

# Applied onomastics in language teaching: a systematic literature review

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## Abstract

This paper presents a systematic literature review about proposals that apply Onomastics to Language Teaching, conducted according to PRISMA methodology. The analysis is based on 15 studies (articles and book chapters) published between 2018 and 2024: 13 were developed by Brazilian researchers, one by Ukrainian researchers, and one by a North American researcher. The analysed papers show diversity according to the level of education of students, duration of the pedagogic experience, disciplinary area where the classes were given or planned and methodological approach adopted. As convergent result there is the use of active methodologies and the predominance of dialogic practices centered on students' onomastic knowledge. This focus contributes to critical and interdisciplinary teaching training, showing the role of schools as spaces for constructing contextualized and socially relevant knowledge. Concerning the development stage of these proposals, only two reached the final stage, in which there is scientific evaluation of pedagogical experiences. These results indicate that applied onomastics to language teaching is a growing field with great didactic potential, but still in the consolidation phase, showing for more empirical and systematically evaluated proposals are need.

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## 1 Introduction

In Brazil, the field of onomastics (science that studies proper names) has been particularly characterized by the predominance of anthroponymic (investigations mainly on personal names) and toponymic research (place names), developed in contexts far from the school reality of basic education<sup>1</sup>. Not only in Brazil, but also in other countries, for decades, onomastic studies have remained mostly related to the academic field of postgraduate studies and, with a smaller scale, undergraduate studies. However, this situation has been changing in the country, especially after the pioneering publication by Sousa (2007), included in this systematic review.

The approach adopted by Sousa is related to the conception of interdisciplinarity defended by Fazenda (2003), who considers that interdisciplinarity is not a category of knowledge, but it

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<sup>1</sup> For this text, we adopt the following terminology: preschool – from 2 to 5 years-old (in Brazil, *Pré-escola*); Elementary school – from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> grade (in Brazil, *Ensino Fundamental I*); middle school – from 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade (in Brazil, *Ensino Fundamental II*); high school – from 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade (in Brazil, *Ensino Médio*).

can be described as an action that involves an attitude of dialogue, exchange, humility and a commitment to the collective construction of knowledge. In this way, applied onomastics assumes the role of a pedagogical tool that fosters the meeting between different areas of knowledge, not only through its epistemological bases, but also through the articulation of diverse methodological procedures. It can be related to the view of applied linguistics and contemporary education proposed by da Moita Lopes (2006), which emphasizes the need for multiple perspectives to understand and act in a fluid, localized and contradictory world.

Furthermore, applied onomastics in language teaching contributes to the social role of the school by promoting student protagonism, allowing students to understand the world through proper names – which carry historical, sociocultural, geo-environmental, affective, and identity meanings. This approach is related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (cf. Unesco 2017), as it encourages the appreciation of local contexts and the construction of knowledge that can improve a quality, inclusive and contextualized education (cf. dos Santos 2007).

In light of this emerging scenario, this paper aims to present the results of a systematic literature review of studies about the application of onomastics in all education levels: preschool, elementary school, middle education, high school and undergraduate. The literature review presented in this paper intended to answer the following questions: Are there research studies that report and evaluate pedagogical experiences involving the application of onomastics to teaching? What characterizes these studies? What are their strengths and limitations? To answer these questions, the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) methodology (cf. Moher et al. 2009) was adopted, using the following criteria for analysing the selected works: (a) being propositional – containing, at least in part of the text, a concrete proposal for teaching through onomastics; (b) being grounded – the proposal presents pedagogical justifications or references to educational documents; (c) having a defined target audience – the school level or grade to which the proposal is aimed is clearly indicated; (d) being empirical – the proposal has been implemented in the classroom; (e) being interdisciplinary – the proposal integrates knowledge from different disciplines; and (f) having a connection with the SDGs – the proposal is related, at least, to one of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Through a critical evaluation of the selected works for this systematic literature review, the goal is to understand the current stage of development of Applied onomastics in Language Teaching, to identify gaps and potentials, as well as to highlight practices that contribute to a critical, dialogic and interdisciplinary education.

