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A BASIS FOR SOCIALIZED SEMIFORMATION: THE VULGARIZATION OF CRITICISM AS A CONSENSUS-PRODUCING STRATEGY¹PRISCILA MONTEIRO CHAVES²ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3986-6157>

ABSTRACT: Considering the undertaking that has been underway for implementing the National Common Curricular Base (*Base Nacional Comum Curricular* BNCC), this article proposes an analysis of its latest version with a specific focus on what is standardized for the teaching of Portuguese in Elementary Education, establishing relationships, in the background, with the area of languages at the same stage of schooling. The methodological perspective used is critical discourse analysis (CDA), anchored in the dialectical relations between language and social practice, based on the assumption that, within the scope of discourse, it is possible to understand political and social constraints. It is inferred that the policy in question operates by inserting the ideas of apparent regeneration of the democratic culture, by stimulating the socialization of *pseudoparticipation* rather than radically participative culture, as yet another force in the progress of fractions of bourgeois interests, and avails itself of a critical and engaged theoretical-discursive arsenal as yet another consensus-producing strategy among teachers.

Keywords: BNCC, Portuguese language, socialized semiformation, language.

UMA BASE PARA A SEMIFORMAÇÃO SOCIALIZADA: A VULGARIZAÇÃO DA CRÍTICA COMO ESTRATÉGIA DE PRODUÇÃO DO CONSENSO

RESUMO: Considerando o empreendimento que vem ocorrendo para a implementação da Base Nacional Comum Curricular, neste artigo é proposta uma análise da sua última versão com foco específico no que é normatizado para o ensino de Língua Portuguesa no Ensino Fundamental, estabelecendo relações, em um segundo plano, com a área das linguagens nessa mesma etapa da educação. A perspectiva metodológica utilizada é a análise crítica discursiva, ancorada nas relações dialéticas entre linguagem e prática social, partindo do pressuposto que, no âmbito do discurso, é possível compreender as coerções políticas e sociais. Infere-se que a política em questão opera na inserção das ideias de regeneração aparente da cultura democrática, de estímulo não à cultura radicalmente participativa, mas da socialização da *pseudoparticipação*, como mais uma força no progresso

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dos interesses das frações da burguesia e se vale de um arsenal teórico-discursivo crítico e engajado como mais uma estratégia de produção de consenso entre os professores.

Palavras-chave: BNCC, Língua Portuguesa, semiformação socializada, linguagem.

UNA BASE PARA LA SEMIFORMACIÓN SOCIALIZADA: LA VULGARIZACIÓN DE LA CRÍTICA COMO ESTRATEGIA EN LA PRODUCCIÓN DEL CONSENSO

RESÚMEN: Teniendo en cuenta el compromiso que se ha estado llevando a cabo para la implementación de la Base Nacional Comum Curricular, este artículo propone un análisis de su última versión con un enfoque específico en lo que está estandarizado para la enseñanza del portugués en la escuela primaria, estableciendo relaciones, en el fondo, centrándose en el área del lenguaje en esta misma etapa de la educación. La metodología utilizada es el análisis crítico discursivo, anclado en las relaciones dialécticas entre el lenguaje y la práctica social, suponiendo que en el contexto del discurso es posible comprender los determinantes del lenguaje sociopolítico. Se concluye que la política en cuestión opera en la inserción de las ideas de regeneración aparente de la cultura democrática, en la socialización de la *pseudoparticipación*, como una más fuerza en el progreso de los intereses de la burguesía; y se basa en un arsenal teórico discursivo crítico y comprometido como una estrategia de producción del consenso entre los docentes.

Palabras clave: BNCC, Lengua portuguesa, semiformación socializada, lenguajes.

BRIEF INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

“Where are the conditions for revolution? In the changing of attitudes or of external circumstances?” (BENJAMIN, 1994, p. 33)

After three years of its approval, the National Common Curricular Base (*Base Nacional Comum Curricular* – BNCC) is installed in the soul of our teaching activity, either in Basic Education or in Higher Education, in undergraduate courses (BRASIL. CNE, 2019), because it is about “[...] a *normative* document that *defines the organic and progressive set of essential learning outcomes* that all students must attain throughout the stages and types of Basic Education” (BRASIL, 2017, p. 7). Due to its mandatory nature, implementation continues to happen even in times of health crisis and social isolation, with remote education activities (PEREIRA et al, 2020) and the progressive institution of hybrid education that has been taking place in schools and spreading as an education project for the working class (CHAVES; FLORES; EVANGELISTA, 2020).

Referring to the somewhat more recent legislation, a public policy was already foreseen in the Federal Constitution of 1988 (BRAZIL, 1988) to define the action for the preparation of Basic Education curricula. This need was ratified eleven years later by the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law No. 9,394/96 (BRASIL, 1996). In the first ten years of this century, guiding documents for Early Childhood Education, Secondary Education and for the then instituted Elementary Education of Nine Years were published (BRASIL, 2009). Subsequently, the National Curriculum Guidelines were published, which described learning rights for different segments and modalities of teaching and signaled the need for a national base. In 2014, Law 13,005 instituted the National Education Plan – PNE 2014-2024 (BRASIL, 2014) –, which, in its wording, does not prohibit the investment of public resources for private education, endorses the extension of standardized evaluation programs with close harmonization as to international assessments and their purposes and ratifies the relevance of a base. This makes it evident to the national and international scenarios that the concerns about Brazilian curricular policies last at least half a century. Furthermore, it shows that they are motivated, fundamentally, by the negotiations of the fractions of the Brazilian national bourgeoisie that respond to the ostensible indication of the need for reforms in the educational plan by Multilateral Organisms, in what concerns teacher training, evaluations and institution of a unified curriculum.

In the Brazilian context, the development and implementation of the BNCC has had the strong support of business monopoly associations acting as the State. As Neves and Piccinini (2018) well note, this is not a modern phenomenon or one that is restricted to the BNCC. The constitution of “[...] ‘spheres of influence’ is typical, for example, of the organization *Todos Pela Educação*, an ideological exponent of the business community for public education, one of the supporters of MPB, which has long allied with the state bureaucracy through characters from different ideological fields” (2018, p. 195).

