

## **English as a lingua franca in the Brazilian National Curriculum: a literature review (2018-2024)**

### **Inglés como lengua franca en la Base Nacional Común Curricular en Brasil: una revisión de la literatura (2018-2024)**

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#### **Abstract**

The adoption of English as a lingua franca (ELF) perspective in the Brazilian National Curriculum Guidelines (BNCC) has had a mixed reception among researchers and practitioners. Since BNCC final publication in 2018, several studies have been published and research conducted at postgraduate level. In this paper, I review the academic production about how ELF has been addressed in relation to BNCC for the period 2018-2024. The objective was to find out the level of engagement with that official document. The majority of the 21 papers focused on conceptual discussions, characterizing what can be called “initial practical engagement”, while most of the 14 theses and dissertations focused on “developing practical engagement”, through studies on teaching materials, beliefs and teacher education. Classroom implementation (full practical engagement) received less attention in both papers and theses/dissertations. More research needs to be done with teachers to explore how ELF can be adopted in practice in various educational settings.

**Keywords:** English as a lingua franca, BNCC, Brazil, curriculum, literature review.

#### **Resumen**

La adopción del inglés como lengua franca (ILF) en la Base Nacional Común Curricular (BNCC) en Brasil fue recibida de diferentes maneras por investigadores y profesores. Desde la publicación de la BNCC en 2018, se han publicado varios estudios y se han realizado investigaciones a nivel de posgrado. En este trabajo reviso la literatura sobre cómo se ha tratado la ILF desde su inserción en la BNCC para el período 2018-2024. El objetivo era conocer el nivel de compromiso con ese documento oficial. La mayoría de los 21 artículos se centraron en debates conceptuales que caracterizaron lo que llamo “compromiso inicial”. La mayoría de las 14 tesis o disertaciones se centraron en lo que considero “compromiso con el desarrollo”, a través de estudios sobre materiales de enseñanza, creencias y formación docente. La implementación en el aula (compromiso práctico completo) recibió menos atención tanto en artículos como en disertaciones/tesis. Es necesario realizar más investigaciones con docentes para explorar cómo se puede adoptar el ILF en la práctica en diversos entornos educativos.

**Palabras clave:** Inglés como lengua franca, BNCC, Brasil, curriculum, revisión de literatura.

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## Introduction

The teaching of foreign languages has been part of the Brazilian educational system since colonial times (Oliveira, 2015; Grilli, 2018). During the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century several changes were introduced, from the optional character of foreign languages in the curriculum to their mandatory status, with the choice of which language schools could offer at lower and upper secondary levels. The post-war policies followed the allegiance with the United States and favored the English language, although under the multilingual endorsement reflected in the label “any foreign language”, meaning that other foreign languages could be taught. Curriculum guidelines issued in the 1990’s avoided the adoption of a specific focus and treated all the languages as potential school subjects, despite the majority of classes being offered in English.

In 2005, another Law (Lei 11.161, 2005) gave rise to a paradoxical situation in which Spanish was to be offered compulsorily at high school level, but with attendance to classes being optional. This was about to change in 2017, when the broader educational Law (Lei 9394,1996) was modified, and Law 11.161 was revoked. English became the mandatory language at lower and upper secondary levels, according to Law 13.415 (Lei 13.415, 2017).

Concurrently, a national curriculum base was approved after a long process of consultation amid political turbulence (Caetano, 2019). The National Curriculum Base (Base Nacional Comum Curricular - BNCC), established by the Brazilian Ministry of Education and endorsed by the National Education Council (CNE), was released in 2017 for the first years of schooling and an updated full version, including upper secondary level, was published in 2018 (Ministério da Educação, 2018). The third and final version of the document was the result of an intense public consultation process, in a moment the country was going through political change. The first version (for primary and lower secondary levels) received 12 million contributions. A second version received more than 9.000 contributions and was discussed in 27 state regional seminars. The third version was approved in December 2017. In 2018 the Ministry of Education updated the third version and included the upper secondary level (Ensino médio). (Base Nacional Comum, 2025).

