

**ENEM 1000-score essays: an analysis of textual structure
considering cultural capital**

***Redações nota 1000 do Enem: uma análise da estrutura textual à
luz do capital cultural***

***Ensayos con calificación 1000 en el Enem: un análisis de la
estructura textual desde el capital cultural***

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Abstract

This research had the general objective of explaining how Brazil's National High School Exam (ENEM) essay and scoring criteria expose and exacerbate social inequalities. Specifically, the study aimed to demonstrate how writing is affected by class relations, relate the ENEM essay scoring criteria to social inequalities, and discuss — based on the theories of Bourdieu and Bernstein — how competencies highlight such inequalities. The hypothesis proposes that the essay promotes inequalities among ENEM applicants. The analysis focused on the 2023 Participant Booklet, which contains ten essays that achieved the highest score in 2022. As for methodology, Content Analysis was employed to analyze the items, with the results showing an average of 15 argumentative operators and connectives per essay. As for sociocultural repertoire, the texts predominantly used scientific sources, with twelve personalities supporting the arguments of applicants.

Keywords: essay, ENEM, sociocultural repertoire

Resumo

O objetivo geral desta pesquisa foi explicar como o barema e a redação do Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio (Enem) expõem e acirram as desigualdades sociais. Os objetivos específicos buscaram demonstrar como a escrita é afetada pelas relações de classe; relacionar os critérios de correção da redação do Enem às desigualdades sociais; e discutir, a partir das teorias de Bourdieu e Bernstein, como as competências evidenciam as desigualdades. A hipótese da pesquisa propõe a redação enquanto promotora das desigualdades entre os candidatos do Enem. O objetivo analisado foi o Guia do Participante Enem 2023, que traz 10 redações que alcançaram a nota 1000 em 2022. Metodologicamente, utilizou-se a Análise de Conteúdo para esmiuçar os itens, e os resultados mostram uma média de 15 operadores e conectivos argumentativos por redação. Em relação ao repertório sociocultural, foi mais comum o uso de fontes científicas nos textos e 12 personalidades sustentaram a argumentação dos participantes.

Palavras-chave: redação, Enem, repertório sociocultural

Resumen:

El objetivo general de esta investigación fue explicar cómo el baremo y el ensayo del Examen Nacional de Enseñanza Media (Enem) exponen e intensifican las desigualdades sociales. Los objetivos específicos fueron demostrar cómo la escritura se ve afectada por las relaciones de clase; relacionar los criterios de corrección del ensayo del Enem con las desigualdades sociales; y discutir, a partir de las teorías de Bourdieu y Bernstein, cómo las competencias evidencian las desigualdades. La hipótesis de la investigación sostiene que el ensayo promueve las desigualdades entre los candidatos al Enem. El objeto analizado fue la Guía del Participante 2023, que incluye 10 ensayos que obtuvieron 1000 puntos en 2022. Metodológicamente, se utilizó el análisis de contenido para evaluar los ítems, y los resultados muestran un promedio de 15 operadores argumentativos y conectivos por ensayo. En cuanto al repertorio sociocultural, el uso de fuentes científicas en los textos fue más frecuente y 12 personalidades fundamentaron los argumentos de los participantes.

Palabras clave: ensayo, Enem, repertorio sociocultural

Introduction

Higher education entrance exams stratify the population and allow a small group to occupy academic careers (Bianchetti, 1996). There are different methods for selecting candidates for this level of education. In the Netherlands, for example, the candidates are defined by drawing lots. In turn, in England, the profile of the applicant to the desired program is analyzed, being a purely qualitative evaluation. In Eastern Europe, the university slot is achieved by the degree of professional motivation of the applicant (Guimarães, 1984).

Currently, in Brazil, the results of the National High School Exam (ENEM) are used to enter higher education programs in the public and private networks. ENEM is the second largest entrance exam in the world, behind Gaokao, applied in China. It evaluates knowledge in four major areas¹, in addition to writing and argumentation through an essay. It is managed by the federal government and its purpose is to democratize the chances of access to higher

¹ENEM's objective items evaluate candidates in the areas of Languages, Codes and their technologies; Human Sciences and their technologies; Mathematics and its technologies; and Natural Sciences and their technologies. The exam is applied in two weekends. In the first, the Languages, Human Sciences and Writing tests are applied; and, in the second, those of the other areas.

education. However, as in traditional entrance exams, ENEM has become a selective practice that mitigates inequalities (Bianchetti, 1996).

From the perspective of the social sciences, ENEM is a promising object of analysis, as research on it can focus on the individual, the social structure, or both. This study seeks to interpret inequalities, considering the structure and relations that occur within them. Considering that the entrance exam is a broad subject and can be thoroughly examined scientifically from multiple perspectives, the essay was chosen as the object of study. Thus, the hypothesis is that it contains elements that can show how social inequalities affect applicants to Brazilian universities.

The questions that motivated this research are aimed at understanding: how are school inequalities evidenced by ENEM's essay scoring criteria? What makes a text exemplary for Ministry of Education evaluators? How does this explain the candidates' different performances? As a hypothesis, it is believed that the ENEM essay can highlight and exacerbate, through its scoring criteria, school inequalities between applicants to higher education. By examining this relation, the goal is to understand which elements indicate inequalities, a task undertaken by several sociologists since the twentieth century.

As a broader objective, we seek to explain how ENEM's essay scoring criteria exposes and exacerbates social inequalities. The specific objectives are to demonstrate how writing is affected by class relations, relate ENEM's essay scoring criteria to social inequalities; and discuss — based on the theories of Bourdieu and Bernstein — how competencies highlight social inequalities. The objects analyzed will be the scoring criteria and the essays available in the material called “2023 ENEM Essay: participant's booklet,” released via the internet² by the Ministry of Education.

