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**FOREIGN TEXTBOOKS' ANALYSIS UNDER THE IMPLICATIONS OF BNCC:
FOCUS ON MULTILITERACIES AND ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA**

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Trabalho de conclusão do Curso de Letras –
Língua Inglesa e suas Literaturas do Centro de
Humanidades da Universidade Federal do
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Orientador: Profa. Dra. Andreia Turolo da
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Tradução da Universidade Federal do Ceará,
como requisito parcial à obtenção do título de
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RESUMO

Esta pesquisa tem como objetivo analisar dois livros didáticos estrangeiros de inglês, Wide Angle 4 e Wide Angle 6, a partir das diretrizes expressas na BNCC (Base Nacional Comum Curricular), especialmente no que diz respeito ao multiletramento e ao inglês como língua franca. Por meio da metodologia de Bardin, em uma análise exploratória de conteúdo, este estudo investiga o número de sotaques, gêneros textuais e a multimodalidade. Os resultados revelam uma predominância do inglês americano e uma representação limitada de outros sotaques, assim como uma prevalência de textos acadêmicos e formais e tentativas insatisfatórias de apresentar a multimodalidade. A conclusão sugere a necessidade de reavaliação dos livros didáticos estrangeiros, enfatizando a existência de melhores opções que se alinhem à BNCC e ao contexto brasileiro. Além disso, este artigo propõe análises futuras, considerando mais fatores do que os apresentados, para melhor informar os responsáveis pela escolha dos materiais dos alunos.

Palavras-chave: multiletramento; multimodalidade; BNCC; material didático.

ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze two foreign English textbooks, Wide Angle 4 and Wide Angle 6, from the directives of the Brazilian curriculum in BNCC (Base Nacional Comum Curricular), especially concerning multiliteracy and English as a *lingua franca*. Through an exploratory content analysis using Bardin's methodology, this study investigates the number of accents, text genres, and multimodality. The findings reveal a predominance of American English and a limited representation of other accents, a notable focus on academic and formal texts, and unsatisfactory attempts to present multimodality. The conclusion suggests the need for reevaluation of foreign textbooks, emphasizing the existence of better options that align with BNCC and the Brazilian context. In addition to that, this paper proposes future analyses, considering more than the factors presented, to better inform the ones responsible for choosing students' materials.

Keywords: Multiliteracies; Multimodality; BNCC; Teaching materials.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Despite technology being increasingly integrated into the classroom, textbooks are still the primary resource in learning and teaching foreign languages. Much must be considered when choosing a textbook that matches the needs of students and teachers. To assist teachers in selecting English textbooks as a foreign language, Alan Cunningsworth has written a guide titled *Choosing Your Coursebook* (1995). In this guide, he elaborates on a range of factors to ponder when in this task including “learner and teacher expectations; methodological preferences; the perceived needs of the learners; syllabus requirements; and personal references”.

Unfortunately, there are few instances in which teachers are responsible for choosing the material they will use, particularly in private schools in Brazil. Usually, this process is restricted to the school administration, such as coordinators, supervisors, and directors which sometimes results in teachers having to work with inadequate selections. This inadequacy impacts the course of the school year in students’ learning and teachers’ planning.

Besides the learning-teaching issue, when discussing Brazil, there are other factors to consider. Within the BNCC (Base Nacional Comum Curricular), a document that provides guidelines for the school curriculum, specific requirements must be covered in high school education and the materials used should reflect that.

Having this in mind, we have selected a textbook collection adopted in a Brazilian school, which is purposefully foreign, to analyze if this specific school choice fits the Brazilian guidelines concerning multiliteracy and multimodality, as in presenting English as a *lingua franca*, that is a common language used by native speakers of other languages to communicate. This selection was due to the fact that the researcher was already familiar with the books planning and in class. Adopted by a private school in Fortaleza, Ceará, for teaching high school students, the “*Wide Angle 4*” and “*Wide Angle 6*” were initially published in 2019 by Oxford University Press, which are part of a series of six books designed for various proficiency levels, from A1 to C1 (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, c2023).