BNCC provided a framework that was further detailed and contextualized by the 27 Brazilian states, and outlined the essential learning goals for students from early childhood education through to the upper secondary level. The document defines the competencies and skills that students should develop at each educational stage, and is divided into two main sections: a) General Competencies, which are broad skills that all students are expected to develop, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, communication, and the ability to act in a socially responsible manner; b) Specific Content Areas: these are disciplinary areas, that include languages, mathematics, natural sciences, and humanities. Considering that the BNCC emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning, English belongs to the Languages component.

The change in the educational law that made English a compulsory subject in the curriculum, and no longer just an option among many others, was also reflected in the latest and official version of the BNCC, that explicitly embraced an English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) perspective, in contrast with the customary approach that considered it a foreign language<sup>2</sup>. In other words, English was no longer one option among the many foreign languages, but a compulsory one, with the indication that ELF would be the perspective to guide curriculum and pedagogical decisions.

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<sup>2</sup> For a discussion about the differences between EFL and ELF see Swan (2012).

As a policy directive, it may take some time for these changes to be understood and contextualized in teacher education programs, syllabuses, teaching materials, and assessment. However, it sparked a growing interest in exploring what ELF may mean for curriculum designers, teachers and learners, something that had been restricted to academic circles (Bordini & Gimenez, 2014; Lopes & Baumgartner, 2019).

Considering that ELF is now the “official” perspective to be adopted in schools, a literature review carried out by Zenere et al., (2023) highlighted three implications suggested by the BNCC: teaching English from an ELF perspective in contrast with English as a foreign language; multiliteracies and teaching approaches that privilege diversity and intelligibility. They were interested in checking whether these implications were addressed in the reviewed Brazilian publications that had BNCC and the English language as the focus. The authors identified 7 publications that matched their criteria for inclusion. They found that multiliteracies was the most popular topic, meaning the capacity to use different languages for participation in a globalized world, with respect for diversity and heterogeneous and multimodal language use. Detailed discussions of what else ELF would imply were less frequent.

In this paper I add to that scholarship by presenting a partial review of the literature published in Brazil or having the Brazilian context in mind, focusing on BNCC and ELF. It will be restricted to the period between 2018-2024, since after the publication of BNCC practitioners all over the country had to engage with this concept and many researchers in Applied Linguistics addressed the challenges emerging from those guidelines. The purpose is to offer an overview of the themes covered by those studies to help identify the level of engagement with the guidelines, considering that classroom practices may take some time before policy documents are translated into classroom practices.

This paper is organized as follows: first I will describe how BNCC signals what ELF may mean; secondly, I will present the methodology of the literature review and the findings. Finally, I will discuss these results and bring some concluding remarks about future research development to explore how practitioners have been interpreting this concept in the classroom.

## **ELF and BNCC**

ELF is considered an established concept that acknowledges the widespread presence of English in multilingual settings that would require teaching to adapt to its current status as a global language. It promotes distancing from the teaching approach that implied non-native users had to adhere to native speakers’ linguistic and cultural norms. ELF became a research program that gathers scholars interested in challenging those ideologies. In Brazil, this field of study has been explored with critical perspectives, considering mainly pedagogical recontextualizations and theoretical perspectives that challenge Eurocentric views of language (e.g., Gimenez et al., 2011, Duboc & Siqueira, 2020; Gimenez, 2024). The situated nature of social practices involving English as well as its entanglement with globalization and issues of power and inequality have been predominant in local ELF interpretations that highlight the political aspect of English language teaching (Siqueira & Gimenez, 2021; see also other papers in this issue). Brazilian scholarship on ELF has therefore, been developed within social and critical perspectives rather than a strictly linguistic one. Accordingly, BNCC recognized English as a language that is being increasingly used all over the world, with multilingual speakers and therefore, its teaching does not need to follow the native speakers’ cultural and linguistic norms. For this reason, the endorsement of a more liberatory approach to the teaching of the English language in the national curriculum

document was received with cautious enthusiasm (e.g., Duboc, 2019, Rosa, Duboc & Siqueira, 2023).

The teaching of English is justified in the curriculum as part of a critical education agenda, in contrast with an instrumental one, thus having a formative function, with a focus on the social and political functions of the language. Learning English is equated with acquiring knowledge that enables wider participation, interaction and mobility, as well as access to higher education. ELF is presented as a perspective that matches these goals, since it considers the way this language is used in the world today, not just for interaction with native speakers, but with people all over the world. Therefore, the document frames competence in English as a necessary knowledge towards a more egalitarian society and ELF as an approach that acknowledges “real life” uses.