## **2 Methodological procedures**

For this literature review on applied onomastics in education, an adapted version of the principles and procedures recommended by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) was used, considering that the methodology was originally developed for the health field and has been applied to evaluate research published in other areas: Onomastics and Applied Linguistics. As Seide (2023: 2) explained, “a systematic review of literature relies on a set of criteria for selecting and assessing previous publications”. The use of this methodology is recommended if one aims to conduct bibliographic research while minimizing the risk of biased evaluation of the works already published on the chosen topic. This

methodology enables “to systematize the body of knowledge on a given topic and/or to propose guidelines for future research” (Seide 2023: 2).

In the PRISMA methodology, the reduction of research bias is achieved through the use of the following procedures: establishing clear research question and search query a priori, as well as selecting and evaluating previous studies related to the research topic (cf. Moher et al. 2009). Additionally, in most health-related investigations, the selection of studies to be evaluated is conducted by consensus of at least two evaluators (cf. Sampaio/Mancini 2007).

Conducting a systematic literature review using PRISMA requires the completion of seven procedures. Procedures 1 to 3 are carried out through a research protocol. The implementation of their results in a selected bibliographic list is used for procedures 5 to 7, as presented below:

- 1) define the research question and the scope of research, 2) identify the database(s) to be used, including keywords and search strategy, 3) carry out an initial search and selection of articles (generally by reading titles, abstracts, and keywords), 4) apply the selection criteria and justify any exclusions, 5) perform a critical analysis and assessment of all studies included, 6) provide a synthesis of the information found in the articles, and 7) draw conclusions

(Sampaio/Mancini 2007, cited in Seide 2023)

Tables 1 and 2 below show the research protocols developed and used to answer the research questions revisited here: Are there studies that report and evaluate pedagogical experiences involving Onomastics in teaching? What characterizes these studies? What are their strengths and limitations? Then, in figure 3 are clarified the evaluation criteria for the works.

<b>Data source:</b> Curricula Vitae available on the Lattes Platform and data collection date: February 21, 2025.
<b>Inclusion criteria:</b> Publications by active members of the Lexicology, Lexicography, and Terminology Working Group of the Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Letras e Linguística (ANPOLL/‘National Association of Postgraduate and Research in Language and Linguistics’) or by specialists in Onomastics; Members of the Observatório Onomástico (O-ONOMA/‘Onomastic Observatory’) registered with Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológica /‘National Council for Scientific and Technological Development’ (CNPQ); The publication must be a scientific paper, a book chapter, or a full paper published in a scientific events annals, the work is part of the evaluators’ personal collection.
<b>Exclusion criteria:</b> The work is not available free for download.
<b>Procedure for identifying the works:</b> reading the titles of the works as listed in the CVs.
<b>Results:</b> There were 25 works found. After the exclusion criteria, there were 20 works.

**Table 1: Research protocol for bibliographic studies in Brazil**

<b>Database:</b> Web of Science accessed via Periódico Capes/‘Caps Periodicals’ on the data collection date: February 21 <sup>st</sup> , 2025.
<b>Inclusion criteria:</b> Publications related to Onomastics concerning education, written in English, Portuguese or Spanish; it is obligatory the texts selected to be scientific articles or full papers published in scientific events annals.
<b>Exclusion criteria:</b> The work is not available free online.
<b>Work identification procedure:</b> automatic search in all the available fields using the following keywords and Boolean operators: <i>onomastics</i> and <i>teaching</i> .
<b>Results:</b> 30 works were automatically selected. After the exclusion criteria, there remained 7 works. Besides this, there was the exclusion of one paper which was in the group of Brazilian research.

**Table 2: Protocol for bibliographic research outside Brazil**

<b>Propositional:</b> at least in one part of the text, there is a concrete pedagogical proposal for teaching through Onomastics or for teaching Onomastics.
<b>Supported:</b> pedagogical justifications or educational documents are mentioned to support, justify, or contextualize the proposal.
<b>Empirical:</b> the proposal was tested in a classroom one or more times.
<b>Interdisciplinary:</b> the proposal involves knowledge from more than one discipline.
<b>Education for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG):</b> the proposal relates the teaching of Onomastics at least to one SDG.

