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THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: AN ANALYSIS OF ITS OFFER IN BRAZILIAN UNIVERSITIES¹

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ABSTRACT: This study focuses on offering Foreign Language (FL) disciplines in national Higher Education given the demands of the academic and professional spheres through the parameters of the globalized society and its influence on the university internationalization process. Therefore, a brief history of higher education institutions in the country is presented, up to the configuration of recent institutional models, focusing on a new law of 1996, LDB (Guidelines and Bases of the Brazilian Education), which enabled the preparation of the National Curriculum Guidelines (DCN) and the reformulation of the curricula at all levels of education. This way, following the need for mastery of a FL, especially the English Language, considered as an academic *lingua franca*, a survey was carried out for the provision of FL in undergraduate courses based on opinions and decrees that they have guided their curricula over the last two decades, publicly available on the Ministry of Education and Sports website. By analyzing the files, mentions to the domain of FL were perceived, sometimes defined as FL and the Spanish language. Its offer is mainly related to developing communicative competence and reading ability. Thus, we observed that the FL has the role of allowing access, participation, and dissemination of academic research and extension activities globally, in addition to being related to the performance of the professional in training given current demands.

Keywords: Foreign Language, Higher education, National Curriculum Guidelines.

A LÍNGUA ESTRANGEIRA NO ENSINO SUPERIOR: UMA ANÁLISE DE SUA OFERTA EM UNIVERSIDADES BRASILEIRAS

RESUMO: O presente estudo tem como enfoque a oferta de disciplinas de Língua Estrangeira (LE) no ensino superior nacional, em vista das demandas das esferas acadêmica e profissional mediante os parâmetros da sociedade globalizada e sua influência no processo de internacionalização das

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universidades. Para tanto, é apresentado um breve histórico das Instituições de ensino superior no país, até a configuração dos modelos institucionais recentes, tendo como enfoque a Nova Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional (LDB) de 1996, a qual viabilizou a elaboração das Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais (DCN) e a reformulação curricular de todos os níveis da educação. Deste modo, seguindo a necessidade de domínio de uma LE, sobretudo da Língua Inglesa (LI), considerada como língua franca acadêmica, é realizada uma pesquisa pela oferta de LE nos cursos de graduação com base nos pareceres e decretos que norteiam seus currículos nas duas últimas décadas, disponibilizados publicamente pelo site do Ministério da Educação e do Desporto (MEC). A partir da análise dos arquivos, foram percebidas menções ao domínio de LE, por vezes definidas como EL e Língua Espanhola, sendo sua oferta relacionada sobretudo ao desenvolvimento da competência comunicativa e da habilidade leitora. Deste modo, observou-se que a LE tem como papel permitir o acesso, a participação e a divulgação das atividades acadêmicas de pesquisa e extensão em âmbito global, além de estar relacionada à atuação do profissional em formação em vista das demandas vigentes.

Palavras-chave: Língua Estrangeira, Ensino superior, Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais.

LA LENGUA EXTRANJERA EN LA EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR: UN ANÁLISIS DE SU OFERTA EN LAS UNIVERSIDADES BRASILEÑAS

RESUMEN: Este estudio se centra en la oferta de disciplinas de Lengua Extranjera (LE) en la Educación Superior nacional, ante las demandas del ámbito académico y profesional a través de los parámetros de la sociedad globalizada y su influencia en el proceso de internacionalización de las universidades. Para estos fines, se presenta una breve historia de las instituciones de educación superior en el país, hasta la configuración de modelos institucionales recientes, enfocándose en la Nueva Ley de Directrices y Bases de la Educación Nacional (LDB) de 1996, que permitió la elaboración de las Directrices Curriculares Nacionales (DCN) y reformulación curricular en todos los niveles educativos. De esta forma, ante la necesidad de dominio de una LE, especialmente la Lengua Inglesa (LI), considerada como lengua franca académica, se realiza una investigación cerca de la oferta de LE en cursos de grado a partir de dictámenes y decretos que han guiado sus planes de estudio durante las últimas dos décadas, puestos a disposición del público en el sitio del Ministerio de Educación y Deportes (MEC). A partir del análisis de los archivos se percibieron menciones al dominio de LE, en ocasiones definido como EL y la lengua española, y su oferta está relacionada principalmente con el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa y la capacidad lectora. Así, se observó que LE tiene el rol de permitir el acceso, participación y difusión de las actividades de investigación y extensión académica a nivel global, además de estar relacionado con el desempeño del profesional en formación ante las demandas actuales.

Palabras clave: Lengua Extranjera; Educación superior; Directrices Curriculares Nacionales.

INTRODUCTION

With a late history, Brazil's first higher education institutions date back to the colonial period, under the interests of the Portuguese crown and with the influence of religious institutions and European educational models. After several changes until the Proclamation of the Republic in 1889, the first Brazilian universities emerged with the country's modernization process in the 1920s. In this order, the last century was marked by educational reforms at all levels of education in the country, a milestone for this context being the promulgation of the New Laws of Directives and Bases of National Education in 1996, with the configuration of higher education in the recent parameters. Associated with this set of laws, curricular guidelines were proposed to reform curricula in this context, with analysis of the subjects offered by the courses and their workloads and other issues relevant to the pillars of research, teaching, and extension. Allied with this reformulation, the recent political, social, and economic context emerges as a parameter for directing these directions concerning the profile of graduates from undergraduate

courses in the various areas of knowledge offered by the current educational institutions, since their role concerns meeting both academic and labor market demands.

In this scenario, globalization has expanded the modes of communication, interaction, and exchange between peoples, highlighting the importance of the mastery of Foreign Language (hereinafter FL), especially the English Language (hereinafter EL), considered the most commonly used language in this process. In this context, new literacies have also emerged, and the domain of FL has extended as a means of accessing and disseminating research and scientific production, in addition to its link to technology and information. More specifically, in higher education, another development is the internationalization process of universities, which has as one of its bases the mastery of FL.

