



UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA MARIA
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**THE “EXAME NACIONAL DO ENSINO MÉDIO”: YOUTH AND
CARTOONS**

Aluno: Gabriel Mazuim da Silva

Orientadora: Patrícia Marcuzzo

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RESUMO

O Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio (ENEM) é um teste aplicado nacionalmente e sua nota é atualmente usada como uma forma de acesso ao ensino superior. O presente trabalho tem como objetivo investigar a seção de língua inglesa do teste ENEM por meio da análise das questões e dos documentos oficiais que orientam essa testagem, como a Matriz de Referência e as Sinopses Estatísticas. Mais especificamente, este trabalho versa sobre as questões que têm como texto base os gêneros tira cômica e cartum. Para a realização deste estudo, inicialmente foram coletados todos os exemplares dos testes de língua inglesa do ENEM já aplicados e disponibilizados no site do INEP (Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira). Essa coleta resultou em um total de 95 questões de língua inglesa. A partir disso, foram identificadas e selecionadas para análise apenas as questões que têm como texto-base a tira cômica e o cartum, totalizando 11 questões. A partir das operações investigativas organizadas neste trabalho, foi possível levantar um perfil dos participantes da prova; analisar quantitativamente a presença dos gêneros textuais trabalhados; a divisão dos gêneros textuais em foco dentro das provas; descrever o formato e objetivo das perguntas de língua inglesa, pensando qualitativamente sobre os gêneros textuais Tira Cômica e Cartum e também abordando os temas e autores dos textos estudados.

Palavras-chave: ENEM. Quadrinhos. Testagem. Juventude.

ABSTRACT

The Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio (ENEM) is a test applied nationwide and its grade is currently used as a way of having access to higher education. This study aims to investigate the English language section of ENEM test through the analysis of the issues and official documents that guide this testing, like the “Matriz de Referência” and the “Sinopse Estatísticas”. More specifically, this study deals with the issues that have as base text the cartoon genres. Initially, all copies of the ENEM English language tests already applied and made available on the INEP (Anísio Teixeira National Institute of Educational Studies) website were collected. This gathering resulted in 95 English language questions. From that, only the questions that have as their base text the cartoon genres were identified and selected for analysis, totaling 11 questions. Based on the analysis of this study, it was possible to raise a profile of the testees; to quantitatively analyze the presence of the selected textual genres; to present the division of the textual genres focus within the issues; to describe the format and purpose of the English language issues, thinking qualitatively about the cartoons genres and also to address the themes and authors of the texts studied

Keywords: ENEM. Cartoons. Testing. Youth.

INTRODUCTION

The *Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio* (ENEM) is a test, applied nationwide by the Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira (INEP). The ENEM had its first edition in 1998 and its main function was to assess the quality of public high school education, but since 2009 it has been used as an admission test for public colleges. The ENEM has over a million testees every year having more than 6 million registered testees in 2018, according to INEP. The current version of the test has five sections, “Ciências da Natureza e suas tecnologias”, “Ciências Humanas e suas tecnologias”, “Linguagens, Códigos e suas tecnologias” (which includes the language section), “Matemática e suas tecnologias” and an essay. The language section of the test has 45 questions related to language, with 40 questions related to reading and interpretation in Portuguese, and five questions composing the Foreign language section of the test, which can be either Portuguese or Spanish. The test has a foreign language section since 2010. The testee performance on a section is given through a grade, that goes from 0 to 1000, with different questions having different worth toward the final grade.

There are normally two editions of the ENEM every year, one for the normal time slot and one for students outside of Brazil, but in 2016, there were three editions because of a problem of leaking of the normal test. This results on 19 different tests with English questions, since 2010.

Despite the huge importance of the ENEM on the Brazilian education, there are few studies focuses on the English section of the test, such as RADÜNZ (2019) and OLIVEIRA (2019). The former focuses on the ENEM structure through a Systemic-Functional approach and the latter focusing on language policies related to the test. Further knowledge of the test, its texts and questions would be able to show what seems to be the basic English that a Brazilian high-schooler should be able to deal with after graduating high school.