Indeed, the BNCC became a topic of discussion in the public sphere when the first version was released in September 2015, when the leadership of the Workers’ Party suffered an intense political crisis, in close connection and as a result of the structural crises of capital and the need to maintain accumulation patterns.³ In the following year, we have the release of the second version of the

³ Treating the theme in a more recent and more significant way for what is seen in educational policies today, we note, according to Vieira and Lamosa (2017), that the reforms of the State, from the 90s, in Brazil and in the world, respond to the restructuring of capital. “In order to resume the levels of profitability of transnational companies and financial capital, affected by the oil crisis in the 1970s, the fractions of capital, both in the countries of the center of capitalism and in dependent economies, articulated a way out of the crisis” (p. 4). In this scenario, the capital offensive did not occur only against workers in their immediate circumstances. The promotion of strategies that comprised the redefinition of the role of the State involved issues related to the education of the working class, which would need to respond to the needs posed by

document, still under the government of Dilma Rousseff. Both Base proposals claimed to determine *fundamental learning standards* in all stages of Basic Education. As a result of the legal-media-parliamentary coup (FONTES, 2017), the third and the final version of the BNCC were defined and published under the government of the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), and the (cognitive and socioemotional) competencies and skills to be developed (especially these) attained even more prominence.

The alternation of leaders in the State apparatus changed the arrangement of some supporting political agents in the constitution of the Base, but not its structural content nor the participation of the business community in its proposition, design, writing and acceleration of political movements that created the conditions for its materialization and full implementation. Some representations of researchers from the universities involved were exempted from the process and the business community gained even more prominence, mainly due to the performance of the Lemann Foundation⁴, linked to the extensive Cenpec, Institutes Natura, Ayrton Senna, Unibanco, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, SM Foundation and Insper and others that make up the Base Movement. A movement that, since its origin, has shown itself as non-partisan and used the participation of members of the two largest Brazilian parties (PT and PSDB) to forge this character. In addition, members emphasized this characteristic in the most tense moments of the process so that the agenda does not stop despite any circumstances. As an example, at the moment when political party polarization broke out, “[...] in March 2016, three members of the Movement wrote a non-partisan article for a large São Paulo daily⁵, affirming the need to move beyond political differences and support BNCC on behalf of ‘children and youth in the classroom’”(TARLAU; MOELLER, 2020, p. 579).

As much as we have not yet detected close affinities between large-scale assessments and what BNCC prescribes, according to Freitas (2018, n/p), it composes “[...] an educational policy that proposes to improve Brazilian education through its linkage of teaching to census assessments (of all students) on a national scale (Prova Brasil and ANA, for example), which obliges the States to apply the BNCC” and has motivated, in school curricula, an even greater similarity. The author adds by stating that, if so, “[...] a State cannot, in fact, create its own curriculum, as its students will be tested according to national assessments made from MEC's BNCC and not from any State curriculum” (FREITAS, 2018, n/p).

We have seen how the dispute for position and consensus in civil society avails itself, within the new bourgeois activism, of formal and informal networks to occupy the business counter and make political dealings seem purely technical and scientific. Let us remember here what Palácios, then Secretary of Basic Education of the Ministry of Education (2015-2016), said, quoted by Tarlau and Moeller (2020, p. 578) when asked about the ways in which the Base Movement quickly garnered support from the population regarding the positive reception of BNCC: “Lemann's participation was very important. Especially in the relationship with the media. Through all difficult situations, in times of political turmoil, it was a guarantor of this movement in sectors over which it had no influence”. The

such restructuring. Which, inevitably, involves the curriculum, evaluation and training policies of these educators. If ‘in the mid-1990s, it was found that the new pattern of capital accumulation and the new technological pattern of production resulted in increased poverty, unemployment, and underemployment and anti-globalization movements’”(VIEIRA; LAMOSA, 2017, p.5), it is also in the educational field that these *imbalances* will be poorly *resolved* in the short and long term.

⁴ Even though other institutions have been called to join the *Movimento pela Base*, we must not lose sight of the fact that its creation occurred on the initiative of the Lemann Foundation, which has always been at the forefront of the process and intended to constitute a hegemonic support block for the support chain of its main enterprise in the context of Brazilian education. This indicates that the antagonisms between what the document proposes and what the professors and part of the scientific community that favored the existence of a base envisioned would not be resolved with more time for discussion. The Lemann Foundation also outlined the process by sponsoring research and conducting educational seminars abroad, “[...] paid for meals during meetings and bought air tickets, so that MEC employees, from the National Council of Education Secretaries (Consed) and the National Union of Municipal Education Directors (Undime) could participate in national events. [...] The Lemann Foundation was always at the table, since it literally paid for lunch” (TARLAU; MOELLER, 2020, p. 575).

⁵ Available at: <<<https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/paywall/login.shtml?https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/opiniaio/2016/05/1767087-os-estudantes-nao-podem-esperar.shtml>>. Accessed on: 26 Aug, 2019.

authors comment that the Lemann Foundation orchestrated a “[...] media strategy, in which representatives of the foundation trained dozens of journalists to cover educational issues, including the BNCC, and present them in a positive light. The foundation organized high-level events that received wide media coverage” (2020, p. 578).

The purpose of this reasoning is to show that it makes no sense to read this writing disembodied from the material dynamics that produced the educational policy in question. It constitutes one more piece that is inscribed in the understanding of the real movement of the whole, to track and compose, through its expression, the set of intimate connections, since the aura of inevitability becomes more credible through the political game, expert’s speeches, the production of materials, the articulation with the media and the force of the law. Thus, taking into account the referred scenario, the objective of the present study is to discuss the extent to which the Brazilian Common Curriculum Base, using the theoretical-practical convictions of teachers in the languages field, facilitates the constitution of a generalized consensus and returns to teachers and working-class children a *standardization of socialized semiformation*.

