ETHNOGRAPHY: METHOD ONLY OR LOGIC OF INQUIRY IN EFL RESEARCH IN BRAZIL?**

ETNOGRAFIA: APENAS MÉTODO OU LÓGICA DE INVESTI-GAÇÃO EM PESQUISAS BRASILEIRAS NO CAMPO DO ENSI-NO E APRENDIZAGEM DE LÍNGUAS ESTRANGEIRAS?

Adail Sebastião Rodrigues-Júnior*

ABSTRACT

This exploratory paper poses the following question: how has ethnography been used as logic of inquiry in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) research in Brazil? In order to start some discussion in this respect, a corpus comprised of thirty seven MA abstracts available at the online Bank of Theses of CAPES (Research and Graduate Teaching Support Coordination) was used to investigate how ethnography has been utilized as an orienting procedure in Brazilian research on EFL. The keywords language teaching, ethnography and ethnographic were chosen so as to select abstracts that were related to ethnography and language teaching, either as logic of inquiry, or as a methodological tool for collecting and analyzing data. The preliminary results have suggested that ethnography has mostly been adopted as an instrument for analysis rather than logic of inquiry, which (i) allows for the misunderstanding commonly arisen from research in this field of investigation and consequently (ii) points out that Foreign Language Teaching and Learning research should take into account more focused and clarified methodological designs under the umbrella of Qualitative Research.

Keywords: foreign language teaching and learning research; ethnography as logic of inquiry; qualitative research.

RESUMO

Este artigo exploratório coloca a seguinte questão: como tem sido usada a etnografia, como lógica de investigação, em pesquisas brasileiras no campo da Língua Inglesa como língua estrangeira (ILE)? Com o intuito de iniciar uma discussão nesse sentido, um corpus de trinta e sete resumos de dissertações de mestrado, disponível no Banco de Teses da CAPES,

* UFOP/FAPEMIG, Ouro Preto (MG), Brasil. adail.sebastiao@gmail.com

foi utilizado para investigar como a etnografia tem sido adotada como um procedimento orientador em pesquisas brasileiras nessa área. As palavras-chave ensino de línguas, etnografia e etnográfico(a) foram escolhidas para selecionar resumos que se relacionavam à etnografia e ao ensino de línguas, tanto como lógica de investigação, quanto ferramenta metodológica para coleta e análise de dados. Os resultados preliminares sugerem que a etnografia tem sido adotada mais como um instrumento para análise do que como lógica de investigação, fato que (i) explica os usos inadequados que mormente surgem das pesquisas nessa área do conhecimento e, consequentemente, (ii) mostra que a pesquisa em ensino e aprendizagem de línguas estrangeiras deve preocupar-se em considerar desenhos metodológicos mais claros e específicos, no âmbito da Pesquisa Qualitativa.

Palavras-chave: pesquisa em ensino e aprendizagem de língua estrangeira; etnografia como lógica de investigação; pesquisa qualitativa.

INTRODUCTION

When I was struggling with my MA thesis, I was introduced to a classic book, *Ways with Words*, whose author, Shirley B. Heath (1983), positioned herself as an ethnographer, not merely by affirming that her research was conducted according to "some" ethnographic procedures, but first and foremost by clearly explaining that she had, among other things, "spent many hours cooking, chopping wood, gardening, sewing, and minding children by the rules of the communities" she investigated over nearly a decade (p. 8). Heath's interest was to "record the natural flow of community and classroom life" (p. 8) in order to depict a major picture of how children from Roadville and Trackton communities learned to use language at home and at school. I must admit that Heath's seminal work changed the direction I was taking in my MA research and led me to different ways of approaching the community I was studying. More than that, such an approach has influenced my academic work ever since, especially because the terms (or concepts) *ethnography* and *fieldwork* have been used interchangeably in most of the research on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Brazil (cf. Rodrigues-Júnior 2007).

