Article

Language policy, technologization, and English ideologies in Brazilian public schools: a critical analysis of three programs in Paraná

Política linguística, tecnologização e ideologias sobre a língua inglesa na educação pública brasileira: uma análise crítica de três programas no Paraná

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ABSTRACT: English is the only modern foreign language included in national and state basic education curricula (BNCC/CREP) and is considered an essential tool for the internationalization of Paraná's public education system. Moreover, these educational policies emphasize the use of digital technologies in language learning contexts. In this sense, the present study is justified by our professional engagement as English language professors involved in teacher education. The aim of this paper is to investigate discursive constructions of English and digital technologies in three language policies implemented within Paraná's public education system. More specifically, this small-scale study seeks to identify how proposals within these language policies are operationalized by language management at the secondary school and university levels. Adopting a qualitative approach grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the study examines how ideologies surrounding the English language and discourses of technologization are constructed in three language education programs, with particular attention to the ideologies underpinning these policies and the role attributed to technology in their implementation. Through a literature review and document analysis, this study focuses on three state language policies: *Paraná Fala Inglês*, *Ganhando o Mundo*, and *Inglês Paraná*. These programs are analyzed in light of theoretical perspectives on language policy, linguistic ideologies, and discourses of technology. The findings suggest that these policies reinforce native-speakerist discourses and emphasize technology as a means of addressing perceived deficiencies in language teaching. In the case of *Paraná Fala Inglês*, English is discursively framed as a strategic resource for institutional advancement and academic competitiveness. *Ganhando o Mundo* operates through a meritocratic logic that reduces student value to quantifiable outcomes—such as standardized test scores—to justify substantial investment in a limited group of participants. Finally, *Inglês Paraná* relies heavily on platform-based instruction, frequently marginalizing local teachers in favor of pre-

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packaged digital "solutions." Overall, these programs operate within a modernization logic that intertwines the prestige of English with digital transformation, often at the expense of democratic participation, critical pedagogy, and educational equity. Although presented as inclusive and transformative, these policies risk reinforcing social inequalities, narrowing conceptions of English, and displacing locally grounded teaching practices.

KEYWORDS: Language policies. Language ideologies. Technology. English language. Critical Discourse Analysis.

RESUMO: O inglês é a única língua estrangeira moderna incluída nos currículos nacionais e estaduais da educação básica (BNCC/CREP) e é considerado uma ferramenta essencial para a internacionalização do sistema público de educação do Paraná. Além disso, essas políticas educacionais enfatizam o uso de tecnologias digitais em contextos de aprendizagem de línguas. Nesse sentido, o presente estudo se justifica por nosso engajamento profissional como formadores de professores de língua inglesa. O objetivo deste artigo é investigar as construções discursivas do inglês e das tecnologias digitais em três políticas linguísticas implementadas no sistema público de educação do Paraná. Mais especificamente, este estudo de pequena escala busca identificar como as propostas presentes nessas políticas linguísticas são operacionalizadas pela gestão da linguagem nos níveis da educação básica e do ensino superior. Adotando uma abordagem qualitativa fundamentada na Análise Crítica do Discurso (ACD), o estudo examina como ideologias em torno da língua inglesa e discursos de tecnologização são construídos em três programas de educação linguística, com atenção especial às ideologias que sustentam essas políticas e ao papel atribuído à tecnologia em sua implementação. Por meio de revisão de literatura e análise documental, o estudo focaliza três políticas linguísticas estaduais: *Paraná Fala Inglês, Ganhando o Mundo* e *Inglês Paraná*. Esses programas são analisados à luz de referenciais teóricos sobre política linguística, ideologias linguísticas e discursos sobre tecnologia. Os resultados sugerem que essas políticas reforçam discursos de falante nativo e enfatizam a tecnologia como meio de enfrentar supostas deficiências no ensino de línguas. No caso do *Paraná Fala Inglês*, o inglês é discursivamente enquadrado como um recurso estratégico para o avanço institucional e a competitividade acadêmica. O *Ganhando o Mundo* opera a partir de uma lógica meritocrática que reduz o valor dos estudantes a resultados quantificáveis — como pontuações em testes padronizados — para justificar investimentos elevados em um grupo restrito de participantes. Por fim, o *Inglês Paraná* baseia-se fortemente em instrução mediada por plataformas digitais, frequentemente marginalizando professores locais em favor de "soluções" digitais prontas. De modo geral, esses programas operam sob uma lógica de modernização que entrelaça o prestígio do inglês à transformação digital, muitas vezes em detrimento da participação democrática, da pedagogia crítica e da equidade educacional. Embora apresentados como inclusivos e transformadores, tais políticas correm o risco de reforçar desigualdades sociais, restringir concepções de língua inglesa e deslocar práticas pedagógicas localmente situadas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Políticas linguísticas. Ideologias linguísticas. Tecnologia. Língua inglesa. Análise Crítica do Discurso.

1 Introduction

In recent years, language studies have undergone significant transformations due to the increased circulation of information, people, and goods driven by globalization. This mobility, amplified by the expansion of digital technologies and the internet, has reshaped sociolinguistic practices and created new demands for conceptual and methodological tools (Guimarães, 2020).