To fully understand the perspectives in which the textbook was analyzed to answer how literacies and multiliteracies, and English as *lingua franca* are presented in this material, it is necessary to explore the theories in Literacies and Multiliteracies and to examine what is expected from English textbooks in Brazilian basic education according to BNCC.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical basis for this research will be presented in two parts: one focused on the understanding of literacies, multiliteracies and multimodality, and the other addressing BNCC directives on the mentioned concepts and English as a *lingua franca*.

2.1 Literacies and Multiliteracies

When most people hear about literacy, the first thing that comes to mind is likely related to the acquisition of reading and writing skills. However, literacy encompasses much more than the ability to decode symbols correctly. Although literacy is correlated with alphabetization, it is intrinsically linked to the reality of the communities and societies it is inserted in. Before this approach gained popularity, literacy was perceived as “autonomous”, meaning that it alone would provoke social and cognitive changes. Street argues that the autonomous model “disguises the cultural and ideological assumptions that underpin it and that can then be presented as though they are neutral and universal” (STREET and LEFSTEIN, 2007). However, when the cultural and ideological aspects embedded in literacy are ignored, a single form of literacy becomes dominant, therefore promoting one culture. The Literacy elected by dominant institutions, is the only one recognized, while others are marginalized and oppressed.

To oppose this model, the “ideological” model began to be promoted by many scholars, including Street. This model defended that literacy varies depending on its context as Buzato makes clear:

Literacy, or more precisely, literacies, are social and cultural practices that have specific meanings and purposes within a social group. They help maintain the cohesion and identity of the group and are acquired through collective events involving reading and writing. Therefore, they vary in different socio-cultural contexts. (BUZATO, 2006, p. 5, tradução nossa)¹

Consequently, literacy began to be viewed as a social practice constructed based on the specific realities of a given community or society, rather than as something neutral, as in the “autonomous” model. Hence, the plurality of literacy is embraced, and the term

¹ All the translations were done by the author and will have a footnote with the original text.

Original text: “O letramento, ou mais precisamente, os letramentos são práticas sociais e culturais que têm sentidos específicos e finalidades específicas dentro de um grupo social, ajudam a manter a coesão e a identidade do grupo, são aprendidas em eventos coletivos de uso da leitura e da escrita, e por isso são diferentes em diferentes contextos sócio-culturais.”

“literacies” is born, giving voice to various forms of literacy spread among peoples through its worldwide genres, as defined in any dictionary, the different writing styles with their characteristics. Here, literacies and genres are intertwined, since we can only observe one through the other.

With the advance of technologies, literature studies have had to adapt to the changing times. The ways in which texts are being transmitted have evolved. Not only are cultural aspects a guiding force in literacies, but now, various semiotic possibilities for texts have become crucial in defining literacy. The multimodality of texts, that is texts that are compounded by many languages (ROJO, 2012), demanded the development of a new way to perceive and produce texts, since now they are “multi”. The concept of “multiliteracies” involves these two important factors in literacy, as summarized by Rojo (2012, p. 13, tradução nossa), “the cultural multiplicity of populations and the semiotic multiplicity in the constitution of the texts through which they inform and communicate”².

Contemporary communication is increasingly becoming multimodal and with the internet, various forms of literacy have emerged and become accessible to different groups of people. The goal is to develop individuals who are not only proficient readers and writers but also critical and aware thinkers capable of forming and expressing opinions. To achieve that, multiliteracies should be introduced to them. Along with that, the digital world makes an addition to this process, the interaction. In the digital world, we can interact with texts “in the interface, the tools, in the networked spaces of hypertexts, on social media, etc” (ROJO, 2012, p. 23, tradução nossa)³. Multiliteracies also address all these new literacies emerging with the times.

2.2 National guidelines to teach English in Brazilian basic schools (BNCC)

As mentioned earlier, education in Brazil is guided by directives outlined in various documents. Here, we will concentrate on the BNCC (Base Nacional Comum Curricular), which contains the curriculum from elementary to high school across various study areas. Naturally, some pages in this document focus on the teaching of modern languages and what is expected from them. It states that foreign languages should be offered to students from middle school (6th grade) until the end of high school. However, it does not

² Original text: A multiplicidade cultural das populações e a multiplicidade semiótica de constituição dos textos por meio dos quais ela se informa e se comunica.