Based on these assumptions and a theme so often mentioned in linguistic research in the last three decades, this study sought to analyze the incorporation of FL in the curricula of higher education courses. We began with a survey of the guiding documents of this curricular reformulation, which are available online at the website of the Ministry of Education, in order to verify the presence or absence of FL in the curricular plans.

First, we developed this discussion offering a brief history of higher education courses in Brazil (MARTINS, 2002; OLIVEN, 2002; DURHAM, 2003; FÁVERO, 2006; SOUZA, 2012; MACHADO, CAMPOS & SARUNDERS, 2007; SAVIANI, 2010), followed by the configuration of undergraduate courses from the curricular guidelines (BRASIL, 1996/1997; FRAUCHES, 2008). We discuss, in a third moment, the presence of FL in higher education, especially regarding the phenomena of globalization and internationalization of Brazilian universities (ASSIS-PETERSON & COX, 2007; MACIEL, 2011; FINARDI & PORCINO, 2014; SEGRERA, 2015; FINARDI, SANTOS, & GUIMARÃES, 2016; AMORIM & FINARDI, 2017). Next, we detail the process of searching and analyzing documents that guide the provision of FL in undergraduate courses in the country. Lastly, we present some considerations about the analyzed data and suggest some discussion points in the scope of the presence of FL in higher education.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

As a legacy of the colonization process by the Portuguese crown, Brazil belatedly had its first higher education institutions in 1808, with the forced move of the royal court members to the territory given the threat of a Napoleonic invasion. This monarchic principle was marked by the creation of autonomous schools, with an emphasis in the first decades on the schools of Surgery and Anatomy in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro and the Academies of the Navy and Royal Military Guard.

Although independent, these schools remained under the monopoly of the Portuguese crown until the Proclamation of the Republic in 1889, when there was an expansion to state and municipal levels, as well as to private initiative, in the creation of new educational institutions. According to Durham (2003), until the proclamation, there were 24 autonomous schools in Brazil, and until 1918, 56 new schools emerged following the model of liberal professional education. In this regard, Martins (2002, p. 1) pointed out that:

Until the proclamation of the republic in 1889, higher education developed very slowly, following the model of training liberal professionals in isolated colleges; it aimed to ensure a professional diploma with the right to occupy privileged positions in a restricted labor market in addition to ensuring social prestige. It should be noted that the non-university character of the teaching did not constitute a demerit for higher education since the level of the teachers had to be comparable to that of the University of Coimbra, and the courses were of long duration.

As mentioned by the author, until that moment, there were no universities in Brazil. This situation persisted until the 1920s, with the country's modernization process through urbanization, industrialization, and, consequently, cultural and educational renewal. In this order, all levels of education underwent reforms to reach the "public, universal, and free" primary education (DURHAM, 2003, p. 6).

In the case of higher education, as opposed to the prevailing autonomous school models, Martins (2002, p.1) stated that:

The debate about creating universities was no longer restricted to strictly political issues (degree of state control) as in the past but to the concept of the university and its functions in society. The functions defined were housing science, scientists, and promoting research. Universities would not be mere teaching institutions but centers of disinterested knowledge (MARTINS, 2002, p.1).

It is important to highlight that this debate gained strength in the 1920s due to the activities of the Brazilian Association of Education and the Brazilian Academy of Sciences which discussed, among the most important issues, the conception, functions, and autonomy of the university, as well as sought a model to be adopted in the national context (FÁVERO, 2006). Moreover, Durham (2003) emphasized the strong presence of the church in the educational field since the creation of the confessional schools in the Republican Period. With this modernization of the higher level of education, the conservative Catholic elite lost space in granting economic funds for the creation of universities, especially with the opposition of liberal intellectuals. Therefore,

What was proposed was much more than just the creation of a university: it was a broad reform of the entire system of higher education, replacing the autonomous schools with large universities, with room for the development of basic sciences and research, in addition to professional training. The system would be public and non-denominational (DURHAM, 2003, p. 6).

In the 1930s, during the Provisional Government of Getúlio Vargas, “the political and economic context put on the agenda the structure of education in the country and began discussions to prevail some of the basic principles on which the new regime was based” (MACHADO, CAMPOS & SAUNDERS, 2007, p. 2). In this context, education became a pivotal aspect of the national formation and the ongoing modernization process. Therefore, public education was promoted more intensively with the creation of the Ministry of Education and Public Health Affairs.

In that same year, the minister Francisco de Campos, from Minas Gerais State, organized a reform in all national education to meet the new educational paradigms, creating the National Education Council and introducing grading, mandatory attendance, and the fundamental and complementary cycles (MACHADO, CAMPOS & SAUNDERS, 2007). More specifically, and concerning higher education, there was the approval of the Statute of the Brazilian Universities, which established that:

The university could be official, meaning public (federal, state, or municipal) or free (i.e., private); it should also include three of the following courses: Law, Medicine, Engineering, Education, Sciences, and Letters. Administrative ties would link these colleges through a rectory, thereby maintaining their legal autonomy (OLIVEN, 2002, p. 27).

Nevertheless, in the margin of an authoritarian and centralizing power regime promoted by Vargas in the second half of the 1930s, the then Minister of Education and Health, Gustavo Capanema, reformulated the University of Rio de Janeiro – created in 1920 following the system of autonomous faculties – establishing the University of Brazil. This institution suggested a higher education model for the whole country. Throughout Vargas’ government, there was the emergence of the first national universities, which Souza (2012, p. 54) subdivided between:

- the beginning of the Vargas Era (1930): three universities (University of Rio de Janeiro, University of Minas Gerais, and Engineering School of Porto Alegre);

- the end of the Vargas Era (1945): five universities (the University of Brazil, Technical University of Rio Grande do Sul, University of São Paulo, Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, and University of the Federal District).

