

Literacy in the National Common Core (BNCC)^{1 2 3}

Alfabetização na Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC)

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Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to analyze how literacy is articulated in the National Common Core (BNCC⁴) approved by the National Education Council in December 2017. Documentary research is the methodology used to examine documents/texts produced by both administrative agencies and officials in charge of education, in Brazil and in the world, respectively. It concludes that the functional literacy model, adopted by Unesco for Education, Science and Culture to subsidize adult literacy programs and projects, which is compatible with the notion of competence adopted by the BNCC, reduces literacy to the development of phonological awareness and to the learning of writing technique with the aim of educating people adapted to the prevailing social order and productive model.

Keywords: literacy, functional model of literacy, National Common Core, text

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⁴ Translation of the term National Common Core - Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) - in Portuguese

Resumo:

Este artigo tem por objetivo analisar como a alfabetização é articulada na Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) aprovada pelo Conselho Nacional de Educação em dezembro de 2017. Adota, como metodologia de estudo, a pesquisa documental, pois analisa documentos/textos produzidos por órgãos diretores e encarregados da educação, respectivamente, no Brasil e no mundo. Conclui que o modelo de alfabetização funcional adotado pela Organização das Nações Unidas para a Educação, a Ciência e a Cultura para subsidiar programas e projetos de alfabetização de adultos, compatível com a noção de competência adotada na BNCC, reduz a alfabetização ao desenvolvimento da consciência fonológica, à aprendizagem da técnica da escrita com o objetivo de formar pessoas adaptadas à ordem social e ao modelo produtivo vigentes.

Palavras-chave: *alfabetização, modelo funcional de alfabetização, Base Nacional Comum Curricular, texto*

Initial considerations

Among many articles published in scientific books and journals on the National Common Core (BNCC) versions, we highlight the articles by Mortatti (2015), “This National Common Core Basis: One more Brazilian Tragedy?”, and Gontijo (2015), “The National Common Core Basis (BNCC): Critical Comments,” as they specifically discuss literacy. These two authors position themselves critically regarding the BNCC version which, in 2015, was being developed and open to analyses, comments, suggestions and proposals through the *Public Consultation* platform.

The first author, based on a dialogue with Geraldi (1984 quoted by Mortatti, 2015), criticizes BNCC's conceptual eclecticism, with serious inconsistencies and incoherencies, which results from the reaffirmation of constructivism. This is a theory in the literacy field that became hegemonic due to its adoption by government programs and public policies, as it was considered a scientific and self-explanatory truth, - mixed - with the use of terminology, which is a characteristic of another theoretical-conceptual field and another political option: linguistic interactionism.

Gontijo (2015), on the other hand, based on studies carried out in the field of the literacy history in Brazil, points out that the elaboration of a *base* is not new. According to the researcher, in other moments of our history, it was possible to identify initiatives with this purpose by the administrative agencies from the national basic education. However, it was not until the 1990s that the proposition of a national common core began to build quality goals. The author concludes that, despite the heralded goal of improving educational rates, the alignment between the National Common Core, version 2015, and assessment has generated some impoverishment of what is taught in public schools.

Thus, considering the need to deepen reflections on literacy in the BNCC, the central scope of this text is to analyze how literacy is articulated in the BNCC text, approved by the National Education Council at the end of 2017.

It may not be necessary to return to the general foundations of the BNCC, as other authors have already followed this path, namely: Macedo (2016), Marsiglia, Pina, Machado & Lima (2017), Bittencourt (2017) and Carvalho & Lourenço (2018). However, we would like to discuss the notion of competence, as it supports the proposition of the learning and development objectives/rights described in the BNCC text, articulating goals for basic education and also for each stage of this level of education.

Competence, at the BNCC (Education Ministry, 2017), is defined as knowledge mobilization (concepts and procedures), skills (cognitive and socio-emotional practices), attitudes and values to solve demands of complex daily life, the full exercise of citizenship and the world of work⁵(p. 6). This definition then refers to the idea that elementary school should make individuals capable of using knowledge, skills, attitudes and values in solving the demands of everyday life, promoting the exercise of citizenship and entering the world of work. Thus, learning at school needs to have a practical applicability or usefulness and, therefore, the school should be at the service of society, fulfilling their demands without questioning them, giving the idea that it is fair, egalitarian and founded on the appreciation of all human beings.