³ Original text: na interface, das ferramentas, nos espaços em rede dos hipertextos, nas redes sociais etc.

specify which languages should be taught, giving each school the freedom to adapt to their realities (BRASIL, 2018). Nevertheless, due to the popularity of English, most schools choose to make it the compulsory language course.

Let's begin by explaining the language aspects that Brazilian education is expected to emphasize. According to the document, language teaching should give priority to the development of reading, listening, and speaking skills through texts, as is defined as plurisemiotic, meaning they are multimodal (BRASIL, 2018). The aim is to equip students with linguistic and literacy tools to become independent critical agents in the current “multi” world. To achieve this goal, the initial step is to move away from traditional grammar-centered teaching and shift the focus to meaning construction within a discursive perspective. This meaning-centered teaching allows for countless varieties of English to be introduced in class, helping to challenge linguistic standardization and educating students about the cultural diversity found in the world.

Moreover, the development of multiliteracy skills is crucial in exposing students to numerous significant texts and equipping them as critical thinkers, particularly concerning new literacy practices required by emerging technologies (WALSH, 2010). It's also vital to acknowledge that what is relevant for students may vary from one context to another, emphasizing the importance for participants in the educational system to consider what holds meaning for these individuals and where it is situated as said in the following excerpt:

It is also important to observe the linguistic repertoires that students already use in their daily practices, often involving languages spoken at home or within specific social groups. In all of these situations, the appreciation of prior knowledge, the encouragement of sharing and helping others, and the definition of the desirable foreign language skills for various contexts should guide both individual and collective classroom practices. (BRASIL, 2018, p.124, tradução nossa)⁴

This provides evidence that the ideological model of literacy is the one upon which the BNCC bases its language approach, as it incorporates the social aspects of individuals into its practices, even accommodating other languages that play a role in their lives.

To conclude, when discussing what is relevant for students, this can also benefit their motivation, especially in the context of teaching English as a foreign language. Students

⁴ Original text: “Também é importante observar os repertórios linguísticos que os/as estudantes já utilizam em suas práticas cotidianas, muitas vezes envolvendo línguas faladas em casa ou em determinados grupos sociais. Em todas essas situações, a valorização de conhecimentos prévios, o estímulo ao compartilhamento e à ajuda ao outro, e a definição dos conhecimentos em língua estrangeira desejáveis para a atuação em diversos cenários devem orientar as práticas individuais e coletivas em sala de aula.”

often struggle to find the language's relevance in their lives. To address this issue, Brown suggests various ways to change this situation, such as “using class time for optimal authentic input and interaction” and “helping students see genuine uses for English in their own lives” (BROWN, 2000, p. 117). When multiliteracy is applied, as mentioned earlier, it can serve as a valuable tool for generating interest not only in the language itself or in the classroom but also in the broader range of skills and knowledge acquired through literacy.

3 RESEARCH METHODS

In an exploratory investigation, Laurence Bardin’s Content Analysis methodology (BARDIN, 2016) was applied to assess the suitability of the two textbooks for Brazilian high school classrooms. In this research, we analyzed contents in the textbooks present not only in verbal texts but also in multimodal texts to identify other languages present in the books in terms of multimodality.

Before diving into the methodology itself, let's outline the study objects: “Wide Angle 4” and “Wide Angle 6”. From now on, the books will be addressed as WA4 and WA6 respectively. As mentioned before, both books are part of a series of six books published by Oxford University Press. Each of these books consists of twelve units, and each unit is subdivided into five lessons. The first three lessons focus on reading, writing, and listening, although not necessarily in that order. Following these, there is a lesson titled “English for Real”, which addresses communication skills. Lastly, each unit concludes with a speaking lesson.