Although the curriculum does not bring a list of references, it seems to endorse the view that in an ELF context English is not a variety, but a means of communication between multilingual speakers. It rejects both the exclusive association with foreigners from hegemonic countries and the understanding that it is a variety:

In this perspective, the uses made by speakers from all over the world, with different linguistic and cultural repertoires, are accepted and validated, which allows us, for example, to question the view that the only ‘correct’ English—and the one to be taught—is the one used by American and British speakers. (Ministério da Educação, 2018, p. 241, my translation)

According to BNCC, there are at least three implications from the adoption of an ELF perspective: a) to review the links between language, territory and culture; b) to broaden the understanding of literacy to encompass multiliteracies; and c) to adopt a teaching approach that acknowledges the diversity of uses of English. One example given by the curriculum is the use of “ain’t” in negative sentences, that cannot be treated as an exception, deviating from the standard. The suggestion is to treat “local uses of English and related linguistic resources in the perspective of building a linguistic repertoire, which must be analyzed and made available to the student to make use of it, always fulfilling the condition of intelligibility in linguistic interactions.” (Ministério da Educação, 2018, p. 242, my translation). This understanding of ELF is reinforced in the section addressing the teaching of English at upper secondary level. It stresses the “fluid, dynamic and specific characteristics of this language” and proceeds to point out that aspects such as “precision, standardization, error, imitation and level of proficiency or mastery of the language are replaced by broader notions related to the discursive universe in practices situated within the fields of activity, such as intelligibility, uniqueness, variety, creativity/invention and repertoire” (Ministério da Educação, 2018, p. 485, my translation).

The inclusion of English as a compulsory curriculum subject is framed in the BNCC within critical education, with an ELF perspective providing the background to support change in teaching and assessment practices. It demands an important shift in English language teaching which, historically, has been influenced by native speakers’ norms and has reinforced an instrumental role for the language. However, how these ideas are being interpreted and implemented in classrooms across the country is in infant stages. This review of literature aims to offer a starting point towards identifying some of these early studies and their approach to the BNCC guidelines. Accordingly, the research question is: What do these studies reveal about the level of engagement of Brazilian researchers and practitioners with ELF in the BNCC?

## Methodology

This study is a literature review that followed the steps recommended by Snyder (2019): i) identifying the research questions in the reviewed studies; ii) establishing the criteria to include or exclude sources; iii) conducting a systematic search, iv) screening titles and abstracts, v) accumulating and reading papers, vi) extracting key information and themes, vii) interpreting findings, and viii) reporting the results.

The research question was identified as “What do these studies reveal about the level of engagement of Brazilian researchers and practitioners with ELF in the BNCC?”. One criterion for inclusion was that the publications should be open access, to allow other researchers and readers to deepen their reading if they wish to do so. The sources for consultation were Google Scholar (criterion: all types, 2018-2024), Portal de Periódicos da CAPES<sup>3</sup> (criteria: articles and reviews, national production, 2018-2024) and Catálogo de Teses e Dissertações CAPES<sup>4</sup> (criterion: theses and dissertations, 2019-2023)<sup>5</sup>. The search words were: ELF or ILF and BNCC, lingua franca and BNCC, Inglês como Língua Franca and BNCC. The abstracts of all of the publications were read and annotated in terms of objectives; methodology, results/conclusions. When needed, the full publication was also read.

The number of publications with the characteristics above and identified for the period between 2018 and 2024, were:

Table 1. Number of publications about ELF and BNCC

Search terms/source	Google Scholar	Portal Periódicos	Catálogo Teses
“English as a lingua franca” or “Inglês como Língua Franca and BNCC”	204	21	3
“Inglês como língua franca and BNCC”	637	13	19 <sup>6</sup>
“Língua franca and BNCC”	1460	19	13

Source: the author.

<sup>3</sup> A portal providing access to a virtual library with major national and international publications. Available at <https://www.periodicos.capes.gov.br/>

<sup>4</sup> A database with theses and dissertations produced by postgraduate programs in Brazil. Available at <https://catalogodeteses.capes.gov.br/catalogo-teses/#/>

<sup>5</sup> There were no results for 2018, which can be explained by the recency of the BNCC and the time lapse between its publication and the finished research at postgraduate level. Research concluded in 2024 is not available on the platform yet.