We believe that the notion of competence, as adopted by the BNCC, is directly linked to the functional literacy model adopted by UNESCO to subsidize adult education programs

⁵ Translation from Portuguese. “*é definida como a mobilização de conhecimentos (conceitos e procedimentos), habilidades (práticas, cognitivas e socioemocionais), atitudes e valores para resolver demandas complexas da vida cotidiana, do pleno exercício da cidadania e do mundo do trabalho*”.

and projects throughout the world, now spread out in all basic education and, consequently, for the initial literacy process of children in the early years of elementary school. Thus, despite its apparent transformative character, the BNCC intends to reduce what is learned in public schools to a technical apparatus that underpins the permanence of existing social relations and production in contemporary society. The writing in the introductory part of the BNCC text reinforces this hypothesis, as it is mentioned that

The BNCC recognizes that - education must affirm values and stimulate actions that contribute to the transformation of society, making it more humane, socially just and also focused on the preservation of nature⁶..., - also being aligned with the 2030 Agenda of the United Nations (UN) (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 6).

In spite of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015) announcing that inclusive, equitable and quality education will be ensured with regard to child education and adult literacy, the target it sets to be achieved by 2030 is as follows:

4.1... ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

4.6... ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy (p. 23).

According to this passage from the *2030 Agenda*, the goal regarding children's education is distinct from the goal concerning youth and adults. For the former, primary and secondary education should be guaranteed by 2030 that will lead to relevant and effective results attested by internationally assessed examinations. Literacy and learning of basic math skills for young people and adults will be provided. If the central axis of the Agenda is inclusive, equitable and quality education, why does it guarantee only literacy and basic math skills, not to mention the guarantee of secondary/middle school education for the young people and adults (men and women)? What is the relevant and effective learning that will be taught to children (boys and girls) to live in 2030? In a way, the BNCC answers both of these questions, since the development and learning objectives set out in this text for elementary education are directed towards the education of children, youth and adults.

⁶ Translation from Portuguese: *“educação deve afirmar valores e estimular ações que contribuam para a transformação da sociedade, tornando-a mais humana, socialmente justa e, também, voltada para a preservação da natureza”*.

Regarding result evaluation, the BNCC is very much in tune with the *2030 Agenda*, as it starts from very detailed learning and development objectives that will serve as indicators for the setting up of test items, i.e., for the measuring of learning outcomes. The fact that evaluation is one of the BNCC's main objectives for its formulation has consequences on the way knowledge is conceived, that is, as a set of skills, attitudes and values that is useful, especially for economic development. Measurement by test items, must also be treated as a technique, be unique to everyone and observe degrees of depth according to the stage of education in which they will be transmitted.

Based on these first considerations, we seek in this article, firstly, to reflect on the functional literacy model adopted by UNESCO in the 1960s. Secondly, we analyze the developments of this model on the way learning and development objectives are mapped out in the BNCC for the literacy process, reducing it to the acquisition of a technique. Finally, we emphasize that, by analyzing how the text is thought out, the emphasis of literacy in the BNCC is on teaching writing techniques, therefore, on the mechanical aspects of reading and writing.

Considering our main objective - to analyze how literacy is articulated in the BNCC, we chose documentary research, for the development of the study from which this article derives, as it analyzes documents produced by the administrative agencies and officials responsible for education, respectively, in Brazil and in the world.. However, it is necessary to emphasize, based on Mikhail Bakhtin's (2003) conception of language, that we understand document as utterance/text, that is, as a response to a broader discursive chain that takes place throughout history and also in the present time. Thought as a response, it portrays a position, even if it has prevailed, through the use of mechanisms of power and discourse that dilute/hide possible oppositions. The discursive corpus that integrates the analyses contemplated in this article is then made up of the following texts: BNCC, approved in 2017, and reports and meetings minutes carried out by Unesco.

Functional literacy model

From September 9th to 19th, 1965, the World Congress of Ministers of Education for the Eradication of Illiteracy was held in Tehran. This congress recognized that illiteracy was an attack on human dignity and impeded economic development. As noted by the then-UNESCO

Director-General René Maheu: “literacy teaching is conversely gaining recognition as a factor in development”. Unesco, 1968, p. 10). The director also stressed that this position referred to the notion of functional literacy, which was being adopted by UNESCO. This congress, however, was, in his opinion, the milestone for the adoption of this concept that linked literacy; and social, individual and economic development; and illiteracy and underdevelopment; requiring actions that could increase literacy rates from poor countries.