Moreover, there are additional resources integrated throughout the units, known as “Floating Features”. These text boxes run through all units and are designed to enhance specific skills. At the end of the book, there are twelve “Unit Reviews” and supplementary pages dedicated to reinforcing grammar knowledge, labeled as “Grammar Focus”. In this analysis, we have only gone through the Unit starters and the lessons minus the “Floating Features”.

Three dimensions were taken into the focus of analysis as they were established to outline our objectives: the diversity of speakers in the audio tracks and videos, the integration of multiliteracy throughout the texts, and multimodality. The diversity of speakers was analyzed by listening to the audio and computing the different accents presented in all audio occurrences. Unfortunately, neither the student’s book nor the teacher’s book provided the nationality or the accent of the speakers, so they had to be inferred by the researcher through

the phonemes used in the utterances. This dimension was created to analyze if the books present English as a *lingua franca* being spoken by speakers around the world. The findings were gathered in the following table:

Table 1.1 - Example Book Audio Occurrences

EXAMPLE BOOK AUDIO OCCURRENCES					
UNIT	TOTAL	AE	BE	OTHER	
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
TOTAL					
%					

Source: Research data.

The multimodality of each book was analyzed through investigating which semiotics were used in the text and if they are plural, including also new literacies connected to online environments, while the multiliteracies were analyzed by collecting the different text genres in the book. This data was gathered in the following tables:

Table 1.2: Example Book Multimodality

EXAMPLE BOOK MULTIMODALITY							
TOTAL	PICTURES	CHARTS	CARTOON/ DRAWINGS	TECH RELATED	VIDEOS	AUDIO	WRITTEN TEXTS
%							

Source: Research data.

Table 1.3: Example Book Text Genres

EXAMPLE BOOK TEXT GENRES		
GENRES	TOTAL	%
GENRE 1		
GENRE 2		
TOTAL		%

Source: Research data.

Subsequently, the occurrences in each indicator were quantified to draw conclusions. To assess each indicator, we calculated the frequency of various accents in the audio tracks and videos, along with the occurrence of text genres and multimodalities. This data was then compared to the total number for each indicator, allowing us to present the results more clearly through the use of percentages.

4 DISCUSSION

Both books have a wide range of text genres scattered throughout the lessons. As we gathered the results, a majority of articles were seen. In the WA4, almost 30% of the texts were articles, data that matches the number of articles found in the WA6. However, the next occurrences of genres are different from one material to another. In the WA4, blog posts are the second most frequent, closely followed by essays, while in the WA6, the second place is tied between emails and dictionary entries. These findings exhibit a consistency between the two books, as illustrated in the following tables.

Table 2.1: Wide Angle 4 Text Genres

(continua)

WIDE ANGLE 4 TEXT GENRES		
GENRES	TOTAL	%
BLOG POST	6	13,33%
NOTES	4	8,89%
ARTICLE	13	28,89%
JOB AD	1	2,22%
PERSONAL STATEMENT	1	2,22%
NEWS REPORT	1	2,22%

Table 2.1: Wide Angle 4 Text Genres

(conclusão)

WIDE ANGLE 4 TEXT GENRES		
GENRES	TOTAL	%
DICTIONARY DEFINITION	3	6,67%
ESSAY	5	11,11%
PROCESSES CHART	1	2,22%
EXPOSITORY SUMMARIES	1	2,22%
MIND MAP	1	2,22%
ONLINE ADVICE COLUMN	1	2,22%
AD	2	4,44%
MOVIE SUMMARY	1	2,22%
HOTEL REVIEW	1	2,22%
COMMENTS	2	4,44%
HEADLINE	1	2,22%
TOTAL	45	100,00%

Source: Research data.

