

# Key multi-word terms in a language teacher education journal

*Práticas bem legais: uma análise de termos-chave em uma revista de formação de professores*

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## Abstract

The Bem Legal Journal (BLJ) serves as a developmental platform for pre- and in-service teachers (Welp et al., 2020) to develop their identity as teacher-author-educators (Garcez & Schlatter, 2017) while improving language teaching. The purpose of this study is to identify the topics covered in BLJ articles through the extraction of key multi-word terms (KMWT), a type of keyword that consists of two or more words and appears more frequently in the corpus of study when contrasted to a reference corpus (Kilgarriff et al., 2014). The corpus of study comprises all English-written BLJ articles, while The Warwick ELT Journal serves as the reference corpus. The Keyword & Term tool in Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al., 2014) was used to extract KMWT and the Concordance tool aided in understanding their meanings in the corpus of study. The analysis of the 95 KMWT extracted revealed seven categories. Project-based pedagogy emerged as the main theme in the articles that constitute the corpus, being the category with the largest number of KMWT. This study sheds light on the topics and teaching approaches covered in BLJ and offers insights for language educators seeking to enhance their professional development.

**Keywords:** English language teaching; Key multi-word terms; Corpus linguistics; Teacher-author-educator.

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## Resumo

A Revista Bem Legal (BLJ) serve como uma plataforma de desenvolvimento para professores em formação e em serviço (Welp et al., 2020) visando desenvolver sua identidade como professores-autores-formadores (Garcez; Schlatter, 2017), buscando aprimorar o ensino de línguas. Este estudo tem como objetivo identificar os temas abordados nos artigos da BLJ por meio da extração de termos-chave multipalavra (KMWT), um tipo de palavra-chave formada por duas ou mais palavras e que ocorre com maior frequência no corpus de estudo quando contrastado ao corpus de referência (Kilgarriff et al., 2014). O corpus de estudo compreende todos os artigos da BLJ escritos em inglês, enquanto a Revista The Warwick ELT compõe o corpus de referência. A ferramenta Keyword & Term no Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al., 2014) foi utilizada para extrair os KMWT e a ferramenta Concordance auxiliou na compreensão de seus significados no corpus de estudo. A análise dos 95 KMWT extraídos revelou sete categorias. A pedagogia baseada em projetos emergiu como o principal tema tratado nos artigos que compõem o corpus, se configurando como a categoria com o maior número de KMWT. Este estudo lança luz sobre os tópicos e abordagens de ensino abordados no BLJ e pode servir como fonte de estudo e pesquisa para educadores de línguas que buscam aprimorar seu desenvolvimento profissional.

**Palavras-chave:** Ensino de língua inglesa; Termos-chave; Linguística de corpus; Professor-autor-formador.

## 1. Introduction

Teaching additional languages is a complex and challenging task, and good language teaching practices require an understanding of the linguistic, cultural, and social aspects of languages and students (Scrivener, 2011). In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in corpus-based studies, which provide an empirical basis for language teaching and learning (Jablonkai & Csomay, 2022) by analyzing language in context (McEnery & Brezina, 2022). In this vein, the present study aims to investigate the key multi-word terms (KMWT) used in texts published by pre- and in- service English teachers in a journal named Bem Legal<sup>1</sup>. The study draws on a corpus of 96 texts written in English by Brazilian language teachers, which were compiled and analyzed using corpus linguistics methodology.

The main objective of the study is to identify the most frequent KMWT used in Bem Legal Journal (BLJ) when compared to a publication which has similar purposes, The Warwick ELT Journal, to, then, analyze the topics related to language teaching. The study adopts a bottom-up approach to identify the KMWT in the corpus, which are then manually grouped into categories based on their semantic and pedagogical properties.

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<sup>1</sup> In English: "Pretty Cool".

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In the following sections, we introduce the BLJ, corpus linguistics, and KWMT analysis, followed by the methodology employed in this study. We then present the results and engage in a detailed discussion. Finally, we conclude with a summary of the main findings and offer suggestions for future research.

## 2. The Bem Legal Journal

The Bem Legal Journal (BLJ) is an online, open-access publication dedicated to promoting successful initiatives in language education. Published biannually by the Institute of Languages and Literature at Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul; UFRGS), a prominent public research university in southern Brazil, BLJ serves as a platform for educators to share their innovative ideas, teaching practices, and critical reflections with their peers. The primary objective of BLJ is to foster a collaborative and inclusive environment that encourages the exchange of valuable insights and knowledge within the language education community. As such, BLJ is an indispensable resource for educators and researchers who seek to advance the field of language education.