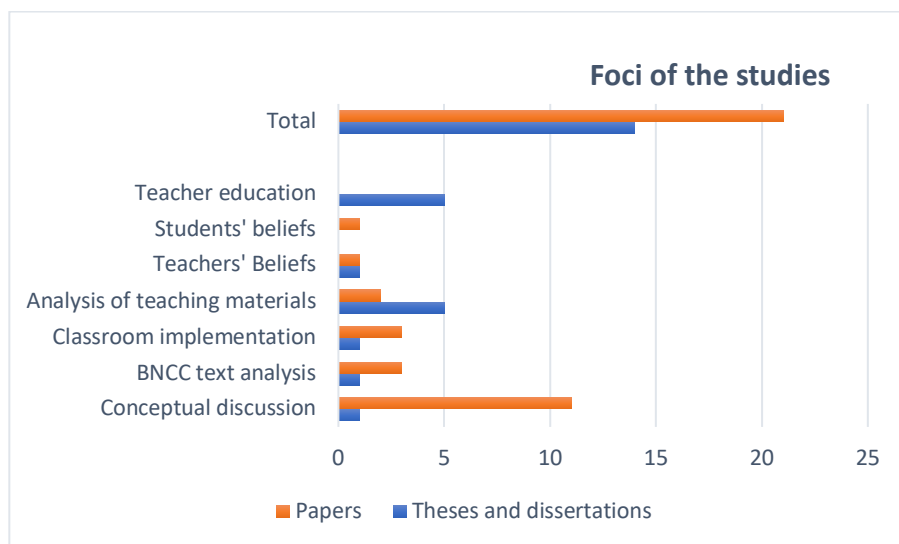
<sup>6</sup> Five were excluded because they did not have a direct connection with the topic (Branquitude normativa no livro didático de inglês: perpetuação do racismo e manutenção de privilégios; A identidade do professor de disciplina dita não linguística no CAP/UFPe e a interculturalização; A utilização de aplicativos no ensino de língua inglesa: desafios e propostas; “Todos os brasileiros comem o mesmo café da manhã?” - perspectivas interculturais nos cadernos de apoio de língua inglesa do currículo paulista para o ensino fundamental; Discurso dos sujeitos-professores e sujeitos-alunos sobre o processo de ensino-aprendizagem de língua portuguesa e língua inglesa na educação básica).

Considering that Google Scholar does not allow search refinement to exclude those that did not have a direct connection with BNCC and its pedagogical implications, and for reasons of space limitations in this text, I concentrated on the items available through Portal de Periódicos and the Catalogue of Theses and Dissertations available through CAPES<sup>7</sup>. The total numbers were 21 papers and 13 theses or dissertations.

After reading the abstracts, the following categories were created to establish the research focus:

- a) **Analysis of teaching materials**, when textbooks or other teaching materials were analyzed in relation to what BNCC proposes.
- b) **BNCC text analysis**, when the purpose was to analyze the text itself.
- c) **Classroom implementation**, when practical classroom experience was reported.
- d) **Conceptual discussion**, when the purpose was to engage with the concepts adopted by BNCC.
- e) **Teachers' and/or students' beliefs**, when the objective was to investigate how teachers and/or students conceptualized ELF.
- g) **Teacher education**, when the study included opportunities for teacher development through courses at initial or continuing education.

Graph 1. exhibits the number of publications according to their foci



Source: the author.

Another set of categories was developed through the analysis of the results and conclusions of the reviewed publications: initial, developing or full practical engagement with the ELF perspective, depending on how teaching practices were addressed. If they only discussed the different conceptualizations of ELF or pointed out inconsistencies in the document, they were

<sup>7</sup> However, it is important to note that a more comprehensive review would require the inclusion of the references listed on that source that includes book chapters and other types of manuscripts published in Brazil and abroad that could potentially match the criteria for inclusion in this literature review.



labelled “initial engagement”; if they analyzed some of the conditions for implementation such as teaching materials, teacher education, and the unveiling of beliefs held by teachers and students, they were labelled “developing practical engagement”, whereas “full practical engagement” was the label adopted for classroom implementation.