**Table 3: Evaluation criteria for the collected works**

In the first part of March 2025, using the procedures described in Table 3, 15 scientific works were consensually selected by two researchers, the authors of this paper – Seide and Sousa. These works are described and evaluated in the following section, ordered not by chronological publication date, but in ascending one due to the scope of the evaluation criteria<sup>2</sup>.

### 3 Description and evaluation of the selected works

Andrade/Pereira’s (2021) paper could not be defined as propositional but interdisciplinary, based on Brazilian educational documents called *Base Nacional Comum Curricular* (BNCC) (Ministério da Educação 2018).<sup>3</sup> The researchers describe the contents and skills to be addressed in Pre-Elementary Education. Instead of presenting pedagogical procedures, the authors indicate content related to teaching Onomastics to 3- to 4-year-old preschool students that pertains to nicknames that refer to physical or psychological characteristics of the named individuals.

<sup>2</sup> This systematic literature review does not aim to present a historical overview on onomastics in language teaching; its focus is to describe the current state of the area (cf. Swales/Feak 2012: 279).

<sup>3</sup> The ‘National Common Curricular Base’ (Ministério da Educação 2018) is a normative document aimed at guiding the teaching in public and private schools in Brazil, indicating the skills to be developed by students each school year. It was published in 2017 and updated in 2018.

Based on the same document but focusing on middle school (*Ensino Fundamental II*), Seide's (2022) chapter also does not describe pedagogical procedures. Instead of this, it identifies among the proposed contents in BNCC for middle school (*Ensino Fundamental II*) those that can be approached from an onomastic perspective in four curricular subjects: Portuguese Language, English Language, Geography and History. The chapter also indicates some interdisciplinary relationships between the contents and highlights published onomastic research that can be adapted and applied to the teaching context. These studies focus on place names, nicknames for places and commercial names. It is important to mention that, according to this study, both experienced teachers and initial teaching education students of these disciplines are able to understand which contents are suitable for an interdisciplinary approach to Onomastics in their daily classes at each grade level.

Based on the *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais* – PCNs<sup>4</sup> ('National Curriculum Parameters', Ministério da Educação 2000) and an interdisciplinary perspective of Onomastics, Sousa (2007) the researcher proposed concrete actions for its implementation in the classroom including suggestions aimed to guide students toward understanding local toponymy, conducting field research and sharing their results. This approach mobilized knowledge from history, geography, anthropology and, especially, linguistics. Although it is an initial-stage proposal without a specific target audience, it emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach and it is grounded in active learning methodologies.

The book chapter by Figueiredo/Castro (2019) aims, among other objectives, to present teaching proposals for proper names in high school (*Ensino Médio*) classes in Brazil within two curricular subjects: Portuguese language and English language<sup>5</sup>. Although they specify the targeted educational level, there is no attempt to relate the pursued contents to the curricular guidelines recommended by BNCC. Despite these limitations, the study's merit lies in describing seven different teaching approaches. For some of them, there is a satisfactory and sufficient description of pedagogical procedures that can enable teachers to implement them effectively.

For English as a foreign language the following strategies are recommended: using exotic names of Brazilian cities in activities where students practice conversation skills related to informing their interlocutor about their place of origin; introducing lecture classes about the origins of globally recognized English commercial names; incorporating suffixes used in the formation of proper names in English – such as the suffix *-son*, which forms surnames and the suffixes *-y* and *-ie*, which are used to create personal names.

Some advice for teaching English as a foreign language are adaptations or complements to Portuguese language lessons. One involves using quaint names of Brazilian cities in a writing activity where students create and describe a fictional event that justifies or explains why the city has an exotic name. Focusing on commercial names, students are encouraged to collect commercial names of their own city that are expressed in English by the business owners'

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<sup>4</sup> The *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais* (PCNs) is a document that guided the educational system in Brazil. It was published in 1997 and updated in 2000. In 2017, it was replaced by BNCC.