“The fertility of the document calls for analysis”, said Walter Benjamin (2013, p. 29). Therefore, we chose the area of languages on said document in what concerns elementary school⁶ (with a focus on teaching the Portuguese language), for the development of this assessment. This choice was motivated by two main aspects: 1) the referred area makes up 50%⁷ of the volume of pages destined in the document for this stage of Basic Education (BRAZIL, 2017) and 2) the teaching of Portuguese (most of it) is a great pillar of large-scale evaluations, being constantly at the heart of the proposals and educational reforms due to the interest in making these results a bargaining chip in international negotiations. In close affinity with the political and philosophical perspective that is used in the assessment, the methodological path availed itself, in a more global way, of some precepts of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), disseminated by Norman Fairclough (2001; 2012), which consists of a study rooted in the dialectical relations between language and social practice. With regard to the same relationships plus more detailed aspects of the interpretation of the document, the contributions of José Luiz Fiorin (2000) were considered too.

Starting from the assumption that, in the scope of the discourse, it is possible to understand the socio-political constraints that determine language, CDA presents a proposal markedly built-in opposition to the discourses guided by the *status quo* support of the exploitation relations across social classes. Considering that the discourse makes ideological aspects materialized and remarkable, representations do not exist outside the different circumstances of language. If so, the different ways of understanding the world exist and are externalized in discourse formations (FIORIN, 2000). CDA provides elements for formulating counter-hegemonic proposals⁸ insofar as it problematizes the discursive practices that act in the attempt to massively adapt a class made subaltern to the current productive system. That is, it is a theoretical-methodological instrument, with a materialist-historical

⁶ Elementary Education was chosen as part of the empiricism to be analyzed because, of the 1,529 skills presented by the document, 1,304 are related to this stage of Basic Education.

⁷ Among the 402 pages destined to the standardization of Elementary Education at BNCC, 201 pages are dedicated to the area of languages, of which 125 deal only with LP at this stage.

⁸ A concept that expresses opposition to the unilateral relationship of domination based strictly on economic aspects. In the sense of Raymond Williams (1979, p. 113), the idea of hegemony deals with a relationship of subordination in its manifestation “[...] as a practical conscience, as an effect of saturation of the whole life process, [...] of all the substance of identity and relationships experienced, to such a depth that the pressures and limits of what can ultimately be seen as an economic, political and cultural system, seem to be pressures and limits of simple experience and common sense”. Williams reinforces in this concept its dynamic, procedural character, treating it as “[...] an accomplished complex of experiences, relationships and activities, with specific and changing pressures and limits”, which prevents us from understanding it as sheer passive, unilateral domination. For the author, even the dynamism with which it renews itself, moves and responds to resistance is an element for its support. A sense that is similar to what Antônio Gramsci proposed, in opposition to the notions that come from the semantic field of supremacy or preeminence, giving centrality to the double movement of direction and dominance. In this way, if it has this procedural character and exists only in social relations, it inevitably implies counter-hegemonic experiences. Thus, although dominant, hegemony will not be absolute.

basis⁹, for investigating such discourse formations that are established in power relations, also demonstrating how “[...] the public is educated before the documents” (BENJAMIN, 2013, p. 29) and how they reinforce the sociopolitical structures, making them linger (FAIRCLOUGH, 2001).

It is precisely because of the philosophical and political relations on which this theoretical-methodological perspective is based that it became necessary to present this introductory historical section and the very brief manifestation of the most panoramic scientific community to which this proposal is affiliated. That is, in general, from what has already been said and published about the BNCC in a global perspective, the different *studies of the parties* also become relevant, so that one can understand both the social determinations undergone by the document and the different ways in which consensus has been produced based on the strategies on which the document itself is supported.

It is true that the curriculum practiced in schools cannot be reduced to the BNCC, otherwise, the contradictions of material reality and the possibility of social organization of historical subjects would be ignored. However, to deny its hegemonic strength in the deliberations of the paths of public education would be, at the very least, to deny the dynamics of language and the properties of direction and domination of capital.

DOCUMENTAL ELEMENTS FOR UNDERSTANDING BNCC

In addition to a certain pragmatism to increasingly deprive the school of its essential functions, Carvalho (2017, p. 30) draws attention to the fact that “[...] thinking about the school experience from its practical and its supposed economic relevance has put at risk the possibility of attributing a political and existential meaning to educational formation”. If such a concern was previously justified by a blind adoption of famous learning methods, today, this deprivation is updated and manifests itself as a result of the insufficient criticism leveled at the concepts that no longer respond to the needs of current times. This becomes relevant as a slightly more detailed reading of the BNCC presents us with a particular constancy of some aspects. Let us note and reflect on part of the following: 1) the relationship established between its skills and competencies and the different objects of knowledge; 2) the choice of verbs that give meaning and standardize the activities around these objects; and 3) the apparent adherence to the theoretical-critical framework in the different areas of knowledge.

Without ignoring that “[...] innocence serves as a cover for the document” (BENJAMIN, 2013, p. 29), let us remember that the BNCC ensures that “[...] the skills do not describe actions or conduct expected from the teacher, nor do they induce the choice of approaches or methodologies” (BRASIL, 2017, p. 30). These options would be “[...] within the scope of curricula and pedagogical projects, which, as already mentioned, must be adapted to the reality of each school system or network and to each school institution, considering the context and characteristics of their students” (BRASIL, 2017, p. 30). However, the exhaustion and detail with which competencies and skills are related to objects of knowledge, in addition to manifesting, to some extent, a contradiction to this information, also contradict the central idea of what would be a *curricular base*¹⁰.

⁹ In *Linguagem e Ideologia* (2000), José Luiz Fiorin makes this relationship between the place of ideological determinations and the forms of compression of reality even more evident. According to him, “[...] the relationships that, at the surface level, appear as relationships between individuals are, at the essence level, a relationship between social classes, one that appropriates the value produced by unpaid work and another that sells its workforce and is plundered. Equal relations of exchange exist only at the phenomenal level. This means that there is an exchange of equivalents, that is, equality in exchange. However, it occurs only at the level of circulation. This means that it is both affirmed and denied. It is affirmed at the phenomenal level and denied at the deep level, where there is no equivalence, no exchange, but simply appropriation” (2000, p. 27).