²https://download.inep.gov.br/publicacoes/institucionais/avaliacoes_e_exames_da_educacao_basica/a_redacao_no_Enem_2023_cartilha_do_participante.pdf

Essays in higher education entrance exams

Guimarães (1984), in revisiting the history of the entrance exam sector in Brazil, shows that essay items were included in entrance exams during the Military Dictatorship, when the Ministry of Education proposed a Working Group dedicated to devise means to improve Portuguese language education in schools. This measure resulted from the applicants' unsatisfactory results in entrance exams until the 1970s. According to the author, there was a belief that including an essay in entrance exams would improve the quality of basic education.

Inconsistently, including the essay did not change the students' situation. It led to essay writing being taught in specific preparatory courses focused on the entrance exam. This reduced the writing skill to that which is required in entrance exams (Bianchetti, 1996; Guimarães, 1984). There is evidence of inequality, as access to "preparatory courses" is reserved for a portion of the population with sufficient cultural and economic capital to invest in extracurricular activities aimed at the entrance exam. This behavior is adopted by the new middle classes, which act strategically in relation to their children's school education (Ball, 2011; Nogueira, 2010).

Revisiting the discussion on the Brazilian entrance exam, Bento Júnior, Bento & Ribeiro (2023) say that, in the 1990s, a mix between pressure from social movements and from international funding agencies led the federal government to create the ENEM exam in 1998. According to the authors, the objective of ENEM was to measure the knowledge of high school graduates, without being used as a resource for admission to undergraduate programs. As for the essay, the first essay applied had an excerpt from the song *O que é O que é*, by Gonzaguinha, and the theme was "Living and learning."

The ten-year period of the 2000s was marked by the expansion of opportunities for access to higher education in Brazil. Azevedo and Vargas (2023) present 20 measures³ adopted

³Expansão: Federal Universities Expansion Program (2003–2007); ProUni: University for All Program (2004); Proind: Higher Education and Indigenous Teaching Degrees Support Program (2005); Incluir: Higher Education Accessibility Program (2005); UAB: Brazil Open University System (2006); PDE: Education Development Plan (2007); Reuni: Federal Universities Restructuring and Expansion Plans Support Program (2007–2012); Pnaes: National Student Aid Plan and, later, Program (2007); Fies (modification): Higher Education Student Financing Fund (2007); Procampo (implementation): Higher Rural Education Teaching Degree Support Program (2007); Uniafro: Affirmative Action Program for the Black Population in Federal and State Higher Education Institutions (2008); ENEM (reformulation): National High School Exam (2009); Sisu: Unified Selection System (2010); Pnaest: National Student Aid Program for State Public Higher Education Institutions (2010); Expansion of Fies (2010); Quota Law/Law No. 12,711/2012 (2012); High School Expansion Program (2012); Expansion of Procampo (2012); Bilingual Education Program: training of teachers and translators/interpreters of Brazilian Sign Language (2012); and PBP: Student Permanence Aid Program (2013).

by the federal government to increase the number of slots in undergraduate programs. The authors support the argument that such initiatives reduced disadvantages among students seeking this level of education, evidenced by the change in the socioeconomic level (SEL) of the population and the increase in the number of low-income students admitted to higher education institutions.

Among the projects implemented by the State, the ENEM reformulation, in 2009, improved the exam's evaluation criteria based on the notions of competencies and skills. Competency refers to an action produced by a student that will be validated by evaluators, that is, their *performance* (Aguilar & Ribeiro, 2010). This concept is broad and indicates that more than one path can be followed to solve a problem. The emphasis is on the path chosen and not exclusively on the result achieved. This prevents a restriction of the notion of competency to technicism (Bento Júnior, 2023).

Banadusi (2011) shows that the concept of “competency,” in the field of labor, is associated with the skill to exceed what has been proposed in an activity. The definition of this construct assumes a multifactorial perspective, as it brings together numerous and heterogeneous elements and causes. Normally, when discussing competency, there are characteristics associated to knowledge, professional know-how, or the basic dispositions that all individuals have (know-how-to-be). In a critical stance, Ropé (2011) states that competencies are the central gear of large-scale evaluations, as all types of statistics will explain the higher or lower performance of students.

Françoise Ropé (2011) reiterates that competencies are associated to the production of diagnoses – which represent instrumental rationality – in evaluations that are centralized and try to determine what the participants lack. In addition, another problem of this conception is how it is carried out in schools. Knowledge is fragmented into technical objectives, emptying its meaning. Even so, the use of skills is adopted on a local and global scale to define the effectiveness of educational institutions and compare them to others around the world.

In the ENEM essay, five competencies underlie the scoring of the text produced by the applicants. Each competency has a value of 200 points, divided into five groups that represent the proficiency levels assessed by the evaluators. This scale is similar to a *continuum* in which texts range from the absence of the components of that competency to their full command. Quantitatively, the levels (from 0 to 5) are defined through a standard deviation of 40 points

(Chart 1). The applicants' final score is the sum of the scores obtained in the five competencies, which can total 1000 points (Brasil, 2023).