With the fall of Getúlio in 1945 and the redemocratization of Brazil, more public universities spread throughout the country. However, Fávero (2006) pointed out that educational institutions were still characterized by professional training and disconnected from research and knowledge production. According to Durham (2003), this trend was observed starting in 1964, with a new authoritarian regime implanted in the country, which lasted until mid-1980 and drove the emergence of private universities.

Over the following decades, there were essential projects for consolidating universities in the most recent parameters, starting with the 1988 Constitution. Going back to the 1934 Constitution, which gave the Union the responsibility for the national education guidelines, the project of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (hereinafter LDB – abbreviation of *Lei de Diretrizes e Bases*), which sought to regulate the Brazilian education system, was forwarded to the legislative power in 1948 and promulgated in 1961 (Law No. 4.024). According to Oliven (2002, p. 32), the first LDB strengthened the centralization of this education system because:

Even allowing some flexibility in its implementation, in practice, this law reinforced the traditional model of higher education institutions in force in Brazil. In organizational terms, it left unscathed the life professorship, the isolated colleges, and the university composed of a simple juxtaposition of professional schools; moreover, it maintained a greater concern with teaching without focusing on research development.

In this context, in 1968, under the influence of experiences of international higher education institutions, there was the approval of the University Reform Law (Law no. 5540/68), which proposed institutional modernization. Among the main reforms, there were the creation of departments, the implementation of the university entrance examination, and the conception of the inseparability of teaching, research, and extension activities, which led to improvements in faculty training and promoted graduate and extension activities. This expansion led to a higher number of private institutions and isolated teaching establishments due to the growing demand for vacancies in higher education.

It is important to point out that, from 1964 to 1985, “the universities became the object of direct interference by the federal government” (OLIVEN, 2002, p. 33). This happened because various professors were removed from their functions and the government created Information Assessorships that acted to curb “activities of a ‘subversive’ nature, both of professors and students” (*id.*, p. 33). With the end of the dictatorship in 1985, a new process of redemocratization began. After the 1988 Constitution, a new LDB was promulgated in 1996 (Law no. 9.394/96), which attributed eight purposes to higher education in Article 43, which briefly refers to stimulating cultural creation, developing the scientific spirit and reflective thinking, professional training in different areas of knowledge, encouraging research and scientific investigation, promoting cultural, scientific, and technical knowledge, the possibility of cultural and professional improvement, stimulating knowledge of current global and local problems, promoting extension, and the universalization and improvement of basic education through professional training (BRASIL, 1996).

From this set of laws, a process of regular evaluation of undergraduate courses and higher education institutions by the Union was also introduced, guaranteeing the accreditation and reaccreditation of these through their performance. According to Oliven (2002), these evaluations cover aspects of undergraduate courses and the physical space of the university and have shown that public universities have the best results.

In this context, Saviani (2010, p.11) reported that:

In Brazil, despite the tendency towards privatization that was outlined at the end of the empire and throughout the First Republic, the Napoleonic model prevailed until the 1988 Constitution,

which was characterized by the strong presence of the State in the organization and regulation of higher education, especially in the case of universities.

Regarding the framework of higher education institutions as universities, the LDB of 1996 established that:

For an institution to be considered a university and, therefore, enjoy autonomy to open or close courses, establish the number of vacancies, plan activities, etc., it must have at least one-third of its faculty with a master's or doctoral degree and one third hired on a full-time basis. Hence, improving the qualification of the faculty and their working conditions, coupled with periodic evaluations and the conditional accreditation of institutions for a certain period, were factors that led to the institutionalization of research (OLIVEN, 2002, p. 37).

After the promulgation of this new LDB, which was also regulated in the Constitution, higher education in Brazil became composed of a diversified system of undergraduate and graduate programs and courses belonging to public and private educational institutions. With the linking of research to higher education in the late 1980s, there was a tendency to change this model.

With numerous decrees, regulations, and complementary ordinances, the LDB of 1996 began to be part of curricular guidelines proposed by the Ministry of Education and Sports (hereinafter MEC – abbreviation of *Ministério da Educação e do Desporto*) for the various levels of education, including undergraduate courses. In this scope, the curricula of higher education courses are being redefined. Therefore, the following subsection presents some deliberations of the National Curricular Guidelines (hereinafter DCN – abbreviation of *Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais*) in Brazil's higher education institutions (HEIs).

CONFIGURATION OF UNDERGRADUATE COURSES FROM THE DCNs

Between the LDB of 1961 and 1996, one can highlight the need for faculty training as a convergent point. In the first case, with the University Reform Law, there was also a movement in favor of research and extension activities. At the same time, in the most recent one, the issue of teacher qualification expanded horizons both in labor issues in this context and the promotion of research (OLIVEN, 2002). Nevertheless, when observing the curricular issues inherent to higher education, the DCNs came to break some existing paradigms at this level of education. In the compilation of opinions and resolutions of general guidance on the implementation of DCNs in higher education, which are available on the MEC website, one can note that the curricula were fixed, constituting the so-called minimum curricula, which detailed the component subjects of each course. This implies issues related to subjects' relevance and workload extension to meet the social and professional demands in force. According to Opinion CNE/CES no. 776/97:

The orientation established by the Law of Directives and Bases for National Education, regarding education in general and higher education in particular, points towards ensuring greater flexibility in the organization of courses and careers, attending to the growing heterogeneity of both previous education and the expectations and interests of students. The new LDB also emphasizes the need for a thorough review of the tradition that bureaucratizes courses and is incongruous with contemporary trends of considering good training at the undergraduate level as an initial stage of continuing education (BRASIL, 1997, p. 2).

In this curriculum format, “the interests of corporate groups interested in creating obstacles for entry into a markedly competitive labor market” prevailed. Once this inefficiency in professional training, the DCN came to “ensure greater flexibility in the organization of courses and careers, attending the growing heterogeneity of both the previous training and the expectations and interests of students” (FRAUCHES, 2008, p.33). In a perspective of expansion to the so-called full curricula, the DCN aimed

to help HEIs in the curricular organization, promoting an opening to diverse formations in each area of knowledge and, consequently, meeting the new educational demands.