In this context, the English language has gained increasing prominence in Brazilian education, being mandatory in the curriculum and widely adopted in higher education courses (Gimenez *et al.*, 2018). Simultaneously, discourses advocating the integration of digital technologies into education have gained traction, with technologies being framed as essential to lifelong learning (Selwyn, 2012).

The prioritization of English over other languages in elementary and secondary education is reinforced by government programs, which, although not explicitly declaring this preference, do so by prioritizing allocation of resources to their actions at the local level. Similarly, the state of Paraná has invested heavily in technology-driven pedagogical programs, especially after the 2020s COVID pandemic, particularly in areas such as robotics, programming, and online platforms for core subjects, including English (Paraná, 2022).

This study critically examines three language policies implemented in Paraná: *Paraná Fala Inglês*, *Ganhando o Mundo*, and *Inglês Paraná*, in order to analyze how discourses regarding English and technology are constructed and mobilized. Drawing on document analysis and bibliographic review, we explore how these policies reflect broader ideological frameworks concerning internationalization, technologization, and language hierarchies (Santana; Santana; Figueiredo, 2022)

In this study, we understand *technologization* not merely as the inclusion of digital tools in educational practices, but as a broader discursive and ideological process through which technology is framed as a solution to educational challenges (Selwyn, 2014; Heinsfeld; Pischetola, 2019; Santana, 2025). This perspective invites a

critical reflection on how educational technologies are introduced, legitimized, and naturalized within public policies, often disregarding structural inequalities and pedagogical specificities.

Although English has gained increasing visibility in Brazilian public education, and digital technologies have been widely incorporated into language programs, little attention has been paid to how these elements are discursively constructed and ideologically mobilized within state-level language policies. Studies such as those by Shohamy (2006), Tollerfson (2006), Ricento (2015), Piller (2015) point to the covert ways in which language policies encode power relations and ideological agendas, while Selwyn (2014) and Facer and Selwyn (2021) warn against the uncritical adoption of technological solutions as inherently progressive or transformative.

In Paraná, academic analysis of the three aforementioned programs remains limited. Existing research often treats them in isolation or through descriptive lenses, with few studies adopting a critical or discursive approach. This gap motivates our inquiry: How are English language ideologies and discourses of technologization articulated in *Paraná Fala Inglês, Ganhando o Mundo*, and *Inglês Paraná*?

This paper is organized as follows: first, we provide a theoretical overview of language policy and internationalization. Next, we examine discourses of technologization, followed by a discussion of linguistic and technological ideologies. After outlining this theoretical framework, we describe the methodology and analyze the three programs under investigation. Finally, we offer some concluding remarks.

2 Language policies and internationalization

The concepts of language policy and internationalization are deeply intertwined in contemporary educational discourse. Language policies increasingly reflect global aspirations for mobility and competitiveness, often framed through internationalization agendas that prioritize English as the language of international access. Language policy and planning (LPP) is a field of inquiry in Applied Linguistics,

Sociolinguistics, and the broader social sciences, including Philosophy, Political Science, and Sociology. Although it has been studied for over five decades, there are still ongoing debates regarding the scope of the field, its theoretical foundations, and its terminology (Spolsky, 2004).

Rajagopalan (2013) defines language policy as the art of formulating reflections and actions concerning specific languages, aimed at addressing matters of public interest for nations, states, or even transnational entities. Similarly, Spolsky (2004) conceptualizes LP as composed of three key components: (a) language practices; (b) beliefs and ideologies about language; and (c) efforts to influence or regulate language practices, including planning, management, and intervention.

In Applied Linguistics, LP encompasses a wide range of concerns, from the protection of minority languages to the teaching of mother tongues and foreign languages (Nicolaides; Tílio, 2013; Guimarães, 2020). These perspectives emphasize that language policies are inseparable from broader political, economic, and ideological processes.

Internationalization, in turn, is understood as a set of institutional strategies and policies—often promoted by universities and national governments—to respond to the pressures of globalization. These typically include student mobility programs, international partnerships, and curricular reforms (Guimarães, 2020). However, internationalization is not a neutral or purely educational phenomenon. As Dale (2004) warns, it is frequently aligned with global trends toward standardization, managerialism, and the homogenization of higher education systems.

In the context of language education, we could argue that internationalization often serves as a justification for prioritizing English, not only as a lingua franca (ELF) but also as a marker of modernity, competitiveness, and international prestige. This rationale deeply influences language policy decisions at institutional and governmental levels, particularly in contexts where English is linked to socioeconomic advancement.

The global spread of English in educational policies is frequently justified by its role as a lingua franca—a contact language used among speakers of different native languages. However, the notions provided by ELF scholars challenge traditional conceptions of linguistic correctness and ownership. It emphasizes communicative effectiveness over native-speaker norms and reflects the pluricentric nature of English today (Jenkins, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2011). In public policies, though, ELF is often appropriated without critical reflection, and the promotion of English continues to be tied to ideologies of prestige, modernity, and standardization. This tension is particularly evident in programs that frame English learning as a gateway to international mobility and global citizenship, while still reinforcing normative models of language use.

Language policy and language planning can be understood as two sides of the same coin. Initially, the field was referred to as *language planning*, emphasizing the State's intentional efforts to bring about linguistic change. However, perspectives that acknowledge the complexity of regulating and altering language use through top-down measures proposed the term *language policy* as a designation that better captures these dynamics. Some scholars, however, prefer to use *language policy and planning (LPP)* (García, 2015) to encompass both dimensions.