Chart 1

ENEM essay scoring criteria

Competency	Proficiency level	
Competency I: Demonstrate command of formal writing in Portuguese Language.	0	Demonstrates ignorance of formal writing.
	1	Demonstrates precarious command of formal writing, in a systematic way, with diversified and frequent deviations as to grammar, register choice, and writing conventions.
	2	Demonstrates insufficient command of formal writing, with several deviations as to grammar, register choice, and writing conventions.
	3	Demonstrates average command of formal writing and register choice, with some deviations as to grammar and writing conventions.
	4	Demonstrates good command of formal writing and register choice, with few deviations as to grammar and writing conventions.
	5	Demonstrates excellent command of formal writing and register choice. Grammatical or writing convention deviations are accepted only exceptionally and when not recurring.
Competency II: Understand the essay proposal and apply concepts from the various areas of knowledge to discuss the theme, within the structural limits of the argumentative essay in prose.	0	Deviation from the theme/non-compliance with the argumentative essay structure. In these cases, the essay receives a zero score and is annulled.
	1	Presents the subject, touching the theme, or demonstrates precarious command of the argumentative essay format, with constant traces of other text types.
	2	Discusses the theme by copying excerpts from motivating texts or presents insufficient command of the argumentative essay format, not complying with the structure with proposition, argumentation and conclusion.
	3	Discusses the theme through predictable argumentation and presents average command of the argumentative essay format, with proposition, argumentation and conclusion.
	4	Discusses the theme through consistent argumentation and presents good command of the argumentative essay format, with proposition, argumentation and conclusion.
	5	Discusses the theme through consistent argumentation, based on a productive sociocultural repertoire, and presents excellent command of the argumentative essay format.
Competency III: Select, relate, organize and interpret information, facts, opinions and arguments in defense of a point of view.	0	Presents information, facts and opinions unrelated to the theme and without defense of a point of view.
	1	Presents information, facts and opinions little related to the theme or incoherent and without defense of a point of view.
	2	Presents information, facts and opinions related to the theme, but disorganized or contradictory and limited to the arguments of the motivating texts, in defense of a point of view.

	3	Presents information, facts and opinions related to the theme, limited to the arguments of the motivating texts and poorly organized, in defense of a point of view.
	4	Presents information, facts and opinions related to the theme, in an organized way, with evidence of authorship, in defense of a point of view.
	5	Presents information, facts and opinions related to the proposed theme, in a consistent and organized way, configuring the presence of a text project and the discussion of information, in defense of a point of view.
Competency IV: Demonstrate knowledge of the linguistic mechanisms necessary for the construction of argumentation.	0	Does not articulate the information.
	1	Articulates the parts of the text in a precarious way.
	2	Articulates the parts of the text insufficiently, with several inadequacies, and presents a limited repertoire of cohesive resources.
	3	Articulates the parts of the text in an average way, with inadequacies, and presents a little diverse repertoire of cohesive resources.
	4	Articulates the parts of the text, with few inadequacies, and presents a diverse repertoire of cohesive resources.
	5	Articulates the parts of the text well and presents a diverse repertoire of cohesive resources.
Competency V: Develop an intervention proposal for the issue addressed, respecting human rights.	0	Does not present an intervention proposal or presents a proposal unrelated to the theme or subject.
	1	Presents an intervention proposal that is vague, precarious or related only to the subject.
	2	Develops, in an insufficient way, an intervention proposal related to the theme, or not articulated with the discussion conducted in the text.
	3	Develops, in an average way, an intervention proposal related to the theme and articulated with the discussion conducted in the text.
	4	Develops an intervention proposal related to the theme and articulated with the discussion conducted in the text.
	5	Develops very well an intervention proposal, detailed, related to the theme and articulated with the discussion conducted in the text.

According to the Ministry of Education guidelines, as to the text produced in the ENEM essay, the applicant is expected to:

produce a prose text, of the argumentative essay type, on a social, scientific, cultural or political theme. The aspects to be assessed relate to the competencies that must have been developed during the years of school education. (Brasil, 2023, p. 4)

The rules also require that the author argues about a theme – previously defined and released only at the time of the exam – based on a sociocultural repertoire, in a coherent and cohesive manner, using formal written language. In addition, they require a proposal for social intervention on the issue presented that respects human rights and is in line with the elements adopted in the text. ENEM's evaluation board disregards essays that are blank, that do not comply with the argumentative essay format, with less than seven lines, written in another language, and with any form of communication that is inconsistent with the abovementioned requirements (Brasil, 2023).

The writing competencies from the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu: the reproduction of the social structure

In the field of education, Bourdieu opened possibilities for sociologists to understand social relations based on how schools were organized. According to Nogueira and Nogueira (2002), he was responsible for an educational revolution, as he deepened the analysis of the relation between school performance and social origin, exposing the fallacy present in the massification of public schools — equitable, modern and democratic — and explaining the frustrations of young people from the medium and low-income strata who did not achieve the same results as those belonging to the upper classes.

According to Valle (2007), several theorists, including Bourdieu, consider language as a socio-historical phenomenon. Thus, when language is institutionalized — in dictionaries, books and materials that inform formal writing —, it is possible to perceive a difference in the linguistic *habitus* between the different classes. Upper classes deal more naturally with formal situations that require the command of this type of language; that is due to the symbolic resources they have. To understand how this linguistic *habitus* is built, it is essential to resort to the concept of cultural capital.

This concept was a counterpoint to the innateness of human intellectuality and exposes the idea that social classes are responsible for the transmission of mental structures, intellectual tools, language, general culture, body postures, aesthetic dispositions, cultural assets and others. Each of these resources is transmitted by the families (Nogueira, 2011). Cultural capital exists in three forms: as embodied cultural capital, a long-lasting disposition; as objectified cultural

capital, present in cultural assets; and as institutionalized cultural capital, which is expressed by academic credentials or professional qualifications (Nogueira & Catani, 2007).