Over the last five years or so, I have been investigating the uses of these two terms by Brazilian applied linguists interested in adopting an ethnographic perspective to their research. The research was firstly granted by the National Council of Technological and Scientific Development (CNPq) (Castanheira *et alii* 2006), whose main aim was to systematize the uses and applications of the term *ethnography* in educational research in Brazil, within the period 1995-2004. To do so, the project was split into three specific knowledge areas, or axes, as follows:

ethnography and literacy; ethnography and the teaching of natural sciences; ethnography and the teaching of English as a foreign language. This paper thus presents partial results from this major project on ethnography and education, specifically the discussion held on the third axis, i.e. EFL research. The orienting theories for this research stemmed primarily from Green, Dixon & Zaharlick (2005)[1], Green & Bloome (1997), Erickson (1984), Athanases & Heath (1995), Watson-Gegeo (1988) and Fonseca (1999). In what follows, I review briefly some theoretical points regarding the uses of the concept ethnography *in* education (Green & Bloome 1997) and *in* EFL research (Watson-Gegeo 1988). After that, I show the overall points of the descriptive analysis carried out and finally draw the preliminary conclusions of this work.

1. ETHNOGRAPHY IN (EFL) EDUCATION[2]

The term ethnography comes from the Greek word *ethnos*, which means people or cultural group, and the term *graphia*, which means representation of specific groups of people through writing (LeCompte & Priessle 1993). The etymological definition of ethnography carries in itself the explanation of what an ethnographer is supposed to do – describe specific cultures and groups of people, be they exotic groups from different cultures or groups within the ethnographer's culture. Because of its constitutive dimension, ethnography has been considered the hallmark of anthropology, since all aspects of fieldwork and participant observation are based on the fundamental principles of ethnography and its logic of investigation. Ethnographers, such as Spradley (1980), advocate that ethnography sheds light on the ways researchers collect, describe and interpret their data, especially the various forms of entering into the field and acquiring cultural competence (Sanjek 2002). The principal emphasis these researchers place on this issue is the fact that ethnographically-oriented-research procedures focus on an *emic* perspective, that is, the knowledge produced by investigating a group or community needs to be generated *from the point of view* of the members of that community. This procedure characterizes ethnography as a science of local culture, differently from knowledge produced within laboratories or libraries.

---

1. Originally published in: FLOOD, J.; LAPP, D.; SQUIRE, J.; JENSEN, J. (Ed.). *Research in the Teaching of the English Language Arts*. Nahwan, N. J. : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates (LEA), 2001, p. 201-224.
2. Part of the theory presented here appeared at Rodrigues-Júnior & Paiva (2009).

Ethnography as logic of inquiry (Green, Dixon & Zaharlick 2005) has been considered one influential means of exploring and describing specific cultures and communities of practice within education. Intertwined views of classroom dynamics with wide ranges of social practices have been the core issue of ethnography and its logic of investigation. According to Athanases and Heath (1995: 263), "an ethnography can provide researchers, teachers, and other educators with rich documentation of learning as it unfolds and varies over time, leading potentially to insights into cultural patterns, formulation of hypotheses for testing, and support for generation of theory".

Consequently, the ethnographic description of a culture does need long-term participation within the community investigated in order for the ethnographer to gain confidence from the people s/he analyzes and principally to create rapport (Spradley 1980). Athanases and Heath (1995: 267-8), building on Talbert's (1973) view of an anthropological basis for ethnography, calls our attention to this long-term period of exploration by arguing that

> the discovery of cultural patterns [is] the primary goal of anthropology [and] long-term fieldwork in pursuit of that goal requires a period of at least a year of study and participant observation. The researcher becomes immersed in the culture as, at minimum, a "tolerated observed". The researcher engages in comparative science, using a relativistic view (treatment of language norms on their own terms), demonstrating sensitivity to context or the interrelated nature of social systems within which the culture under study is situated and the pursuit of complementary scholarly study to understand cultural patterns noted in the fieldwork.