The journal can be understood as a space for pre- and in-service teachers which can assist in the construction of their identity as teacher-author-educators (Garcez & Schlatter, 2017) and, thus, improve language education as a whole through the proposition of a collective reflection with their peers. A teacher-author is a professional who can formulate as well as solve problems that arise from their practice, going beyond to exchange those experiences with peers, looking to reflect meaningfully and collectively on what it means to learn to teach in the context they are inserted (Garcez & Schlatter, 2017). A teacher-author-educator does the same as a teacher-author with the difference of the responsibility for registering their repertoire which is being constructed (Garcez & Schlatter, 2017).

Garcez and Schlatter (2017: 30, our translation) further expound on those concepts arguing that:

The joint construction of a culture of teacher-author-educators takes place, in our experience, from at least the practicum. Since the first issue of the Bem Legal Journal, we propose reading and discussing articles published in previous issues as well as submitting texts for publication in the journal about some pretty cool aspects of the

experience of the project developed in the practicum (instead of reports to the supervisor). [...] The journal has an editorial committee of more experienced teacher-author-educators who welcome, analyze and make suggestions for the rewriting of articles, thus creating the opportunity for teacher-authors also to constitute themselves as teacher-author-educators.<sup>2</sup>

Like other university professors at UFRGS and its neighboring universities in the South of Brazil, Garcez and Schlatter incorporate articles from BLJ into their classroom instruction and actively encourage their students to submit their own work during practicum courses in teaching degrees. This pedagogical approach likely accounts for the high proportion of published works by undergraduates hailing from the state of Rio Grande do Sul. Additionally, the editorial committee of BLJ serves as a fortifying source of support and guidance for teacher-authors, allowing them to strengthen their identities as teacher-author-educators through the publication of their work (Garcez & Schlatter, 2017). This collective experience of knowledge exchange and authorship is an essential aspect of professional growth in the field of language education since it provides educators with the opportunity to engage in ongoing critical reflection and development of their teaching practices (Schön, 1997). Therefore, BLJ serves as a crucial resource for both established and aspiring educators, fostering a sense of community, intellectual curiosity and dedication to the improvement of language education (Garcez & Schlatter, 2017; Welp et al., 2020).

Welp et al. (2020) provide a comprehensive overview of the structure of BLJ, which is organized into five distinct sections, each corresponding to a specific speech genre with unique objectives and publication norms. Genres in BLJ include (1) reports on good practices, which are detailed 2,200-word texts outlining successful projects or task sequences that have already been implemented; (2) lesson plans, which are 1,500-word texts containing a comprehensive lesson or task plan; (3) project proposals, which are texts of 1,000 words that present suggestions for projects or didactic sequences; (4) classroom stories, which are 1,500-word texts that focus on interesting classroom anecdotes; and (5) interviews, which are limited to 2,000 words and provide an account of a dialogue with an education agent about a relevant theme.

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<sup>2</sup> Originally in Portuguese: "A construção conjunta de uma cultura de professores-autores-formadores tem lugar, na nossa experiência, desde pelo menos os estágios de docência. Desde a primeira edição da revista Bem Legal, propomos a leitura e a discussão de artigos publicados nas edições anteriores e a escrita de artigos para publicação na revista sobre algum aspecto bem legal da vivência do projeto desenvolvido no estágio supervisionado (em vez de relatórios para o supervisor). [...] A revista reúne uma comissão editorial de professores-autores-formadores mais experientes que acolhem, analisam e fazem sugestões para a reescrita dos artigos, criando, assim a oportunidade para que professores-autores também se constituam como professores-autores-formadores."

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In the next section, we discuss our choice of using corpus linguistics tools in order to analyze key multi-word terms in BLJ.

### 3. Corpus linguistics and key multi-word terms analysis

Corpus linguistics is an approach to the study of large language data "through corpora (singular: corpus). A corpus is a large, principled collection of naturally occurring examples of language stored electronically" (Bennett, 2010: 2). Considering the large scale of data dealt with by corpus linguists, a computer is employed to "read, search and manipulate" the information, since it would not be feasible due to time and lack of accuracy for human analysts to retrieve results through individual analyses of each text (McEnery & Hardie, 2012: 2).

Brezina (2018) emphasizes the importance of a corpus being both representative and unbiased. Specifically, the texts included in the corpus should exhibit "similar characteristics to the population it is drawn from" (Brezina, 2018: 15) and avoid any "systematic but often hidden deviation of the sample from the population" (Brezina, 2018: 16). One possible type of deviation from representativeness and unbiasedness occurs when a corpus is composed of disparate sections of texts or texts that cover a range of unrelated topics, even though these selections do not align with the research question or goals of the analyst. Such deviations can compromise the corpus and ultimately hinder its suitability for analysis.

Key multi-word terms (KMWT), the object of this study, can be extracted from corpora. KMWT are expressions composed of two or more words that appear frequently together in a corpus, when contrasted to a reference corpus, and that carry a specific meaning or concept (Kilgarriff et al., 2014). We understand that the KMWT we analyze are capable of facilitating "understanding the main point of a text" (Bondi, 2010: 3), or, in the case of this study, giving access to features of our corpus of study "that are not immediately obvious" (Bondi, 2010: 5). According to Scott (1997: 243), through the analysis of KMWT, it is possible to reveal the aboutness of the corpus of study.