In the specific case of higher education institutions, these will necessarily respond to the quality standard in offering their courses, which means, in Article 43, preparing professionals capable of insertion in the field of development, in its various segments, economic, cultural, political, scientific, technological, etc. This resulted in the imperative commitment of the institutions that form professionals and human resources with the imminent changes, in the political, economic, and cultural ambit and even, at each moment, in the field of sciences and technology, in various areas of knowledge; thus, the institution must be able to constitute a response to these demands. (FRAUCHES, 2008, p.42)

In Edict No. 4 of December 10, 1997, cited by Frauches (2008, p. 45–49) MEC, together with the Secretary of Higher Education (hereinafter SESu – abbreviation of *Secretaria de Educação Superior*), affirmed a greater autonomy to HEPs regarding the curricula of higher education courses establishing seven basic guidelines to the DCNs' purposes, concerning: (a) profile, competencies, and skills desired by the graduates; (b) the curricular contents (divided into basic and professional); (c) the minimum duration of the courses; (d) the optimizing of the modular structure; (e) the internship and the complementary activities acquired outside the school environment; and (f) the curricula connection with the innovation and quality of the teaching of pedagogical projects in favor of the quality indicators observed in the institutional evaluation. From these guidelines, the aforementioned edict proposed that:

The discussion of the Curricular Guidelines must be held to integrate a broad portion of the interested community, thereby legitimizing the discussion process. Thus, HEIs should be integrated into scientific societies, professional orders and associations, class associations, productive sector, and other sectors involved through seminars, meetings, workshops, and meetings, to ensure Curricular Guidelines articulated both the necessary reforms to the structure of supply of undergraduate courses and the professional profiles demanded by society (FRAUCHES, 2008, p.47).

With this proposal, the discussion of the HEIs about their curricula through the guidelines for elaborating their DCN proposals took place, with a deadline of April 3, 1998, to be sent to SESu/MEC. According to Frauches (2008, p. 18), this deadline “was extended twice, by edicts 5 and 6/98, being concluded on July 15, 1998.” In this sense, higher education courses in various areas of knowledge sent their proposals to the competent bodies, and it is possible to find the resolutions and opinions per course on the MEC website.

Box 1 shows the major areas of knowledge, according to the compilation of documents by Frauches (2008) and the respective national undergraduate courses listed by the MEC portal.

Box 1 - List of undergraduate courses by knowledge areas based on MEC data

Areas	Biological and Health Sciences (13)	Exact and Earth Sciences (13)	Human and Social Sciences (15)	Applied Social Sciences (15)	Engineering and Technology (10)
Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Biomedicine b) Biological Sciences c) Domestic Economy d) Physical Education e) Nursing f) Pharmacy g) Physiotherapy h) Speech therapy i) Medicine j) Nutrition k) Dentistry l) Occupational Therapy m) Public Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Agronomy (Agronomic Engineering) b) Engineering c) Agricultural Engineering d) Forest Engineering e) Fishing Engineering f) Statistics g) Physics h) Geology i) Mathematics j) Veterinary Medicine k) Oceanography l) Chemistry m) Animal Science 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Performing Arts (Theater) b) Visual Arts (Plastic Arts and Drawing) c) Social Sciences (Anthropology, Political Science, Sociology) d) Law e) Philosophy f) Geography g) History h) Letters i) Music j) Pedagogy k) Psychology l) Religious studies m) Dance n) Theology o) Museology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Management Sciences b) Accounting Sciences c) Economic Sciences d) Information Sciences (Library Science) e) Archival f) Social Communication g) Cinema and Audiovisual h) Journalism i) Advertising j) Public Relations k) Hospitality (Hotel Management) l) Social Service m) Executive Secretary n) Tourism o) International Relations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Architecture and Urbanism b) Computing c) Computing (degree) d) Computer Science e) Computer Engineering f) Software Engineering g) Information Systems h) Design i) Meteorology j) Aeronautical Sciences

Source: the authors.

In addition to the 66 courses listed along the five major areas of knowledge — Biological and Health Sciences, Exact and Earth Sciences, Human and Social Sciences, Applied Social Sciences, and Engineering and Technology — the MEC website also presents opinions for Higher Technological Courses and the Training of Teachers for Basic Education (i.e., guidelines for technological training courses and degree courses aimed at the training of teachers for the basic level).

Given the above, since the LDB, with the reformulation of curricula of higher education courses mediated by the DCNs, in the last two decades, we have observed the growth of higher education in Brazil and the diversification of forms of attendance, especially in graduation, which, according to Franco (2008), has not occurred together with an improvement in the relationship between the pedagogical projects of higher education courses and the real demands of the labor market.

In this sense, as proposed in this study, the current demands of education have presumed the presence of FL at this level of education and, therefore, it is worth presenting in Section 3 the motivations and how this insertion, especially of FL, occurred in the curricula of higher education courses.

THE PRESENCE OF FL IN HIGHER EDUCATION

When locating FL teaching and learning in the context of national higher education, it is important to relook at an aspect highlighted by several researchers when explaining phenomena related to this domain: globalization. From an economic perspective, Finardi, Santos, and Guimarães (2016) stated that globalization occurs through relationships based on free market operations, altering borders and flows of information and migration. For Finardi and Porcino (2014), globalization began in the 1990s

and refers to the free flow of goods and services directly related to technology and, consequently, to the speed of information. Regarding the technological advances, especially in the last two decades, the authors pointed out that they:

[...] have enabled a more agile, democratic, and cheap flow of information, products, and services. In a globalized economy, millions of users are connected to mobile devices, the Internet, and social networks. All this information flow has changed how we see and position ourselves in this new global and local scenario, face-to-face or virtual (FINARDI and PORCINO, 2014, p. 242).