## Results

### *Initial engagement*

The majority of the included references (35%) discussed how ELF can be interpreted according to the document. This set of publications (mostly in journals) shows that the authors were interested in discussing what the implications were and aimed at unpacking what could be seen as “new” concepts. They selected some keywords to establish a dialogue with potential understandings. Some of the studies addressed the meanings of language, culture, ELF and interculturality (Silva, Ladeia & Cruz, 2018), criticality, citizenship and diversity (Ribas, 2018; Farias & Silva, 2022), *lingua franca*, multiliteracies and interculturality (Santclair, Sabota, Silva (2022), and English (Santana, 2022). Another publication discussed the links between the guidelines and the use of digital technologies in and out of the classroom considering that multiliteracies are proposed as capacities to be learned (Silva & Pacheco, 2020), while Costa & Silva, (2022) examined the connections between BNCC and the guidelines issued for the internationalization of basic education. From a policy point of view, Oliveira (2022) investigated a local context in the south of Brazil and stressed the conflicts between ELF and the influence of native speakerism and monolingual ideologies that still predominate among teachers and students.

More recently, ELF has been framed within decolonial approaches, and Pedrosa & Ribeiro (2022) argue that this perspective (that they believe is coherent with BNCC) offers possibilities for countering the hegemonic views that privilege certain varieties of English. This positive assessment of the document is shared by Santos & Marques (2024), who see ELF as an alternative to the coloniality inherent in the preference for native speakers’ English.

Other four publications focus on the text itself and its contradictions. Duboc (2019) explores the tensions between the normativities represented by the suggested syllabi and the fluidity that characterizes ELF as a context of language use. Similarly, Santana & Kupske (2020) analyzed the different versions of BNCC, concentrating on the change from English as a foreign language to ELF. Overall, their assessment is positive, but they pointed out the paradox of adopting ELF and focussing on grammar and pronunciation, in addition to not incorporating competences like questioning why those competencies were selected. Those inconsistencies were also pointed out by Oliveira (2021), who believes the document fails to provide guidance for critical language education that would be coherent with an ELF perspective. An attempt to understand the reasons for establishing ELF as the language perspective in the final version of BNCC, Rosa, Duboc & Siqueira (2023) looked at the clues, evidence and traces in the text that could indicate why this choice was made. The authors do not settle the matter because they conclude that it could be interpreted both as by chance (especially for teachers not used to that terminology), and as intentional, coherent with a neoliberal agenda that privileges English in its instrumental role. Another study, based on discourse analysis, framed ELF as an illusion, since it is presented as a tool for communication, but, according to the theoretical framework adopted, language is not only for communication but also for non-communication (Costa, 2022).

Contrary to the critics, Batista, Oliveira & Borges (2024) advocate that the BNCC responds adequately to the demands of the 21st century, by prioritizing the English language in its communicative potential among speakers around the world.

The studies in this category reveal how researchers were trying to establish a dialogue with the official document from different theoretical perspectives. The next category encompass studies that tried to come closer to thinking of strategies to implement ELF in schools.

### *Developing practical engagement*

Any curriculum innovation would require a set of conditions to be implemented. Some of these were investigated by researchers and practitioners: teaching materials, teachers' and learners' beliefs and teacher education.

The publications categorized as "Analysis of teaching materials" were directed at textbooks with the purpose of identifying whether they were aligned with the BNCC guidelines. Based on definitions of ELF that encourage intelligibility rather than adherence to language standards, and connected to a larger study by Aniecevski (2023), Aniecevski & Passoni (2021) presented the analysis of two units of two textbooks officially included in the National Textbook Program. They concluded that although some initial steps have been taken towards greater flexibility, the American and British varieties of English still predominate, and other sources are expected to be included in future editions to foster awareness about ELF.

With a focus on interculturality, Sato, Saparas & Buin (2023), based on Sato (2023), analyzed one imported textbook according to the various skills it intended to develop. The oral activities were the ones that came closer to the ELF perspective, by focussing on communication. However, other aspects such as greater diversity of representations about other cultures distanced from the ELF perspective and the activities reflected eurocentrism.