Furthermore, KMWT seem to be more indicative of content as opposed to isolated single keywords, as suggested by the Firthian maxim: "You shall know a word by the company it keeps!" (FIRTH, 1957, p. 11). The reason for this is that, when considering the co-occurrence of the elements

that make up a KMWT, their meanings become less opaque, allowing for more valid and appropriate interpretations of their use (FIRTH, 1957).

In order to achieve the goal of this study and considering that it is through the analysis of the KMWT of a corpus that we can identify its aboutness, the detailed methods for extracting and analyzing the terms of the corpora are described in the next section.

#### 4. Methodology

This study seeks to characterize the community from which BLJ texts originate by analyzing KMWT, thereby gaining a better understanding of the topics considered important by teacher-author-educators who submit their work to the publication. This section outlines the corpus-analytic steps utilized to achieve this objective, with a focus on the design and compilation of the two corpora, followed by the extraction and categorization of the KMWT.

To conduct this study, a comparison was carried out between the Bem Legal Corpus (BLC) and a reference corpus called The Warwick ELT Corpus (TWELTC). The BLC consists of English-language articles published between 2011 and 2021, which were manually located and downloaded as PDF files and later uploaded onto Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al., 2014). The corpus comprises all issues of the BLJ from its inception in 2011 until the latest publication in 2021, which marks the commencement of the compilation process.

As our research aimed to investigate KMWT, we designed and compiled the reference corpus following Brezina's (2018: 81) recommendation: "the larger and the more similar the reference corpus is to the corpus of interest the more reliable and focused the comparison is". Thus, we chose texts from The Warwick ELT Journal – published from 2016 to 2019 and curated by a group of Master's students of English Language Teaching at the University of Warwick, based in the United Kingdom, to compose the corpus of reference due to its similarities with the objectives as the BLJ and its higher token count compared to the BLC. TWELTC comprises all issues of The Warwick ELT Journal, which commenced publication in 2016 and appears to have been discontinued in 2019.

**Table 1.** BLC description

Section	Number of texts	Number of words	Percentage of words
Reports on good practices	54	101,871	63.6%
Lesson plans/project proposal	42	58,277	36.4%
Classroom stories	0	0	0%
Interviews	0	0	0%
TOTAL	96	160,149	100%

Source: The authors

As can be seen in Table 1, the BLC is made up of 96 texts, totaling 160,149 words. This corpus only includes reports on good practices and lesson plans/project proposals<sup>3</sup> sections of the journal, as these were the only English-language texts found to be published. The data in the table also indicates that the majority of texts fall within the reports on good practices section.

Table 2 shows that TWELTC is composed of 67 articles and 205,144 words. Despite the smaller number of texts in this corpus, the total word count is higher, allowing us to extract KMWT from the BLC reliably since the texts are adequate as for the time and topic of publication and the number of tokens is bigger.

**Table 2.** TWELTC description

	Number of texts	Number of words
Whole corpus	67	205,144

Source: The authors.

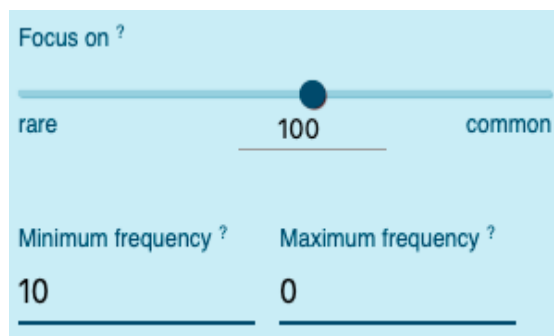
After compiling both corpora, they were analyzed using the Keyword & Term tool in SketchEngine (Kilgariff et al., 2014) to generate a list of lemmatized KMWT in the BLC. Additionally, we used the Focus on feature of SketchEngine, which identifies a list of words that appear more frequently in the focus corpus than in the reference corpus. In this feature, a setting of 0.001 would

<sup>3</sup> In some issues of BLJ, the sections lesson plans and project proposals were treated as one. Thus, we considered both to be of the same genre in this study.



refer to rare or unusual words in the reference corpus. Conversely, a setting of 1000000 would focus on words that are very frequent in general language or in the reference corpus (Kilgariff et al., 2014). Thus, we decided to set the feature at 100, which is close to the middle of the scale as can be seen in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1.** Focus on tool and minimum frequency settings



**Source:** SketchEngine (Kilgariff et al., 2014)

We also selected a minimum of 10 occurrences for a word to be considered a KMWT, since we wanted words that appeared somehow regularly in the corpus of study. After setting this threshold, we excluded KMWT that appeared in fewer than three texts, as well as those that were in Portuguese (e.g., *língua adicional*<sup>4</sup>, *em língua estrangeira*, *material didático*, *leitura em língua* and *sílabas tônica*) and discourse markers (e.g., *final consideration* and *other word*). This process yielded a list of 95 terms, which can be found in Appendix I.