Considering the ENEM essay competency framework from the Bourdiesian perspective, it becomes predictable that command of the highest proficiencies would be achieved by individuals from the upper-middle and upper strata. Although this explanation is seemingly obvious, it is necessary to discuss how this introjection of the capital occurs, as well as its capacity to be expressed in entrance exams. To this end, we revisit Competency III, which refers to the skill to “select, relate, organize and interpret information, facts, opinions and arguments in defense of a point of view” (Brasil, 2023).

This competency, according to the essay evaluation materials, refers to the applicants’ skill to employ different sources of information to write their text. Therefore, that is a means to evaluate their sociocultural repertoire, which is understood as all resources that are not available in the motivating texts provided in the essay proposal, related to the elements of the theme and validated by some field of knowledge (Brasil, 2023). Thus, the evaluation is focused on the legitimacy, productive use and relevance of the elements that go beyond the resources provided in the motivational texts.

The requirements for scoring 200 points in this competency, from Bourdieu’s perspective, indicates the need for the objectified state of cultural capital. In a more in-depth definition, the foundation of this capital is the material supports and their specific condition of appropriation (Nogueira & Catani, 2007). Thus, the use of legitimate repertoire, such as by citing a classic book, requires the material and symbolic appropriation of this asset, requiring the possession of economic and cultural capital. Attending a library with restricted-access items is not enough, as the individual must appropriate that asset, which is more common in the upper classes.

In this regard, Almeida (2004) demonstrates, by analyzing Portuguese Language education in two schools attended by the elite of São Paulo, that students with family members who graduated from the University of São Paulo (USP) and who were former students of one of the institutions studied, expressed their cultural capital in a more natural way during the production of their texts, going beyond the content taught in the classroom. In this situation, the school proposes to awaken the sensibility of the students, who, in turn, are thereby benefitted when taking the entrance exam. This excerpt illustrates the embodied cultural capital.

Accordingly, the embodiment of cultural capital – which presupposes its inculcation and assimilation – requires investment from an individual point of view, like a cultivation, making it a part of the person, that is, a *habitus* (Nogueira & Catani, 2007). This acquisition is not instantaneous or hereditary, but suggests an effort over time so the symbolic assets are naturalized. By conquering this facet, it is demonstrated how some assets or events are treated in a methodical, satisfactory and contemplative way for those who enjoy them (Bourdieu, 2007).

Finally, it is important to note that Bourdieu produced a critical structuralism, whose function was to shed light on how society was organized (Thiry-Cherques, 2006). He perceived the reproduction of classes that occurred in the school space, going against the discourse of “pedagogical optimism” of the 1960s. The school system values those that are intelligent, have a vocation, and have access to symbolic assets (Valle, 2007), but camouflages the cultural capital held by these subjects. The same seems to occur with ENEM, as those who achieve the competencies are valued, making them examples for future applicants, but the multiple factors responsible for their success are concealed.

Bernstein and the pedagogical discourse: ENEM as a case of strong classification and framing

Basil Bernstein was a sociologist contemporary to Bourdieu who presented another reading for the social relations that occurred in school. His works dialogue with his critics – such as Pierre Bourdieu – and propose a theory focused on the relations between communication, social class and power within educational institutions (Bernstein, 1984; Bernstein, 2003; Santos, 2003a; Santos, 2003b). Based on these three constructs, the criticism of the notion of competency in the ENEM essay will continue. However, before starting it, it is necessary to know some parts of Bernstein’s theory.

Bernstein’s interest focused on the hierarchies present in the school. He emphasizes the concept of competency, reiterating that “they are intrinsically creative and are tacitly acquired through informal interactions. They are practical accomplishments” (Bernstein, 2003, p. 77, our translation). Competencies are fundamental for building and participating in the world and their acquisition goes beyond power relations, even when these relations happen without awareness (Bernstein, 2003). In the school context, competency-based pedagogies aim to strengthen the

power of a subject or group, opposing the idea of performance — which values individual results and stratification (Santos, 2003a).

The pedagogical practices adopted in education result from the interplay of successive pedagogical recontextualizations, encompassing from the curriculum to the pedagogical practices of teachers (Santos, 2003b). Recontextualization is the regulation of *what* and *how* a transmission-acquisition process will be. This decision can cover school management or the State (official recontextualization) and is the main step for scientific knowledge to be reappropriated, reallocated, refocused and related to other discourses that will produce a new specific order (Santos, 2003b).

The pedagogical discourse arises from the rules of recontextualization and its main characteristic is regulation, which has a moral character and informs the attitudes of students. During classes, the contents derive from their own logics, formed by rules that ensure the validity of the institutional discourse (Santos, 2003b). Appropriating this dynamics, an idea that capacity-building is vital for subjects was forged. It was incorporated by pedagogical reforms and indicates the students' readiness to be taught or respond efficiently to contents (Bernstein, 2003).

Thus understood, capacity-building is the substrate of the socially empty and generic discourse used by specialized agencies in the recontextualization and reproduction of abstract concepts, such as life and work. In these spaces, which can be exemplified by preparatory courses for entrance exams, critical education is stifled (Bernstein, 2003). Two concepts that explain this situation are classification and framing. Classification is directed to maintaining the borders between the different groups, while framing deals with the social relations established by them (Morais & Neves, 2007).

These concepts clarify how power is diffused in pedagogical interaction. In situations with strong classification and framing, there is greater control over the rules and knowledge transmitted. In this case, control is explicit, and the position occupied by the subjects is naturalized. On the other hand, when control is implicit, actions are spontaneous and subject to inquiry, that is, the delimitation between those involved is less clear. These are the relations that shape the codes and procedures expressed in the rules (Morais & Neves, 2007).