The aim of this study is to analyze ENEM’s English section, focusing on the questions that explore cartoon genres as the background text, trying to illustrate how those texts are explored, their themes and how they are connected to the testees reality.

The idea of conducting this research with the materials coming from the ENEM came from the researcher’s own experience as a testee. While taking the test in 2012 and then again in 2014, the researcher was impacted in a different way by the English section of the test, especially when it came to questions with comics and cartoons as text. It was possible to observe that with the elements presented in these specific questions and texts, very common and easily

identifiable narratives were structured for any young adult or teenager who was answering the questions, including himself. In this sense, the desire to investigate further about this textual genre that positively impacted the researcher's personal journey in learning and improving in the English language strongly moves the choice of the theme of this paper.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The present review of literature is organized according to the concepts that are discussed in studies related to testing and that understand cartoons and comic strips as a genres.

2.1 TESTING

ENEM is a test (MARCHEZAN, 2005, p.27), given that, different from an evaluation, it does not take part on pedagogical processes, it only assesses the candidate's knowledge and understandings, with no connection between the testees and the test maker. By taking into consideration the current purposes of ENEM, Hughes (1989) presents a further view into the characteristics of tests. ENEM is primarily seen as a tool for accessing higher education; therefore, it is possible to interpret it as an achievement test, which measures the testees knowledge of high school subjects. Hughes (1989, p. 16) also points out the differences between discrete points and integrative testing, the ENEM presents itself as a fully integrative test, always attaching interpretation skills necessary to the testees to answer the questions being presented. Hughes (1989, p. 9) also discusses the concept of objective and subjective testing, and since the ENEM is only composed by multiple-choice questions with one single possible correct answer, it is a fully objective scoring test. The English section of the ENEM assesses only the interpretation skills of the testee, of all the reading testing techniques identified by Hughes (1989, p. 120), such as multiple choices, written answers, summary closes and such only multiple choice questions appear on the test.

2.2 CARTOONS AND COMIC STRIPS AS GENRES

Comic strips are described as "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer" (MCCLLOUD, 1994, p. 9). Comic strips are also related to cartoons; however, they are not the same genre. In their studies, Arrigoni (2011) and Simões (2010) present cartoons and comic strips as different genres in the Brazilian culture, even though these genres are named differently in other cultures and languages. Arrigoni describes cartoons as "[...] timeless. Generally, they do not refer to any personality or fact of news. Thus, they can be considered a

text of universal humor”. In terms of compositional structure, Simões (2010, p. 50) mapped the basic elements of comic strips, which generally are of a rectangular shaped, framed, and present a narrative sequence with fictional characters and a signature of the author. In addition, Simões (2010, p. 50) identifies the basic elements of cartoons, which are usually single framed, and present timeless subjects depicted in a way which can be seen as humorous by certain groups and a signature of the author.

METHODOLOGY

The 19 ENEM tests, in which the English section was included, were retrieved from the INEP website, The English section of the test was separated from the rest of the test for analysis. While searching for the tests on the official site, the “Sinopse Estatísticas do Exame Nacional de Ensino Médio” and the “Matriz de Referência”, official documents that presents data about the test and the testees, were retrieved from the INEP website, with their data being used as tool to help illustrate the profile of testees and the test.

After the separation of the English section of the 19 tests, the 95 English questions were read and the texts of the questions were classified according to the genres they correspond to. Of those 95 questions analyzed, 11 texts that had humor, images, frames and verbal texts were separated. Those 11 tests were later classified according to the definitions of the genres given by Simões (2010). The chosen texts were also analyzed to identify if they had any thematic similarity in them.

After the classification of the texts, the structure of the questions was analyzed in order to describe how the questions are organized. Besides that, the questions were read, to observe if they were asking for reading comprehension or if they were asking for knowledge about grammar and syntax.

According to the “Matriz de Referência”, every single part of the test evaluates the capacity of the testee to master language and reading, the capacity of the testee to understand phenomena related to the subjects. It is also expected that the testee to be able to face problem situations related to the data presented on their education and by the test, to be able to build arguments, maintain a consistent argumentation and to be able to make proposals, influencing society with their knowledge.