Cooper (1989) defines language planning as deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or function of language codes, offering a more tempered view of the possibility of altering language practices. In contrast, critical approaches to language planning (e.g., Tollefson, 2006) have emphasized the role of power relations in these processes, pointing to the ideological and hegemonic forces at play. These perspectives recognize that power operates not only through the legal apparatus of official policies but also through the practices and ideologies that underpin them.

Both LPP and internationalization are discursively and ideologically loaded. They reflect and reproduce power relations, symbolic hierarchies, and sociopolitical

interests. As Guimarães (2020) notes, language policies are embedded in structures that shape and are shaped by beliefs about language, linguistic behavior, and social organization. Shohamy (2006) reinforces this view by describing languages as dynamic and personal entities, which, throughout history, have been manipulated by powerful groups to advance political, economic, and ideological agendas. Language becomes a tool for inclusion, exclusion, categorization, and control—serving as a symbol of identity, legitimacy, and status.

As part of a project of linguistic globalization, English has been transformed into a commodity, a good that would allow access to the globalized world and inclusion in transnational labor markets, attributing to English the function of "ensuring positions of higher status" and power in transactional and cosmopolitan networks" through access to information and knowledge (Signorini, 2013).

Language policies and internationalization policies are thus situated in the tension between language as social practice and language as an instrument of governance. Through both explicit and implicit mechanisms, authorities regulate linguistic behavior in ways that are often perceived as neutral but are, in fact, ideologically motivated. LP management, in this sense, is context-dependent and shaped by the sociolinguistic realities of the institutions or regions in which it operates. Governments and large corporations are the main actors in these processes, as they control access to powerful societal institutions—particularly the education system, where language ideologies are reproduced and naturalized (Guimarães, 2020).

From a Marxist standpoint, ideology functions as a system that masks capitalism's internal contradictions, ensuring the reproduction of exploitative and dominant conditions (Selwyn, 2014). In the field of discourse studies, Fairclough (2003) similarly argues that ideologies reflect aspects of the world that can sustain, legitimize, or challenge relations of power, domination, and inequality. Thus, beliefs and perceptions about language are closely tied to social interests and maintained through the (re)production of discourses in which the voices of various social actors intersect.

Language ideologies, in this sense, refer to socially shared beliefs, feelings, and conceptions about language that are dialectically shaped by, and in turn shape, language use. As Piller (2015) asserts, these ideologies serve social (not merely linguistic) purposes, are linked to specific interests, and are inherently multiple and contested.

Furthermore, language is often framed as a symbol of national unity, identity, and legitimacy. This framing feeds into ideological binaries such as native/non-native, purity/variation, and standard/minority. As Ricento (2006) highlights, dominant language ideologies promote the idea that majority languages, especially English, facilitate mobility and integration into the global economy, while overlooking linguistic diversity and equity.

Language policies, therefore, are not neutral instruments but are grounded epistemologies and ontologies, shaped by the sociopolitical contexts in which they emerge (Jordão; Martinez, 2015). This applies equally to internationalization strategies and technological programs, which must be questioned in terms of *who plans what, for whom, and through what means.*

Based on these perspectives, we approach LPs as a multidimensional construct that includes beliefs (ideologies), practices (ecologies), and interventions (intentional efforts). LPs operates through both official and unofficial discourses and texts, and through both explicit and implicit mechanisms. It encompasses interventions in language corpus (e.g., standardization, terminology), status (e.g., official recognition, national prestige), and acquisition (e.g., teaching, learning, curriculum development). Languages, in this view, inhabit both public and private spaces and interact with the environment in which they are used, forming what Shohamy (2006) calls a linguistic ecosystem. Within this dynamic, internationalization policies play a significant role in rationalizing LPP decisions, often framing them in terms of global competitiveness, institutional visibility, and alignment with dominant linguistic and technological ideologies.

In the current context, government initiatives that promote English language learning function as language policies, materialized through official acts and investments of financial and human resources aimed at reshaping language practices. These initiatives seek to create favorable conditions for language learning, drawing on ideological formations to justify their implementation. This is the case with programs such as *Paraná Fala Inglês*, *Ganhando o Mundo*, and *Inglês Paraná*.

3 Discourses of technology in language teaching

Discourses around educational technology can also be viewed as ideological systems. Selwyn (2014) argues that such discourses reflect values rooted in capitalism, individualism, neoliberalism, and the new economy, serving to promote and extend these ideologies across educational settings. In this view, educational technology is frequently framed as a prerequisite for learner-centered methodologies, efficient teaching, and the commodification of education for economic development.

The influence of technology in educational settings is replete with hegemonic discourses, much like the role of the English language. Furthermore, technology has been assimilated into social and academic discourses, often regarded as inherently beneficial and necessary for modernization (Selwyn *et al*., 2019). This logic closely parallels dominant narratives about the English language in education.

Selwyn (2017) calls attention to the economic and political interests embedded in educational technologies. He warns against uncritical celebrations of technological innovation, especially when reforms lack clarity regarding their aims and implications. Instead, the author advocates for a critical perspective characterized by "distrust and skepticism," but also by "constructiveness" (Selwyn, 2017, p. 16).

