THE LEARNER OF PLAC IN A REFUGE SITUATION: WHAT THE "VOICE" OF TEACHING REVEALS

O APRENDIZ DE PLAC EM SITUAÇÃO DE REFÚGIO: O QUE A "VOZ" DA DOCÊNCIA REVELA

EL APRENDIZ DE PLAC EN SITUACIÓN DE REFUGIO: QUÉ REVELA LA "VOZ" DE LA DOCENCIA

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ABSTRACT: The learner of Portuguese as a Welcoming Language (PLAc) has been an increasingly frequent reality in Brazilian public schools. This paper presents an analysis of the teaching "voice" of two teacher-collaborators about the pedagogical challenge of serving this target audience. The theoretical and methodological approach is based on Critical Discourse Analysis (ADC), based on the contributions of Fairclough (2001), observing aspects of their representation as professionals, the representation they have of their students, and how they perceive Brazil as a welcoming country. In addition, the studies of Barbisan and Megid (2018) and of Clandinin and Rosiek (2007), on narratives are the pillars of this work. Language of Reception (LAc) is briefly commented on, in light of Ançã (2008; 2013), Audras et al. (2020), Barbosa and São Bernardo (2017), among others. The results reveal representations that demand modus operandi peculiar to a public in need of reception.

KEYWORDS: Welcoming Language (PLAc). Narratives. Representations. Teaching portuguese.

RESUMO: O aprendiz de Português como Língua de Acolhimento (PLAc) tem sido uma realidade, cada vez mais, frequente em escolas públicas brasileiras. Este artigo apresenta uma análise da "voz" docente de duas professoras-colaboradoras sobre o desafio pedagógico em atender a esse público-alvo. O aporte teórico-metodológico fundamenta-se na Análise de Discurso Crítica (ADC), precisamente as contribuições de Fairclough (2001), observando aspectos de sua representação como profissional, da representação que elas têm de seus alunos e de como percebem o Brasil como um país acolhedor. Além disso, os estudos de Barbisan e Megid (2018) e de Clandinin e Rosiek (2007), sobre narrativas são os pilares deste trabalho. Comenta-se rapidamente Língua de Acolhimento (LAc), à luz de Ançã (2008; 2013), Audras et al. (2020), Barbosa e São Bernardo (2017), entre outros. Os resultados revelam representações que demandam modus operandi peculiares a um público que necessita de acolhimento.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Língua de Acolhimento (PLAc). Narrativas. Representações. Ensino de português.*

RESUMEN: *El aprendiz de Portugués como Lengua de Acogida (PLAc) ha sido una realidad cada vez más frecuente en las escuelas públicas brasileñas. Este artículo presenta un análisis de la "voz" docente de dos profesoras-colaboradoras sobre el desafío pedagógico de atender a este público-objeto. El aporte teórico metodológico se basa en el Análisis del Discurso Crítica (ADC), precisamente las contribuciones de Fairclough (2001), observando aspectos de su representación como profesional, de representación que ellas tienen de sus alumnos y de cómo perciben Brasil como un país acogedor. Además de eso, los estudios de Barbisan y Megid (2018) y de Clandinin y Rosiek (2007), sobre narrativas son las bases de este trabajo. Se comenta rápidamente Lengua de Acogida, bajo la perspectiva de Ançã (2008; 2013), Audras et al. (2020), Barbosa y São Bernardo (2017), entre otros. Los resultados revelan representaciones que demandan modus operandi peculiares a un público que necesita de acogida.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Lengua de Acogida (PLAc). Narrativas. Representaciones. Enseñanza de portugués.*

Introduction

Amid migratory contexts, the challenge of establishing oneself in different countries, especially those whose language is distant from the migrant, becomes greater. This is because language is essential for the insertion of these people in the community of destination. Access to this "passport" has been a topic on the governmental agendas of countries that adopt policies for these communities, especially those in refugee situations.

Brazil, as a signatory country (SILVA, 2013), places itself in the condition of welcoming country, receiving migrants from various parts of the world in this condition. However, the way in which this reception has occurred is open to discussion, since receiving implies citizenship, employment, health, and education.

In the educational context, teachers who deal with students from these communities have faced challenges of all kinds, starting with the right to access the language, the cornerstone in the construction of this new citizen. They need to develop methodologies that promote this insertion, which requires continuing education courses in the perspective of Portuguese as a non-primary language. Although there are already undergraduate courses in Portuguese as a second or foreign language at Brazilian universities (University of Brasilia - UnB, Federal University of Bahia - FBA), sometimes the professionals who graduate from these courses are not absorbed by this emerging market, and sometimes they are assigned to teach Portuguese as a first language, as has traditionally been the case. In the end, the ones

who take on multilingual classes in public schools are the teachers of the Portuguese language, which is part of the regular curriculum.