In a classroom experience, these relations become part of that context. If classification and framing change, the norms cease to have that meaning (Morais & Neves, 2007). Bernstein

(2003) uses the pedagogical practice and context performance model to distinguish competency and performance, considering the criteria: time, space and discourse; guidelines for evaluation; control; text; autonomy and economy. For analysis of the ENEM essay, the competency and performance models applied to the pedagogical text will be approached more in-depth.

Textual production in the context of a competency model indicates “the development of the acquirer’s competency, in a cognitive-affective or social manner, and these are the focuses. The teacher operates with a theory of reading that the acquirer offers (or not)” (Bernstein, 2003, p. 84, our translation). In this situation, there is a monopoly, on the part of the teacher, in relation to the meaning of the signs used by the student during the evaluation of the text. In other words, the teacher recontextualizes academic knowledge to evaluate that which was produced by a student. In the ENEM, the evaluation board assumes this role.

As for the essay scoring criteria, again, Competency I – demonstrate command of formal writing in Portuguese language – and Competency IV – demonstrate knowledge of the linguistic mechanisms necessary for the construction of argumentation – exemplify the competency model mentioned above. The criteria for the two competencies have their own evaluation guidelines with specific coding, whose textual production rules require suitability to a context that is responsible for the production of meanings. Thus, to achieve the expected result, the text produced must show the command and recognition of the rules (Morais & Neves, 2007).

On the other hand, essay evaluators find themselves in a context in which classification and framing are strong, such that their position is not questioned. Evidence of inequality is the difficulty, exhibited by certain students, in understanding and selecting the meanings necessary to produce a text (Morais & Neves, 2007). In a large-scale evaluation such as ENEM, there is, in this case, a performance model, in which — despite the text being evaluated according to competencies — performance is expressed by scores (Bernstein, 2003). This represents, as already said, the maintenance of some institutions at the top of the hierarchy.

According to Bernstein (2003), the performance model imposes an evaluative theory that scans right and wrong answers, converting them into numbers. There is a visible pedagogy marked by clear criteria, explicit measurement procedures and the standardization of texts written by students. These characteristics enable the comparison of the failures and successes

of institutions, subjects and teachers. In addition, it is possible to adjust students to schools based on their academic profile (Bernstein, 1984), modulating the school market.

Data from *Nexo Jornal*, published in 2023, show a ranking of ENEM participants' performance. The conclusions show that only 5% of the 2.7 million participants scored an average above 700 points in the four areas of knowledge with the essay. This information highlights elements that constitute the official pedagogical discourse – produced by the State – about the entrance exam applicants' learning, strengthening (or weakening) the classification and framing. In schools, the regulatory discourse is modeled by positioning teachers and students in the context of educational reproduction (Morais & Neves, 2007).

This dynamics leads to the demand for excellence and the improvement of results modifying the instructional discourse – knowledge and cognitive skills – to the mold of the regulatory discourse – norms, rules, values, socio-affective skills acquired in the school setting (Morais & Neves, 2007). This set of parameters reinforces class values and is responsible, within schools, for concentrating the spotlights on those who reproduce the regulatory discourse, silencing those who see no sense in the meanings of some commands, such as taking the entrance exam (Morais & Neves, 2007; Santos, 2003b).

Methodology

This research is classified as exploratory. Studies with this characteristic seek a more in-depth approach to an issue, giving it more visibility or building hypotheses capable of expanding the discoveries related to a certain object (Gil, 2002). As this is an immersion in a subject, methodologically, this is a qualitative study. According to Minayo (2007), research of this type deals with representations, intentionalities and relations that are not explained exclusively through quantification or objectivity. Conceptualizing qualitative research in a single manner is inapplicable (Alves & Aquino, 2012).

According to Alves & Aquino (2012), qualitative research is a means to understand, interpret and explain events marked by consensus and conflicts resulting from interactions

provided by different worldviews. For data analysis, we adopted the Content Analysis method. Bardin (1977) explains that this instrument covers techniques aimed at researching systematic and objective procedures that can clarify the conditions of (re)production of messages. By adopting this procedure, it is expected a critical and dynamic stance towards language in its broadest sense (Franco, 2008).

Content Analysis is implemented in three stages: pre-analysis, exploration of materials, and data analysis and interpretation. In the pre-analysis, the items are selected and the corpus is delimited with the preparation of the material. In the exploration, the codifications that originate symbolic and thematic categories are established. Based on them, the data involved in their classification and interpretation are compared (Bardin, 1977). What is expected with this practice is the understanding and generalization of the characteristics of the corpus of meaning present in language (Franco, 2008).

According to Franco (2008), language expresses the human existence that defines dynamic social representations arising from the interaction between language, thought and action. In addition, the author says that the meaning attributed to something results from an individual and objectified positioning, materialized in social practice and manifested through cognitive, evaluative and emotional means within a context. The study corpus consists of texts available in the 2023 ENEM Participant Booklet. This material refers to the ENEM of the previous year, that is, the 2022 essays will be analyzed, whose theme was “Challenges for the valorization of traditional communities and peoples in Brazil” (Figure 1).