A critical approach to educational technology (EdTech, henceforth) as Selwyn proposes, must interrogate how technologies serve as tools of control, conflict, and resistance, and how they function as vehicles for the circulation of dominant ideologies. It must also address unequal access to technology and the risks of

exacerbating social inequalities. Finally, such an approach calls for imagining "preferred futures," where technology supports inclusive, equitable, and pedagogically grounded practices (Pennycook, 2001).

In line with this perspective, we approach educational technologies in Paraná's language policies not as neutral instruments, but as discursive artifacts shaped by policy goals and ideological assumptions—especially within English language instruction.

Heinsfeld and Pischetola (2019) reinforce this view by showing how Brazilian public policies increasingly frame digital technologies as "strategic tools" for modernization. However, these technologies are often treated as technical solutions, with little attention to their sociocultural implications. Moreover, their use is frequently justified by the production of quantitative data, which fails to capture the complexities of classroom interaction and learning.

In research centered on Paraná, scholars have identified notable shortcomings in infrastructure and strategic planning for technological initiatives, particularly in public secondary schools. Ozelame (2020), Bianchessi and Mendes (2019), and Jackiw (2011) highlight the top-down nature of policy enforcement and insufficient investment in teacher education as major obstacles. These challenges have led to resistance among educators and compromised the long-term viability of such programs.

El Kadri and Rocha (2017), analyzing pre-service teacher experiences in technology-mediated projects, found that while participants embraced discourses of innovation and collaboration, they also exhibited what the authors called "critical distrust"—a cautious stance toward technologies imposed without adequate support or dialogue. Technologization is thus not merely a pedagogical tool, but a discourse that positions innovation and digitalization as solutions to systemic educational challenges. It operates both as a mechanism for policy implementation and as a legitimizing narrative for reform.

In the state programs under analysis, digital technologies are not only employed to facilitate the teaching and learning of English but are also packaged and promoted as symbols of progress, inclusion, and alignment with global educational standards. Such a portrayal conceals the market-driven and ideological interests underlying these initiatives. This triadic relationship—between language policy, internationalization, and technologization—produces what we identify as a discourse of modernization, in which English and technology are constructed as markers of quality, efficiency, and competitiveness.

This framing, however, may obscure structural inequalities and pedagogical limitations while reinforcing ideologies of linguistic standardization and teacher deskilling[1]. These converging discourses — language policy, internationalization, and technologization — inform and legitimize educational reforms in the name of modernity and global alignment.

To fully grasp how language policies operate in contemporary educational contexts, it is essential to examine how technologization intersects with LP and internationalization—not merely as an instrumental layer, but as a discursive force that legitimizes and reshapes policy objectives and actions. The following section explores this relationship in greater depth, drawing on critical literature on educational technologies and public policies in Brazil. This theoretical articulation allows us to critically examine how the state programs analyzed in this study—*Paraná Fala Inglês*, *Ganhando o Mundo*, and *Inglês Paraná*—mobilize language ideologies and discourses of technologization under the broader agenda of internationalization.

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[1] The term deskilling of teachers, referring to the positioning of teachers as "implementers of solutions, abiding a controlled curriculum, top-down policies and general lack of autonomy (Santana; Santana; Figueiredo, 2022)

4 Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to investigate how ideologies surrounding the English language and discourses of technologization are constructed in three language education programs implemented in Paraná: *Paraná Fala Inglês*, *Ganhando o Mundo*, and *Inglês Paraná*. The relationship between language policy, internationalization, and technologization forms the analytical foundation of this work. These three elements are understood not as isolated dimensions, but as mutually reinforcing discursive fields.

CDA, as theorized by Fairclough (1995) and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), conceptualizes discourse as both a form of social practice and a product of specific institutional, political, and ideological contexts. It enables the investigation of how language is used to construct meaning, reproduce power asymmetries, and reveal hidden agendas in public policy. As Resende (2017) argues, discursive practices can either reinforce dominant ideologies or challenge and reconfigure them. With this in mind, we identify and problematize the dominant discourses found in the three programs, drawing on insights from critical applied linguistics.

This paper analyzes different textual genres as representations of distinct social practices. Following Fairclough (2001) and Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999), we interpret situational context through textual genres, while, as Halliday (1987) proposes, cultural context involves broader social practices shaped by identity and institutional conventions. The corpus includes publicly available texts such as institutional news releases, policy announcements, and selected academic studies related to the three programs. These materials were analyzed through a discursive lens centered on three analytical axes: (a) representations of English and (b) discourses of technologization and innovation. The analysis emphasizes how these discourses shape public perceptions, naturalize policy objectives, and obscure underlying social inequalities and institutional tensions.

Rather than focusing on pre-established analytical categories, we adopt an interpretive critique of the ideological mechanisms embedded in language education policies. Our primary unit of analysis is lexical choice, since "clusters of meanings help reveal, the worldviews constructed within the texts" (Figueiredo, 2009, p. 740).

Further on, we discuss the scope of the programs and their idealizations.

5 Results discussion

To ensure analytical clarity, the programs are examined individually while interpreted through a common theoretical lens that articulates the interrelationship between language policy, internationalization, and technologization.