Cultural anthropology has split ethnography into two interconnected angles, ethnography as *product* – ethnographic writings and descriptions of particular cultures, and as *process* – techniques and methods of acquiring knowledge of specific groups or communities by using fieldwork and participant observation (Sanjek 2002). Although the product of ethnography is the main aim of any research conducted by ethnographic principles of knowledge and cultural description, the processes of entering into the field, participating as an in-group member inserted in the community studied, building rapport, and exploring culture as the representation of the community under analysis are in fact the core of ethnography as logic of inquiry. The ethnographer has to allow her/himself to be influenced by the dynamics of the people studied as if s/he belonged to that community as a member. Ethnographic research is not supposed to adopt isolated observation techniques per se, nor to exclude the voices of the people investigated from its writings. On the contrary, ethnography requires full participation of the researcher in the culture of the "other" and appropriate registering within ethnographic

products (reports, monographs, and so forth) of the voices of the latter. Likewise, ethnography leads to the metaphorical view of the ethnographer as a bridge which constantly fills the gap between what is already known about that culture and what is to be known about the dynamics of that culture. Green, Dixon & Zaharlick (2005: 148) caution that

> [a]n observer who enters with a predefined checklist, predefined questions or hypotheses, or an observation scheme that defines, in an a priori manner, all behaviors or events that will be recorded is not engaging in ethnography, regardless of the length of observation or the reliability of the observation system. Further, if the observer does not draw on theories of culture to guide the choices of what is relevant to observe and record, or overlays his or her personal interpretation of the activity observed, they are not engaging in an ethnographic approach from an anthropological point of view.

One important but contentious conceptualization often cautiously approached by anthropologists is the uses of the term *culture*. Given the fluidity of the term and the multicultural and globalized world we live in, the post-Boasian tradition of anthropological inquiry posits as to what extent culture maps individuals' lives and their social practices (Barnard & Spencer 2002). Far from coming to terms with the controversial definitions and applications of culture in Anthropology, the concept of culture I find rather appropriate and suitable for the purposes of this paper is that of Frake (1977), as quoted in Spradley (1979: 7):

> Culture is not simply a cognitive map that people acquire, in whole or in part, more or less accurately, and then learn to read. People are not just map-readers; they are map-makers. People are cast out into imperfectly charted, continually seas of everyday life. Mapping them out is a constant process resulting not in an individual cognitive map, but in a whole chart case of rough, improvised, continually revised sketch maps. Culture does not provide a cognitive map, but rather a set of principles for map making and navigation. Different cultures are like different schools of navigation designed to cope with different terrains and seas (Frake 1977: 6-7).

Taking educational research based upon a purely ethnographic logic of inquiry into account, Heath (1982) states clearly that some problems may arise as to what school setting seems mostly appropriate to be studied and what ethnographic procedures should be applied to investigating data produced from educational events. Given that an ethnographic-oriented research aims primarily at describing a specific culture and its multiple and dialectical forms of social dynamics, Heath (1982) argues that school settings are just one part of the breadth of sociohistorical features an ethnographer may encounter and perceive within a culture. Bearing this assumption in mind, Heath (1982: 37) affirms that

Trab. Ling. Aplic., Campinas, n(51.1): 35-49, jan./jun. 2012

39

> when formal schooling is the focus of research, anthropologists attempt to study it in relation to the broader cultural and community context in which it exists. For example, the behaviors of pupils are ideally viewed not only in relation to fit or contrast with those of teacher, typical student, or successful pupil, but also with respect to home and community enculturation patterns of pupils and teachers.

What Heath (1982) attempts to show is the fact that ethnography in education, interpreted as logic of inquiry, may naturally lead to a juxtaposition of complex perspectives and procedures of investigation of the social dynamics under scrutiny that a unique perspective may not reveal. As an example of this juxtaposition is Solsken's (1992) long-term ethnographic triangulation. Solsken contrasted one male student reading activities in different sites, more precisely, in his bedroom, during his family homework session, in the kindergarten and second grade class with a female teacher, and in his first grade class with a male teacher. Her research demonstrated that the student under analysis used to see literacy practices as women work, given her mother and sisters habits of reading at home, which might explain his literacy problems with the female teacher. On the other hand, when attending the first grade class with a male teacher, the boy has considerably improved his reading skills, since he realized that literacy is not only women work in general. By tracing the boy's literacy development within three years of analysis, Solsken was able to construct a picture of the student's reading improvement and its interconnections between school reading activities, home reading activities, and self reading interests. The results Solsken has found are heavily due to her long-term research and the possibilities this ethnographic procedure has provided. Had not Solsken actively participated in the boy's complex school and family cultures, the emergence of the unstable events surrounding the boy's literacy process would not have come to light.