The “Matriz de Referência” also presents four specific abilities related to foreign languages presented on ENEM, which are “H5 – Associar vocábulos e expressões de um texto


em LEM ao seu tema.”, “H6 - Utilizar os conhecimentos da LEM e de seus mecanismos como meio de ampliar as possibilidades de acesso a informações, tecnologias e culturas.”, “H7 – Relacionar um texto em LEM, as estruturas linguísticas, sua função e seu uso social.” and “H8 - Reconhecer a importância da produção cultural em LEM como representação da diversidade cultural e linguística.”

The “Sinopse Estatísticas do Exame Nacional de Ensino Médio” presented data on the testees numbers and performance, with the possibility of categorization of the data by age, race, gender and geographical location.

RESULTS

The questions analyzed had the same basic structure. The questions are written in Portuguese with its number (1), the text in English (2), a stem in Portuguese (3) and five possible answers in Portuguese, one of them being the correct one and four distractors (4).

QUESTÃO 94 **1**



2 Disponível em: <http://www.garfield.com>. Acesso em: 29 jul. 2010.

A tira, definida como um segmento de história em quadrinhos, pode transmitir uma mensagem com efeito de humor. A presença desse efeito no diálogo entre Jon e Garfield acontece porque **3**

4

- A Jon pensa que sua ex-namorada é maluca e que Garfield não sabia disso.
- B Jodell é a única namorada maluca que Jon teve, e Garfield acha isso estranho.
- C Garfield tem certeza de que a ex-namorada de Jon é sensata, o maluco é o amigo.
- D Garfield conhece as ex-namoradas de Jon e considera mais de uma como maluca.
- E Jon caracteriza a ex-namorada como maluca e não entende a cara de Garfield.

Image 1 A random question, with its sections marked.

None of the questions analyzed contained a grammatical focus, with the questions asking mostly for interpretation of the text or of its themes, in accordance to the H5 skill (see “Matriz de Referência”).

Despite the visual nature of the genre, none of the questions ask for interpretation of specific visual parts of the texts, focusing only on the written and thematic part of the texts.

"I START EVERY SONG BY COUNTING 1-2-3-4 BECAUSE IT REMINDS ME OF MATH. MATH DEPRESSES ME AND THAT HELPS ME SING THE BLUES."

GLASSBERGEN, R. Today's cartoon. Disponível em: <http://www.glasbergen.com>. Acesso em: 23 jul. 2010.

Ao estabelecer uma relação entre a Matemática e o *blues* a partir da opinião pessoal de um dos rapazes, a charge sugere que

- A** as canções iniciadas com a contagem de 1 a 4 fazem lembrar o *blues*.
- B** o *blues*, com seu ritmo depressivo, alivia o sentimento causado pela Matemática.
- C** as canções devem se iniciar com a contagem de 1 a 4 para se tornarem tristes.
- D** o *blues*, assim como a Matemática, consegue despertar um sentimento inspirador.
- E** o sentimento despertado pela Matemática serve como motivação para o *blues*.

Image 2 Question asking for reading of the text



Disponível em: <http://www.comics.com>. Acesso em: 28 abr. 2011.

A tirinha é um gênero textual que, além de entreter, trata de diferentes temas sociais. No caso dessa tirinha, as falas no 3º quadrinho revelam o foco do tema, que é

- A** a curiosidade dos filhos ao interpelarem os pais.
- B** a desobediência dos filhos em relação aos pais.
- C** a paciência dos pais ao conversarem com os filhos.
- D** a postura questionadora dos filhos em relação aos pais.
- E** o cansaço dos pais em repetir as coisas para os filhos.

Image 3 Question asking for interpretation of the theme

The 95 questions of the 19 tests analyzed had 11 questions with the focused genres, totalizing 11% of all the questions on the tests. The questions with cartoons and comic strips appeared heavily from 2010 to 2015, with a sudden disappearance in 2016 and 2017, but returning in 2018. From the 11 questions, six are comic strips and five are cartoons.