The final report of this congress placed literacy, especially that of adults, as a prerequisite for the modernization and development of society, individuals and of the economic system. The main purpose of functional literacy was to train educated labor to act more productively in industry. Thus, functional literacy would only consist of teaching reading, writing and calculus, including work skills for higher productivity.

The text produced by Unesco called *La alfabetización funcional: cómo y por qué*, (Functional literacy: how and why) in addition to explaining what this model consisted of, that is: “any literacy operation conceived as a component of economic and social development projects” (Unesco, 1970b, p.9), was intended to demonstrate the superiority of this model by distinguishing it from the traditional literacy model. Thus, from UNESCO's perspective, the latter was limited to teach adults to calculate, read, write for communication purposes, and their teaching methods were uniform and externally prescribed. In functional literacy, on the other hand, the education of reading, writing and calculus could not occur separately from professional formation, and its methods should be variable and flexible, according to the diversity of objectives intended.

Accordingly, in order to propose a new (functional) literacy model as the basis of adult literacy programs, UNESCO criticized the traditional literacy model and, consequently, its objectives, methods and forms of organization. Despite not having clear guidelines on how this new model could be developed in practice, it was believed that the traditional model would not allow the goal of training labor adapted to the current economic model to be reached.

Also according to the UNESCO text (1970b), the novelty of the concept and the need for a practical definition of literacy were related to the plurality of often contradictory interpretations, hitherto adopted in countries for functional literacy. There were places where it was understood as being based on the applicability in practical situations of reading, writing and calculus knowledge. Others considered that their accomplishment in the workspaces was

enough or that the words chosen to learn to read and write were part of the technical vocabulary used in the professional environment to be considered functional.

Despite the adoption of the functional literacy model for adults, in the text entitled *Literacy 1967-1969: Progress achieved in literacy throughout the world*⁷ (Unesco, 1970a), consisting of responses to a questionnaire sent by UNESCO to member countries, this organization affirmed the existence, in the late 1960s, of an educational crisis expressed in the world illiteracy rates, because the expansion of the educational system in developing countries did not keep up with the population increase due to the rise in birth and survival rates. It was also pointed out in that text that many countries considered literacy programs to be a worthless effort and therefore argued in favor of expanding primary education as a way of eliminating illiteracy at its source. Opposing this position, UNESCO mentioned that in a socialist country such as Russia, Anatoly Vasilyevich Lunacharsky had proclaimed that

The fight against illiteracy and ignorance cannot be confined to organizing proper school teaching for children, adolescents and young people. Adults will want to be rescued from the humiliation of being unable to read and write. Schools for adults must occupy a prominent place in the general plan of education (Cited by UNESCO, 1970a, p. 25).

By mentioning the position that came from a socialist country, UNESCO sought to demonstrate that, regardless of political-ideological positions, there was broad acceptance of its functional literacy model. To this end, it was even quoted in the Mahatma Gandhi text, pointing out that Mahatma said that illiteracy in India needed to be - eradicated - and that literacy should not be restricted to knowledge of the alphabet, but should promote the learning of useful knowledge.

In our opinion, however, the focus on the functional literacy model for adults did not create contradictions with children's literacy, as the last two years of primary schooling, as directed by UNESCO (1972a), should be aimed at training for work. The controversy was more economic in nature, linked to the international financing of education, since at that time, it was directed to adult literacy programs and projects.

It should be added that the concept of functional literacy has changed in the course of its adoption by UNESCO. Initially, as mentioned, it was related only to economic development and productivity. Thus, according to this agency, it was possible to estimate that functional and

⁷ Translation of *La alfabetización 1967-1969: los progresos de la alfabetización en el mundo*.

selective literacy, that is, carried out in centers where it could be better used for development, it would provide benefits: a) for individuals, who could improve their productivity and consequently increase their salaries; b) for the productive sectors, which could reduce costs; c) for the country, which would increase gross national product, such as public income, and decrease imports.

Criticism of this model appeared in the text of the Third International Conference on Adult Education, held in Tokyo from July 25th to August 7th, 1972. According to records produced from this meeting, many speakers expressed disagreement with the use of the term - Functional literacy - because the purpose of literacy would subordinate – the adult exclusively to economic and production mechanisms, regardless of their social and cultural implications -⁸ (Unesco, 1972b, p. 12).