It has been nonetheless surprising that a great deal of research on education has been entitled "ethnographic" without necessarily following the standard procedures commonly approached by ethnographers during their fieldwork. Athanases & Heath (1995) and Green, Dixon & Zaharlick (2005) have cautioned educational inquiry practitioners to avoid these misleading procedures when advocating an ethnographic perspective to research. According to the authors, much of the research on ethnography and education does not follow this orientation. This lack of attention to the essentials of ethnography has caused serious misinterpretations of the real objectives of ethnography within the field of education, especially of the aims researchers are supposed to effectively pursue during their fieldwork.

This misinterpretation has led Green & Bloome (1997) to locate ethnographic research on education along a decreasing axis, that is, one extreme represents a totally-oriented-perspective to ethnography, and the other extreme stands for a limited-oriented-perspective. The orientation that lies in the middle of the axis focuses its methodological procedures on some aspects of ethnography, without taking into deep consideration the holistic view of the community under analysis as is expected in the totally-oriented-perspective. So, Green & Bloome (1997) define these three orientations, respectively, as follows: 1) DOING ETHNOGRAPHY; 2) ADOPTING AN ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE; 3) USING ETHNOGRAPHIC TOOLS. To put it simply:

> (…) *doing ethnography* involves the framing, conceptualizing, conducting, interpreting, writing, and reporting associated with a broad, in-depth, and long-term study of a social or cultural group (…). By adopting an *ethnographic perspective*, we mean that it is possible to take a more focused approach (i.e., do less than a comprehensive ethnography) to study particular aspects of everyday life and cultural practices of a social group. (…) *[U]sing ethnographic tools,* refers to the use of methods and techniques usually associated with fieldwork (Green & Bloome 1997: 183).

In the field of EFL research, however, ethnography has been taken as a synonym of qualitative research (Watson-Gegeo 1988), which entails seeing any qualitative approach to data collection and analysis as an ethnography in whole or in part. According to Watson-Gegeo (1988), the controversy lies in the difference between *etic* and *emic* approaches to fieldwork, in which the latter poses a more culturally based perspective to examine groups or communities from an insider perspective, whereas the former is more inclined to investigate phenomena without necessarily demanding a more focused and culture-bond analysis. For Watson-Gegeo (1988: 575), in the field of EFL "ethnography has been greeted with enthusiasm (…), but many studies bearing the name *ethnographic* are impressionistic and superficial rather than careful and detailed".

Bearing in mind this controversial discussion, in this article I investigate how ethnography has been addressed in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) studies within the period 1995-2004, by analyzing a corpus of thirty seven MA theses' abstracts and the way the term *ethnography* has been used to characterize each research. The abstracts are available at CAPES homepage (www.capes.gov.br), a Brazilian funding agency for graduate teaching support, and they were selected by choosing three specific keywords: foreign language teaching, ethnography, ethnographic. This choice was made in order to single out the abstracts that had presented information whose theoretical as well as methodological grounds pointed

somehow to an ethnographic orientation. After selecting the keywords, the system automatically generated thirty seven abstracts in which ethnography had been mentioned as an orienting procedure. It is important to notice that CAPES's bank of theses and dissertations displays only the abstracts, which has not allowed me to read the methodological procedures of each manuscript. Also, at the time the data for this ongoing research was gathered, the bank covered a collection of works only from 1987 up to 2004, which has limited the analysis to the time-frame 1995-2004. These limitations clearly state that the conclusions drawn in this study are preliminary and far from any position that might lead to generalized standpoints. Likewise, they are indicative of the need for a more meticulous research on the methodologies of each MA thesis investigated.

The data were derived from summaries of researches carried out in four public universities in Brazil, i.e. Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), and Universidade Estadual de Campinas (UNICAMP). Each of these universities has traditional and well-known graduate programs in applied linguistics, with a focus on EFL research. The abstracts were descriptively analyzed having in mind Green & Bloome's (1997) taxonomy, in order to try to answer the overarching question: How has ethnography been used as logic of inquiry in EFL research in Brazil? Even though the data generated display a very limited picture of this specific reality, the results suggest that there has been some divergence on the uses of ethnography for research in the field of EFL, which then indicates that a more systematic view of ethnography should be taken by the proponents of each research analyzed.