Once the list of 95 terms was compiled, each term was thoroughly analyzed and categorized by the three authors according to semantic fields. Seven categories were identified: project-based pedagogy, sequencing, context, classroom management, language teaching, language focus, and resource. Definitions for each category were derived from the concordance lines and the literature related to language teaching as will be explained in the next section.

## 5. Results

<sup>4</sup> Henceforth, KMWT will be referenced in the text using italics.



As discussed above, the categories were defined based on the extraction of KMWT and extensive reading of the concordance lines of all the occurrences. The 95 key terms were manually grouped into seven categories: (1) project-based pedagogy, (2) sequencing, (3) context, (4) classroom management, (5) language teaching, (6) language focus, and (7) resource. Table 3 illustrates the categories that emerged from the data categorization process, along with the number of terms and total number of occurrences in each group.

**Table 3 - Categories**

Category	Number of KMWT (types)	Total number of occurrences (tokens)	Percentage of tokens
project-based pedagogy	43	848	45.29%
sequencing	21	449	23.98%
context	9	187	9.98%
classroom management	7	139	7.42%
language teaching	6	126	6.73%
language focus	6	79	4.22%
resource	3	44	2.35%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>1,872</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: The authors.

As can be seen above, project-based pedagogy is the most productive category both in terms of diverse lexical items (43) and in the total number of occurrences (848). This category alone accounts for over 45% of the number of types and total occurrences. The category with the smallest number of items is resource, with only 2% of the KMWT.

Table 4 provides insights on the most prototypical terms of each category, which will be discussed in depth in the discussion section for being considered the "clearest cases of category membership defined operationally by people's judgments of goodness of membership in the category" (Rosch, 2004 [1978]: 98). The table offers a comparison of absolute and relative frequencies of KMWT in both the BLC and TWELTC corpora, along with the keyness score of each

term. For a more comprehensive understanding of all 95 KMWT, including the document frequency (DOC f) of the occurrences, refer to Appendix I.

**Table 4.** Prototypical KMWT

Category	KMWT	f in BLC	f in TWELTC	Relative f in BLC	Relative f in TWELTC	eyness score
project-based pedagogy <sup>5</sup>	<i>final product</i>	97	3	494.46152	11.6822	5.323
	<i>video clip</i>	55	1	280.36478	3.89407	3.661
	<i>linguistic resource</i>	46	3	234.48691	11.6822	2.995
	<i>final production</i>	34	1	173.31641	3.89407	2.631
	<i>previous knowledge</i>	31	7	158.02379	27.25846	2.028
	<i>reading activity</i>	24	4	122.341	15.57626	1.924
	<i>horror story</i>	21	0	107.04837	0	2.07
	<i>short story</i>	21	4	107.04837	15.57626	1.791
	<i>eating habit</i>	14	0	71.36558	0	1.714
	<i>cultural aspect</i>	14	5	71.36558	19.47033	1.434
sequencing	<i>next class</i>	22	4	112.14591	15.57626	1.836
	<i>fourth class</i>	17	1	86.6582	3.89407	1.797
	<i>end of the class</i>	15	0	76.46312	0	1.765
	<i>first moment</i>	13	0	66.26804	0	1.663
	<i>previous activity</i>	13	0	66.26804	0	1.663
	<i>next step</i>	13	1	3.89407		1.6

<sup>5</sup> The words presented here are not meant to encapsulate the entirety of project-based pedagogy. These terms are used to refer to specific elements within the broader pedagogical approach. In the following section, we will provide more comprehensive evidence of project-based pedagogy in the BLC.

<b>context</b>	<i>english class</i>	52	28	265.07214	109.03384	1.746
	<i>high school</i>	27	27	137.63362	105.13978	1.158
<b>classroom management</b>	<i>whole group</i>	33	2	168.21887	7.78813	2.488
	<i>small group</i>	25	7	127.43854	27.25846	1.787
	<i>big group</i>	24	1	122.341	3.89407	2.14
<b>language teaching</b>	<i>english language</i>	41	222	208.99921	864.4826	0.32
	<i>english teacher</i>	11	49	56.07296	190.80922	0.537
<b>language focus</b>	<i>simple present</i>	23	0	117.24345	0	2.172
	<i>new vocabulary</i>	14	5	71.36558	19.47033	1.434
	<i>simple past</i>	11	1	56.07296	3.89407	1.502
<b>resource</b>	<i>piece of paper</i>	19	0	96.85329	0	1.969
	<i>computer lab</i>	12	1	61.1705	3.89407	1.551

Table 4 displays the categories in ascending order based on the number of different types and tokens of KMWT. The most diverse and frequent category is project-based pedagogy, comprising 43 types and 848 tokens, representing 45.29% of the total number of occurrences of KMWT. This category refers to a pedagogy that involves a final production (or final product) linked to a selected theme, such as eating habits or cultural aspects, and includes speech genres (e.g. video clip, horror story, short story) and tasks (e.g. linguistic resource, previous knowledge, reading activity). Further in the text, we will address how tasks relate to previous knowledge and linguistic resources in greater detail.