5.1 Paraná Fala Inglês

Launched in 2014, *Paraná Fala Inglês (PFI)* aimed to fill the gap left by the federal *Inglês sem Fronteiras* program by supporting the internationalization of state universities (Sarmento; Abreu; Moraes Filho, 2016). Its goals include preparing students and faculty for exchange programs, contributing to the improvement of linguistic-communicative competence in English and enhancing international cooperation—thus reinforcing the role of English as a vehicle for global academic participation (Marson; Borges, 2015). Conceived as a language policy initiative at the state level, PFI aligns local pedagogical actions with global agendas.

Representations of English and internationalization: PFI seems to construct English as a strategic tool for institutional advancement. According to El Kadri, Gimenez, and El Kadri (2019), the program is discursively framed as a driver of internationalization, with the potential to elevate universities to the level of top national and foreign institutions. English is positioned not merely as a language of communication, but as a prerequisite for access to global networks of knowledge production and circulation. This demonstrates that the intention of learning a foreign language is intrinsically related to the objective of internationalizing public universities.

The analysis reinforces that the priority of the English language is to enable students and professors to participate in exchange programs abroad and carry out international cooperation, that is, actions supposedly related to the better evaluation of graduate programs. Ideologically, the English language is positioned here as the instrument that allows participating and "performing", acquiring an instrumental character to achieve the objective of matching graduate programs to ones considered to be of quality and that produce and disseminate knowledge in English.

PFI frames English as an instrument for academic performance and international competitiveness. The program links English proficiency to graduate program success and global rankings, reinforcing ideologies of English as a prestige language. The promotion TOEFL iBT preparation courses signal alignment with standardized, native-speaker norms, privileging North American English and marginalizing linguistic diversity (El Kadri; Gimenez; El Kadri, 2019).

Participants (instructors and students of the program) in the study by El Kadri, Gimenez, and El Kadri (2019) unanimously affirmed the indispensability of English for participation in academic and professional exchanges. Their responses revealed strong alignment with native-speakerist ideologies, identifying American English as the most useful and globally accepted variety. This reflects a broader belief that linguistic legitimacy is defined by proximity to native norms—particularly those of the United States and United Kingdom (Piller, 2015). Additionally, many participants believed that teachers with international experience were inherently more competent, reinforcing hierarchical and exclusionary discourses. Altogether, these findings indicate the reproduction of hegemonic ideologies that frame English as both symbolic capital and a commodity within the global knowledge economy.

Although the program refers broadly to "languages," its objectives and implementation clearly prioritize English in a hegemonic and monolingual orientation (El Kadri; Di Raimo, 2017; Marson, 2017). This emphasis reinforces the view that

internationalization is not a neutral educational project, but one deeply shaped by political and economic imperatives (Altbach; Knight, 2007).

Discourses of technologization: While technology is not central to the program's pedagogical core, its use is present in administrative tasks and instructional resources. Institutional materials and academic papers reference digital infrastructure, such as announcements and the adoption of online content (Senefonte, 2021). In 2017, the *Superintendência Geral de Ciência, Tecnologia e Ensino Superior* (SETI) announced a partnership with a Canadian company to provide didactic materials for the second stage of the program, which would be delivered exclusively online (Dia a Dia Educação, 2017)

> Smart English, responsible for technological solutions for English teaching and present in 40 countries, developed the system for the English classes of the second phase of the program carried out in Paraná, which started this week and will be exclusively online.[2]

This partnership signals the three main points of concern. First, it highlights the purchases of international English teaching materials from hegemonic native-speaking countries. This emphasizes the insertion of neoliberal markets within public policies. Second, the use of the word "solution" to describe the insertion of digital technologies implies a discourse of "deficit" in English language education in the state of Paraná. It suggests a discourse in which technology is an essential aspect of transforming and improving educational settings. Lastly, the materials are exclusively digital, and the classes were announced to be online at the time. This raises questions regarding the accessibility of the program to those who do not have access to digital technology in their homes—potentializing the "digital divide" (Selwyn, 2014). Furthermore, the

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[2] **Original text in Portuguese:** A Smart English, responsável por soluções tecnológicas para o ensino de inglês, que está presente em 40 países, desenvolveu o sistema para as aulas de inglês da segunda etapa do programa realizado no Paraná, que iniciou nesta semana e será exclusivamente online.

reliance on digital technologies is contradictory to the well-known problems of infrastructure in state universities.

Still, in terms of broadening the social divide, Parpinelli, Belinelli, and Godoy (2021) states that students are required to purchase digital course materials at the beginning of the course, further deepening inequalities. Infrastructure problems related to the use of these materials are also reported by the authors. Pinheiro et al. (2021) justify the adoption of digital textbooks by arguing that they make classes more "dynamic." However, the logic underlying these decisions seem to reflect technofundamentalist discourses—framing technology as inherently transformative and necessary for educational improvement. The platform's effectiveness remains insufficiently evaluated, especially regarding access and its responsiveness to diverse educational needs—which is the main focus of the program.

Despite its stated aim to democratize access to English, PFI reinforces meritocratic barriers and native-speaker ideologies. By linking English to academic prestige, mobility, and technological innovation, the program obscures structural inequalities and marginalizes context-sensitive, plurilingual pedagogies.