2. DATA ANALYSIS

The data showed 20 different ways of referring to ethnography in the abstracts, as can be seen in Figure 1. The 20 lexemes were found by means of a simple mathematical Rule of Three, following Brown & Rodgers (2002), i.e. the total of times each lexeme was used, divided by the total of abstracts, then multiplied by a hundred (N/Óx100), in which N = number of different lexemes and Ó = the total sum of abstracts, that is, 37 abstracts. Only the abstracts written in Portuguese were analyzed because the archive generates data in this language.
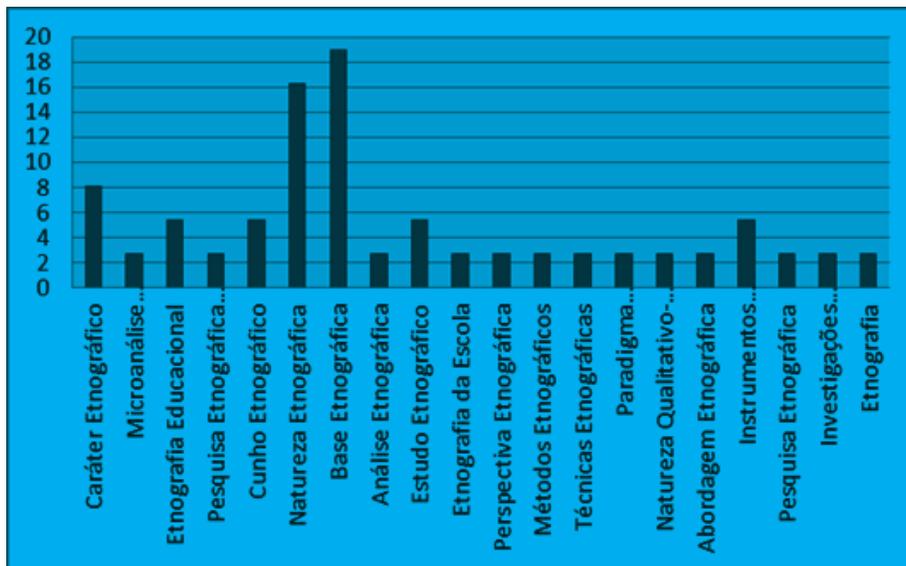
Figure 1. Lexemes referring to ethnography in the abstracts

Out of the 37 abstracts there are 20 different mentions to ethnography, being "Abordagem etnográfica" (Ethnographic approach) the reference that most frequently occurred in the corpus, i.e. more than 20%. Other two mentions, "Natureza etnográfica" (Ethnographic nature) and "Caráter etnográfico" (Ethnographic character) occurred around 17% and 10%, respectively. The remainder reveals that there are a multitude of references to ethnography in the small corpus, which indicates that, up to a certain point, the concept *ethnography* and its derivations have been used interchangeably. If we take three linguistic examples[3] from the data, this interchangeability can be easily seen.

> Excerpt 1:
> *Dado o caráter etnográfico da pesquisa, foram utilizados diversos instrumentos para coleta e triangulação dos dados, tais como gravações de aulas em áudio e/ou vídeo, anotações de campo que foram transformadas em diários do pesquisador, relatos, questionários...* [Given the ethnographic character of the research, several tools for data collection and triangulation were utilized, such as audio and/or film lesson records, field notes, which became, in turn, the observer's diaries, reports and questionnaires...]

---

3. The examples were originally produced in Portuguese and then I translated them into English, trying to be as faithful as possible to the original.

Excerpt 2:

O estudo realizado utilizou em seu desenho de pesquisa procedimentos da microanálise etnográfica da interação, da sociolinguística interacional (Gumperz, 1982; Tannen, 1984, 1989) e da teorização sobre abordagem de ensino (Widdowson, 1978, 1990; Almeida Filho, 1987, 1993). [The study conducted used in its research design procedures from the ethnographic microanalysis of interaction, from interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982; Tannen, 1984, 1989) and from the theorization of teaching approach (Widdowson, 1978, 1990; Almeida Filho, 1987, 1993).]

Excerpt 3:

Este estudo adotou um paradigma qualitativo e etnográfico e tem uma natureza interpretativa e descritiva. [This study has adopted a qualitative and ethnographic paradigm and has a descriptive as well as interpretative nature.]