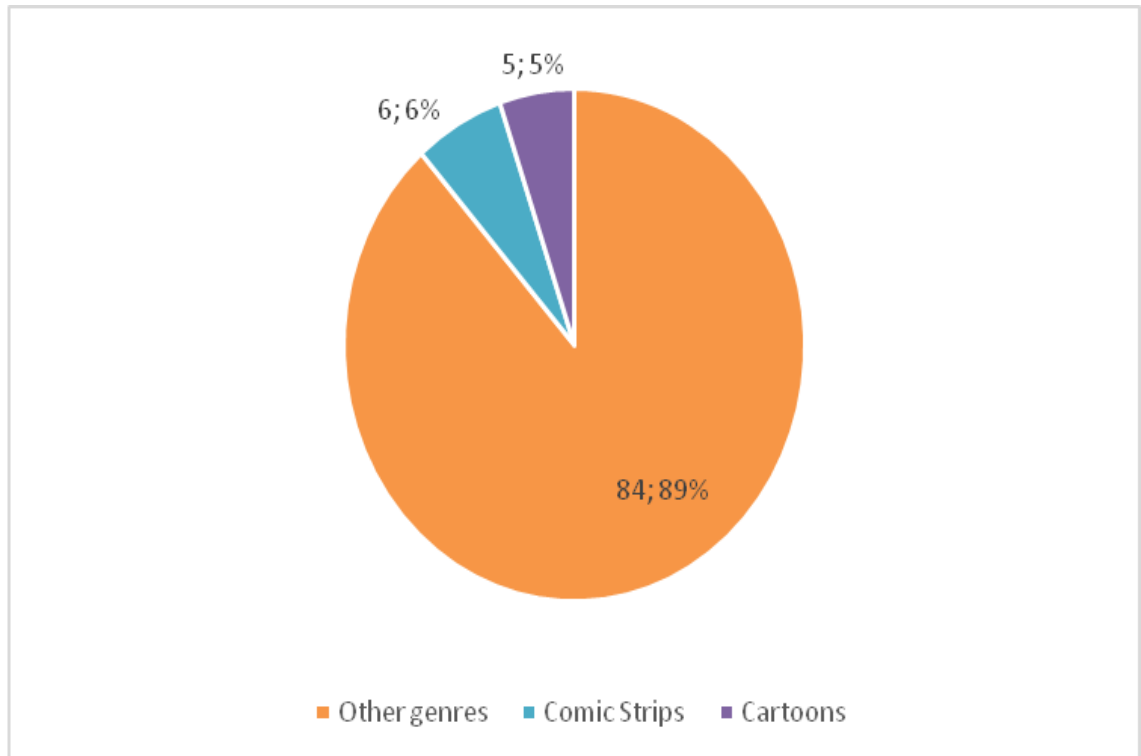


Image 4 Distribution of genres

The Comic strip genre is characterized by a rectangular sequence of frames, normally humorous with action developing between all frames and culminating on the last one, as described by Ramos (2009) “trata-se de um texto curto (dada a restrição do formato retangular, que é fixo, construído em um ou mais quadrinhos, com presença de personagens fixos ou não, que cria uma narrativa com desfecho inesperado no final”.



Image 5 Comic Strip example

The Cartoon genre is characterized normally by a single frame, with any plot or situational development being observed by subtle visual elements on the single frame, as reported by Ramos (2009) “mesmo sendo mostrado em apenas um quadro, o cartum consegue sintetizar uma sequência entre um

antes e um depois, elementos mínimos da estrutura narrativa. “The humorous part of the text does not focus on a specific event or situation, but mocks a common situation in day to day life, appeared less than comic strips but still heavily, as reported by Ramos (2009) “... importante observar que o humor advêm de uma situação corriqueira”.



Image 6 A cartoon example

The eleven questions’ texts were analyzed, and further classified by authors and themes. The most common author was Randy Glassbergen, an American author that focuses on creating texts with themes related to youth, day-to-day life and the relationships between people. The most common theme was youth, the relations between children/teenagers and society.

The texts selected had different themes being explored; with five of them exploring questions related to youth (teenagers/children) discussing things with themselves or with adults, one text related to technology, one related to relationships and one text related to linguistic prejudice.