Figure 1
2022 ENEM Essay Theme



enem2022
Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio

INSTRUÇÕES PARA A REDAÇÃO

- O rascunho da redação deve ser feito no espaço apropriado.
- O texto definitivo deve ser escrito à tinta preta, na folha própria, em até 30 linhas.
- A redação que apresentar cópia dos textos da Proposta de Redação ou do Caderno de Questões terá o número de linhas copiadas desconsiderado para a contagem de linhas.
- Receberá nota zero, em qualquer das situações expressas a seguir, a redação que:**
 - tiver até 7 (sete) linhas escritas, sendo considerada "texto insuficiente";
 - fugir ao tema ou não atender ao tipo dissertativo-argumentativo;
 - apresentar parte do texto deliberadamente desconectada do tema proposto;
 - apresentar nome, assinatura, rubrica ou outras formas de identificação no espaço destinado ao texto.

TEXTO I

Você sabe quais são as comunidades e os povos tradicionais brasileiros? Talvez indígenas e quilombolas sejam os primeiros que passam pela cabeça, mas, na verdade, além deles, existem 26 reconhecidos oficialmente e muitos outros que ainda não foram incluídos na legislação.

São pescadores artesanais, quebradeiras de coco babaçu, apanhadores de flores sempre-vivas, caatingueiros, extrativistas, para citar alguns, todos considerados culturalmente diferenciados, capazes de se reconhecerem entre si.

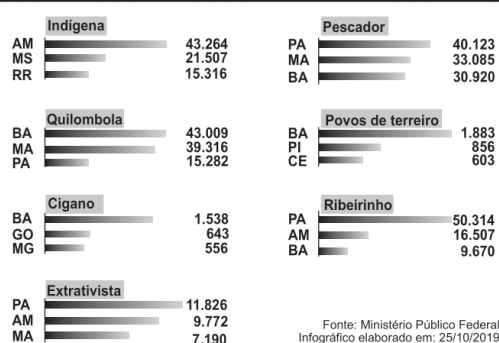
Para uma pesquisadora da UnB, essas populações consideram a terra como uma mãe, e há uma relação de reciprocidade com a natureza. Nessa troca, a natureza fornece "alimento, um lugar saudável para habitar, para ter água. E elas se responsabilizam por cuidar dela, por tirar dela apenas o suficiente para viver bem e respeitam o tempo de regeneração da própria natureza", diz.

Disponível em: <https://g1.globo.com>. Acesso em: 17 jun. 2022 (adaptado).

TEXTO II

Povos tradicionais do Brasil

Estados com a maior concentração de famílias



Fonte: Ministério Público Federal. Infográfico elaborado em: 25/10/2019.

Disponível em: <https://g1.globo.com>. Acesso em: 17 jun. 2022 (adaptado).

TEXTO III

Povos e comunidades tradicionais

O Ministério do Desenvolvimento Social (MDS) preside, desde 2007, a Comissão Nacional de Desenvolvimento Sustentável dos Povos e Comunidades Tradicionais (CNPCT), criada em 2006. Fruto dos trabalhos da CNPCT, foi instituída, por meio do Decreto nº 6.040, de 7 de fevereiro de 2017, a Política Nacional de Desenvolvimento Sustentável dos Povos e Comunidades Tradicionais (PNPCT). A PNPCT foi criada em um contexto de busca de reconhecimento e preservação de outras formas de organização social por parte do Estado.

Disponível em: <http://mds.gov.br>. Acesso em: 17 jun. 2022 (adaptado).

TEXTO IV

Carta da Amazônia 2021

Aos participantes da 26ª Conferência das Nações Unidas sobre Mudanças Climáticas (COP26)

Não podia ser mais estratégico para nós, Povos Indígenas, Populações e Comunidades Tradicionais brasileiras, reafirmarmos a defesa da sociobiodiversidade amazônica neste momento em que o mundo volta a debater a crise climática na COP26. Uma crise que atinge, em todos os contextos, os viventes da Terra!

Nossos territórios protegidos e direitos respeitados são as reivindicações dos movimentos sociais e ambientais brasileiros.

Não compactuamos com qualquer tentativa e estratégia baseada somente na lógica do mercado, com empresas que apoiam legislações ambientais que ameaçam nossos direitos e com mecanismos de financiamento que não condizem com a realidade dos nossos territórios.

Propomos o que temos de melhor: a experiência das nossas sociedades e culturas históricas, construídas com base em nossos saberes tradicionais e ancestrais, além de nosso profundo conhecimento da natureza.

Inovação, para nós, não pode resultar em processos que venham a ameaçar nossos territórios, nossas formas tradicionais e harmônicas de viver e produzir.

Amazônia, Brasil, 20 de outubro de 2021.

Entidades signatárias: CNS; Coiab; Conaq; MIQCB; Coica; ANA Amazônia e Confrem

Disponível em: <https://s3.amazonaws.com>. Acesso em: 17 jun. 2022 (adaptado).

PROPOSTA DE REDAÇÃO

A partir da leitura dos textos motivadores e com base nos conhecimentos construídos ao longo de sua formação, redija um texto dissertativo-argumentativo em modalidade escrita formal da língua portuguesa sobre o tema "Desafios para a valorização de comunidades e povos tradicionais no Brasil", apresentando proposta de intervenção que respeite os direitos humanos. Selecione, organize e relacione, de forma coerente e coesa, argumentos e fatos para a defesa de seu ponto de vista.

Results and discussions

Pre-analysis and exploration of materials

The pre-analysis process was organized with the selection of the ten essays published in the 2023 ENEM Participant Booklet. Different versions of the applicant guiding material could be chosen; however, the analysis proposal sought to isolate the theme construct. By isolating it, it is impossible to consider that the complexity of the theme affected the authors' way of writing. Although the use of competencies enables a comparison over time, the focus was on understanding how the essay of applicants with exceptional scores was structured in that specific context.