The second most numerous category is sequencing, with 21 types and 449 tokens (23.98%) of KMWT. It refers to the progression of the course (e.g. next class, fourth class), the class (e.g. end of the class, first moment) or the activity (e.g. next class, fourth class, end of the class, first moment).

The third most frequent category is context, which relates to the circumstances that constitute the setting of the learning event, such as English class and high school. This category includes nine KMWT, totaling 187 occurrences, accounting for 9.98% of the total.

In the fourth place, there is the classroom management category, which involves actions aimed at creating "the conditions in which learning can take place" (Scrivener, 2011: 54), such as how the students can be grouped in the classroom (e.g. whole group, small group, big group). This category comprises seven KMWT, with 139 occurrences, representing 7.42% of the total.

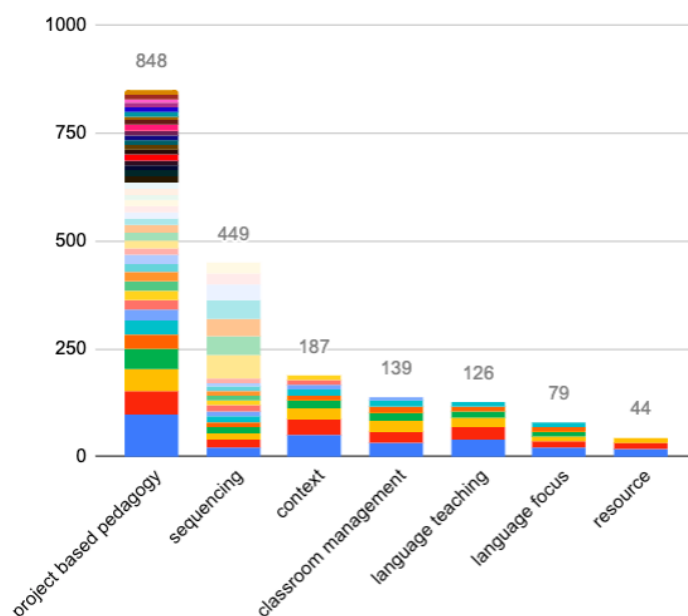
The category of language teaching includes terms related to the craft of teaching, such as the subject of the class (e.g. English language) and the educational agent (e.g. English teacher). This category comprises six KMWT and accounts for 126 types (6.73%).

The category of language focus comprehends the language features – such as grammar (e.g. simple present, simple past) and lexis (e.g. new vocabulary) – dealt with in the reported projects. It encompasses six KMWT that occur 79 times (4.22%) in the BLC.

Lastly, the category of resource concerns materials (e.g. piece of paper) and spaces (e.g. computer lab) that enable activities to happen. The three terms included in this category total 44 occurrences and account for 2.35% of all tokens of KMWT.

The stacked bar graph in Figure 2 summarizes the results described in this section.

**Figure 2.** Categories, number of occurrences and number of terms



Source: The authors.

The graph presents the categories on the X-axis and the number of occurrences of KMWT and the variety of terms in each category on the Y-axis. The different shades within each bar represent the range of terms within each category. A detailed discussion of each category is presented next.

## 6. Discussion

This section presents the discussions of the main findings of the study, which revealed that project-based pedagogy is the most significant category in terms of both the number of occurrences and the variety of different KMWT.

According to Hernández and Ventura (1998), project-based learning is a method of organizing the school curriculum that prioritizes students' engagement with information and the connection between various subject matters through problems that stimulate the construction of knowledge. Projects begin with the definition of a thematic focus. Subsequently, students explore materials from which they can acquire the necessary content to address the problem within the chosen thematic axis, allowing them to study and refine the theme while actively engaging the students. In a project-based pedagogy, it is also important to maintain an evaluative attitude throughout the process in order to elicit what students already know, what they believe they are learning, and what they are most curious to learn (Hernández & Ventura, 1998).

Furthermore, at the end of the project, it is essential to recapitulate the journey in order to organize the acquired knowledge and plan new educational proposals (Hernández & Ventura, 1998). In language education, Schlatter and Garcez (2009; 2012) suggest that projects can culminate in a final product aimed at assessing learning outcomes and systematically summarizing the knowledge addressed throughout the process. This final product takes the form of a text that represents a particular genre of oral or written discourse.

The project-based pedagogy category in question can be better understood with the help of the following excerpt, which is taken from the BLC and highlights the KMWT in bold.