¹⁰ According to Macedo, when presenting the “[...] document approved by CNE, MEC maintains only the pun form of the original and proclaims that ‘education is the base’. What does this sentence tell us about the idea of education that MEC works with? That the base we are talking about – common national curriculum – is the same as (or contemplates) the education that we intend to give to our children. If this were not one of the possible senses, the pun would not apply. The

It is at least disastrous the attempt at distinction exposed by MEC and defended in what Mendonça Filho enunciated at the head of the Ministry of Education at that time, when he guaranteed that the BNCC would be “[...] the point to be reached at each stage of Basic Education, while the curricula pave the way there” (MEC, 2017, p. 5). It is possible to say this through the verification of covenants, agreements and other hiring of different municipal education secretariats and private institutions or consultancies for paying freelancers for the reproduction – sometimes euphemistically called transposition – of the Base into curricula for public Basic Education schools.

In addition to this observation, the agents involved in proposing a document that is structured with a focus on skills and competencies and has a very detailed discrimination of the objects of knowledge to be worked on do not seem to be concerned only with “[...] the point to be reached”¹¹, but even and probably with holding teachers and educational institutions responsible when these skills and competencies cannot be instrumentally corroborated in large-scale assessments.

As a very illustrative example of what was stated, some skills required for the 3rd year of elementary school can be referenced, which include: “(EF03LP01) Read and write words with regular contextual correspondences between graphemes and phonemes – *c/qu; g/gu; r/rr; s/ss; o* (rather than *u*) and *e* (*e* rather than *i* in unstressed syllable at the end of the word – and with nasality marks (tilde, *m, n*)” (2017, p. 115). Or, even more detailed in the same page of the document, “[...] (EF03LP03) Read and write words correctly with the digraphs *lh, nh, cl*” (BRASIL, 2017, p. 115). It is also important to state that it is not a matter of expressing opposition to the relevance of such linguistic-formal aspects, as well as other specificities of the process of appropriating the alphabetical writing system. What is questioned is the fact that a normative document, which is defined as a basis, necessarily gives prominence to elements as punctual and easy to inspect when their instrumental aspects are cut out.

Much has already been discussed about reducing the subject's training process to a perspective that attends to the competencies concentrated in the demands of the labor market. Under the discourse guided by the ideal of employability combined with the “[...] expansion of partial, temporary, precarious, subcontracted, outsourced work” (ANTUNES, 2006, p. 41), education – mainly public education – has been left offering the working class the *privilege* of being servile (ANTUNES, 2018), of having their cognitive and socio-emotional skills pragmatically developed (CHAVES; EVANGELISTA, 2020), so that they can be flexibly useful to the productive work process.¹²

Advancing on what was stated in the eighth note of this text, it is understood, with Gramsci, that it is not only through a specific organization of force that the economically dominant classes maintain their dominance; it is necessary for them to practice moral, cultural and intellectual

most benevolent reading tells us that education is the basis for other achievements, whether for the country or for each one of us. Although a certain positive aura has been built around this second sense, there is, in it, the assumption that education needs, pragmatically, to be useful for something to come. So, it is merchandized, a good to be exchanged in the future market” (2018, p. 28).

¹¹ A manifestation already indicated by Palácios, when public presentations on the preliminary proposal began, by affirming a close relationship between BNCC and national assessments. “The National Common Curricular Base will act as a primer to determine what all Brazilian students are entitled to and must learn during public education”. Thus, according to him, the document would be taken as “[...] a guide for your classes. It will also reorganize the entire educational system, *teaching materials, teacher training, evaluations*, which will have the Base as a reference” (PALÁCIOS, 2015, *apud* PERONI; CAETANO, 2015, p. 342, emphasis added).

¹² Rummert, Algebaile and Ventura (2013, p. 720) summarize the conflictual relationship between the adaptation of the State to the central support of the capital accumulation process (the State as executive secretary of the common interests of the bourgeoisie) and the demand by raising “[...] the subsistence level of the workforce, as well as facing the possibilities of destabilization arising from the processes of correlation of forces, which requires permanent strategies of social control. It is in this scenario of capital-imperialism that education is repeatedly called to the scene as a strategy that aims to face the state of indeterminacy of contemporary times. In the case of Brazil, capital-imperialism takes on a particular form and content, marked by the fact that the country today has fundamental conditions to constitute a integrated pole subordinated to capital-imperialism”. This concept was adopted and disseminated by Virginia Fontes (2010, p. 146-147), to indicate the preponderance of “[...] monetary capital, expressing the domination of pure capitalist property” and its expropriating character that cause structural transformations as regards the relations between the set of interests of great business men, “[...] the world of work, the form of political organization, the dynamics of scientific production, culture; in short, the whole of sociability”.

direction. In a merely didactic way, it is possible to think that this direction provides the configuration of material forces, understood more as content, since these would not be historically conceivable without form, and ideologies would be individual fantasies without material forces.

Conforming to a way of understanding the world makes use of the principle of universality, a movement of concealment in which ideology operates, insofar as it makes it seem natural, from the original order of things, that which is socially produced. This direction can be observed in the conjunction of semantic subsidies that are usually recurrent in the discourses of a given conjuncture. For Fiorin (2000, p.19), “[...] these semantic elements, assimilated by each man throughout his education, constitute consciousness and, therefore, his way of thinking about the world”, which causes, historically, the standardization of education of the popular classes to be increasingly disputed by fractions of the bourgeoisie.

This assimilation is conceived within different discourse strategies. One of them is the use of the same semantic elements in statements of a very different nature or purpose. I am referring here, in what concerns BNCC's area of languages in Elementary Education, to the use of a critical theoretical arsenal that puts¹³ on the agenda a conception of language¹⁴ anchored in the concept of *utterance* and its derivatives. This conception arrived in Brazil in the last quarter of the last century, which is based on the assumption of interactivity from the perspective of Bakhtin's circle¹⁵ and which gains notoriety denouncing the limits of an essentially formalist and structuralist view of language. Therefore, the centrality of the text is reassumed as a unit of work by the proposal, “[...] in order to always relate the texts to their contexts of production and the development of skills to the significant use of language in reading, listening activities and production of texts in various media and semioses” (BRASIL, 2017, p. 65).