To understand the concerns that teachers of classes with the presence of migrants have been going through, we present this study, which analyzes the narratives of two teacher collaborators, highlighting their perceptions about pedagogical action in this context. We will also consider their perception of the students and of Brazil as a welcoming country.

As the term Welcoming Language (LAc) arises because of these migratory situations, it seems relevant to present, briefly, what has been conceptually proposed for this term.

Welcoming Language (LAc): situating the concept

According to the literature, the term Welcoming Language (LAc) was initially applied in Europe, in the 1970s, in the twentieth century (ANÇÃ, 2003; 2008), for the teaching of Portuguese to immigrant populations from countries that make up the African Countries of Portuguese Official Language - PALOP, such as Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and S. Tomé e Príncipe (GROSSO, 2010), as well as those who came from Eastern Europe, such as Ukraine and Asian countries for various reasons, especially political incompatibilities and economic needs.

The idea of welcoming was coined to replace the term foreign, the traditional expression Foreign Language, which did not meet the situation in which migrants found themselves, which required political attitudes that incorporated the learning of the Portuguese language and the insertion of these people within the local community, due to the weaknesses and vulnerability they presented. In this sense, LAc goes beyond the limits of a traditional foreign language teaching, expanding to a linguistic-cultural universe that is beyond communicative boundaries (GROSSO, 2010).

In Brazil, which has assumed a role as a welcoming country, the term has been used in research and teaching contexts (BARBOSA; SÃO BERNARDO, 2017; EUZÉBIO; REBOUÇAS; LOPES, 2018; RAMOS; ALBUQUERQUE, 2018), due to the large international migratory contingent that seeks it as a place of refuge. These are people who have left their homeland for various reasons, among which, civil wars, political and/or religious persecution, and natural disasters stand out.

LAc, therefore, proposes itself as a language that contemplates social, cultural, and pragmatic aspects of the local community, but above all, it is something to be added to the linguistic-cultural *background of* its learners, since it demands respect, symmetry and sharing

of the culture of those who need this language. For this reason, the welcoming "look" is not to be confused with charity; it presupposes sharing, not seeing what arrives as other, foreigner, or invader. This implies welcoming in a broad sense, involving the various "actors of education and socio-cultural actions on the front line in this period of adaptation / inclusion, developing more social cohesion to ensure the dynamism (including that of reception) of the collective actor" (AUDRAS *et al.,* 2020, p. 2, our translation).

This perspective, in the scope of formal education, demands from public policies an adequate professional formation to attend to this public, understanding the complexity of the scenario, with the necessary sensibility, not only regarding language teaching in a meaningful way to the needs of the demands, but also regarding the development of empathy towards the learners.

In Brazil, such training is still under construction, with the massive presence of public university projects, some in partnership with the education departments of states and municipalities, which are working hard to find ways to adapt pedagogical practices. In this context, the teachers' availability for continued education is an important step towards overcoming obstacles and learning new things, because the classroom has become a challenging field of teaching practice. It is about this challenging practice that the collaborators of this study will have their "voices" unveiled through their narratives.

Narratives: a revealing tool

Storytelling is the first linguistic action that a child acquires to textually express the world and its emotions. It is no wonder that storytelling has been an integral part of humanity since its origin and has occupied, and still occupies, a preponderant role in unknown communities, because it preserves the cultural history of these communities for all generations.

In the scientific field, one of the events that contributed to highlight the narratives as an object of investigation occurred because of the diagnosis of the American educational situation in the 1980s (BARBISAN; MEGID, 2018). Based on an official report on the negative results in education, the decision was made to listen to teachers to find out from them which weaknesses should be overcome.

This status attributed to narratives has gained notoriety in several humanistic studies, which saw in this instrument an opportunity to, on the one hand, "give" voice to minorities that have always been neglected because of their invisibility, and on the other hand, but as a

result of situations like this, to attribute to the researcher a role as an investigator of research occasion that brings significant results of social change, as it gives the collaborator, owner of the voice, a role of social actor, also an agent of this potential change. This scientific panorama has been configured due to the humanitarian crisis that the world has been going through in recent times, a crisis caused by several factors, as pointed out in the previous section. The world changes, the *modus operandi* of seeing it and interfering in it change: this has been the maxim of science, a reflection of contemporary philosophical interferences (BAUMAN, 2005).