Number	Genre	Author	Theme
1	Cartoon	Dave Walker	Technology
2	Cartoon	Randy Glasbergen	Youth, Education

3	Comic Strip	Jim Davis	Relationships
4	Cartoon	Randy Glasbergen	Youth, Education
5	Comic strip	Author not identified	Youth, Family
6	Cartoon	David Donar	linguistic prejudice
7	Comic Strip	Darrin Bell	No specific theme
8	Comic Strip	Bill Watterson	Youth, Family
9	Comic Strip	Tom Armstrong	Youth, Family
10	Comic Strip	Lynn Johnston	No specific theme
11	Cartoon	Randy Glasbergen	Youth

Chart 1 Texts analyzed, their genres, authors and themes.

The following themes were found on the texts:

Theme	Characteristics of the texts with the theme	Genres in which the theme appears	Number of times present
Youth	Situations related to childhood, teenagerhood, and young adulthood.	Cartoons and comic strips.	Six
Education	Situations related to education settings and students	Cartoons and comic strips	Two
Family	Situations related to familiar relationships	Comic strips	Three
Relationships	Situations related to romantic relationships	Comic strip	One

Technology	Situations related to gadgets and technology	Cartoon	One
Linguistic prejudice	Situations related to linguistic prejudice and language use	Cartoon	One

Chart 2 Themes

According to the official data retrieved from the Sinopse Estatísticas do Exame Nacional de Ensino Médio, over 79% of the testees are under the age of 26, while 17% were between 26 and 40, and a minority of 4% was over 40.

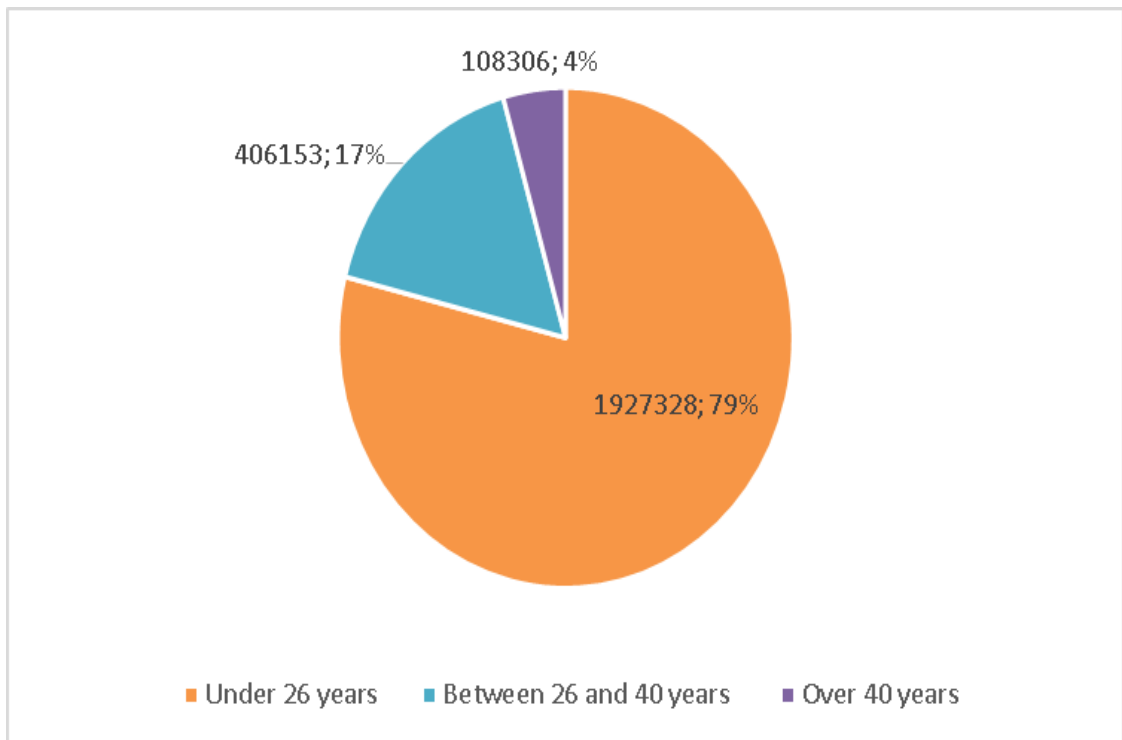


Image 7 Number of testees by age on ENEM 2017

On the analysis of the performance on the language section, the under 26 years group presented 84% of the above 600 grades, while the between 26 and 40 years got 14% of the above 600 grades and the over 40 years group got 2% of the above 600 grades. So, the percentage of young testees is not only bigger, but they statistically also have better grades on the test.