<sup>5</sup> For this and other works by Brazilian researchers, the curricular component of Portuguese Language is considered as native language, while the component of English Language is considered the foreign language.

choice after a lecture class on the topic, then to research the motivations behind these choices and, finally, to share and disseminate their findings with classmates. Regarding commercial names, another recommendation is that students should create new names for products by given images or to select such from a list of new onyms prepared in advance by the teacher. Additionally, student might be encouraged to research municipality names excerpted from maps available on the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) ('Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics') website, and in analyzing them being based on criteria set by the teacher, such as the origin language or the type and name (for example: place names derived from saints, plants, etc.)

The study by Silva et.al. (2021) also focuses on middle school (*Ensino Fundamental II*) and, as the target audience, includes deaf students from the city of Imperatriz, located in the state of Maranhão, in the northeast region of Brazil, within a context of teaching Libras (Brazilian Sign Language) in bilingual schools. His recommendations involve an adapted use of an educational book written in Portuguese dedicated to the city tourist attractions and history of the city to teach how to identify iconicity<sup>6</sup>, motivation and semantic characteristics of 12 place names in Libras selected, referred as toponymic signs by the researchers. These are names that designate tourist spaces in the city. This article stands out because it is based on dialogic teaching, describing the main aspects of the methodology to enable its reproduction. It also values students' prior knowledge and it is interdisciplinary, interfacing with Geography and History curricular subjects, and it aims at the participation of deaf teachers from these disciplines.

Targeting high school (*Ensino Médio*) students, Sousa/Gouveia (2017) describe an interdisciplinary didactic module that integrates the curricular components of Portuguese Language and History. The proposal involves motivating students to conduct field research in their place of residence and to carry out semi-structured interviews with older residents of the area in order to recover the memory regarding the origins of place names. After the field research, students are expected to record and analyze the data. Then, at the end of the didactic module, they can share and socialize their results.

Approaching from a bilingual perspective, Sousa (2021) describes ways in which place names can be taught in classes of The Brazilian Sign Language (Libras), the native language of deaf people in Brazil, and Portuguese as an additional language for Brazilian deaf students, who live in the state of Acre, in the north region of Brazil. His approach is interdisciplinary, involving not only both languages, but also curricular components of Geography and Biology. It consists of describing materials and pedagogical procedures for implementing a didactic module organized in ten steps that focus on studying a set of toponymic signs in their linguistic, motivational and cultural dimensions, as well as conducting a comparative study of these names with place names in Portuguese. Another important feature of his study is its inclusion of sustainability issues: there is the recommendation of motivating students to discuss the exploitation of regional natural resources linking this issue to Acrean place names. Although well-founded and thoroughly described, however there is no indication of a specific class group for applying the

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<sup>6</sup> A toponymic sign exhibits iconicity when a relationship is perceptible between the signage (in the three-dimensional space of the production of the toponym in Libras) and the image that served as a reference for the creation of the toponymic sign (cf. Silva et. al. 2021: 88).

proposal; it is only mentioned that the classes will be conducted within Basic Education, covering from elementary school to high school.

The main limitation of the researchers analysed so far is that they are not empirical, which means that they have not been implemented in the classroom. In contrast, the following works describe and evaluate concrete pedagogical experiences, that is, those that have been tested in actual classroom.

Dos Santos/Sousa (2022) describe and thoroughly evaluate an interdisciplinary pedagogical experience involving Portuguese language related to geography and history components<sup>7</sup>. This experience was carried out with a 6<sup>th</sup> grade class of middle education (*Ensino Fundamental II*) at a public school in Rio Branco, the capital of Acre state, in the north of Brazil. In this class of 37 students, a 36-hour didactic module was implemented, in which students were introduced to the study of proper place names, studied maps and texts about the history of the city and its surroundings and, ultimately, they conducted research activities to identify and analyses the names of 16 neighbourhoods. The module was finalized with the dissemination of the results to the school community.

Costa/Dargel (2022) also describe in detail a concrete pedagogical experience carried out in Portuguese language classes at a public school in the city of Terenos, located in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, in the midwest region of Brazil. The authors present, in a well-founded and thorough manner, the contents, objectives, procedures adopted and results achieved to promote the study and use of personal proper names in activities involving textual production of two discursive genres: to create literary memory, worked out with students from 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades, and to prepare a chronicle with 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades students. It is important to mention that, in Brazil, middle school is related to four grades: from 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The pedagogical basis of these two proposals relates not only to Brazilian curricular documents, but mainly to the “Didactic Sequence Methodology” created by Dolz/Noverraz/Schneuwly (2004). Another distinctive feature of this study is its focus on universal literary genres and the detailed way in which the experience is described and evaluated. These characteristics make the researchers’ study very useful for Portuguese Language teachers, either experienced or in initial teacher education.