The perception of the world under the epistemological bases of contemporaneity brings the presence of the subject, which was erased in the science of modernity by the pseudo removal of subjectivity from the object of speculation, premise of the studies that founded scientific knowledge in the late nineteenth century, early twentieth century. In the "order of discourse" of sciences today, those of the humanistic area, par excellence, the subject in its "voices" constitutes a source of research by offering relevant qualitative data, and narratives are one of the "natural" *locus* for these voices to which they are amalgamated.

Working with narratives does not necessarily mean that the research is eminently narrative; one must distinguish between narrative research and research in which narratives are precisely the object of speculation.

Narrative research is understood as research in which the subject-author of the investigation also includes himself as one of the subject-collaborators, narrating his experiences, his life stories, expressing his subjectivity. According to Clandinin and Rosiek (2007), narrative research not only values individual experience, but also contemplates other narratives, the social and cultural ones, observing how they were shaped, expressed, and instituted by them. This type of research can promote the construction of enriching paths for the transformations of the experiences themselves (CLANDININ; ROSIEK, 2007).

However, narratives by themselves do not confer the status of narrative on research with all the rigor it presupposes, although they are part of it. They can be instrumental to other types of qualitative research. Narratives have been used as an object of analysis in many studies, especially in the field of education, where it is used in research projects, in teacher training courses to collect and generate the "voices" of these protagonists, pointing out their difficulties, desires and expectations about their future performance as an educator. In this way, these "voices" are not mere statements, but a synonym of freedom and expression for someone who wants to hear them, share them, constituting a beginning of what can be

transformative for the strengthening of this actor, in the search for a successful pedagogical practice.

Narratives, however, are not exclusive to education; other areas of the humanities have also resorted to this research instrument. Linguistics, from the perspective of discourse, of social semiosis, of theories of representation of identities, among others, has resorted to narratives as an object of research. The "voices", understood as historical, collective, and socially situated discourses, are relevant investigative aspects for the understanding of the subjectivities of the self-narrated social actors. In this way, the enunciative scene is not something outside the real world, as modern scientists intended; it is the "place" of language, an integral part of the subject, through which he constitutes himself as a social being, expresses himself, dialogues to promote social transformations in a given chronotope (time and space).

Narratives: the co-text and context of "voices"

The narratives, the object of analysis in this study, are accounts of two female teachers of Portuguese from the perspective of reception who, in response to an urgent demand for learning Portuguese, worked in different states of the Federation.

The first collaborator is a teacher, at the time, a scholarship holder of the project **Teaching Portuguese to Foreigners (immigrants**), of the Amazonas State University, which attended people coming, mostly from Venezuela, in search of Brazil as a safe place, of possibilities, that could provide them survival. The project was developed in the period from 2017 to 2019. It consisted in the development of teaching materials and classes taught on Brazilian Portuguese with this linguistic status, for use in immediate communications and insertion in the labor market.

The second collaborator, one of the volunteer teachers of the work **Research and Teaching of Portuguese as a Second Language: The Samambaia project - DF** (RAMOS; ALBUQUERQUE, 2017), which was developed by a teacher and students of the Degree Course in Brazilian Portuguese as a Second Language at the University of Brasília. The main goal was to meet an eclectic demand of adults (Pakistanis, Sudanese, Haitians), professionals from various areas, regarding formal access to the basic level of Portuguese for insertion in the social practices of the local community. The project was carried out throughout 2015 and counted on the collaboration of a professor and students from the International Relations Course at the IESB University Center, an institution also located in the Federal District.

Although at the time and in the scope of the projects, the terminology "welcoming language" was not contemplated, it can be said that the perspective was that of welcoming, because, in addition to providing immediate access to the language, in both cases, there was a concern with the official legalization of the people, as well as a welcome to their families with activities[3].

Given the "new" scenario that was emerging, it was a challenge for the coordinators and the teacher-collaborators to operate in an unpredictable context, both from the point of view of circumstances and, in the case of Samambaia, of the languages and cultures involved, which are very different from Brazil and the Portuguese spoken here, in structure and categorization and representation of the world.

To enrich the reflections on the linguistic teaching and to contribute to the strengthening of pedagogical practices in the Welcoming Language context, in the specific case of PLAc, we will hear what our informants say about the way this teaching represented to them (me-author), considering the representation of their learners and of Brazil as a welcoming country.