5.2 Ganhando o Mundo

Created in 2019, *Ganhando o Mundo* is an exchange program targeting high-performing high school students. Its goals include cultural immersion, academic enrichment, and leadership development. The program consists of sending approximately 1000 students enrolled in the 2nd year of high school, aged between 15 and 17, to different countries such as Australia, Canada, the United States, England, and New Zealand for a 6-month exchange program (Paraná, 2019). The selection process is now divided into two stages: registration and classification, taking into account academic performance and participation in state education programs, as seen in Paraná (2025, p. 4).

6.1 Students will be ranked according to the following criteria:

a) The Standardized Score obtained by the student in the Prova Paraná Mais, administered in 2024, which will carry a weight of 75;

b) The number of certificates obtained through participation in the digital educational resource Inglês Paraná – each certificate will carry a weight of 15 (up to a maximum of 3 certificates);

c) The number of certificates for participation as a Student Monitor at the school in which the student is enrolled – a weight of 10 will be assigned for one 40-hour certificate of activities in the Student Monitor Program at the school (up to a maximum of 3 certificates);

d) The certificates mentioned in items "b" and "c" must refer to the 2024 academic year.[3]

The selection criteria reflect a neoliberal logic in education policy by reducing student value to quantifiable outputs such as standardized test scores and certificate accumulation in the *Inglês Paraná* Plataform. Ideologically, learning is framed as an individual, measurable endeavor, where success depends on one's ability to navigate state-approved programs and collect credentials with predefined numerical weights. This logic commodifies educational participation, encouraging students to view certificates as tokens of exchange rather than indicators of meaningful engagement.

This meritocratic logic of the program, its emphasis on individual achievement, and its high financial investment in a small group contribute to systemic exclusion. The symbolic devaluation of local teachers and schools undermines public education while reinforcing neoliberal logics of performance and reward. We Perceive the emergence of inequalities at the micro level in the implementation of *Ganhando o Mundo*, supported by some ideological constructions that make at its core, the creation of the program becomes meritocratic and exclusionary, in addition to the mismatch

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[3] **Original text in Portuguese:** 6.1 Os estudantes serão classificados de acordo com os seguintes critérios: a) A Nota Padronizada obtida pelo estudante na Prova Paraná Mais, realizada em 2024, à qual será atribuído peso 75; b) O número de certificados obtidos pela participação no recurso educacional digital Inglês Paraná – será atribuído peso 15 para cada certificado (até o máximo de 3 certificados); c) O número de certificados pela participação como Aluno Monitor na instituição de ensino em que estiver matriculado – será atribuído peso 10 para um certificado de 40 horas de atividades no Programa Aluno Monitor na escola (até o máximo de 3 certificados); d) Os certificados mencionados nas alíneas "b" e "c" deverão ser referentes ao ano letivo de 2024.

between what the LP proposes to accomplish through language education in the state, and the possibility of reach that it achieves.

Representations of English and internationalization: The program has gained notoriety in the online and printed media, and investments have been potentialized. However, it is noticeable that the linked ideologies demonstrate a fragility in their justifications for existence. The budget directed to the program could be used to formulate an LP that serves more students, even if it happens within our borders, which could produce similar or even better effects, allowing a greater number of students to participate, not just some few selected ones with higher grades, as was done in this case.

The program promotes English as a symbol of modernity, leadership, and economic success. It reinforces native-speaker norms and marginalizes the Brazilian school system by positioning international institutions as superior. It aligns with ideologies of English as a commodity, as well as with linguistic imperialism and a standard language. These aspects hurt its real and significant possibilities for contributions, such as the example of being a language used for communication as a lingua franca, among people within a common and, not as a predominant language above the others. It establishes an English language hegemony, as the most important foreign language that must be learned in the molds of native speakers, excelling in standardization and imposition of a pre-existing model. It also determines a filter between the individuals who dominate it or not, legitimized by formal institutions.

Discourses of technologization: Although digital technology is not a central component of the *Ganhando o Mundo* program, it plays a role in the preparatory phase particularly through the use of self-access online courses. In the first edition of the program, as described by Ricciato (2022), the first stage of student immersion involved an online English course. The decision to adopt a self-instructional platform was justified by the heterogeneity of the participant group and by the goal of promoting learner autonomy—allowing students to define the pace of their learning according to

their individual competencies (Ricciato, 2022, p. 32–33). However, the author acknowledges limitations in this approach, notably the lack of meaningful interaction with online tutors and the platform's insufficient support for collaborative learning. Although the course units aimed to foster both linguistic and digital skills, the absence of peer interaction and the disregard for linguistic diversity presented significant pedagogical challenges.

We understand that in *Ganhando o Mundo*, technology operates within a discourse of *deschooling* (Selwyn, 2013), where self-access platforms replace meaningful pedagogical mediation, reducing teachers to technical guides. More than sidelining educators, this reflects an ideological move that admits that language education in the public sector as deficient and positions technology as a ready-made, low-cost solution. Rather than addressing broader, structural issues, this policy relies on digital platforms to circumvent systemic reforms. This approach reinforces a technocratic narrative in which EdTech appears as a simple fix, obscuring the deeper social and material conditions that shape educational inequities.