Thus, the BNCC works with adherence to a set of theoretical and critical elements that historically have been gaining space in curricular policies and, previously, in the scientific community, as shown in the following extract:

(EF15LP02) To establish expectations in relation to the text you are going to read (anticipating assumptions of the meanings, form and *social function of the text*), relying on your previous knowledge about the *conditions of production and reception* of that text, its *genre*, support and thematic universe, as well as about textual projections, graphic resources, images, data of the work itself (table of contents, preface etc.), confirming anticipations and inferences made before and during the reading of texts, checking the adequacy of the hypotheses made (BRASIL, 2017, p. 95, emphasis added).

¹³ Let us remember that this conception has already been present in documents guiding curricular policies that precede the BNCC, such as *Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais* and *Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais*.

¹⁴ Three clearer epistemological cuts in the conceptions of language that are being adopted by the history of Western thought are considered. The first conception would be language as an expression of thought, in which the linguistic phenomenon was abbreviated “[...] to a monological, individual act, which is not affected by the other nor by the circumstances that constitute the social situation in which the enunciation takes place” (TRAVAGLIA, 1997, p. 21). The second, inventoried by Saussurian structuralism, understands language as an instrument of communication. A conception that “[...] led to the study of language as a virtual code, isolated from its use [...] and made Linguistics not to consider the interlocutors and the situation of use as determinants of the units and rules that constitute language, that is, it has removed the speaking individual from the production process, from what is social and historical in language. This is a monological and immanent view of language, which studies it according to a formalist perspective – which limits this study to the inner workings of language – and which separates man in his social context” (TRAVAGLIA, 1997, p. 21). And the third conception of language, adopted in a reductionist way by BNCC, would be one that understands it as a place of action, interaction and social practice.

¹⁵ Based on studies of Marxian theory, mainly in the opposition between Feuerbach materialism and Hegelian idealism, the Bakhtin Circle called into question the great theoretical currents of linguistics existing in the second half of the last century, which restricted language either to an *idealistic subjectivism*, taking it as an isolated monological enunciation, or to an *abstract objectivism*, which is understood as the aforementioned abstract system of normative forms (BAKHTIN, 1997). Based on this opposition, the language in use becomes the main object of study, and language is understood in the “[...] sense of the set of possible contexts of use for each particular form” (BAKHTIN, 1997, p. 95).

A few pages ahead, as another skill to be achieved, the document provides the following: “(EF35LP22) To understand dialogues in narrative texts, observing the effect of the meaning of enunciation verbs and, if applicable, the use of linguistic varieties in direct discourse” (BRASIL, 2017, p. 133). Let us keep this syntactic structure and the choice of elements that make up its unit of meaning.

Considering also the assumption that the documents have a didactic function (BENJAMIN, 2013), as a second interpretative movement of it, it was necessary to analyze, more cautiously, how these semantic elements of deeper structure and demarcated historicity materialize in the discourse, because each of them does not only have a characteristic semantics, but they are embodied in their own syntactic structure, in tune with the way the document works socially. In this study, proceeding in this way allows us to understand, with greater clarity, the ideological determination underlying it, not only by identifying the main players involved, but also by exposing the ways in which this content has been standardized. In the words of Fiorin (2000, p. 21), examining ideological constraints and the attempt to produce consensus only “[...] with the elements of the deep structure can [...] distort the analysis. It is at the superficial level, that is, in the realization of the semantic elements of the deep structure, that ideological determinations are fully revealed”.

These constructions work as rationalizations that elucidate and justify the immediate reality, in addition to this reality feeding back those. If the fact that the objects of knowledge are meaningless if they are not at the service of an action is so deeply ingrained, even if such action is as trivial as possible, and this is supported by a rationality that excels in utilitarianism, in instrumental rationality (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 1985), it is at the phenomenal level of reality that they are constituted and perpetuated in a given social formation. It is in this sense that “[...] the syntactic structure of the definition is of paramount importance” (FIORIN, 2000, p. 40), which reverberates throughout the entire document and that “[...] changes the content in the plane of its expression” (p. 38).

In the syntactic structure in which the skills are presented, there is the following agreed formula: *verb + complement + modifier*, depending on the syntagma that will constitute the significant unit. As an example, note: “(EF02LP27) To rewrite [(verb)] literary narrative texts [(complement)] read by the teacher [(modifier)]” (BRASIL, 2017, p. 109). Considering the hierarchy of linguistic elements that make up the sentence, the focus of the referred structure falls on what the verb demands, in this case, to *rewrite*, so that the experience that comes from the relationship established with *literary narrative texts* remains, due to the very way document is written, at a secondary level. Let us note here that the complement is, in general, the object of knowledge mobilized in the skill; the verb constitutes the cognitive process of the required skill in itself and the modifier has a more comprehensive use, being able to refer to the ways in which the object is treated, to the context, to the tools that will be used to facilitate its appropriation, to “[...] clarification of the situation or condition in which the skill must be developed” (BRASIL, 2017, p. 30), among other similar recurrences that operate in the modification of the verb or complement in question. In these conditions, it is reaffirmed that what is becoming *supplementary* in said example is the text – in this skill, the *literary* one –, an element that the document's proposal claims to assume its centrality “[...] as a work unit” (BRASIL, 2017, p. 65). And there remains, contradictorily, the indication that the *fundamental* is not that fundamental.