Considering that the students were interested in music and that this topic can embrace different age groups, which was the case of our students, we decided to develop a project involving songs. As the **final product**, we thought of producing a **video clip**. [...] Now we will show in detail each step of our project named A

**video clip** in our lives. It is important to mention that this project was designed for beginners in English and it can be adapted to different contexts (high beginners, intermediate, etc).

The most frequent KMWT in the project-based pedagogy category were final product and video clip, which are terms that directly refer to a document used as a reference in the Practicum and Teaching Methodology credit-courses at UFRGS and other neighboring universities: the Rio Grande do Sul State Curriculum Standards (Schlatter & Garcez, 2009). Furthermore, texts in the BLC also make reference to a book published by the same authors (Schlatter & Garcez, 2012). This book was conceived as a follow-up of their work in the State Curriculum Standards and aims at providing additional language teachers with a more comprehensive and practical understanding of the project-based pedagogy. By grounding their teaching methodology on this pedagogy, the authors offer a more effective alternative to the traditional fragmented content list, which, in turn, still tends to be the norm in many educational contexts.

Barbosa (2004) highlights that projects can be conducted individually or in groups, stemming from a problem situation for a specific group of students. In the perspective of linguistic education, projects may involve a final production, such as a video clip, related to a selected theme, in the case of the excerpt below, music. Additionally, projects should involve one or more speech genres related to students' effective participation in the communities in which they are inserted (Schlatter & Garcez, 2009; 2012).

The project-based pedagogy category also comprehends terms that refer to those speech genres themselves, i.e. "relatively stable types" of utterances used in different spheres of communication in human activity (Bakhtin, 1986: 61). Video clip, horror story, short story and comic book are the most frequent and prototypical terms of speech genres in the corpus.

Referring back to the excerpt above, video clip was chosen to be the structuring genre of that project, combining the theme with the tasks, leading students to the production of this specific genre. Even though that was the genre focused, it does not necessarily mean that there was an exclusive approach to it, since others could have been supporting genres, used to provide support to and scaffold the development of the project (Schlatter & Garcez, 2009; 2012).

According to Referenciais Curriculares do Rio Grande do Sul (2009), **comic books** are part of students' interests and they can be an important tool for teaching an additional language, since they are composed by short texts and present **linguistic resources** in a contextualized way. Moreover, the work with **comic books** develops students' abilities

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to identify the different elements of the narrative, to make inferences over the relations between verbal and non-verbal texts, to recognize the effects of graphic and **linguistic resources** in the story, to comprehend and discuss the theme, and to express points of view. (file23661083)

This second excerpt above, extracted from the BLC, is also representative of the project-based pedagogy category and explicitly aligns with the Rio Grande do Sul State Curriculum Standards (Schlatter & Garcez, 2009), emphasizing the importance of selecting projects based on students' interests. In the passage, comic books are referred to as a speech genre that caters to students' specific interests.

Other terms in this category – such as *linguistic resource*, *previous knowledge*, and *reading activity* – are related to the design of tasks, i.e., the planning and directions teachers want to see being carried out by the students (Schlatter & Garcez, 2012). In the texts comprising the corpus, task-based language teaching (TBLT) appears to be connected with project-based pedagogy, as it helps students develop practical skills that are applicable in real-world contexts (Schlatter & Garcez, 2009; 2012). This approach provides a more engaging and effective way for students to learn, as it allows them to apply their language knowledge and skills to meaningful tasks and projects.

For Branden (2016: 240), "a task is a goal-oriented activity that involves the meaningful use of language," and, in TBLT, communication tasks are the centerpiece of language acquisition (Branden, 2006). Task-based language classrooms often follow a three-stage model that encompasses pre-task activities, the task itself and post-task activities. During the pre-task phase, teachers and students prepare for the task by introducing the topic, activating previous knowledge and providing relevant vocabulary. Teachers also motivate learners and give clear task instructions. In the task performance stage, students work individually or in groups to complete the task, with the teacher providing interactional support to address misconceptions and give feedback. Finally, in the post-task phase, students report on their task outcomes and discuss their performance (Branden, 2016).

*Linguistic resources*, a term that occurs 46 times in 26 different texts in the corpus, is closely tied to the notion of TBLT, particularly in the context of project-based pedagogy, where specific genres bring relevant lexico-grammatical features to the fore. It is worth mentioning that the choice to use the term linguistic resources (*recursos linguísticos* in Portuguese) rather than simply



grammar is because it is a more contextualized way of referring to the specific language that matters to accomplish certain tasks. Schlatter and Garcez (2009) argue that the relevance of a linguistic resource to students' project participation should be justified, meaning that grammar work should be targeted and focus on what is necessary for the speaker to achieve a specific purpose, rather than covering all rules and structures.