In this sense, Assis-Peterson and Cox (2007) stated that there has always been interaction between speakers of different languages through various means of communication, with the advent of the Internet being the apex of this exchange since it compressed the distance between men. Consequently, the need for a common language arose, which was occupied by FL, especially for economic and political reasons.

Before speaking English, the world spoke Latin and French. However, unlike what had happened with Latin and French, languages used mainly for the enunciation of high culture and, therefore, the restricted domain of an intellectual and ruling elite, in the times of globalization, English spread to all spheres of social activities (ASSIS-PETERSON and COX, 2007, p. 5).

This privileged position occupied by the EL has been analyzed by researchers, especially in social sciences and language, as an imperialistic phenomenon marked by neocolonial interests in favor of American and British cultures (Phillipson, 1992; Pennycook, 2004; Ortiz, 2006). Although the EL is present in several social activities, its domain is still restricted to specific social groups with more affluent social and economic conditions. In the educational sphere, the association of the EL as the official language of globalization implies a new form of literacy aimed at integrating learners into the prevailing social parameters (MACIEL, 2011). Thus, its teaching and learning become a market issue with the production of standardized teaching materials and the spread of private language schools.

Regarding the teaching of EL in higher education, Finardi and Porcino (2014, p. 243–244) pointed out that there is a distinction between the impact of globalization on the national basic and higher education. In the second case, such an impact was perceived first, along with other effects, including the massification and internationalization of this level of education and the use of English as an international and academic language.

Inherent to this discussion, Finardi, Santos, and Guimarães (2016, p. 234), based on Jenkins (2013), also associated this process of internationalization of higher education with the phenomenon of globalization, which they defined as “the strategy by which universities respond to globalization, integrating an intercultural dimension in their triple mission of teaching, research, and extension.” In this order, EL acts once again as a common language, or in Jenkins’ terms, an academic lingua franca, which allows for greater mobility on academic, cultural, and linguistic levels.

Bringing Knight’s (2003) definition of internationalization as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural, and global dimension into the mission or function of higher education,” Amorim and Finardi (2017) highlighted a few more global trends in current universities concerning globalization, these being the growth in the use of information and communication technologies and the privatization of HEIs (SEGRERA, 2015).

In this sense, the current moment is the restructuring of higher education to the new demands imposed by globalization. Consequently, this process of internationalization of universities points to “a pattern where countries in the northern hemisphere benefit more from globalization and internationalization than countries in the southern hemisphere” (FINARDI, SANTOS, and GUIMARÃES, 2016, p. 236). In this sense, this process is the path of insertion of developing countries in the globalized world, as is the example of Brazil.

Thus, the supremacy of the EL in the international/global context puts in check the mother tongue (hereinafter MT) of countries, especially the developing ones. In analyzing the circulation of research from the field of Languages in EL and MT, Finardi, Santos, and Guimarães (2016, p. 242) stated that:

Although Brazil has the 13th largest academic production in the world, this production rarely has an international impact since it is produced in Portuguese and circulates mainly domestically and in Portuguese-speaking countries. One consequence of this, considering the caveats and the southern hemisphere context already pointed out by Hamel (2013) and Vavrus and Pekol (2015), is that our academic production, although robust, is not computed and circulated internationally.

Corroborating the central points of this study concerning EL in national higher education, the massive presence of EL is undeniable, especially in the mobility and circulation of research and scientific production and its usage to access to technology and information. There are certainly many points to be discussed about the effects of globalization and internationalization in this reality, since, as mentioned by the aforementioned authors in this section (FINARDI, SANTOS, and GUIMARÃES, 2016), there are positive and negative points of both phenomena. However, we emphasize with this study the issue of incorporating the EL into the curricula of higher education courses, and, therefore, we do not deepen the discussion into the impacts of these processes at this moment.

In order to converge the history of the creation and organization of higher education courses to the parameters in which they are at the moment of this study, as to the demands of the globalized society for the offer of EL in national higher education, the documents, among legal opinions and resolutions, available on the MEC website, were researched in search of the presence of this component in the DCNs and curricula of the 66 courses mentioned in Section 3, a process described in the following subsection.

THE OFFER OF THE LE IN UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

After presenting a history of higher education, followed by the elaboration of the DCNs in the configuration of undergraduate courses offered in the country, FL – especially the EL – is pointed out in this study as a language associated with the globalization and, consequently, the internationalization of universities. Because of the demands for a lingua franca, which allows access to the information and technology era, as well as the insertion, participation, and dissemination of academic research and extension activities, this study investigates its offer in this context of language teaching and learning.

Therefore, as a methodological process, we chose to verify the mention of the teaching of FL in the DCNs of the 66 undergraduate courses offered in the country and listed on the MEC's website, distributed among five distinct areas of knowledge, referring to Biological and Health Sciences, Exact and Earth Sciences, Human and Social Sciences, Applied Social Sciences, and Engineering and Technology, as well as Higher Technological Courses and Teacher Training for Basic Education. To this end, the instruments for data collection were the documents that guided the elaboration of the course curricula, which were available online at the MEC's portal by the time of this study. The search for the terms 'foreign language,' 'foreign language,' and 'English language' was performed in the texts of each of the selected files to verify the presence of the EL or other FL among the curricular and/or professional content proposed by the approval of their DCNs.

In proposing the analysis of these documents, 190 opinions and 98 resolutions were found, dated between 1997–2021, and grouped among the 66 higher education courses already presented in Box 1. To cope with the volume of material on the site, the search for the terms was carried out only in files referring to the DCNs of each course, with a total of 66 files analyzed. Of these, 36 did not mention the terms searched for. The 30 documents that did contain at least one of the search terms are listed in Box 2.