Table 2.2: Wide Angle 6 Text Genres

(continua)

WIDE ANGLE 6 TEXT GENRES		
GENRES	TOTAL	%
COMMENTS	1	2,56%
ARTICLE	12	30,77%
DESCRIPTIVE TEXT	3	7,69%
RECORDING EXCERPT	3	7,69%
ESSAY	4	10,26%
INTERVIEW	1	2,56%
BLURB	1	2,56%
NOVEL	1	2,56%
REPORT	3	7,69%
LETTER	1	2,56%
CHART (TABLE)	1	2,56%
BIOGRAPHY	1	2,56%
ADVICE COLUMN	1	2,56%
BLOG POST	4	10,26%
MENU	1	2,56%

Table 2.2: Wide Angle 6 Text Genres

(conclusão)

WIDE ANGLE 6 TEXT GENRES		
GENRES	TOTAL	%
ADVERTISEMENT	1	2,56%
REVIEW	1	2,56%
EMAIL	5	12,82%
DIALOGUE	3	7,69%
GRAPH	1	2,56%
DICTIONARY ENTRY	5	12,82%
HEADLINE	2	5,13%
PERSONAL EXP	2	5,13%
ARTICLE EXCERPTS	2	5,13%
TOTAL	39	100,00%

Source: Research data.

It is important to notice the major difference between the values from the most frequent to the second most frequent genres. Both books highlight academic reading and writing with a focus on grammar. One could argue that academic reading and writing are important for high school since students are starting to think about undergraduate programs, however, we have to remember the goals on which BNCC bases itself. The idea is to prepare first a universal citizen and then to teach the language itself. Unfortunately, the basic expectations are outlined by the possibilities of the Brazilian public school system, which are very different from the private school context in which these books were found.

In terms of Multimodality, the data collected is also similar between the textbooks as it can be seen in tables 2.1 and 2.2. Many pictures illustrate the situations in the books, providing essential context and slightly introducing the diversity of English speakers. Unfortunately, this diversity is not reflected in the audio tracks and videos, as will be discussed in more detail later in this text. Setting pictures aside, audio files are prevalent with dialogues, lectures, and many podcasts. The themes depicted in the tracks vary from lesson to lesson and are highly informative.

Table 3.1: Wide Angle 4 Multimodality

WIDE ANGLE 4 MULTIMODALITY							
TOTAL	PICTURES	CHARTS	CARTOON/ DRAWINGS	TECH RELATED	VIDEOS	AUDIO	WRITTEN TEXTS
415	192	35	22	13	34	89	30
%	46,27%	8,43%	5,30%	3,13%	8,19%	21,45%	7,23%

Source: Research data.

Table 3.2: Wide Angle 6 Multimodality

WIDE ANGLE 6 MULTIMODALITY							
TOTAL	PICTURES	CHARTS	CARTOON/ DRAWINGS	TECH RELATED	VIDEOS	AUDIO	WRITTEN TEXTS
331	133	24	24	15	32	79	24
%	40,18%	7,25%	7,25%	4,53%	9,67%	23,87%	9,67%

Source: Research data.

There are also visual arts, charts, videos and written texts, and with the least number of appearances, tech-related texts. Those texts are the ones that try to simulate an online environment resembling websites or audio players. This is noteworthy since new technologies bring about new literacies as Walsh supports:

Students of today will need to be able to continually adapt to new technologies and to those literacy practices needed for each development. The reality is that, even in this time of writing, newer communication technologies are emerging. More than ever teachers need to prepare their students for the new literacy practices and discourses that have become embedded in online social interaction. (WALSH, 2010, p.216)

Unfortunately, this attempt to include new literacies into students' learning is not entirely satisfactory since it lacks the main difference between the literacies rooted in technology and traditional literacies: interaction. Although the book series provides online practice, this feature summarizes itself into standardized online activities, which are not sufficient to engage students in the dynamic environment of new literacies. This scenario is not exclusive to the Wide Angle series since textbook publishers are still trying to adapt to the ongoing changes in technology.

As shown in the previous tables, the books make much use of audio resources evidencing the emphasis on listening comprehension and pronunciation. However, all tracks

are staged, paused, or robotic, which may not reflect real-life communication. Interestingly, in the WA6 tracks, there seems to be an attempt to sound more spontaneous, which makes sense since the book is the most advanced one of the series. When speaking of English as a *lingua franca*, both textbooks do not show interest in presenting worldwide speakers.