The sequencing category is the second most frequent and diverse category in the BLC, encompassing terms that refer to the progression of the course, class, or activity. Terms in this category are mostly found in passages where authors describe the delivery of tasks. It is noteworthy that the sequencing created between tasks and lessons is especially relevant to project-based pedagogy since the activities developed by students aim to produce a predefined final product (Schlatter & Garcez, 2009; 2012). Additionally, terms in this category support what Branden (2016) notes regarding the three-stage model activities.

In the corpus, the authors seem to understand the importance of a sequence of chained tasks for the accomplishment of a project. The following excerpt exemplifies this context with two of the most prototypical terms: next class and previous activity. It seems to highlight how essential it is to establish a clear and logical sequence of tasks and activities, considering that proper sequencing helps to build students' knowledge progressively, reinforcing the learning process and providing them with the necessary skills to accomplish the proposed final product of the project.

At this moment, students must get prepared for their final presentation, which is supposed to happen **next class**.  
</s><s> In the same pairs as the **previous activity**, they need to create a PowerPoint presentation determining a new occupation for the character in their flashcard and what aspects led them to that decision. (file23661044)

The most recurrent KMWT in the context category is English class, followed by high school, as seen in the excerpts below. This category encompasses terms that are related to the location and setting of the lessons. The frequency of the terms of this category suggests that the BLC is primarily composed of texts that describe English language teaching practices in high school settings.

The classes took place in the state school Gema Angelina Belia, located in Porto Alegre, between April and July of 2015.  
</s><s> The group was a second year of **high school** with almost thirty students. (file23661152)

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In my first English teaching practicum, I chose to teach a seventh grade in a school near my house. The school offered two periods of **English classes a week**. Before starting the teaching part of my practicum, I observed some of the English teacher's classes, in order to know the students and for them to know me. (file23661143)

The context in which language teaching and learning take place is a crucial factor that can influence the success of the educational process. As such, it is important for teachers to be mindful of the context in which they are teaching and adapt their lessons accordingly. This way, teachers can provide effective instruction that is tailored to the unique needs of their students. The texts in the corpus show that the teacher-author-educators are conscious of this fact. This is evident in the references to the learning environment as indicated by the frequencies of KMWT in this category and illustrated in the excerpts above. In essence, authors systematically include information about the context where the class was taught in their texts. This is because of the importance of acknowledging that every teaching context is unique and has specificities that can affect what is considered a pretty cool practice in English language teaching.

The category of classroom management, i.e., important conditions for learning to take place, has whole group as the most recurrent term. In contrast to a traditional teacher-centered approach, a project-based pedagogy prioritizes interaction and collaboration, both between peers and between students and teachers, in order to facilitate the construction of knowledge (Hernández & Ventura, 1998).

This conception seems to relate to Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, in which learning occurs primarily through interaction with others and with the world, with language playing a fundamental role. Vygotsky's (1998) notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) explains the relationship between learning and child development, indicating that a child's potential development is identified not only by what they can do independently but also by what they can do with help from others. In turn, scaffolding refers to the temporary assistance provided by a teacher or more capable peer to help learners perform tasks that are beyond their current ability. This concept stems from the notion of ZPD and is believed to be beneficial to developing the learners' autonomy. By offering guidance and assistance, scaffolding enables learners to perform similar classroom tasks independently in the future outside of the classroom (Gibbons, 2015).

The excerpt provided below illustrates the author's description of the group arrangements used to carry out the tasks, including pair, trio and whole group. This particular pattern of group

arrangement, which moves from small groups to a whole-group setting, is not unique to this specific text, rather, it can be encountered in multiple texts in the corpus, highlighting the importance authors attach to collaborative learning and the scaffolding of the learning.

This class starts with wrap-up about the information they brought as required last class. Each pair/trio will discuss about the topic they are producing. The teacher will accompany and guide each group. By the end of this discussion, the groups are going to tell to the **whole group** the topic they chose. Activity After the warm-up, students are going to keep working on their trailers. (file23661072)

The language teaching category pertains to the subject matter being taught, namely the English language and to the category of teachers involved at stake. This category is particularly salient in the Brazilian context, a country marked by significant socio-economic disparities that also permeate the educational system. In public schools, where a majority of students come from low-income families, English is often perceived as having little relevance to their daily lives, as these students are unlikely to travel abroad or interact with English speakers in their local communities. Consequently, one of the initial goals of English language instruction in public schools is to "guarantee conditions so that students do not turn their backs to a world that happens in diversity"<sup>6</sup>, a world mobilized by texts in English – and other additional languages (Schlatter & Garcez, 2009: 135).

We were concerned to show that the **English language** was not that far from their everyday life and it could be very useful for basic things and they could see English as a language spoken by many, not only in the United States or England. We wanted them to discover other cultures and other interests inside the classroom. (file23661090)

The excerpt provided above is representative of the need to justify the importance of English language teaching in the Brazilian public school system. The challenges of teaching English in this context are closely tied to the social and economic realities of the students and their families, making it critical to demonstrate the potential value of English as a means of engaging with the wider world and advancing their future opportunities.