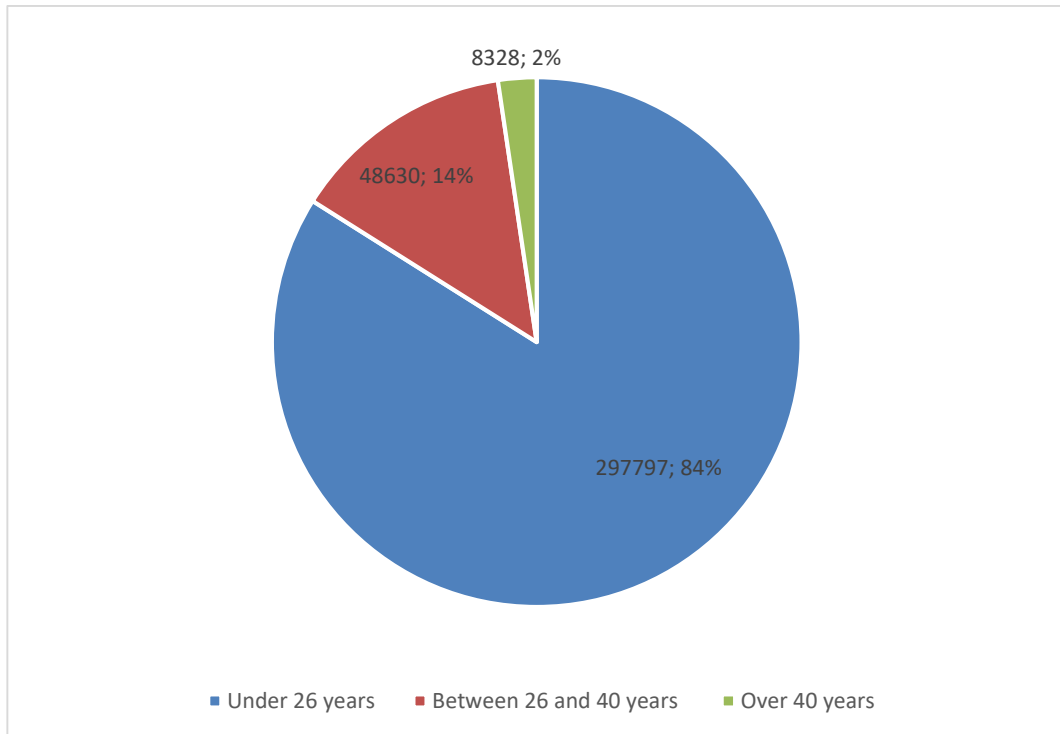


Image 8 Number of grades over 600 by testees, classified by age on ENEM 2017

Taking into consideration the data retrieved from the Sinopse Estatísticas do Exame Nacional de Ensino Médio, which shows that 79% of the testees are either teenagers or young adults and that they have bigger grades. The history of the test objectives, which was at first to evaluate the quality of the Brazilian high school education, and then turned into test that regulates the entrance into higher education. The themes that commonly appear on the texts, which are mostly youth, family relationships and education and the fact that one of the skills expected of the testee is to connect themes and reality through reading it is possible to say that the test appeals more to the younger testees.

FINAL REMARKS

In this study, it was possible to identify and quantify the questions that use comic strips and cartoons as text, to describe the structure of these questions, to identify the focus of the questions that use cartoons as text and to identify the thematic focus of the questions that use cartons as text and how it connects to the testees.

Through analysis of the test, it was possible to find that questions with cartoons represent 10% of the entirety of English questions of the test, that there is a huge presence of themes related to education and youth and the format of the English questions, all of them being

multiple choices exercises, without a focus on grammar, but with a heavy focus on the interpretation of written text and themes.

Through analysis of the documents, it was possible to present the ENEM testee through an age filter and to understand what entails the skills asked by the question for a testee.

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