Faced with the need to respond to criticism, the idea was emphasized that adult literacy, besides occurring in economic contexts, also happened in social and cultural contexts. Thus, any attempt to eradicate illiteracy would have to take into account these last contexts, as illiterates had diverse interests in learning to read and write. As pointed out by UNESCO (1972a), research by anthropologists and sociologists indicated that “literacy programs must take into account the illiterate’s attitude towards adult education, their expectations, their desires, the use to which he can put whatever literacy skills he acquires.”(p. 36).

Paulo Freire's writings and lessons about the social and cultural significance of literacy, based on experiences in Brazil and Chile, as pointed out by UNESCO, considered “literacy education as a process through which the illiterate become aware of his own creative powers and comes to view literacy as a tool for liberating and freeing these powers” (Unesco, 1972a, p. 38). Regarding these ideas, he argued that if literacy allowed the illiterate subject to play an active role in society, the illiterate subject would also need to be willing to accept this new condition. However, this was not always the case because, according to experiences observed in some countries, even when workers were aware of their obligations and social rights, they would

⁸ Translated from Portuguese: “o adulto, exclusivamente, aos mecanismos econômicos e de produção, sem levar em conta a sua implicação social e cultural”.

participate more actively in social organizations and would be able to analyze the conditions in which they lived, their wages however, would not increase.

It should be added that, in 1975, the International Literacy Symposium took place in Persepolis, Iran. This Symposium was held on the basis of a proposal presented by the Iranian government at 16th Meeting of the General UNESCO Conference, which took place in Paris in October 1974. According to a declaration approved at the Symposium, illiteracy in the world increased, reflecting - the failure of development policies that are indifferent to man and to the satisfaction of his essential needs - ⁹(Oficina de Educación Iberoamericana, 1975, p. 3). Despite knowing the advances in literacy, in many countries, it has not helped to improve people's living conditions, as they have not acquired - the means to become aware of the problems of the society in which they live and of their own problems, neither of the means to solve them or of really participating in their solution - ¹⁰(Oficina de Educación Iberoamericana, 1975, p. 3), even presenting a tendency towards *illiteracy*.

Successful programs have been linked to the vital needs and participation of human beings in the changes of society. Thus, these were not limited to the teaching of reading, writing and calculus, which were subordinate only to the needs of growth detached from the human purpose of educational processes. For UNESCO, however, considering the time and efforts made by the worker in their literacy, the results of the questionnaires showed that it was reasonable to expect interest in literacy when it clearly provided an improvement in productivity and workers' incomes.

In designing the future of the functional literacy model, UNESCO emphasized that evaluation would continue to play a central role in projects within the functional literacy model, pointing out the results and providing the basis for new projects. In this way, there would be increased support from UNESCO towards studies on adult literacy, dissemination of results and project evaluation. Another perspective deals with the application of the methods and techniques of the functional literacy model in other sectors of education. In this regard, the last

⁹ Translated from Portuguese: “o fracasso das políticas de desenvolvimento indiferentes ao homem e à satisfação de suas necessidades essenciais”

¹⁰ Translated from Portuguese: “meios para a tomada de consciência dos problemas da sociedade em que vivem e de seus próprios problemas, nem os meios para resolvê-los ou para participar realmente de sua solução”

Unesco General Conference, held in 1970, made a recommendation, in its resolution on literacy, to the Member States and the Unesco Director-General,

to encourage research and experimentation *concerning adaptation of new methods and techniques of functional literacy to regular and systematic education* and their utilization in connexion with experimental projects, designed to promote lifelong education and to remodel the traditional educational systems. Thus, the coming years should see a broadening of the activities of the Experimental Literacy Program, as well as widespread application of the functional approach to education (Unesco, 1972a, p. 54).

Thus, in the 1970s, UNESCO aimed at broadening the adoption of the functional literacy model for all education, making it merely a dependent element on the social, economic and cultural order, and responsible for the reproduction, in school, of the attitudes, behaviors, knowledge and values that are necessary for economic strengthening and growth.

The minutes from 20th Unesco General Conference Meeting (1979) reiterated the need for governments to intensify efforts to make their populations literate, taking into account, among other aspects, the following considerations: (i) the fight against illiteracy is a responsibility, which demands political will and resource mobilization; (ii) literacy should be inspired by the objectives of economic, social and cultural development, as this is an essential condition for the full participation of individuals and groups in the life of society and in the definition of their destiny.