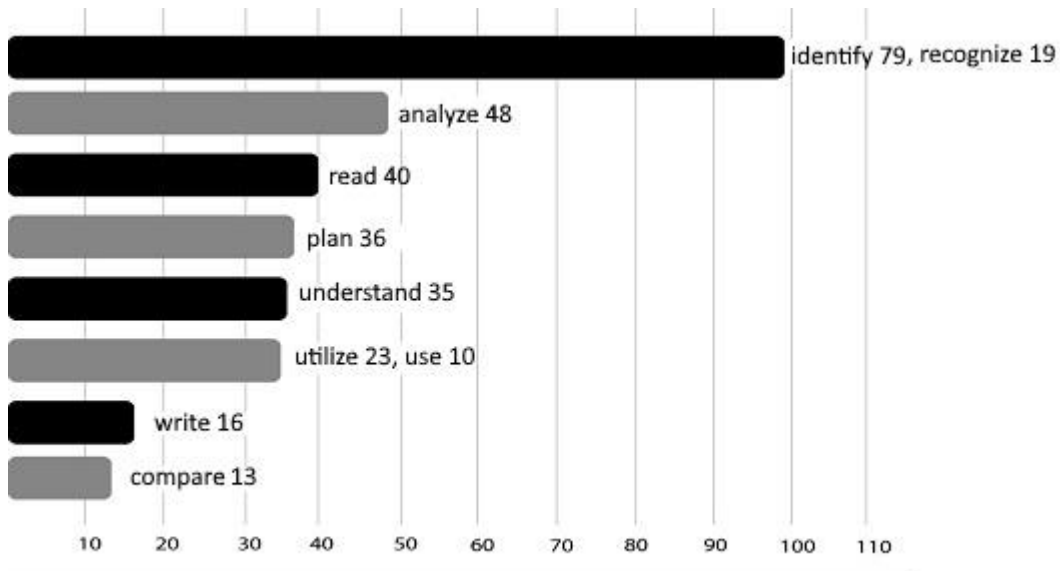
After observing this structure in which the skills to be developed and the essential function that the verb plays in them are described, the semantic dimension becomes the focus of investigation again, in terms of the meaning that these verbs have given to the sentences and, consequently, to the deal with the objects of knowledge. In this way, another dimension is added to the analysis, working in two directions, as both the syntactically privileged location that these verbs occupy can modify the value given to the other semantic elements (objects of knowledge) used in the sentences, as well as the very choice of verbs that make sense of those skills. This assessment is carried out first in the area of languages of Elementary Education (EE) and then, although it is not part of the objective of this work, it extends, very briefly, to the other areas of the same stage of Basic Education.

“(EF15LP03) *To find* explicit information in texts. (EF15LP04) *To identify* the effect of meaning produced by the use of expressive graphic-visual resources in multisemiotic texts” (BRASIL,

2017, p.93, emphasis added), are characteristic examples of skills to be developed in the teaching of Portuguese from 1st to 5th year of Elementary School. Emphasized verbs, used to denote the cognitive process of the skill required, have a rather recursive semantic load in the document in question.

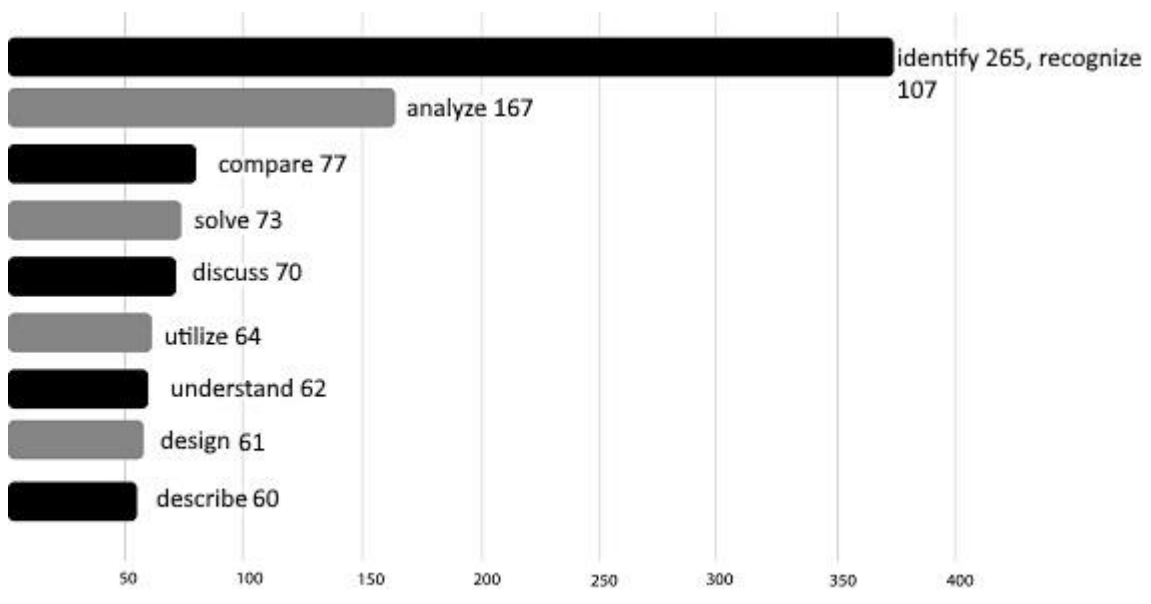
The graphs shown below show, respectively, the survey made of the most recurrent verbs that denote Portuguese skills for EE and for this same stage of Basic Education considering all areas of knowledge.

Graph 1: Most recurrent verbs in Portuguese skills for EE



Source: Brasil, 2017. Designed by Elvis Riboli.

Graph 2: Most recurrent verbs in skills for EE.



Source: Brasil, 2017. Designed by Elvis Riboli.

In a more panoramic perspective, now without dwelling on one of the areas of knowledge in detail, the centrality and recurrence of those whose semantic load denotes less critical and even cognitive involvement on the part of the students remains evident. Verbs such as *counter*, *argue*, *criticize*, and *grasp* hardly appear, because even in a standard guided by the ideology of skills, they could be the beginning of the process of denying their *in-itself* absent of historicity. On the other hand, verbs that bring very restricted meanings and place the student in an orderly position through knowledge are very common. As an example, *use* and *describe* stand out, as they appear more than 100 times in the document.

Finally, it is pertinent to point out the most used verb in the Base, namely: to *identify*. Used in the sense of distinguishing, having the ability to *recognize* or merely *classify*, the verb in question has a recurrence of 567 times in the BNCC, one more evidence not only of its instrumental character and the consequent impoverishment of cognitive activity that the policy in question provokes, but of the secondary place to which historically and scientifically produced and systematized contents are relegated. In this sense, let us note “[...] that this supremacy of the instrumental character of educational discourses does not imply the disappearance of disciplines and knowledge that are seen as part of a humanistic concept of formation”. And that happens even with “[...] literature, the arts or philosophy. It means, rather, that even this knowledge and disciplines start to have another role: that of assistants in the supremacy of instrumentalism linked to the market and consumer society” (CARVALHO, 2017, p. 30).