5.3 Inglês Paraná

Launched in 2021 in partnership with English Live, *Inglês Paraná* offers a fully online course integrated into the public education system. It includes a placement test, multiple levels, and monitoring systems aligned with the CEFR and BNCC. Students can access it through computers and cell phones. The main objective of this tool, as described on the website "*Escola Digital Professor*", is to favor the process of teaching and learning the English language on the network, offering students from the basic education network a complete online course in English (de Deus, 2024).

Academic research specifically addressing the *Inglês Paraná* program remains scarce. Searches in academic databases and institutional repositories identified only two peer-reviewed articles (Santana; Santana; Figueiredo, 2022; Marson; Camargo, 2025), one master's dissertation (de Deus, 2024), five undergraduate theses available

in institutional repositories, and one doctoral thesis with a chapter dedicated to the topic (Santana, 2025). This limited production contrasts sharply with the program's wide implementation across the state and the substantial public investment it has received. This gap suggests not only a delay in academic scrutiny but also reveals a political silence around the ideological implications of platform-based language education in public systems. Such silence is itself symptomatic of a wider trend of depoliticization in EdTech policy discourses.

Representations of English and internationalization: Similarly to the other programs, Inglês Paraná presents English as a means of future employability and global citizenship. Institutional discourse emphasizes modernization and access, but links success to alignment with external, often foreign, standards. The policy promotes English as a commodity and is represented as beneficial and transforming for schoolers.

Besides, the platform-based material conceives the role of the English language as a condition for work, rather than a conception that prioritizes citizen and critical education. From this perspective, the English language (as well as education as a whole) is seen as a commodity to be sold, acting as an agent that will include or exclude "future professionals" from social practices in the world of work. The idea conveyed is that students will have the privilege of having access to such a form of education, as the state government will be the benefactor that will give the opportunity, guarantee, and allow students to finally learn English (Santana; Santana; Figueiredo, 2022).

What becomes evident here is a shift in how English is framed, not as a means of dialogue, reflection, or inclusion, but as a gatekeeping tool within neoliberal discourses of opportunity and merit. The promise of mobility through English becomes entangled with exclusionary logics based on technocratic indicators and globalized benchmarks. This vision runs counter to the principles of critical language education and flattens the plural, situated nature of English as a lingua franca.

Discourses of technologization: According to the text, the program's differential is that, based on the initiative of the state, it will be able to bring modernization characteristics to the teaching of the English language, with an air of the future, heralding a transformation of the student into a citizen capable of acting in a global sphere. The platform, designed to encourage and facilitate the learning of English and complement the teaching already offered by the school, may, according to the text, encourage students to perform. Teachers are expected to integrate the platform but are sidelined in decision-making and content mediation. Studies (Santana; Santana; Figueiredo, 2022; Barbosa; Alves, 2023) highlight how the program exemplifies deskilling and managerial control, reinforcing Selwyn's (2013) critique of technocratic reform and deschooling narratives.

As presented by Santana, Santana, and Figueiredo (2022), it is expected that teachers integrate the platform into their classes, although the platform is self-accessible. This positioning of the Department of Education implies a disempowerment of the teachers in their classrooms. First, this policy seemingly implies that the teacher does not master the content to be taught, and technology comes to fill this gap. Finally, it appears to completely ignore the lack of access to the internet and electronic devices on the part of many students and teachers. The result is a pedagogical paradox: while English is framed as a tool for inclusion, the model of delivery undermines those most in need of accessible, mediated instruction.

Recent research by Marson and Camargo (2025) reinforces these concerns by revealing that teachers feel unable to contextualize or adapt platform activities to their students' realities. They report fragmented and repetitive content, inadequate progression, and a lack of relevance to students' interests and linguistic levels. Some pointed to students resorting to random answers due to disengagement and lack of meaningful interaction with the platform's materials. Moreover, teachers in the study expressed frustration over their inability to intervene or mediate the learning process, which has led many to perceive their role as reduced to that of a passive monitor rather

than an active pedagogue. Even when teachers attempt to creatively integrate the platform — such as showing videos or asking students to copy exercises — these efforts reflect attempts to reclaim pedagogical agency that the system structurally denies them.

Another point to be considered is the selection of the platform. While the National Textbook Program (PNLD), established by Brazil's Ministry of Education, plays a central role in the selection, acquisition, and free distribution of printed textbooks—ensuring that materials undergo rigorous pedagogical and curricular evaluation—online learning platforms are often exempt from equivalent scrutiny. In many cases, such platforms are acquired through procurement processes without being subject to the same public evaluation criteria applied to textbooks. Moreover, the absence of clear pedagogical guidelines for teachers—regarding how to implement the content, structure classroom interactions, or use provided resources such as slides—further hinders effective integration of the platform into everyday teaching. This lack of direction can be particularly challenging in contexts where educators rely on such frameworks to adapt materials to their students' needs. In a context marked by systemic educational inequalities, such omissions risk amplifying disparities rather than addressing them.