In the preparation of the material, it is essential to revisit the conceptualization of argumentative essay. According to the Anísio Teixeira National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (INEP), this genre is characterized by formality in writing (Brasil, 2023). In writing such text, students are expected to show command of the skills required for writing other texts, such as expressive, informative-referential, and creative texts (Bittencourt, 1989). The characteristics of each one, as well as the basic skills required, were systematized in Chart 2. It also presents the specifics of argumentative writing.

Chart 2

Text types suggested by Bittencourt (1989)

Type	Basic skills
Expressive	1st Knowing how to name objects one intends to talk about; build simple sentences. It serves to describe the physical characteristics of an object; 2nd Knowing how to express segments of spoken language.
Informational-referential	1st Ordering; 2nd Summarizing; 3rd Defining; 4th Explaining; 5th. Documenting.
Creative	1st Inventing; 2nd Expressing oneself with non-conventional language.
Informational-argumentative	1st Defend a thesis based on own opinions, arguing and refuting ideas contrary to the thesis; using techniques of logic, persuasion and argumentation to convince the reader; 2nd Determine cause and effect relations based on the formulation of favorable or contrary arguments, establishing relations between them; 3rd Compare and classify personal ideas by relating them with other pieces of information.

The instructions for writing the ENEM essay require that the text explain the theme in the introductory paragraph; then, in the development paragraphs, a point of view must be defended through legitimate argumentation and socio-cultural repertoire. Finally, the conclusion should present the intervention proposal, which is composed of an action (what?), an agent (who?), a means (how?), an effect (for what?) and details. The intervention proposal may appear in some of the other paragraphs; however, writing teachers consensually suggest its presence at the end of the text.

During the free-floating reading of the material, the aforementioned format was found in all essays. At the same time, the rule of exhaustiveness favored the production of codifications that emerged from the exploration of the corpus. Thus, we considered: the number of connectives in the texts; the authors cited; the synonyms; the arguments presented in development paragraphs 1 and 2, which are also exposed in the introduction; and the source of the socio-cultural repertoires, classified as historical, literary, artistic or media, scientific or legislative.

Data analysis and interpretation

Before presenting the first results, it is necessary to understand what excellence would be, especially in the case of writing. According to Almeida (2004), schools – of the São Paulo elite, the focus of their analysis – are committed to having their students access a multiplicity of literary and audiovisual works and be able to develop the criticism and interpretation of these assets. The intention of these practices is the naturalization of competencies and, consequently, their use in the entrance exam. There are institutions in which cultural capital is perceived in a fluid manner, due to the students' public; and in others, it lacks daily direction. Both cases exemplify school excellence.

The texts were analyzed thoroughly with coding representing the possession of cultural capital and, on the other hand, the strong classification and framing explicit in the essays. The first coding that demonstrates these constructs is the use of argumentative operators and connectives. According to Peixoto (2017), argumentative operators and connectives are fundamental for persuading readers. Conceptually, "argumentative operators are linguistic

elements that affect the interpretation of the sentence and have an impact on the entire grammatical domain” (Peixoto, 2017, p. 164, our translation).

In the observed essays, the average number of connectives was 15 (Table 1). Table 1 shows the number of these resources adopted in each paragraph. Their analysis also found the existence of 149 argumentative operators, which were represented in a word cloud (Figure 2). The most common expressions were: *therefore, in this context, moreover, in addition, hence, in this way, in this sense, thus, in this regard, and in order to*. The successive appearance of these connectives may indicate, according to Morais and Neves (2007), a gap between the educational discourse and that of everyday life. This results from the strong classification that regulates that which is understood as legitimate.

Table 1

Argumentative operators and connectives by paragraphs

Texts	Introduction	Development 1	Development 2	Conclusion	Total
T1	2	2	4	5	13
T2	1	4	6	4	15
T3	4	4	6	4	18
T4	3	5	5	5	18
T5	1	5	4	4	14
T6	3	3	4	4	14
T7	2	4	4	2	12
T8	3	6	2	6	17
T9	2	4	5	3	14
T10	1	4	5	4	14

Figure 2

Word cloud with the most common argumentative operators and connectives



The data also show the distinction between students with exceptional scores and participants in the 2022 ENEM, whose essays had an average score equal to 645 points (Gomes & Alfano, 2023). This discrepancy goes beyond the social structure, demonstrating other elements that are part of the pedagogical apparatus (Santos, 2003). In these cases, there is an introverted mode of performance, whose mark is the appropriation of specialized discourse with few variations in the performance expected from students and common to members of this group (Bernstein, 2003).

The same was found when observing the use of synonyms in the 1000-score essays (Table 2). Synonyms, similarly to argumentative operators and connectives, are elements that can serve to highlight specialized discourse and, thus, favor the distancing of subjects from different social classes. This is an example of how power relations act in the construction of texts and how pedagogical discourse prevents individuals from employing non-academic discourses in the production of texts (Bernstein, 2003; Morais & Neves, 2007).

Table 2

Number of synonyms in the essays

Texts	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10
Synonyms	6	8	9	6	1	3	7	3	8	4

From a on social class-based perspective, the command of different linguistic resources indicates how the dominant strata directly appropriate the means and forms of cultural production (Bernstein, 1984). This is consistent with an *O Globo* newspaper article on the 2022 ENEM, which shows an advantage of 182 points for private school students over public school students (Gomes & Alfano, 2023). Private schools, in the case of Brazil, serve the various middle-class strata. These publics seek to ensure their success through education (Nogueira, 2010), highlighting the direct relation with cultural reproduction and indirect relation with its means and forms of production (Bernstein, 1984).