There are two studies that report pedagogical experiences carried out in public schools in the city of Marechal Cândido Rondon, located in the west region of Paraná state, in south of Brazil. The first one happened in April 2023 and involved the development and testing of four-hour classes in Portuguese as a Native Language in three 7<sup>th</sup>-grade at middle school (*Ensino Fundamental II*). This experience was conducted as part of a mandatory internship during the undergraduate course in Languages and Literature. It includes descriptions from the perspective of the trainee teacher involved (cf. Correia/Moreira/Seide 2023; dos Santos/de Souza/Seide 2023) as well as from the intern and the supervising teacher of the internship (cf. Seide/Lucas 2024). In these classes, the study of personal proper names, including first names and surnames, was

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<sup>7</sup> The proposed contents, activities and procedures tested in this pedagogical experience were initially conceived by Sousa in 2007 in a comprehensive work published in the annals of a scientific event, which appears to be the first publication in Brazil on the theme of how onomastics can be applied to Portuguese language teaching.

integrated with interpreting cartoons, news articles and reports, and with activities such as production and rewriting of stories from the news related to migratory flows. It is focused on teaching orthographic rules concerning to the use of capital letters too.

Two aspects differ this experience from the previously mentioned: first, the didactic module was tested in three different classes with generally positive results; second, the lessons were integrated into the regular classroom routine, as they involved adapting reading texts and activities from the textbook. Despite these positive aspects, the experience did not have an interdisciplinary nature and did not discuss/observe topics related to sustainability.

Another experience within the context of mandatory internship classes for the undergraduate course of Languages and Literature was conducted in the curricular component of Spanish as a Foreign Language: two lessons were developed and tested in three classes for each high school grade (cf. Dias/Seide 2024). These lessons integrated knowledge from geography, Spanish, Nahuatl language and the names of rivers (hydronyms), as well as addressed SDG number 6, which is related to the access to potable water and sanitation. Using reports about the water crisis affecting certain regions of Mexico and maps illustrating water sources, the management of water resources was linked to the names of surface water bodies (rivers) and groundwater (aquifers). The analysis included examining the etymology of these names, which required distinguishing those originating from the Aztec Nahuatl language.

The main limitation of the two experiences reported here is that they are punctual and short in duration, as only a few classes were tested: three in the first experience and two in the second. The studies described below differ from those already evaluated in this literature review because they were conducted outside Brazil and they involved a greater number of classes, allowing for a more comprehensive and in-depth analysis of these pedagogical interventions.

Marieiev et al. (2024) conducted a pedagogical experiment focused on evaluating teaching strategies for the different types of proper nouns (toponyms – place names; anthroponyms – personal names; biblionyms – book titles; and cosmonyms – celestial bodies and planets) and how to use them in written textual productions. The methodology was based on the comparison between the skills of two student groups: a control group and an experimental group in language classes. The researchers report that the participants were university students in their third and fourth year of a bachelor's degree at the National Pedagogical University in Ukraine: 64 students in the control group and 71 students in the experimental group. The activities included lectures, exercises, discussions with onomastics experts and text production tasks. The results indicated an increase in active onymic vocabulary<sup>8</sup> within the control group. Despite showing promising results through empirical research involving a considerable number of students, the experiment is described very vaguely: it does not specify which course the students were enrolled in, although it can be inferred that these were foreign language classes; there is also no detailed information about the exercises and activities carried out or the time required for them. These limitations distinguish this pedagogical research from Mackenzie (2018).

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<sup>8</sup> The onymic vocabulary is formed by proper names and it integrates the general vocabulary, which is formed by all the lexical items the speaker knows. The active vocabulary is formed by the lexical items that the speaker really uses in the speaking and writing.