Box 2 - Mention of FL in the DCN opinions made available by MEC

Course	No. Perish	Excerpt(s) from the legal opinions
Hotel Management	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 110/2004, approved on March 11, 2004	II - Specific Contents: studies related to administration, economics, and law, applied to the hotel business, interconnected with tourism, in addition to studies on communication systems and information technology, including mastering at least one foreign language;
Biomedicine	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 104/2002, approved on March 13, 2002	Competencies and Skills: III. Communication: health professionals should be accessible and maintain the confidentiality of information entrusted to them when interacting with other health professionals and the general public. Communication involves verbal and nonverbal communication, writing, and reading skills; proficiency in at least one foreign language; and proficiency in communication and information technologies;
Aeronautical Sciences	Legal Opinion CNE/CES No. 225/2012, approved June 5, 2012	Profile of graduates: 11. Master the English language to undertake through critical analysis of national and international civil aviation organizations, anticipating and promoting their transformation. [...] The minimum programmatic content, but not limited to, is that required, for Airline Transport Pilot training, by the Brazilian Civil Aviation Regulation Volume 141 (RBAC no. 141) issued by the National Civil Aviation Agency (ANAC), as well as spoken, written, and listened English language, at an advanced level, applied to aeronautics. [...] § 11. Master the English language to undertake , through critical analysis of national and international civil aviation organizations, the anticipation and promotion of their transformation.
Computer Science	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 136/2012, approved on March 8th, 2012	2. Skills and competencies: 10. Read technical texts in the English language;
Computing (bachelor and bachelor's degree); Computer Engineering; Software Engineering	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 136/2012, approved on March 8 and 9, 2012	2. Skills and competencies: 10. Read technical texts in the English language;
Nursing, Medicine and Nutrition	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 1.133/2001, approved August 7, 2001	Article 4 - The training of nurses/doctors/nutritionists aims to equip professionals with the knowledge required to exercise the following general competencies and skills: III. Communication: health professionals should be accessible and maintain the confidentiality of information entrusted to them when interacting with other health professionals and the public. Communication involves verbal and nonverbal communication, writing, and reading skills; proficiency in at least one foreign language; and proficiency in communication and information technologies;
Pharmacy and Dentistry	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 1.300/2001, approved on November 6th, 2001	Art. 4 - Training of the Pharmacist/Dental Surgeon aims to provide the professional with the knowledge required to exercise the following general competencies and abilities: III. Communication: health professionals should be accessible and maintain the confidentiality of information entrusted to them when interacting with other health professionals and the public. Communication involves verbal and nonverbal communication, writing, and reading skills; proficiency in at least one foreign language; and proficiency in communication and information technologies;

Course	No. Perish	Excerpt(s) from the legal opinions
Philosophy	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 492/2001, approved on April 3rd, 2001	2. Competences and skills: Ability to read and understand philosophical texts in a foreign language
Physiotherapy; Speech Therapy and Occupational Therapy	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 1.210/2001, approved on September 12, 2001	III. Communication: health professionals should be accessible and maintain the confidentiality of information entrusted to them when interacting with other health professionals and the public. Communication involves verbal and nonverbal communication, writing, and reading skills; proficiency in at least one foreign language ; and proficiency in communication and information technologies;
Geography	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 492/2001, approved on April 3rd, 2001	2. Competences and Abilities A) General: h. Master the Portuguese language and a foreign language in which the production and dissemination of geographical knowledge are significant.
Geology	Legal Opinion CNE/CES No. 387/2012, approved on November 7, 2012	Art. 5 The bachelor's degree courses in the field of Geology and Geological Engineering must graduate students who reveal, at least, the common competencies and abilities to X - read technical texts in the English language ;
Journalism	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 39/2013, approved on February 20, 2013	The CNE/CES Commission received several suggestions for improving the proposal prepared by the Commission of Experts. The suggestions deal with very different aspects, such as emphasizing the learning of foreign languages , giving more emphasis to research and extension in training journalists, considering the issue of ethnic and racial equality, etc. I - General Competencies: - To have an instrumental command of at least two other languages - preferably English and Spanish, which are part of the geopolitical context in which Brazil is inserted;
Letters	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 492/2001, approved on April 3rd, 2001	2. Competences and Skills: The graduate in Letters, both in their mother tongue and in a classical or modern foreign language , in the modalities of bachelor's degree and licentiate, should be identified by multiple competencies and skills acquired during their conventional academic training, theoretical and practical, or outside of it. [...] the degree in Literature must contribute to the development of the following competencies and skills - mastery of the use of the Portuguese language or a foreign language , in its oral and written manifestations, in terms of reception and production of texts;
Veterinary Medicine	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 105/2002, approved on March 13, 2002	Art. 4 - general competencies and skills: III. Communication: health professionals should be accessible and maintain the confidentiality of information entrusted to them when interacting with other health professionals and the public. Communication involves verbal and nonverbal communication, writing, and reading skills; proficiency in at least one foreign language and communication and information technologies;
Psychology	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 1.314/2001, approved on November 7th, 2001	3. COMPETENCES AND SKILLS A) General Competencies: Communication: health professionals should be accessible and should maintain the confidentiality of information entrusted to them when interacting with other health professionals and the public. Communication involves verbal and nonverbal communication, writing, and reading skills; proficiency in at least one foreign language and communication and information technologies;
Advertising	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 146/2020, approved on April 29th, 2020	I focus on theoretical teaching that can provide the basis for creating and analyzing current media content and diverse data based on sociology, anthropology, and other fundamental disciplines. In this case, it is important to focus on reinforcement for writing and interpreting and provide opportunities for language learning, such as English . At