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<sup>6</sup> In Portuguese: "garantir condições para que os educandos não deem as costas ao mundo que acontece na diversidade"

The language focus category includes essential linguistic resources, such as grammar and lexis, necessary for tasks that integrate language use with the project being developed. These situated linguistic elements are practiced in situations that are significant and intrinsically linked to the goals of the tasks or projects, which involves the reflection on the role of these resources in language practices, including underlying genres and topics.

The provided excerpts below exemplify the use of the simple present and simple past as KMWT. Additionally, other related terms that were not found to be KMWT – such as present continuous, language resources, tense, and weather and music vocabulary – are similarly representative in the passages. The use of the latter term is especially notable, as it is clearly intrinsically connected to the topic of the project, which is focused on weather and music. This illustrates the efforts of integrating linguistic resources with the context and purpose of the project, highlighting the importance of situated linguistic practice for a "pretty cool" language class.

They had to create a poster to exhibit in the hall of the school suggesting people songs to listen to according to the weather - sunny, rainy, cloudy, hot and cold days. </s><s> They structured the sentences to give the suggestion making use of the **Simple Present** and Present Continuous, beyond the weather and music vocabulary. (file23661135)

Language resources [Aiming at providing the students with tools, this section focuses on the **simple past**. </s><s> This tense is frequent in Chimamanda's talk and it is extremely important to the personal narrative structure.] In order to produce your own personal narrative, you will often need to use the **simple past** form of the verbs. </s><s> Therefore: 1. </s><s> Find the **simple past** form of the verbs in the chart below that were taken from Chimamanda's talk and write them in the second line. (file23661059)

Lastly, the resource category focuses on the tools required to carry out tasks effectively and encompasses only three KMWT: piece of paper, sheet of paper, and computer lab. The use of a piece of paper as a tool can be observed in the provided excerpt below, in which its use is merely instrumental, supporting the development of the task by the students. While the limited range of tools in this category may seem surprising, it is important to note that the tasks analyzed in the corpus mainly involve language use and development, rather than a focus on technology or material resources. All in all, the use of supporting tools for language learning tasks highlights the

importance of considering the specific needs and requirements of each task and project, and the role that various resources play in achieving its goals.

Each student will receive a **piece of paper** (as the model below), write down the information needed, and draw their pet (it can be an imaginary pet). These papers must have the same shape and size because they are going to be used in the final activity. (file23661035)

In the next section, the conclusion is presented.

## 7. Conclusion

This study set out to identify the topics approached in the texts published in BLJ as compared to The Warwick ELT Journal. We identified the key pedagogical concepts in the corpus of study through a combination of manual and automated analysis with a focus on frequently occurring KMWT related to pedagogical concepts. The 95 KMWT extracted using Sketch Engine (KILGARRIFF et al., 2014) were manually categorized into six categories, namely: project-based pedagogy (43 KMWT), sequencing (21 KMWT), context (nine KMWT), classroom management (seven), language teaching (six), language focus (six) and resource (three).

Our findings indicate that project-based pedagogy is the most frequently emphasized pedagogical concept in the BLC, as evidenced by the frequent occurrence of KMWT such as final product and video clip. Our analysis also highlights the importance of sequencing in these materials, as well as the close relationship between task-based language teaching and project-based pedagogy. In addition, we identify a number of other key pedagogical concepts, such as linguistic resource and previous knowledge, that are also frequently emphasized in the texts. Those seem to reflect the methodological approach presented in the Rio Grande do Sul State Curriculum Standards (Schlatter & Garcez, 2009; 2012), a document that, even though is not the current official standard, is still used in courses such as Teaching Methodology and Practicum in some universities in the South of Brazil. In the corpus, there are 32 explicit occurrences of Referenciais Curriculares, which suggests that the document is still a reference in this community.

The community that publishes in BLJ seems to be moving away from the presentation-practice-production paradigm. This approach has been criticized for being too teacher-centered and not

giving learners enough opportunities for authentic communication, which is the opposite of project-based pedagogy (Hall, 2015). However, it remains a popular approach in language teaching, particularly for learners who are not yet comfortable with the language.

To further build on this study, future research could broaden the scope of the analysis beyond the current sample to include other relevant journals, countries, and languages. For instance, it would be beneficial to compare the findings from *The Warwick ELT Journal* and other similar journals to identify good practices in English language teaching. Additionally, exploring the texts published in languages other than English in *BLJ* could shed light on the teaching approaches and strategies used in other contexts of linguistic education.

In summary, this study offers valuable insights into the pedagogical principles and practices that are being advanced by a community of English teachers in the southern region of Brazil, who aptly embody the spirit of the *Bem Legal Journal*. We trust that this study can serve as a foundation for future research and reflection on the teaching of additional languages not only in Brazil but also beyond its borders.

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