Santos (2019), on the other hand, concluded that the following categories were found in the analyzed textbook: interdisciplinarity, sociocultural diversity, significant experiences of interaction and reflection, representation of a multilingual and multicultural world, varied use of languages in print or digital media, and construction of citizenship,

The development of global citizenship was the focus of the study conducted by Nascimento (2023), who was interested in assessing a textbook for young learners. He concluded that it did not bring diverse genres from countries other than the United States or the UK.

A discourse analysis carried out by Borges (2023) having textbooks recommended by the National Textbook Program revealed that although they promoted the delinking of English to territories and countries by images and texts, it did so neglecting the tensions, as if the uses of English were free from conflicts and that communication can be guaranteed. She criticized the instrumental view of language conveyed by the textbooks that romanticized the global spread of English.

In addition to teaching materials, what teachers believe plays an important role in their classroom decisions. Perhaps due to the questions that framed ELF mainly as "non-native" uses of English, teachers in a municipal school investigated by Oliveira & Bordini (2022) agreed that English is a global language and that teaching would have to adapt to this language status and be more responsive to a diversity of accents and less rigid with deviations from the norms. Santana (2021), on the other hand, asked open questions and found that the school teachers participating in her study did not have much knowledge about ELF as discussed in the literature, not going beyond seeing it as a language used in many countries around the world.



Situated between teacher education and teachers' beliefs, Lima (2022) offered a four-day course for municipal school teachers who did not have familiarity with the ELF perspective and concluded that, during the sessions, that they moved back and forth in their knowledge as they were confronted with "old" ways of teaching. These results evidence the difficulty of recontextualizing ELF pedagogically without long-term teacher development.

Working with state school teachers, Queiroz (2022) offered a 40-hour course on BNCC addressing ELF and other dimensions of the curriculum. Her results showed the possibilities afforded by the readings and reflective sessions on the sociolinguistic realities of English today, interculturality, multiliteracies and multimodalities. Santos (2023) also facilitated a 10-session online course to schoolteachers with the aim of discussing topics related to ELF, such as language as a social practice, linguistic repertoires, translanguaging, pronunciation from the perspective of ELF, culture and critical interculturality. A gradual approximation to the concept was developed as the course participants started to think about issues of standard pronunciation, the need to prepare contextualized activities beyond the traditional centers and the relevance of fostering critical praxis.

Another opportunity for teacher education was organized by Sanchez (2022). She prepared activities based on conceptualizations of language, native speakers, negotiation strategies and glocalization and involved schoolteachers in reflections about their use in the classroom. The units were updated taking into account their feedback and the public-school context.

If the development of teachers in continuing education requires strong support, at in-service level this may demand equal efforts. The promotion of interculturality and its place in an English initial teacher education degree was the focus of the study developed by Souza (2021). Her analysis of the undergraduate course programs revealed that this concept, advocated by BNCC, was absent from the activities, confirming a colonial view and little endorsement of ELF.

Students' beliefs also play an important role when planning classroom activities. Barbosa & Nascimento (2022) collected data in a public school with emphasis on intercultural issues and found that most of the learners considered travel as the main motivation for learning English. The internet was not perceived as a space that could facilitate interaction with people from other parts of the world. As a result, they proposed a didactic sequence with the aim of raising intercultural awareness.

Teacher education initiatives with the production of teaching materials and the identification of beliefs are connected aspects that, in most cases, reflect an approach that acknowledges the importance of the participants' backgrounds and the need to root concepts in practices.

## **Classroom implementation**

A study describing the experience of introducing ELF during the pandemic, when remote teaching to children was implemented in municipal schools in a city in Santa Catarina state, was reported by Lima, Sávio & Rosso (2020) and Lima, Rosso & Pasini (2021). In these two papers they share the lesson plan and activities in which they integrated translanguaging practices and ELF. In fact, more recently, several authors have been associating these two theoretical frameworks (Cenoz, 2019). They concluded that the initiative was successful, since the young learners were able to communicate and felt comfortable speaking English without worrying about "mistakes".

Another context involving children was reported by Francisco & Parisotto (2022) who proposed an annual plan for the teaching of English focusing on multiliteracies, especially digital ones. They did so by associating the BNCC general competencies and the English component,

suggesting activities that could fulfill the purpose of developing those competencies. They also observed the need for teacher education opportunities, considering that having the infrastructure may not be enough.