Mackenzie's (2018) research focuses on the description and evaluation of his teaching experience related to offering, over three semesters, an elective course called *The Linguistics of Names* to students at the University of Manchester from 2013 to 2016. Each semester, between 100 and 120 students enrolled in the course, which lasted 12 weeks with a total workload of 18 hours. The content mainly centred on the grammatical aspects of proper nouns at all linguistic analysis levels, as well as using a sociolinguistic approach to address the relationship between name and identity, and psycholinguistic approaches to explain better the differences between names and non-names, proper names and common nouns, and how proper names are processed and memorized.

Mackenzie clarifies that, in the phonetic component, he emphasized the symbolism of sound, rhythm, and prosody of personal proper names. At the morphological level, he focused on the formation of nicknames and hypocoristic forms. Place names, in turn, received a historical and etymological treatment through diachronic morphological and etymological analysis based on consulting name dictionaries to discern the origin of a set of place names and their chronological strata. Throughout the paper, there is a detailed description of the activities and exercises proposed, whose analysis allows us to conclude that, overall, it is a course with limited interdisciplinarity that is firmly situated within the field of linguistics. The students evaluated the course positively, because they "praised the uniqueness and novelty of the course, the breadth of material covered, the practical skills taught, and the inherent interest and societal relevance of the material" (Mackenzie 2018: 295).

#### 4 Results

The selected works were published between 2018 and 2024. Thirteen out of these works were written by Brazilian authors, one by Ukrainian authors, and another one was by a native author from the United States who has conducted a pedagogical experience in Manchester, United Kingdom.

As already explained in the methodology section, one of the inclusion criteria for the publications was they to be propositional. The development of a teaching proposal is the first stage of a longer educational process that concludes after a scientific evaluation of the experience of implementing the teaching plan. Considering these three stages of practice-oriented experiences – proposal, implementation and evaluation – it was possible to analyse the works based on their completeness.

There are works that are not in the initial stage, but they are important as preliminary studies that enable the proposition of future pedagogical experiences (cf. Sousa 2007; Andrade/Pereira 2021; Seide 2022). Additionally, some works report experiences at the initial stage because they consist of proposals descriptions that have not yet been empirically implemented (cf. Sousa/Gouveia 2017; Figueiredo/Castro 2019; Sousa 2021; Silva et al. 2021). Other works describe experiences developed in the classroom, but without a systematic evaluation of the results obtained (cf. Costa/Dargel 2022; dos Santos/Sousa 2022; Correia/Moreira/Seide 2023; dos Santos/de Souza/Seide 2023; Seide/Lucas 2024; Dias/Seide 2024), placing them in the intermediate stage. There are two experiences at the final stage for which a scientific evaluation of the results achieved from the students' perspective was conducted (cf. MacKenzie 2018; Marieiev 2024). Among the studies, Silva et al. (2021) and Sousa (2021) deserve to be

highlighted because they aimed teaching Libras to deaf people and, due to that, it can be considered innovative.

The experiences that reached the third stage were conducted in Ukraine and in the United Kingdom. Those in the second stage happened in various cities and regions across Brazil: one in Rio Branco, in the north region; one in Terenos, in the midwest region; and two in Marechal Cândido Rondon, in the south region. Among the studies at the initial stage, there are three Brazilian articles that focus on content of national scope and two designed to be carried out using data and knowledge from the students' place of residence: one in Rio Branco and another in Imperatriz, in the northeast region of Brazil.

Not all works reported the duration of the pedagogical experiment, however, based on the available information, it is evident that they are prepared from short experiences of two hours to longer ones of 18 hours, which correspond to a short-term course. Regarding the levels of education addressed, there is evidence of studies covering all educational stages. There was a preliminary study focusing on onomastic content in preschool education (*Pré-escola*; cf. Andrade/Pereira 2021), one indicating content for middle school (*Ensino Fundamental II*; cf. Seide 2022), four empirical reports for middle school (*Ensino Fundamental II*; cf. Costa/Dargel 2022; Correia/Moreira/Seide 2023; dos Santos/de Souza/Seide 2023; Seide/Lucas 2024), four for high school (*Ensino Médio*; cf. Figueiredo/Castro 2019; Sousa 2021; Sousa/Gouveia 2017; Dias/Seide 2024), one work that does not specify whether the proposal would be applicable to elementary or high school (cf. Sousa 2021), and two for undergraduate education (cf. Mackenzie 2018; Marieiev 2024).