To unveil the discourses about such representations, the categories **modalization** and **intertextuality** (FAIRCLOUGH, 2001) of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) were adopted, because it is understood that this categorical set can reveal how these representations are built in the teachers' discourses narrated here in focus.

Analytical categories: revealing elements of the "voices"

The world is not given a *priori*, as Marcuschi (2007) argues. This statement presupposes that nothing is organized in the world in the same way, as some people think. Our relation of subject with the empirical world is built as we are exposed and we expose ourselves to it, attributing meanings to the relations, thus, our understanding of this world are constructions of discourses, ideologically situated, because already established by society, by culture, in which we can interfere (or not) to promote social changes. The world, perceived in this way, is not a ready and finished fact; understanding it in its discursive organizations, therefore, requires resorting to constructs of the same order so that we can understand how it is represented in the discourses conveyed.

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[3] In the Amazonas State University - UEA project, there was a partnership with the UN Agency for Refugees - UNHCR-Manaus. In the UnB project, there a collaboration with the local NGO.

It is based on this perception that we will briefly comment on the discursive categories, already mentioned above, selected to analyze how the teachers' representations of themselves, of their students, and of Brazil as a welcoming country occur.

About discursive representations, it is argued that they are constructed by, in, and with language through sophisticated resources that can be translated into categories. Fairclough (2001, p. 153, our translation), in defending the term representation by "reported discourse", justifies that:

> [...] (1) it better captures the idea that when one 'reports' discourse. one necessarily chooses to represent it in one way rather than another; and (2) what is represented is not only speech but also writing, and not only its grammatical aspects but also its discursive organization, as well as various other aspects of the discursive event - its circumstances, the tone in which things were said, etc.

The discourse representations in this analysis will be investigated by the categories modalization and intertextuality that are proposed by Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), precisely in the work of Fairclough (2001).

Modalization is a textual-discursive strategy that the authors use to demonstrate their degree of commitment to what they represent in their discourse, whether they are more or less engaged with what they say, emphasizing, accentuating or underscoring what they say, in order to preserve their face. For Fairclough (2001), this strategy may be associated with other discursive functions that contribute to the construction of meaning that the authors intend to express, for example, in statements, questions, assertions, demands and offers, claiming, from the interlocutor, a manifestation of commitment to what is being said.

Intertextuality, on the other hand, a basic premise of the dialogical relationship of language, since the propositions of Bakhtin (2003) and his Circle, concerns the discursive aspect that brings together a set of sayings and sub-sayings of others, which the textual author appropriates, giving individuation to what is collective, explicitly, or implicitly. In this sense, Fairclough (2001) further distinguishes two types of intertexts: manifest and constitutive intertextuality.

In general, the first is that which, as the name indicates, is manifestly present in the text, such as direct textual discourse, transcriptions, and explicitly marked authorial voices, so that textual authorship can be immediately identified.

The constitutive, on the other hand, is constructed in a more sophisticated way, because even though the authors bring the voice of others, including their own, the affirmations, negations, generalizations have no identifiable authorship: the voice is

collective, and there are no specific marks to point out the authors. What is being said or subdicted is an incontestable truth, by virtue of appearing to be a historically and collectively traced pacified point. One way or another, "intertextuality is inevitably selective about what is included or excluded from the events and texts represented" (FAIRCLOUGH, 2001, p. 55, our translation). Therefore, it is a strategic resource that the author resorts to for the meanings he wishes to attribute, to produce in a given chronotope.

In the next section, the categories will be braided with the data obtained from the narrated texts.

Narratives in the context of PLAc: teachers' "voices" unveiled

As already mentioned, we selected two narratives of female teacher-collaborators who worked in two projects of teaching Portuguese as a welcoming language. This is an approach to the discursive elements that make up these narratives and jointly construct the teachers' representation of the pedagogical process and the students.

These analyses make it possible to highlight social practices through teaching, classroom interaction and, consequently, the discourses that situate these practices. In the first and second narratives (hereafter, N1 and N2, respectively), one can notice, initially, the marking of the female teacher-collaborators, that is, how they represent themselves, regarding their academic training and their experience in teaching with the migrant and refugee public:

> *N1: [...] I do not have specific training, since there are regular undergraduate courses, for example, exclusively for Portuguese as a second language. Even so, the experience of teaching in this area, coming from the mentioned project, was relevant for the development of my education and to raise my interest in this area and object of research.*
> *N2: I have a degree in Brazilian Portuguese as a Second Language (PBSL) from the University of Brasilia and I am currently dedicated to research and teaching of Portuguese as a Welcoming Language to refugees [...].*

In the excerpt of N1, the teacher-collaborator emphasizes *not having specific training* in teaching Portuguese as a second language and the relevance of the experience for her training, modulating with the locution *even so*. The negative and then the adversative explicitly marked in N1, promote the author's commitment to teaching. In N2, the author is emphatic in situating her education (*I have a degree*) and her commitment to teaching this public (*I am currently dedicated*). In both cases, the protagonism of the authors in the representation of themselves in a situated social practice is noticeable.