Silva (2021) also considered interculturality as the cornerstone of ELF and investigated students' beliefs and intercultural activities in the adopted textbook. She proposed additional activities that could be implemented taking citizenship, identity and culture as guiding principles. Her study was carried out in a context of evening classes for young adults, in contrast with the other studies reported here, that focused on children. The students in her study exhibited beliefs strongly influenced by hegemonic varieties of English and expressed what the author called "linguistic and cultural coloniality". This reinforced the need for teacher education that helps practitioners to analyze and create teaching materials in accordance with those principles.

The initiatives in this category were about creating opportunities for learning within an ELF perspective. Interestingly, the majority dealt with teaching young learners, a context where English is not compulsory but one that may give teachers greater autonomy to explore innovative ways of teaching.

## **Discussion and conclusion**

While the majority of the papers developed conceptual discussions about the potential meanings of ELF and English language teaching according to the guidelines, studies at postgraduate level had more investigations about textbooks and teaching materials and their adherence to BNCC guidelines. Obviously, we cannot rule out that some of these categories may overlap especially in more extensive research that is the case of theses and dissertations, considering that these categories were defined according to the objectives expressed in the abstracts.

The category with the largest number of publications was "initial engagement", partially explained by the recency of the BNCC. Conceptual discussions about BNCC and ELF ranged from those that celebrated the endorsement of an ELF perspective (e.g., Silva et al, 2018) to those that expressed more critical and skeptical views (e.g., Farias & Silva 2020). Others, while acknowledging advances in BNCC, pointed out inconsistencies in the document (e.g., Duboc 2019). Other analyses of the text itself ranged from tracing the trajectory of the text until its final version (Santana & Kupske 2020) to how much guidance the document provides (Batista et al. 2024). As such, they operate mainly at the level of theoretical considerations, with reference to classroom practices (when present) as speculations about what could be done. While it was expected that the change from English as a foreign language paradigm to ELF would spark controversy and require reflections on its implications, the emphasis of those studies was on the document itself or specific concepts selected for discussion.

As seen in Graph 1, developing practical engagement was the category mostly found in theses and dissertations. Textbooks, including those distributed by the National Textbook Program, and other teaching materials were analyzed to check whether they complied with the ELF perspective. Although some introduced greater diversity of the language, they failed to acknowledge the power relations in interactions among multilingual speakers. With teacher education initiatives, there were reports of opportunities to reflect on the implications derived from an ELF perspective and some exploring how teachers and students conceptualize English. Although advancing further the concept to include how educational actors and resources expressed the concept, these studies did not further explore how teachers and students were dealing with the concept in classrooms.

The third level of engagement (full practical engagement) relates to classroom implementation, with more papers than theses/dissertations. The small number of studies (4 in total) may reflect different causes, from the difficulty of accessing classrooms for research purposes, to a few initiatives that could be documented at the time of writing up. This is an area that requires more collaborative investigations to assess the feasibility of BNCC guidelines.

A hybrid category, between developing and full practical engagement could be attributed to the publications on teacher development courses, since they are considered a step towards BNCC implementation, with participating teachers developing understanding and experimenting with some activities in their classes. In courses with those characteristics (e.g., Lima 2022), teachers are usually required to prepare a unit or analyse teaching materials (e.g., Queiroz 2022).

This partial review of literature about how the ELF concept has been discussed in academic papers, theses and dissertations published in Brazil from 2018 to 2024 is intended to contribute to the construction of a research agenda that a) builds on the knowledge developed so far and b) identifies important research gaps. Such a research program can help bridge academic reflections and practitioners' insights.

Language education plays a very important role in contemporary societies, and educational policies need to be responsive to social needs and ethical imperatives. ELF is open to many interpretations and the document itself can be read in different ways, as the reviewed publications show. Its adoption by a national official policy gives it legitimacy, one that needs to be tested with evidence of learning outcomes. More research in this direction is needed.

The studies reported here also reveal what academics consider relevant, and the gaze is upon practitioners. From a quantitative point of view, the foci identified in these research reports seemingly place emphasis on grappling with understandings of the concept from different viewpoints and ELF as approached by BNCC is a rich field of study. More collaborative work between academics and practitioners may help develop a praxis that responds to those social needs and ethical imperatives.

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