Thus, whilst indifferent to the controversies surrounding the functional literacy model, UNESCO maintained it due to it being essential to ground international statistics. Graff (1995) highlighted the difficulties in defining and measuring literacy, especially, in our opinion, with regard to measuring its functionality, i.e., changes in participation in groups and communities to which people belong and in the efficiency in the work sector. Thus, as shown, for example, by the items present in the *Provinha Brasil* tests and in the National Literacy Assessment, the evaluations, at least at the national level, have been dedicated to measure knowledge related to the writing technique, because the concept of literacy as an acquisition of the written code is at the base of the functional model, that is, what is intended is the learning of minimum reading and writing knowledge that allow adaptation to society and to the productive model.

Literacy in the BNCC

It must be admitted that UNESCO's expectations are fulfilled in the BNCC if we consider its link to international evaluations. The fact that it adopts the notion of competence that reduces knowledge to a technique to be applied in contexts mainly situated in the professional environment and the way the - Portuguese language - curriculum component, specifically literacy, is articulated in the first two years of elementary school¹¹.

As written in the BNCC text, in these initial years, - experiences with oral and written language that have already been initiated in the family and early childhood education - ¹² will be deepened (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 85). In general, the integration axes that guide the development and learning of the Portuguese language are orality; linguistic/semiotic analysis; reading/listening; and text production. These axes should provide the increase of language/discourse skills, both in reading and in production, in *situated language practices*. The action fields in which language practices take place are, according to the BNCC text regarding the two initial years: daily life; artistic-literary; study and research; and public life.

The various literacy practices in which children have been placed throughout their social life and in their early childhood education will also be, according to the BNCC, - progressively intensified in the initial years of elementary school, and made more complex towards secondary genres with more complex texts - ¹³ (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 85). The correlation between these genres or texts with so-called situated practices is very strong and their learning should provide - awareness and improvement of situated practices -¹⁴ (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 85). The literacy practices in which children were introduced into early childhood education are referred to as: - sing along songs and the recital of nursery rhymes and tunes, listening and retelling tales, following game and recipe rules, playing games, reporting experiences and experiments - ¹⁵ (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 85).

¹¹ It is necessary to remember that the “knowledge objectives” related to the learning of the written code are not specified in the BNCC, neither for the education of children nor for the education of youth and adults.

¹² Translated from Portuguese: “*experiências com a língua oral e escrita já iniciadas na família e na Educação Infantil*”

¹³ Translated from Portuguese: “*progressivamente intensificadas e complexificadas, na direção de gêneros secundários com textos mais complexos*”.

¹⁴ Translated from Portuguese: “*a consciência e o aperfeiçoamento das práticas situadas*”.

¹⁵ Translated from Portuguese: “*cantar cantigas e recitar parlendas e quadrinhas, ouvir e recontar contos, seguir regras de jogos e receitas, jogar games, relatar experiências e experimentos*”.

Thus, what is expected is children's literacy in the first two years of elementary school, which should be the focus of the pedagogical action. However, it is reduced to learning the technique of writing for purposes related to application in practical situations. It is necessary to remember that, in the functional model or perspective of literacy (terms that, in our opinion, have the same meaning), literacy, understood as acquisition of the written code or coding and decoding skills, is the basis for action in situated contexts and also for changing the contexts which children are part of. From this perspective, the coding and decoding skills covered by literacy, as detailed in the BNCC text in the first two years of elementary school, are as follows:

- differentiate drawings/graphism (symbols) from graphemes/letters (signs);
- develop a global recognition capacity of words (which we call - incidental - reading, such as reading logo labels), which will then be responsible for reading fluency;
- build knowledge of the alphabet of the language in question;
- understand which sounds to represent in writing and how;
- build the phoneme-grapheme relationship: the perception that letters are representing certain speech sounds in precise contexts;
- perceive the syllable in its variety as a phonological context of this representation;
- until finally understanding the mode of relationship between phonemes and graphemes, in a specific language (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 89)¹⁶.

The elements described in the transcript demonstrate that in the first two years of elementary school, the emphasis is on acquiring written code. In this sense, the only privileged axis in all fields is linguistic analysis. Except for the first skill to be worked on in the literacy process, the others have been guiding methods, booklets, and textbooks organized according to analytical and synthetic methods. The emphasis on these skills throughout history has not resulted in the full literacy of children.