If we analyze the linguistic span (range) surrounding the nodes (terms)[4] "caráter etnográfico" (ethnographic character), "microanálise etnográfica" (ethnographic microanalysis) and "paradigma qualitativo e etnográfico" (qualitative and ethnographic paradigm), we can see that, firstly, ethnography has been defined as a methodological procedure whose specific tools for collecting and analyzing data derive from this kind of method (Excerpt 1). Secondly, the spans point out that ethnography seems to be a methodology adopted in some schools of language investigation, such as interactional sociolinguistics (Excerpt 2), with special focus on microanalysis interaction and teaching. Last, but not least, ethnography is often drawn level with qualitative research (Excerpt 3), as if both concepts were synonyms, as can be clearly seen by the use of the connective "e" (and) signaling equality between the two paradigms, qualitative and ethnographic. Moreover, in excerpt 3 the linguistic choice for connectives reveals that ethnography acknowledges an interpretative *and* descriptive analytical nature, as if these criteria were to some extent disconnected from the core of ethnography. This linguistic choice demonstrates that the researcher probably misinterprets the fundamental basis of ethnography as logic of inquiry. These linguistic choices suggest as well that researchers often misconstrue ethnography as a broader conceptualization, which causes some confusion concerning the uses of the term *ethnography* and the role it plays for unveiling culture and social aspects deeply related to education.

Now it is time to turn to the specificities of the uses of ethnography in each university investigated. In a timescale of 9 years, from 1995 to 2004, I used

---

4. Span is a concept which is fully used by corpus linguists as well as systemic-functional linguists to indicate the clause length of a specific node. The analysis of the clause range of specific nodes may reveal linguistic choices made by writers or speakers and their communicative intentions. (see Halliday & Matthiessen 2004: 38-40).

a Rule of Three to calculate the number of MA theses concluded in each year of the timescale, based on the number of abstracts of each Graduate Program of the universities investigated. Figure 2 shows the results of this calculation.
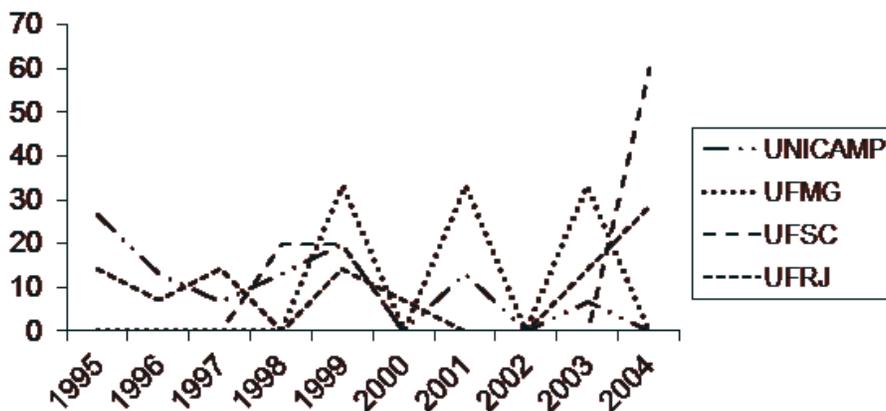

Figure 2. Uses of ethnography in each Graduate Program

Out of the total of MA abstracts produced, UNICAMP presented nearly 30% of research that has adopted ethnography as a tool for investigation. The data show that UFRJ, in turn, presented around 15% of the MA abstracts that has used ethnography as an instrument for analysis. It is important to notice that the number of abstracts in UFRJ's MA Program decreased in the years 2000, 2001 and 2002, having increased again from the year 2002 on. A similar phenomenon has occurred in UNICAMP, with slight differences in the years of 1997, 1999, 2001, and 2003, when compared to UFRJ. One hypothesis that might explain the oscillation of the uses of ethnography by the two universities may be related to the fact that the core of ethnography as logic of inquiry is difficult to pursue, since it is expected that researchers engaged in this kind of investigation should be involved in "framing, conceptualizing, conducting, interpreting, writing, and reporting associated with a broad, in-depth, and long-term study of a social or cultural group" (Green & Bloome 1997: 183). This involvement surely demands a period of time *in situ* that often goes beyond the time students have to conclude their MA research.