Considering the disciplinary or interdisciplinary nature of the articles, it is observed that, among the evaluated works, six are especially integrated into the component of Native Language (cf. Mackenzie 2018; Andrade/Pereira 2021; Costa/Dargel 2022; Correia/Moreira/Seide 2023; dos Santos/de Souza/Seide 2023; Lucas/Seide 2024). Only one focuses on Foreign Language (cf. Marieiev 2024), and two consider the relationship between Native Language and Foreign Language (cf. Figueiredo/Castro 2019; Sousa 2021). The remaining works display greater interdisciplinarity: Sousa and Gouveia (2017) relate the curriculum components of Native Language and Foreign Language to History; dos Santos/Sousa (2022), Seide (2022), and Silva et al. (2021) connect these language components with Geography and History. Another characteristic examined in these works was their relation to some object of sustainable development; among the thirteen reported experiences, only Dias and Seide (2024) explicitly had this purpose.

Related to the teaching techniques and methodologies described, mentioned or named in the works, there is a predominance of active learning methodologies. Some proposals include exercises for identifying and analysing proper names as preparatory activities for text production activities integrated into didactic sequences, such as reading and interpreting maps and journalistic texts. Other activities involve linguistic analysis or replicate onomastic research activities within the teaching context, following Dick's paradigm<sup>9</sup>. Additionally, for foreign language

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<sup>9</sup> This paradigm consists of the following "methodological procedures recommended by Dick for the toponomastic research that was adopted in Brazil as it follows : 1) documentary research based on letters produced by the

classes, there are activities focused on teaching communicative functions that need the use of proper names.

In all the proposals, there is a recommendation for dialogic teaching procedures that mobilize students' onomastic knowledge (cf. Seide 2021). Since this knowledge is shared among students, it serves as a starting point for the activities and helps explain why these activities are so well received: "names can be used as a teaching tool to engage undergraduate linguistics students. Because names are so familiar, even quotidian, students are generally fascinated to learn that they, nonetheless, have hidden structure and predictable patterning, and that language users have subconscious knowledge of many of their attributes." (Mackenzie 2018: 304).

Below, we present a synthesis table that aims to systematize and organize in a clear and visually accessible way the main findings of the analysis conducted.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Period of publication</b>	2007 to 2024
<b>Origin of the researchers</b>	27 Brazilian researchers, 5 Ukrainian researchers, 1 North-American researcher Phase of the proposal beginning (7), intermediary (6), final (2)
<b>Geographical Distribution (Brazil)</b>	North (Rio Branco), Northeast (Imperatriz), Midwest (Terenos) and South (Marechal Cândido Rondon)
<b>Time of proposal</b>	They vary from 2 hours (one-off activity) to 18 hours (short-term discipline)
<b>Education Level</b>	Early Childhood Education to Higher Education, with a greater focus on middle school and high school
<b>Disciplinary Nature</b>	6 in mother tongue, 1 in foreign language, 2 combine Mother Tongue and Foreign Language; the rest have an interdisciplinary nature
<b>Relationship with SDGs</b>	1 proposal explicitly linked to the Education for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (cf. Dias/Seide 2024)
<b>Teaching methodologies</b>	Active methodologies predominate, with practical activities, textual production, analysis of proper names, reading and interpretation of texts and maps
<b>Didactic procedures</b>	Dialogical approach based on students' prior onomastic knowledge, valuing everyday experience and student engagement

**Table 4: Synthesis**

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Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE); 2) data analysis according to the taxonomy of toponymic motivations systematized by it and the geographic and historical context of the region under study; ) records of data and analyses in standard lexicographic toponymic forms; 4) Quantitative data analysis (cf. Seide 2013a: 169). Evidently, considering atlas projects, the last step would be cartography" (Seide/Saparas 2020: 141).

The information presented facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the results, serving as a support tool for critical interpretation and decision-making in future investigations or pedagogical applications. In the next section, we present recommendations for future work focused on the application of onomastics in basic education.