Analyses undertaken in other curricular components that deal with the same area of knowledge demonstrate a phenomenon similar to the argument that has been constructed in this writing. Studies conducted by Pessoa (2018, p. 179) pointed out that the central consensus of Physical Education in the constitution of BNCC can be determined by the inclusion in the document “[...] of physical education treating body practices as human productions, cultural productions [...]” as mentioned by one of his interviewees. This research points out that,

[...] by looking too much at the specificity of the area, CBCE and the experts ended up disregarding the harmful effects to democracy that the approval of this BNCC tends to produce, as well as ignoring the BNCC as an improvement of the education project hegemonized by sectors of the Brazilian business community. By accepting the incorporation of a critical theoretical framework into the document, they ended up weakening the struggle for an autonomous working class education project. Therefore, corporatism was the hallmark of Physical Education at BNCC. [...] Such positioning implies the weakening of the struggle of teachers and groups for an adequate and dignified education project for the working class, with real autonomy and, mainly, independent of conciliation between antagonistic classes (PESSOA, 2018, p. 176).¹⁶

With regard to the Teaching of Art, another curricular component that makes up the languages area, Iavelberg (2018, p.76) states that the BNCC “[...] reveals an uncertainty regarding the content of teaching”. Likewise, the provision of definitions and theoretical guidelines are non-existent, as in the other components of the area. That is, the essential aspects of the area that were constituting the “[...] object of study in personal artistic making (to be realized in artistic products) and in the analysis of artists, works of art, modes of communication, audiences and their stories”(FERRAZ; FUSARI, 2009, p. 146), become almost obsolete in the document. The author notes that “[...] the content written in the PCNs became skills at the BNCC, demarcating, in this passage, both *continuities* and *discontinuities*” (2018, p. 78).

¹⁶ Although it does not make up a phenomenon explicitly dealt with in this article, the author even observes a “[...] concealment of [...] tensions and disputes within the area, through the establishment of specific agreements of Physical Education in the construction of BNCC, [which] have political implications in the sense of giving an appearance of consensus in the face of differences in understanding the object of study and teaching, as well as of the character of Physical Education at school”, so that the policy in question is appeasing some fundamental conflicts that remain “[...] latent within the area” (PESSOA, 2018, p. 177).

Therefore, that set of theoretical and critical elements defended in the contemporary world is placed at the service of those verbs just mentioned and in a proposal structure that, overall, responds to a *knowing how* and makes a *knowing that* or, even more, a *knowing why* accessory. Adding to this hollowing out, this strategy tends to make the proposal even more nebulous in a global way, in addition to removing teachers from the struggle for an education program that brings at its core access to scientifically organized knowledge in a critical way, as a primary necessity for the school that serves the working-class children. That is, it favors many teachers not to express resistance to the curricular policy in question because they feel represented by a proposal that would allocate their theoretical-practical convictions, although in a very puerile way, as will be discussed in the next section.

SOCIALIZED SEMIFORMATION AS A BNCC HORIZON

The fundamental criticism exposed by Theodor W. Adorno in *Theory of Semiformation* (*Theorie der Halbbildung*) is to expose the conversion of cultural education into a socialized semi-education, which does not occur before cultural formation, but replaces it as a complete and finished fact. That is, one of Adorno's goals is to show a treacherous accomplishment that has been taken as education, due to an attempt at apprehension that lacks conjectures, without effective experience with what one wants and needs to know, which favors a *hastened* passage through empiricism by the subject, and which, therefore, could not be taken as education. “That which is understood and experienced averagely – semi-understood and semi-experienced – does not constitute the elementary degree of education, but its mortal enemy” (ADORNO, 1996, p. 403), since it exempts, as much as possible, the sensitive experience of the subject”. In effect, they become “[...] elements that penetrate the consciousness without merging into its continuity, they tend to [...] turn into superstitions, *even when they criticize them*” (1996, p. 403, emphasis added). Semi-education, one of the expressions of the object in question, has favored the BNCC to meet different individual requests of the subjects involved. That is, both of those who aim at an education geared to the labor market; and those who seek an – albeit shallow – engagement in contemporary critical perspectives, whether in languages, mathematics, biological sciences, humanities.

As Adorno denounced about this concept, at the BNCC, its caricature is extremely contradictory, because as it *offers education*, it denies it. The skills and competencies, when related to that critical perspective of the contents, “[...] compose a false and apparently close substitute for experience, instead of the destroyed experience” (ADORNO, 1996, p. 407). When the law of causality and abstract classification replaces sensitive experience, reality as a criterion of truth and the dialectic perspective, “[...] the *semieducated* turns, as if by magic, everything that is mediate into immediate, which includes even what is most distant” (1996, p. 407). This prevents him more and more from realizing that the social relations that appear on the discursive surface as individual relations, erasing the social determinations of each individual, are, in essence, conflicting relations between the different social classes.

Analogous to what was said about the plundering of human labor in the introductory words, the similarities of interest between the different social classes remain only on the phenomenal plane, which here can be understood as the discursive surface of the document and also its directing conduction in educational places. That is, this hypothetical equivalence of interests between the fractions of the bourgeoisie and the teachers who may feel represented by the policy in question happens, mostly, in what Adorno called *the exchange market*, a space for immediate socialization, which brings together opposites and, at the same time, in *sympathetically* offering organized knowledge, at the phenomenal level, refuses it in its most substantive experience.