In terms of the uses of ethnography as a tool for data collection, UFSC and UFMG's MA Programs, on the other hand, have presented distinctive characteristics, if compared to UFRJ and UNICAMP, especially in the years 1997, 2000 and 2003, and 1998, 2000, 2002 and 2004, respectively. UFSC showed an

increase in 1997 when using ethnography as a methodological tool, having then maintained this pattern up to 1999, with a decrease in 2000. Curiously, however, there was this dramatic increase in the year 2003, i.e. up to 60%, in whose Graduate Program the term ethnography had not been used in the MA research abstracts since 2000. This phenomenon probably suggests that this 'ethnographic turning point' may be due to some publications on ethnography-in-education in Brazil and abroad, especially Athanases & Heath (1995), Green, Dixon & Zaharlick (2005), and Fonseca (1999), with well defined theoretical and methodological parameters that set the scene for more potential applications of ethnography as logic of inquiry in EFL research.

UFMG, in turn, has shown proportional increases in the years of 1999, 2001, and 2003, which suggests that the uses of ethnography in UFMG's MA abstracts were, to a certain extent, a standard within the period 1998-2004 in relation to UFSC. What is revealing in Figure 2, however, is the lack of a long-term proportionality in the uses of ethnography by these universities, which allows me to hypothesize the following: due to natural limitations of time, MA research on these universities seem to have followed, during the span shown in Figure 2, an ethnographic perspective, rather than a more comprehensive ethnographic investigation as suggested by Green & Bloome (1997). This fact also implies that despite some publications on ethnography as logic of inquiry, as previously remarked, the idea that lies behind the principles of ethnography-in-education applied to EFL research in Brazil seems to be still in its infancy.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This exploratory study has demonstrated that the principles of ethnography as logic of inquiry have been used differently by each MA Graduate Program investigated, as was clearly shown in the abstracts analyzed. The multitude of terms referring to ethnography reveals that a variety of conceptualizations were used interchangeably with other disciplines, such as interactional sociolinguistics, teaching approach, qualitative paradigm, to quote just a few. These varied uses of the concept 'ethnography' raises doubts concerning the methodological orientation that supports the great majority of works on this field of investigation.

In a discussion chapter, Anderson-Levitt (2006: 282-3) makes the following question: "What is ethnography good for?". By asking this, Anderson-Levitt

contends that ethnography can address specific points concerning (i) meaning-making possibilities realized by the social agents involved in the situation analyzed, (ii) full comprehension of the complexities of the situation investigated, and (iii) deep understanding of the social processes as they naturally emerge in the local situation. These possibilities are undoubtedly outstanding and may consequently lead the researcher to a vast investigative possibility. However, Anderson-Levitt also affirms that "ethnography by itself without cross-cultural comparison is not a good method for developing universal generalizations about human behavior" (p. 283), which naturally lessens the possibilities for generating as well as testing hypotheses about how human beings socially construe their world realities compared to other social groups with similar cultural backgrounds. These are, as we may see, drawbacks that seem to obfuscate a major comprehension of ethnography as logic of inquiry. Turning this discussion to the topic of this paper, the data analyzed have left room for formulating the following hypothesis: there seems to be a gross misinterpretation of the uses of the term ethnography in EFL research in Brazil, whose statement opens space for further investigation on the methodological procedures adopted in the MA abstracts analyzed.

Thinking back on the overarching question posed before (How has ethnography been used as logic of inquiry in EFL research in Brazil?), the tentative conclusion I may arrive at for the moment is that the orientation clarified by Green & Bloome (1997) is still unknown or undervalued by most of the research in the field of EFL. This conclusion points to the fact that a more systematic treatment of the uses of ethnography in this area is necessary. Needless to say that this study is an ongoing research, which also points out that a more in-depth as well as extensive investigation is a prerequisite to continue the investigation of how the MA theses have conducted the analyses and which results they have provided. Besides, this research aims in the future to analyze PhD dissertations and articles published in refereed journals in Brazil that used ethnography as an orienting procedure for interpreting their data.

REFERENCES

ANDERSON-LEVITT, K. M. (2006) Ethnography. In: GREEN, J. L.; CAMILLI, G.; ELMORE, P. B. (org.). *Handbook of complementary methods in education research.* New Jersey, London: LEA, p. 279-295.