Despite the concern about the use of texts in society being made up of different languages (semioses), this aspect has no place in literacy. On the contrary, children, in the early stage of learning written code, need to distinguish writing design. This distinction was debated in research by Góes and Gontijo (2017) by showing, from empirical research, that it is a school creation resulting from investigations that favor the relations between speech units and writing

¹⁶ Translated from Portuguese.

units, forgetting that most of the texts circulating in society combine several languages to produce meaning.

If the emphasis is on linguistic analysis, the production and reading of texts and, consequently, literacy as meaning production processes are secondary, postponed to a time when children have already gone through the basic process (literacy), i.e., - Building knowledge of phonographic relations - ¹⁷ (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 87) in Brazilian Portuguese. Unfortunately, such an understanding of the literacy process is a huge setback for language studies and, more specifically, for the teaching of written language in public schools.

On the other hand, by differentiating literacy and *spelling*, BNCC reduces literacy to the training of phonological awareness. In this sense, literacy is restricted to the acquisition of the alphabetic base (performed in the first two years of schooling), that is, towards the comprehension of the alphabetic character of writing. Spelling, understood as a complementary process of literacy, extends over the subsequent years of elementary school and corresponds to the domain of Portuguese language spelling.

According to Delfior (1998, p. 11), phonological awareness in a broad sense, is the - ability to intentionally identify, segment and manipulate the constituent units of oral language¹⁸. Studies on this issue, although differing in some respects, agree that syllabic and phonemic awareness is a prerequisite for the successful learning of reading and writing. Thus, we can infer from the objectives set for BNCC literacy that it is restricted to the training of phonological awareness, that is, the training of the skills of segmenting and identifying oral language sounds, aiming at the discovery of their corresponding graphics.

Going against this perspective, we believe in a child's ability to produce and read texts in the initial literacy process. We trust in their ability to learn to read and write in and with the diversity of languages that make up texts. For this, however, it would be necessary for the production of texts, as defended by Geraldi (1991), to have a central place in the initial teaching-learning process of written language, not the training of phonological awareness.

¹⁷ Translated from Portuguese: “de construção do conhecimento das relações fonográfêmicas”.

¹⁸ Translated from Portuguese: “habilidade para identificar, segmentar e manipular, de forma intencional, as unidades constituintes da linguagem oral”.

Notion of Text in the BNCC

By analyzing the concepts that underpin Portuguese language teaching and the BNCC literacy process, we come across a mixture of ideas that produce misconceptions and lack conceptual consistency. This document, similar to other curricular documents, mainly the Portuguese Curriculum Parameters of Portuguese Language, states that

it accepts the centrality of the text as a unit of work and the enunciative-discursive perspectives in the approach, in order to always relate the texts to their production contexts and the development of skills to the significant use of language in reading, listening and text production activities in various media and semioses¹⁹ (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 63).

It is also based on concepts such as: - language practices, discourse and discursive genres/textual genres, spheres/fields of discourse circulation - ²⁰ (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 63). This conceptual assembly is not expressed in the goals that are set for the early years of elementary school, because the - word - remains a privileged teaching unit. This choice can be explained by the fact that this unit is more easily decomposed and composed in order to lead children to segment, identify and manipulate syllables and phonemes and their corresponding graphs, that is, it contributes to the development of phonological awareness, a process to which literacy is restricted.

The indication of the texts to be used in this phase also has this objective. In the first and second year, it is suggested to work with tunes; rhymes; tongue twisters; songs; lyrics; among other - genres - from the field of everyday life. For other fields, short texts are suggested. There are few objectives related to the production of texts. These two elements denote the poor centrality of the text and, above all, of text production in the process of teaching and learning the Portuguese language in the two years intended for literacy.

To demonstrate what has been said, we will analyze the tables that describe, language practices and their respective fields and objects of knowledge, in the BNCC:

¹⁹ Translated from Portuguese: *assume a centralidade do texto como unidade de trabalho e as perspectivas enunciativo-discursivas na abordagem, de forma a sempre relacionar os textos a seus contextos de produção e o desenvolvimento de habilidades ao uso significativo da linguagem em atividades de leitura, escuta e produção de textos em várias mídias e semioses.*

²⁰ Translated from Portuguese: *“práticas de linguagem, discurso e gêneros discursivos/gêneros textuais, esferas/campos de circulação dos discursos”*

Chart 1 - Language practices and their respective fields and objects of knowledge