The following tables gather all the audio occurrences, tracks and videos, hence videos contain the audio features and can also be used in class without the visual features. A great number of occurrences of American English (AE) were computed in both books, with British English (BE) coming in second place by a significant margin.

Table 4.1: Wide Angle 4 Audio Occurrences

WIDE ANGLE 4 AUDIO OCCURRENCES					
UNIT	TOTAL	AE	BE	OTHER	
1	12	11	1	1	SPANISH
2	10	9	-	5	4 INDIAN 1 SPANISH
3	10	9	1	1	ITALIAN
4	8	8	1	-	-
5	14	14	10	2	INDIAN
6	13	12	3	1	SPANISH
7	8	7	4	1	ITALIAN
8	12	12	4	5	INDIAN
9	8	7	3	1	ITALIAN
10	11	11	3	-	-
11	8	8	1	2	INDIAN
12	9	9	4	-	-
TOTAL	123	117	35	19	
%	100,00%	95,12%	28,46%	15,45%	

Source: Research data.

Table 4.2: Wide Angle 6 Audio Occurrences

(continua)

WIDE ANGLE 6 AUDIO OCCURRENCES					
UNIT	TOTAL	AE	BE	OTHER	
1	8	8	1	-	-
2	6	6	1	1	INDIAN
3	8	8	-	1	INDIAN
4	9	9	3	-	-

Table 4.2: Wide Angle 6 Audio Occurrences

(conclusão)

WIDE ANGLE 6 AUDIO OCCURRENCES					
UNIT	TOTAL	AE	BE	OTHER	
5	15	14	2	2	INDIAN AND ITALIAN
6	10	8	2	2	INDIAN AND SPANISH
7	9	8	2	1	SPANISH
8	9	9	2	-	-
9	9	8	1	1	SPANISH
10	13	12	1	2	INDIAN
11	8	7	2	1	SPANISH
12	7	7	2	-	-
TOTAL	111	104	19	11	
%	100,00%	93,69%	17,12%	9,91%	

Source: Research data.

The preference for the American form is evident, constituting more than 90% of the occurrences in both books. Other accents, on the other hand, cover 15,45% in WA4 and even less in WA6, accounting for less than 10%. Most of the minority accents are from Indian speakers while the others are from Italian and Spanish speakers. The latter accents are featured in videos placed at the beginning of each unit, where photographers, responsible for the picture initiating each lesson, give an outlook on their works. Although this segment is a bonus, it is not essential to the lessons.

With that, neither book aligns with one of the perspectives in which BNCC establishes language teaching - interculturality, at least not in speech. This is understood in the absence of speakers from various nationalities nor Brazilian. The primary focus remains on the American standard grammatical form of English.

5 CONCLUSION

With this research we can conclude that the two objects, Wide Angle 4 and Wide Angle 6, do not fit BNCC directives properly, particularly in their treatment of English as a *lingua franca*. These textbooks predominantly propagate American English as the standard, with eventual inclusions of British English and other accents. This approach fails to

acknowledge English as a globally spoken language that contains many forms accepted in different communities.

As in multiliteracy and multimodality, the books provide a variety of text genres, but the emphasis on articles suggests an inclination toward academic or formal writing. Also, despite the attempts to incorporate multimodal texts throughout the lessons, the execution is not satisfactory.

These findings stress the importance of reevaluating foreign options, as they may not necessarily align with the Brazilian context. Unfortunately, the idea that foreign materials are better than the national's is spread in the private school system, which must be demystified. Many Brazilian textbook alternatives are more suitable in meeting the expectations outlined by BNCC and reflecting our countries' reality.

While this paper did not delve into aspects such as book length, which does not fit the 200-day school year, and the target audience primarily being adults, these considerations serve as an invitation for future analyses, them being formal or informal, on materials that are possible alternatives to complement learning in Brazil, and have a start viewpoint for choosing textbooks for students.

Also part of the conclusions, it is important to mention that we understand textbooks as one of the many resources available for teaching any subject, having always to be adapted and implemented according to the teachers' awareness of their working contexts and their students' needs.

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