In this sense, in the same way that it is not always *the same thing* to talk about *freedom*, *creativity*, *interaction*, terms that are usually re-semanticized in the co-modified educational discourse (FAIRCLOUGH, 2001), neither is it talking about “[...] conditions for the production of texts” (BRASIL, 2017, p. 75 and p. 77) and other linguistic subsidies that carry a positive aura in their crystallization (MAINGUENEAU, 1997), which are currently appropriated by the documents that

guide and regulate educational policies. Although speakers, supports, and discursive formations change, the construction of discourses remains part of an investment in “[...] abstract syntactic structures, themes and figures, which materialize existing values, needs, desires, explanations, justifications and rationalizations” (FIORIN, 2000, p. 43). This underlies the *treacherous* relationship established between individual and discourse, as the lack of awareness of the process of concealment of what is alien to him makes the awareness of his social formation even more distant (FAIRCLOUGH, 2001) and, mainly, of his primary interests as social class¹⁷.

This concealment occurs because an individual manifestation plan carries a social content plan. Thus, the discourse simulates being individual to hide what is social. In carrying out this simulation and concealment, language serves as a support for the theses of the individuality of each human being and of abstract freedom of thought and expression. The coerced, determined man appears as a creature absolutely free from all social constraints (FIORIN, 2000, p. 42).

The assessment of the document, from the theoretical-methodological perspective adopted, in the light of the concept of semi-education, evidences the attempt to use arbitrary instruments that allow the individual to take possession not of the perceived reality, but of its phenomenal aspects, in a way that quite lacks a substantive relationship with scientific, philosophical and artistic knowledge socially organized and based on the individual and collective experiences of the subjects. This objective knowledge is disjointed from the historical struggle for the freedom of men, and the huge social contrasts remain attenuated, obscured by the routine appearance of disconnected conjunctural events, because the whole of these contrasts – the unity of these events – is not brought to its ultimate consequences (LUKÁCS, 2010). In addition, although it is not a central aspect of analysis of this discussion, it is important to note that it is under the artful and uncompromising use (politically, socially and aesthetically) of the concept of *integral education* (BRASIL, 2017) that these arbitrary instruments also manifest themselves and achieve legitimacy in the proposal.

Thus, it is important to recognize that, if what can make graduates from different areas of knowledge adhere to this project headed by fractions of the bourgeoisie without questioning its historical determinants, constitutive aspects and substantial political interests, it is not difficult to realize that this adherence will be prosaic, fragile and promiscuous. This is because what would be one of the motivations for their consent – apparent adherence to concepts arising from a critical and socially engaged perspective – is at the service of a precarious involvement with what one wants and needs to know effectively. The same goes for the arguments that suggest that we consider sparingly the *approaches* and *distancing* from the Base, as the latter concern what the ground floor needs the most to change their condition of subordination, while the former constitute aspects – in short, functional and instrumental – for which we need no basis at all. Thus, there is nothing in these hypothetical *opportunities* offered by BNCC that was no longer within the reach of (or transcended by) school curricula, of state and municipal curriculum proposals.

The policy in question operates satisfactorily in the insertion of ideas of apparent regeneration of the democratic culture, of the civic culture, of stimulating not the radically participatory culture, but the socialization of *pseudo-participation*, as yet another force in the progress of the interests of the politically and economically dominant fractions, making it evident that “[...] action on circumstances ... is inseparable from action on consciences” (VÁZQUEZ, 2011, p. 152). In other words, it collaborates in building the collective subjectivity of *common sense*, based on flexible

¹⁷ Fiorin denominates the enunciator as a *support* for discourse, and, therefore, “[...] discursive agents are the classes and the fractions of classes. We recall that, although there are different discursive formations in a social formation, the dominant discursive formation is that of the dominant class. The ‘arbiter’ of discursivization is not the individual, but the social classes. The individual does not think and does not say what he wants, but what reality requires him to think and say” (2000, p. 43).

relationships that seek, in a very utilitarian way, to tie advances in science and the labor market, connected in related objectives. This subordinate function of maintaining “[...] social hegemony and political government” (GRAMSCI, 2016, p. 22) exercised by teachers and intellectuals from different areas of knowledge and which places them, even if indirectly, in the condition of representatives of the *ruling* and *dominant* class, in the overwhelming majority of the times, does not occur intentionally. However, it inserts them in the movement, albeit in a less ostensible way, than what Giddens (2005), quoted by Motta (2009), indicated as *reestablishing authority* via *democratic individualism*, which requires the dominant classes to adhere to social solidarity limited to what the economy demands, including in the field of official curricula, in which profit is earned in the long run.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

“So it was not possible to reach the whole truth, because each half brought the profile of a half truth” (ANDRADE, 1987, p. 41).

As stated in the introductory words of this writing, it must be read as one more element in understanding the whole. I tried to bring to the center of the established discussion that, either by its intentionality, or by the interests in dispute, by the analysis of the main stakeholders (as it has been widely disseminated by the scientific community) and also by the way in which this policy is expressed on the discursive surface, the use of the contemporary critical arsenal of areas of knowledge is converted into a socialized semiformation. This can be easily accepted and defended by the theoretical-practical convictions of teachers in different areas, which will probably not happen when politics is understood as a synthetic unit of multiple historical, economic and social determinations.

This occurs because the organic intellectuals of the business monopoly associations, in addition to moving with mastery in the mass media, make a discursive effort to satisfy those education professionals who are unaware of both these spheres of influence and said policy globally. This game makes a more consensual adoption of its proposals prosper, precisely because the discursive surface expresses an apparent representation of the theoretical-practical convictions that are historically constituted and legitimately defended by teachers within their areas of expertise. Unfortunately, at the core of the competencies ideology, the aforementioned theoretical-critical arsenal becomes almost superstition for students, since the contents of knowledge are made secondary in this process. That is, they are subjugated to skills, competencies and activities that require little critical, political and even cognitive involvement from students. This circumstance causes the most harmonious sociability possible, not only of conjunctural dysfunctions, but it perpetuates an unwary way of relating to knowledge and to people. Supported by the evidence now discussed, this is yet another way in which the political content, as it undergoes the scrutiny of specialists, takes on purely technical solutions, increasing its aura of inevitability.

Thus, although the normative document brings a progressive scent to the center of the proposal, with a frivolous critical perspective of each of these areas, the principle of this criticism is crystallized by an expressionless action, emptied of meaning and easily socialized as yet another cliché in the exchange market. Although this fits like a glove for changing opinions, the obstacles to the transformation of the material relationships that determine our existence are worsened.

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