Still on the relation between social class and ENEM performance, in 2023 sixty students obtained the highest score in the essay, an increase of 233% compared to 2022 (with only eighteen 1000 scores). Among the applicants with exceptional performance, only four were students from public schools (Zanlorenssi & Froner, 2024). The group of students with excellent performance in writing shows the compliance with the diffusing agencies responsible for maintaining the strong classification, that is, for the separation between categories and demonstration of power, which emerges when the separation becomes evident (Bernstein, 2003).

The diffusers of cultural reproduction are agents and agencies that disseminate certain principles, practices, activities and symbolic forms or that appropriate principles, practices or symbolic forms to consume goods, services, activities or symbolic forms themselves (Bernstein, 1984). As for the essays, Ferreira (2000) says that the texts are never devoid of intentionality. An author, when writing in a less embellished and more objective manner, for example, expresses meanings produced culturally and shared throughout their life. This expresses their desires and the reading of the reality in which they find themselves (Munhoz & Zanella, 2008).

Continuing with the analysis, there was determination of the types of the repertoires present in the essays of the 2023 ENEM Participant Booklet. The exhaustive reading originated four groups: *historical*; *scientific*; *arts and media*; and *legislative*. A given text can fall into multiple groups, as the applicant may adopt different sources throughout their argumentation. In fact,

this is a tactic suggested by INEP. The construction of the categories considered the source of the repertoire, distinguishing ideas or theories from historical events.

Artistic citations (such as poems, songs and literary works) were grouped with the news. This decision considered the dissemination by mainstream media. Articles of the 1988 Federal Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the United Nations (UN) were grouped together. In the texts, we found 32 repertoires (Table 3), and the most common was the scientific repertoire, present in one third of the cases. Its recurrence reinforces a strong framing, as students adopt the resources of the pedagogical apparatus used by diffusers (Bernstein, 1984; Bernstein, 2003).

Table 3

Types of sociocultural repertoires

Texts	Historical	Scientific	Arts and media	Legislative	Total
T1	-	2	-	1	3
T2	1	-	2	-	3
T3	1	-	-	2	3
T4	-	2	1	-	3
T5	1	2	1	-	4
T6	-	-	1	2	3
T7	1	-	1	1	3
T8	-	4	-	-	4
T9	1	-	-	2	3
T10	1	1	1	-	3
TOTAL	6	11	7	8	32

In scientific citations, the use of authors is a *conditio sine qua non*. When mentioning a concept, it is necessary to present its founder, as this ensures greater legitimacy to the argument. According to Gonzaga (2017), the choices of ideas in argumentative essays need to be consistent and non-contradictory. To this end, arguments can be developed by means of logical reasoning, causal relations; concrete evidence, statistics, examples, real facts, laws and reliable sources; and authority, when expert discourse is reproduced *ipsis litteris*. Twelve personalities were found, as shown in Chart 3.

Chart 3

Cited authors

Texts	No. Of authors	Authors' names
T1	3	Erving Goffman, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels
T2	2	Oswald de Andrade, Cecília Meirelles
T3	-	-
T4	2	Edson Fachin, Oswald de Andrade
T5	1	Ailton Krenak
T6	-	-
T7	1	John Lennon
T8	2	Djamilla Ribeiro, Seneca
T9	-	-
T10	2	Sueli Carneiro, Boaventura de Souza Santos

The adoption of the authors was based on their most popular concepts and their main works. There was an adaptation to the essay theme so their pertinence could be achieved. An example was the concept of stigma, proposed by Goffman, which explained the treatment of traditional peoples by the State and society throughout Brazilian history. There were also literal quotes from thinkers, reinforcing the legitimacy of the argument, even if they were short and generic, such as Seneca's quote: "To greed, all nature is insufficient."

Final considerations

This research arose from questioning the notion of competency adopted by the State in relation to ENEM. In the course of this work, some elements of the theories of Pierre Bourdieu and Basil Bernstein were briefly addressed to discuss the application of a large-scale exam in the context of Brazil. The choice of authors was careful due to the paths followed by each of these sociologists. Thus, the objective of this short essay was to shed light on an object based on different currents of interpretation.

Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital enabled an analysis of the essay evaluation criteria from a structural perspective, based on the reproduction of classes; in turn, Bernstein's concepts of classification and framing enabled reflection on how the essay favors the construction of the pedagogical discourse in schools and classrooms. The combination of class, discourse and power becomes clear when not all students are able to understand the meanings required by the entrance exam. The intersection between the authors consisted in the recognition that inequalities are endogenous and exogenous to individuals and the school.

As for achievement of the objectives, this study was able to demonstrate how writing in the case of entrance exams indicates the presence of inequalities. Considering more than the theory of social reproduction, there was a focus on the social control and power relations that occur in school settings. The analysis of INEP's evaluation criteria also suggests the reproduction of social inequalities, being understood as rules with little malleability and requiring the production of a text in a specific context. As for the last objective, there was a discussion of the theories of Bourdieu and Bernstein; however, due to the object of analysis, the data were read primarily from Bernstein's perspective.

This research represented a theoretical effort toward the problematization of one aspect of ENEM: textual production. This object can be analyzed by means of plural knowledge such as sociolinguistics, sociology of education, pedagogy, psychology and others. The merit of this research was to revisit notable contemporary sociologists to address something specific to Brazil's education: the university entrance exam. The production of reflection based on these theoretical frameworks indicates the capacity of establishing a dialogue with local issues from a global perspective.

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