ATHANASES, S. Z.; HEATH, S. B. (1995) Ethnography in the study of the teaching and learning of english. *Research in the teaching of English*, v. 29, n. 3, p. 263-87.

BROWN, J. D.; RODGERS, T. (2002) S. *Doing second language research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

CASTANHEIRA, M. L. (2000). *Situating learning within collective possibilities: examining the discursive construction of opportunities for learning in the classroom.* PhD dissertation. 493ff. University of California.

CASTANHEIRA, M. L. *et alii*. (2001) Interactional Ethnography: an approach to studying the social construction of literate practices. *Linguistics and Education*, v. 11, n. 4, p. 353-400.

CASTANHEIRA, M. L. *et alii*. (2006) Etnografia em educação no Brasil: o estado do conhecimento (1995-2004). Research project (CNPq n. 401529/2006-1).

CLIFFORD, J. (1998) *A experiência etnográfica:* antropologia e literatura no século XX. Rio de Janeiro: Editora da UFRJ.

DENZIN, N. K.; LINCOLN, Y. (2005) Introduction: the discipline and practice of qualitative research. In: DENZIN, N. K.; LINCOLN, Y. (Ed.). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. 3ed. Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage, p. 1-32.

FONSECA, C. (1999) Quando cada caso NÃO é um caso: pesquisa etnográfica em educação. *Revista Brasileira de Educação*, v. 10, p. 8-78.

FRAKE, C. (1997) Plying frames can be dangerous: some reflections on methodological in cognitive anthropology. *Quarterly Newsletter of the Institute for Comparative Human Development*, v. 3, p. 1-7.

GEERTZ, C. (1989) *A interpretação das culturas*. Rio de Janeiro: LTC.

GREEN, J. L.; DIXON, C. N.; ZAHARLICK, A. (2005) Ethnography as a logic of inquiry. In: FLOOD, J. D.; LAPP, J. R.; JENSEN, J. M. Jensen (Ed.). *Methods of research on teaching the English language arts.* New Jersey & London: LEA, p. 145-194.

GREEN, J. L.; BLOOME, D. (1997) Ethnography and ethnographers of and in education: a situated perspective. In: FLOOD, J.; HEATH, S. B.; LAPP, D. (Ed.). *Handbook for literacy educators: research in the community and visual arts*. New York: Macmillan, p. 181-202.

HALLIDAY, M. A. K.; MATTHIESSEN, C. M. I. M. (2004) *An introduction to functional grammar*. 3ed. UK: Arnold.

HEATH, S. B. (1982) Ethnography in education: defining the essentials. In: GILLMORE, P.; GLATTHORN, A. (Ed.). *Children in and out of school: ethnography and education*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, p. 35-55.

_____. (1983) *Ways with words: language, life, and work in communities and classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

PEIRANO, M. (1995) *A favor da etnografia*. Rio de Janeiro: Relume-Dumará.

RODRIGUES-JÚNIOR, A. S. (2007) Etnografia e ensino de línguas estrangeiras: uma análise exploratória de seu estado-da-arte no Brasil, *Linguagem & Ensino*, v. 10, n. 2, p. 527-552.

RODRIGUES-JÚNIOR, A. S.; PAIVA, V. L. M. O. (2009) Ethnography and complexity in SLA research. In: GONÇALVES, G. R. *et alii*. (Ed.). *New challenges in language and literature*. Belo Horizonte: Faculdade de Letras da UFMG. p. 13-26.

SANJEK, R. (2002) Ethnography. In: BARNARD, A.; SPENCER, J. (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of social and cultural Anthropology*. New York, London: Routledge, p. 193-198.

SOLSKEN, J. (1992) *Literacy, gender and work in families and in school.* Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

SPRADLEY, J. P. (1979) *The ethnographic interview*. Australia: Wadsworth.

_____. (1980) *Participant observation*. Australia: Wadsworth.

TALBERT, C. (1973) Anthropological research models. *Research in the Teaching of English*, v. 7, p. 190-211.

WATSON-GEGEO, K. A. (1988) Ethnography in ESL: defining the essentials. *TESOL Quarterly*, v. 22, n. 4, p. 575-92.