Action Fields	Language Practices	Knowledge Objects
All fields of activity	Reading/listening (shared and standalone)	Reading Protocols Decoding/reading fluency Reader Training
	Writing (shared and autonomous)	Phoneme-grapheme correspondence Alphabetical System Building / Writing Conventions Alphabetic system construction / establishment of anaphoric relations in referencing and setting up of cohesion
	Linguistic / Semiotic Analyses (Literacy)	Knowledge of the Brazilian Portuguese alphabet Setting up of Alphabet system Setting up of Alphabet and spelling systems Knowledge of the Brazilian Portuguese alphabet Knowledge of the various alphabet spellings/ accentuation Word segmentation/word classification by number of syllables Setting up of the Alphabet system Punctuation Synonyms and antonyms/morphology/punctuation Morphology
Everyday life	Reading/listening (shared and autonomous)	Reading Comprehension
	Writing (shared and autonomous)	Autonomous and Shared Writing Shared writing
	Orality	Oral text production
	Linguistic/Semiotic Analysis (Literacy)	Text composition Format
Public life	Reading/listening (shared and autonomous)	Reading Comprehension
	Writing (shared and autonomous)	Shared writing
	Orality	Oral text production
	Linguistic/Semiotic Analysis (Literacy)	Text composition

Study and research	Reading/listening (shared and autonomous)	Reading Comprehension Analytical images in texts Research
	Writing (shared and autonomous)	Text Production Autonomous Writing
	Orality	Oral Text Planning Oral exposition
	Linguistic/Semiotic Analysis (Literacy)	Text composition format /text adaptation to writing norms
Artistic-literary	Reading/listening (shared and autonomous)	Literary reader training Aesthetic/style appreciation
	Writing (shared and autonomous)	Autonomous and shared writing
	Linguistic/Semiotic Analysis (Literacy)	Forms of narrative composition Forms of poetic text composition Forms of visual poetic text composition of

Source: National Common Core (Ministry of Education. 2017).

It should be noted that the axes of integration are now called language practices, which in turn comprise reading/listening; writing; speaking; linguistic; and semiotic analysis. In this way, the text production axis is replaced by the written axis. Orality is not present in the field of artistic-literary performance, which seems quite strange to us.

Knowledge objects are defined for each language practice, In a footnote, there is the following explanation for this expression: they are - understood as *contents, concepts and processes* - which, in turn, are organized into thematic units - ²¹ (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 26), from which the skills to be achieved each year are defined.

Regarding writing, the following knowledge objects are related: autonomous writing, shared writing and text production. Thus, the writings will have the teacher's and/or colleagues' help, because, as the BNCC advises;

literacy and spelling processes will impact texts in the genres addressed in the early years. Despite shared reading and production with the teacher and colleagues, even so, the genres proposed for reading/listening and oral, written and multisemiotic production, in the initial first years, will be simpler, such as lists (call, ingredients, shopping lists), tickets, invitations, photo captions, headlines and deals, class rule lists, etc., as they favor a greater focus on spelling, becoming more complex throughout the initial years²² (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 29).

²¹ Translated from Portuguese with emphasis added: “*entendidos como conteúdos, conceitos e processos –, que, por sua vez, são organizados em unidades temáticas*”.

²² Translation from Portuguese: *os processos de alfabetização e ortografização terão impacto nos textos em gêneros abordados nos anos iniciais. Em que pese a leitura e a produção compartilhadas com o docente e os colegas, ainda assim, os gêneros propostos para*

Based on the above, the texts that circulate in everyday life are highlighted in literacy, such as - the circle time songs, the recipes, the rules of the game, etc. - ²³ (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 29). The choice of these texts aims at providing focus on the written representation of the word, which is the teaching unit in literacy. Thus, we can infer that the main objective of literacy is to enable the learning of phonological awareness and writing technique, aiming at its application in situated practices. The skills traced for each object of knowledge are indicators for the setting up of test items.

Contrary to the BNCC, and in the perspective of what Geraldi (1991) proposed, the centrality of text production is grounded in the field of human rights and the theories of discourse that define the text/utterance as a unit of discursive communication. In the field of law, the first principle of the *Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression*, adopted by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (2000), at its 108th regular session, held from October 16 to 27, 2000 states that: - Freedom of expression, in all its forms and manifestations, is a fundamental and inalienable right inherent of all individuals. Additionally, it is an indispensable requirement for the very existence of a democratic society.