An alarming aspect about the program is related to its implementation as a means of surveillance and control. As analyzed by Barbosa and Alves (2023), such policies highlight a scenario of intensification and increased control over teaching work and curricula, in which technologies have taken on a surveillance role. Reports (APP Sindicato, 2022) show that platform usage is mandatory and tracked, which has introduced a logic of surveillance and productivity over pedagogical flexibility. Marson and Camargo (2025) add that weekly monitoring by the Department of Education pressures teachers to increase student usage, linking platform access data to school performance metrics. This transforms digital activity into a quantifiable output, reinforcing managerialist logics disconnected from actual learning outcomes.

These findings suggest that although teachers acknowledge the potential value of digital tools, they consistently argue that educational technology should support—not replace—pedagogical agency. Without teacher control over content and without space for dialogic interaction, the platform does not promote critical language learning or meaningful engagement with English as a social practice. This managerial perspective repositions students and teachers as data points, flattening the complexity of learning into metrics of usage. Here, access becomes a substitute for engagement, and platform presence replaces meaningful pedagogy.

We move on to the final remarks.

6 Final remarks

The three programs analyzed in this study present discourses that promise qualities, benefits, and global opportunities for participants. However, they remain imbued with linguistic ideologies, do not consider English as a lingua franca, and contribute to the devaluation of Brazilian English teachers. In terms of technology, the programs share an understanding of educational technology as central to innovation in language teaching, promoting self-access autonomy that may ultimately lead to teacher deskilling.

To consolidate the findings of our analysis, Table 1 summarizes key characteristics, discursive constructions, and ideological tensions across the three programs.

Our analysis may indicate that *Paraná Fala Inglês, Ganhando o Mundo*, and *Inglês Paraná* are examples of how state-level language policies operate under a logic of modernization that intertwines the prestige of English with digital transformation—often at the expense of democratic participation, critical pedagogy, and educational equity. Although framed as inclusive and transformative, these policies risk reinforcing social inequalities, narrowing conceptions of English, and displacing local teaching practices.

Table 1: analysis findings.

Axis	*Paraná Fala Inglês*	*Ganhando o Mundo*	*Inglês Paraná*
Policy Scope	Higher education (state universities)	High school (selected students and teachers)	Basic education (broad access)
Main Objective	Prepare students and faculty for internationalization	Cultural immersion, leadership, language development	Democratize English learning via digital platform
Representation of English	Instrumental and symbolic; tied to TOEFL and native standards	Commodity, reward, status marker; native-speakerism	Modernizing tool; skill for employability
Language Ideologies	English as quality and performance; native standard	English as global filter; exclusionary meritocracy	English as solution; standardization and control
Technologization	Partnerships with private EdTech; online TOEFL preparation	Self-access online prep courses; platform-based selection	Full platform integration; surveillance of learning
Teacher Positioning	Limited involvement; external expertise valorized	Deemphasized in exchange logic; replaced by autonomy discourse	Deskilled and instrumentalized; platform-centered
Discursive Logic	Academic internationalization	Neoliberal merit and opportunity	Technological innovation and efficiency
Main Tensions	Quality vs. inclusion; local needs vs. global standards	Public funding vs. restricted access; status vs. pedagogy	Digital divide; standardization vs. contextual pedagogy

Source: the authors.

By approaching these programs through a critical discourse lens (Chouliaraki; Fairclough, 1999), this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how educational policies construct and circulate dominant ideologies. It also invites reflection on the values, assumptions, and exclusions embedded in language education reforms. These dimensions converge in a discourse of modernization that equates English and technology with educational quality and progress. This discourse shapes public perceptions of effective teaching and legitimate knowledge, privileging global norms over local practices

Future research may deepen this analysis by incorporating student and teacher perspectives and conducting a systematic literature review of similar policies across Brazil. Such work would broaden the scope of critical inquiries into language policy, internationalization, and technologization in public education. Linguistic, educational, and internationalization policies must be aligned to avoid mismatches and inefficient use of financial and human resources, as pointed out by Finardi and Archanjo (2015). This disarticulation has negative consequences for institutions, language professionals, and users—particularly in a context where educational investment is limited. We advocate for institutional multilingual policies that support internationalization in higher education and language policies that are responsive to the needs of basic education.

Among the issues, we point out the favoritism toward English—driven by global pressures and modeled on international standards—aims to meet local demands but risks excluding alternative, locally relevant repertoires. Standardized proficiency tests and platform-based activities reinforce specific registers and genres while marginalizing others, even when the latter are more relevant in certain contexts.

Finally, our analysis revealed recurring discourses regarding technology. All three programs share the ideology that educational technology is essential to language education, particularly in promoting autonomy. However, this reliance on technology tends to reduce the role of educators to that of facilitators, raising concerns about teacher's agency. It also overlooks issues related to internet access and digital device availability, thereby exacerbating existing inequalities. These findings, echoed by several authors (Ricciato, 2022; Santana; Santana; Figueiredo, 2022; Barbosa; Alves, 2022), highlight the need for critical examination of how technology is integrated into language education.

We hope this study contributes to research in critical language policy and educational technology by showing how state-run English programs in Paraná reproduce dominant linguistic ideologies and technofundamentalist discourses under

the guise of innovation and internationalization. The findings call for multilingual, inclusive, and context-aware policies that foster critical digital literacies and engage educators in meaningful decision-making. More broadly, we invite scholars and students to investigate the sociopolitical implications of EdTech-driven reforms in unequal societies, especially through research grounded in the communities most directly affected by such policies.

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