Course	No. Perish	Excerpt(s) from the legal opinions
		the same time, it is important to reinforce content from areas such as Arts, Design, and Literature, seeking to strengthen students' aesthetic sense and contribute to the production or analysis of graphic, visual, and sound narratives;
Chemistry	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 1.303/2001, approved on November 6th, 2001	2. Competences and Skills 2.1 Bachelor of Chemistry - In relation to the search for information, communication, and expression: Reading, understanding, and interpreting scientific and technological texts in the mother tongue and a foreign language (particularly English and/or Spanish) . Knowing how to communicate research projects and results correctly in scientific language, both oral and written (texts, reports, opinions, posters, the Internet, etc.) in both mother and foreign languages (especially English and/or Spanish).
International Relations	Legal Opinion CNE/CES No. 243/2017, approved June 6, 2017	Thus, the course in International Relations provides training that reveals the following skills and abilities: XIII - Ability to understand foreign languages, especially English;
Public Relations	Legal Opinion CNE/CES No. 85/2013, approved on March 14, 2013	4.3.2.2 Languages, Media, and Technologies Studies of language, rhetoric, and discourse; studies of the organization of information; studies of media, information, and communication technologies; studies of cyberculture; semiotic studies of communication and the study of contact or relational languages (lingua franca) .
Tourism	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 146/2002, approved on April 3rd, 2002	Curriculum Contents: II - Specific Contents: studies related to the General Theory of Tourism, Theory of Information and Communication, also establishing the relations of Tourism with Administration, Law, Economics, Statistics, and Accounting, besides the mastery of at least one foreign language;
Hospitality	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 146/2002, approved on April 3rd, 2002	Curriculum Contents: II - Specific Contents: studies related to Administration, Economics, and Law, applied to Hospitality, interconnected with Tourism, besides studies on Communication Systems and Informatics, including mastery of at least one foreign language; Art. 9. The undergraduate course in Hotel Management must enable professional training that reveals, at least, the following competencies and abilities VI - communicate in foreign languages, mainly English and Spanish , also managing computerized resources and other technological equipment;
Executive Secretary	Legal Opinion CNE/CES no. 146/2002, approved on April 3rd, 2002	II - Specific Contents: studies of Secretarial Techniques and Secretarial Management, including contents related to the Theories of Organizations, Human Resources Development, and Professional Ethics, in addition to mastering at least one foreign language and furthering the knowledge of the National Language;

Source: the authors (emphasis added).

After observing the Box 2 with the 30 courses whose DCNs contemplated at least one of the search terms in its text, it was possible to discard the following 36 courses present in MEC's list for not mentioning any of their searches: Public Administration, Agronomy/Agronomic Engineering, Architecture and Urbanism, Archeology, Visual Arts, Library Science, Religious Sciences, Biological Sciences, Accounting Sciences, Social Sciences - Anthropology, Political Science and Sociology, Cinema and Audiovisual, Social Communication, Dance, Design, Law, Home Economics, Physical Education, Engineering, Agricultural Engineering, Fishing Engineering, Forest Engineering, Statistics, Physics, Physics, Teacher Training for Basic Education, History, Mathematics, Meteorology, Museology, Music, Oceanography, Pedagogy, Collective Health, Theater, Higher Technological Courses, Theology, and Zootechnics.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to highlight that in the legal opinion CNE/CP No. 12/2018, approved on October 2, 2018, of the course of Science of Religion, the term ‘foreign language’ appears in the 15th article cited in its text, referring to the organization of compulsory curricular components of Elementary School concerning the areas of knowledge, being one of them among the Languages, next to the Portuguese Language, the Mother Tongue, for indigenous populations, and Art and Physical Education. In the Theology course, in turn, ‘language’ and ‘German language’ are mentioned in the introduction of the opinion (CNE/CES no. 60/2014, approved on March 12, 2014), referring only to the official language used in the Theology schools, guided by the training model existing in Germany. In both cases, there was no association of the terms to the offering of FL or EL in the respective courses; therefore, they are not mentioned in Box 2.

Throughout the searches, we found that many legal opinions were repeated throughout the listing of undergraduate courses on the site, since the same document deals with the DCNs of more than one course associated with the same field of knowledge. For this reason, the excerpts from the guidelines of different courses whose texts were similar, with changes only in the terms referring to the name of the course and profile of the trained professional, were presented together in Box 2, as is the case of Nursing, Medicine, and Nutrition; Computing (bachelor and licentiate), Computer Engineering and Software Engineering; Pharmacy and Dentistry; and Physiotherapy, Speech Therapy and Occupational Therapy. Thus, the excerpts discussed below refer to 23 opinions, which were organized into three main common aspects: FL as communicative competence, FL associated with reading, and FL associated with other skills.

It is important to note that the preference to refer to the common aspects as FL and not EL was because the opinions do not always define which FL should be offered. In this scope, the documents of the courses of Geography, Literature, Chemistry, and Executive Secretary highlighted the domain of MT, and those of Journalism, Chemistry, and Hotel Management, as suggested the domain of another FL, Spanish.

Regarding the aspect 1 (FL as a communicative competence), we observed that in the courses in the areas of Biological Sciences, among the Competencies and Abilities listed in their opinions – more specifically in section III corresponding to the communication of the graduated professional – the need for “mastering at least one foreign language and communication and information technologies” stands out.

In the legal opinions of these 11 courses — Biomedicine, Nursing, Medicine, Nutrition, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Physiotherapy, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Veterinary Medicine, and Psychology — one can notice a similar wording in the excerpts and observe that characteristics such as accessibility, confidentiality, reliability, and interactivity are qualities required from the professional graduate and the communicative ability is based on writing and reading skills.

Although there is no definition of the FL to be offered by the courses in the analyzed files, such professional instrumentalization of the student of biological areas indicates a greater interactional possibility allied to the domain of technologies, both in the academic field and the labor market, as elucidated by authors mentioned above (JENKINS, 2013; FINARDI and PORCINO, 2014; FINARDI, SANTOS, and GUIMARÃES, 2016).

Regarding the aspect 2 (FL associated with reading), among the Competencies and Skills of courses in the areas of Engineering and Technology, which are Computer Science, Computing (undergraduate and graduate), Computer Engineering, Software Engineering, and Geology, the learner is expected to be able to “read technical texts in English.” In the case of these 7 courses, there is specific mention of EL in developing this competency. Similarly, the Philosophy course mentions the ability to read and understand philosophical texts in the same section of its opinion but in FL and not EL.