## 5 Recommendations

This systematic review of the literature reveals that applied onomastics in basic education is a developing field, with a significant concentration of published works in Brazil between 2018 and 2024. The practices analysed demonstrate great potential for linking theory and practice, highlighting the use of active methodologies and a dialogic approach that values students' prior knowledge. In light of this overview, the following recommendations are presented:

### Pedagogical Recommendations

- a) Encourage interdisciplinary approaches by integrating onomastics with curricular components such as Portuguese language, geography, history, sociology and foreign languages, in order to enrich students' critical and contextualized education (cf. Fazenda 2003; dos Santos 2007);
- b) Promote the use of local contexts as a starting point for pedagogical activities, valuing proper names present in students' realities and fostering student protagonism;
- c) Adopt active learning methodologies, such as integrative projects, didactic sequences and onomastic investigation based on the collection and analysis of real data;
- d) Expand the incorporation of onomastics across different levels of basic education, with emphasis on middle school (*Ensino Fundamental II*) and high school (*Ensino Médio*);
- e) Relate onomastic proposals to the SDGs, especially regarding the promotion of citizenship, cultural diversity, appreciation of historical heritage and territorial identity.

### Investigative Recommendations

- a) Expand the number of empirical studies, with systematic application and evaluation of proposals in real classroom contexts, emphasising the scientific foundation of applied onomastics;
- b) Diversify the geographical scope of research by incorporating educational realities from different regions of Brazil and other countries, including rural areas and urban peripheries;
- c) Develop shared methodological guidelines to guide the construction, implementation and analysis of didactic proposals based on the principles of applied linguistics and interdisciplinarity;
- d) Encourage the publication of pedagogical experiences by elementary and middle school teachers, recognizing and valuing the knowledge produced by educators in practice;
- e) Investigate the formative impacts of onomastic proposals, focusing on language learning, critical development, identity strengthening and student engagement.

In summary, this research reaffirms the potential of onomastics as a pedagogical tool with formative value, that is able to link linguistic knowledge with contemporary social, cultural and educational issues. However, the advancement of the field depends on investment in applied pedagogical practices and systematic research that contribute to consolidating applied onomastics as a significant part of the school curriculum.

## 6 Final Considerations

The literature review described in this paper used the PRISMA methodology to address the following research questions: Are there studies that report and evaluate pedagogical experiences involving the application of onomastics to teaching? What characterizes these studies? What are their strengths and limitations?

Answering the first question, the analysis of the selected works reveals a diverse and expanding landscape concerning the pedagogical use of onomastics in language teaching. The publications date from 2018 to 2024, with a predominance of Brazilian productions, considering that only two were developed by non-Brazilian researchers: one by Ukrainian researchers and another one by a North American researcher. Geographically, Brazilian experiences demonstrate an effort toward decentralization, covering different regions of the country (North, Midwest, South and Northeast), with particular emphasis on initiatives that incorporate local contexts into pedagogical planning. From a temporal perspective, the proposed activities vary significantly in duration, ranging from brief two-hour activities to courses of 18 hours, indicating flexibility in integrating onomastic content into the school curriculum. Concerning the level of education, these initiatives go from pre school to high school.

Regarding the second question, the results indicate that there is diversity concerning the disciplinary nature of the proposals: some focus exclusively on the native language or foreign language, while others promote interdisciplinary connections with areas such as geography and history. Besides this, only one proposal explicitly aligns with the SDGs, suggesting an opportunity to expand the link between onomastic content and global themes. It was also observed that the methodologies employed in these works demonstrate a strong presence of active teaching approaches, emphasizing dialogic practices and valuing students' prior knowledge, especially related to the use and meaning of proper names.

About the third question, it is important to show, as a strength point, the adoption of the aforementioned approach that promotes student engagement and contributes to the development of meaningful learning, as indicated in the reports of the experiences analyzed. As a recommendation, there should be more initiatives that reach the final stage of development – that is, that include scientific evaluation of the results obtained.

Finally, the predominance of proposals at the initial stage (proposals not yet implemented) and intermediate stage (implemented proposals without systematic evaluation) indicates that applied onomastics in language teaching is a consolidating field with relatively few experiences subjected to rigorous empirical validation.

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