One way to enforce the right to freedom of expression in school is to provide situations in which children produce texts (oral or written through writing and reading). Free expression is a right of all people, therefore, also of children in literacy. Geraldi (1991) pointed out the motivations for choosing the text as a language teaching and learning unit at any stage of schooling. These are ideological motivations because, when producing oral and written texts, students who attend mainly public schools can tell their stories, about their families and about their community, present their ways of thinking and seeing the world.

Paulo Freire (1996) defended education/literacy as a practice of freedom, taking students' reality as a starting point for knowledge production. Text production and reading uphold education as a practice of freedom and oppose the discourse of the school without a party²⁴, the attempt to attribute to school education a supposedly neutral, instrumental character, whose purpose is to educate people to respond to social and economic demands in situated or

leitura/escuta e produção oral, escrita e multissemiótica, nos primeiros anos iniciais, serão mais simples, tais como listas (de chamada, de ingredientes, de compras), bilhetes, convites, fotolegenda, manchetes e lides, listas de regras da turma etc., pois favorecem um foco maior na grafia, complexificando-se conforme o se avança nos anos iniciais.

²³ Translated from Portuguese: “as cantigas de roda, as receitas, as regras de jogo etc.”

²⁴ Movement which emerged in Brasil in 2004.

acting practices. In this way, it also opposes the demand for the formation of passive individuals, with excellent capacities to adapt to the conditions imposed by the market, but unable to act collectively in the construction of a society founded on social justice.

The practices of text and reading production lead future workers to question the knowledge conveyed in school, to have doubts and to ask questions about their place and their rights. Based on the perspective of the functional literacy model, the BNCC does not intend to train adults who will live in a future in which they can actually produce texts, because this knowledge can lead them to question themselves, as in the poem “Questions from a worker who reads” by Bertolt Brecht (1986): “Who built Thebes, of the seven gates? / In the books you will read the names of kings; / Did the kings haul up the lumps of rocks? / And Babylon, many times demolished, who raised it up so many times?”(P. 167).

Final Considerations

The functional model of literacy is currently maintained in the UNESCO documents, the UN agency responsible for outlining world education policies. Thus it is

the functional literate is the person who can undertake those activities in which literacy is necessary for effective action in his or her group and community and which enables them even so to continue to use reading, writing and arithmetic for their own development and community (Infante & Letelier, 2013, p. 19)²⁵

At first sight, this model seems revolutionary to us, as it highlights the development of literacy in order to perform actions, especially for the insertion of the subjects in the world of work and in the daily activities performed in their social group. However, we must not forget that human formation should not be thought of only as a factor that enables the performance of productive activities. Therefore, we understand that this perspective is linked to a way of conceiving human beings that reduces them to mere performers of tasks, that is, it is based on a conception that minimizes the human capacity to act as a critical subject in the world. Children, adolescents, youth and adults need the school to be a formative space that enables them to

²⁵ Translation from Spanish: “Es alfabeto funcional la persona que puede emprender aquellas actividades en que la alfabetización es necesaria para la actuación eficaz en su grupo y comunidad y que le permitan asimismo seguir valiéndose de la lectura, la escritura y la aritmética al servicio de su propio desarrollo y del desarrollo de la comunidad”.

reflect on life, where they have the opportunity to become subjects who doubt, question, contradict, agree, challenge and thus can collectively transform society.

Education, as well as literacy, is a public good, therefore, a duty of the state and the fundamental right of every person. The guarantee of education by the state is one of the conditions for the construction of a just, free and solidary society. That is why we must collectively fight for full literacy. In conceptual terms, unlike the assumption of the functional model and, therefore, the BNCC, literacy needs to be thought of as a sociocultural practice in which children, adolescents, youth and adults, through work integrated with the production of oral and written texts; reading; knowledge about the Portuguese language system; and the relationship between sounds and letters and letters and sounds; exert critical capacity creativity and ingenuity, that is, they practice citizenship at school.

Given the concern with evaluation, it is necessary to question its purpose; the proposition of universal concepts of literacy; and especially, the functional model that aims solely to adapt people to the current economic, social and political order. From our point of view, both past and present, the concepts of literacy, as well as the assessment of literacy, serve only to conform all literacy processes to the same logic, helping to maintain an economic model based on exploitation of people the maintenance of inequalities and, consequently, the lack of social justice.

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