Two other courses that mention reading in FL are Chemistry and International Relations. In the first case, emphasis is placed on the need to “read, understand, and interpret scientific-technological texts in the native and foreign languages” in both EL and Spanish. In the case of International Relations, comprehension in FL is emphasized, with emphasis on the EL.

At this point, it is possible to observe that the different terms mentioned in the documents — ‘technical texts,’ ‘philosophical texts,’ and ‘scientific-technological texts’ — refer to developing the

reading ability of the professionals in training since reading or reading comprehension refers to texts related to the specific areas of each course.

Unlike the first aspect analyzed, regarding courses in Biological Sciences area, which highlighted the communicative aspect of LE both for training and professional performance, the development of reading skills in LE (EL or Spanish) is aimed at academic training and, therefore, its aspect is perceived as the academic lingua franca, as proposed by Jenkins (2013).

Finally, regarding the aspect 3 (FL associated with other skills), in the opinions of the courses of Aeronautical Sciences, Languages, and Chemistry, the written and listening skills are also mentioned, as well as the reception and production of texts, with the EL being mentioned, except for the course of Languages. Still, regarding the EL in these two courses, Aeronautical Sciences mentions in its 11th article that the command of English allows the professional to develop entrepreneurial skills. In contrast, in the Chemistry course, the language allows the dissemination of projects and results of scientific research developed in the area. In both cases, it is possible to perceive the function of the EL as a language of exchange in professional and academic-scientific situations.

In this sense, corroborating this perspective, the opinion of the Geography course also mentions the “production and dissemination of geographic knowledge” in a FL and also Public Relations, which does not bring the term FL or EL but mentions the “study of contact or relation languages (lingua franca),” once again associating itself to Jenkins’ terms (2013).

Upon verifying the 3 aspects, one last point observed was the absence of a specific skill or competence to be developed in FL or EL by the legal opinions of the Hospitality Management, Advertising, Tourism, Hotel Management, and Executive Secretary courses. These documents predominantly used the phrase “mastery of at least one foreign language” to refer to the provision of FL, with the Journalism course being the only one to make mention of the instrumental mastery of languages.

Based on the analysis of the legal opinions, in the next and final section of this article, we will attempt to list some trends among their texts regarding the provision of CL in higher education courses in Brazil and suggest some discussions based on what was exposed.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study addressed the provision of foreign languages in higher education in Brazil, following the history of its consolidation until the recent parameters, based on the elaboration of DCNs and in line with the demands for the offer, especially of FL, as a fundamental language for the process of insertion of national universities in the global context, through access and dissemination of scientific research.

After observing 23 legal opinions available among the 66 higher education courses listed by the MEC website, we observed that these documents do not always define the FL to be offered, with the English language being mentioned in 9 legal opinions corresponding to 13 courses (Aeronautical Sciences, Computer Sciences, Bachelor’s and Bachelor’s degrees Computer Engineering, Software Engineering, Geology, Journalism, Advertising, Chemistry, International Relations, and Hospitality) and the Spanish language in the legal opinions of 3 courses (Journalism, Chemistry, and Hospitality). In this sense, it is also evident that less than half of the undergraduate courses offered in the country highlight the need for LF for academic or professional purposes.

Following the analysis, three common aspects were deduced from the texts regarding the communicative competence, reading skills, and other skills in LE in general. In the first aspect, concerning the development of communicative competence through LE, there is a tendency in Biological Sciences courses to associate the mastery of a FL with technological knowledge of communication and information in the professional instrumentalization of the students.

As for the second aspect, reading skills are mentioned predominantly by courses in Engineering and Technology, in addition to 3 other courses from varied areas (Philosophy, International Relations, and Chemistry). In these cases, the reading skill is fundamental in professional training since it involves understanding specific texts to each course, strengthening the perspective of the importance of

FL, and even EL, mentioned by legal opinions from 8 of these courses, as a means of access to these academic areas.

In a third aspect, as for the other skills, listening comprehension and written production are mentioned in 4 legal opinions, with a mention of the need for a lingua franca in another legal opinion, once again emphasizing the need for FL in academic activities. In this sense, the three aspects pointed to the role of FL as an academic lingua franca or an instrument of access to technologies and information for the professional performance of those graduating from their courses, emphasizing the relationship of FL mastery in two aspects of insertion: that of the trained professional in the current labor market and that of national universities in the production, dissemination and appreciation of research and scientific production in the 5 areas of knowledge.

In this sense, the current political, economic, and social context of higher education reflects the globalization and the consequent process of internationalization of universities by offering the EL or even the Spanish language (the second most mentioned language in the legal opinions). This organization highlights the reaction of developing countries, as is the case of Brazil, to follow and participate in the global academic scenario. Finardi, Santos, and Guimarães (2016) have already discussed the issue of the expressiveness of national academic research; however, for the matter of MT, the dissemination of these productions finds a linguistic barrier also consecutive to the processes of globalization and internationalization pointed out here.

Regardless of whether this study analyzes the provision of FL in the DCNs, the discussion is not only about noting that 23 courses mention some need for FL mastery during graduation, 9 of which define this language as the EL. Although there is mention of the mastery of FL in a little more than approximately 35% of the national undergraduate courses, the effective offer of FL in higher education would depend on several other factors more related to the conditions of the HEIs, such as the availability of time and teaching staff to teach FL courses or coordinate extension programs with this focus.

Still, regarding the importance of FL for belonging to the academic context, both in the dissemination of national academic production and in more general aspects, such as developing competencies and skills in FL of undergraduates and professional preparation in line with the globalized demands of the current labor market, the presence of FL in course reports is still not expressive. From this point of view, we can infer that there is difficulty in offering foreign languages in Brazilian higher education. This factor may be associated with the demand for professionals able to work in courses in various areas through approaches to teaching-learning LF for specific purposes, in addition to didactic issues such as access to materials and resources that allow the effective development of this practice.

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Author 2 – Research supervision, data analysis, and final draft review.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest with this article.