In another excerpt from N1, when dealing with teacher-students interaction in the classroom, the author brings in the indirect voice of a student and a girl student, as a way of exemplifying and reflecting on her own pedagogical work:

> *N1: [...] I remember a moment when <u>a student asked me why we speak "Venezuelano" and not "Venezolano"</u>. At the time, I <u>couldn't think</u> of any plausible justification [...] another time, <u>a student told me that she found the Portuguese conjugation complex and that she finds the verb tenses very confusing</u>. <u>I noticed</u> that this was a feeling shared by the class, reflected in the written activities, so I decided to dedicate some preparation time at home to present in the next class.*

When externalizing these voices in the text, the manifest intertextuality is promoted due to the dialogic relationship established, in a marked way. The external voice is complemented by the protagonism of the author, when she sees herself in a situation of inquiry and reflection, which contemplated the teacher's reaction and recognition of the specificities of teaching Portuguese to that audience.

Still in the course of the narratives, we observed the constitutive intertextuality as a way to reveal discursive practices that circulate in society, therefore, collectively pacified. These "external voices" signal the representation of migrants and refugees in the media sphere, for example. This is what the authors' speeches express in an assimilated way, incorporated into their discourse.

> *N1: [...] <u>I think about the way refugees are represented in the media</u>, often in a dehumanized way, disregarding their individual narratives, which are reflected in socialization, learning, etc.*
> *N2: [...] <u>Although Brazil is internationally recognized</u> as a welcoming country and offers refugees the necessary documentation to settle here and build their lives, little has been done outside of this scope.*

In N1, the author is concerned about what the media reports about refugees. She externalizes the dehumanized condition in which this group is represented. In N2, the use of the concessive word *Although,* as a strategy of modalization, enunciates a disguised representation of Brazil in the international context, since the reception actions by the Nation's State have not been so expressive, according to the author.

In terms of representation, these excerpts symbolize a strategic linguistic-ideological mode of unity. N1 expresses the condition of unification of refugees when it raises the representation of these people by the media and emphasizes the fact of non-recognition of individualities by that social sphere, contributing to a constitutive intertext, since there is no specific authorship. In N2, the same category is perceived when the author indicates the

recognition of Brazil, internationally, as a country welcoming refugees, since it is a signatory of the official documentation of other countries that have manifested with the reception policy.

The representation of this unison intertext, of a supposed universalization of refugees, was at first also punctuated in the author of N1's own discourse. However, there was a recognition that this unity did not exist. And this was only possible with classroom practice, as pointed out in the following passage.

> *N1: The performance in the classroom <u>allowed me to see migration and refuge</u> <u>in a different way</u>, since the students are active participants in the migration process, and not just "representatives" of a social context.*

The author of N2, on the other hand, immediately recognizes that it is necessary to understand the singularities of that public and clarify for the school community the erroneous idea of homogeneity conveyed:

> *N2: [...] <u>the presence of refugee students in the classroom</u> instigates a lot of questioning, both by the teaching staff and by classmates. It is a mixture of admiration and curiosity, which greatly encourages dialogue between people. When this happens, it is important to use the moment to raise questions and <u>demystify some stereotypes,</u> as well as present information and data on refugee and refugees.*

This recognition of the specificities of the audience, as well as the need to bring information to the school community about this same audience, is essential to promote interaction in the classroom. Trust must be fostered immediately, otherwise there will be resistance from the learners, which will hinder the dialogic relationship that must be established in the context of teaching and learning.

> *N1: [...] <u>I believe that it is difficult for refugees to feel comfortable</u> at first in the classroom, both in the relationship with the teacher and in the relationship with their classmates. During my experience, <u>the students did not communicate often</u>, they tried to remain serious during the classes. Then, as they got to know the way the classes were guided, they shared experiences and interests. <u>The interaction in class seemed "safe"</u>, allowing the students to interact with the content in a relaxed way, relating the proximities and distances between Portuguese and Spanish.*
> *N2: [...] in general, and from what I could see in my classes, <u>the younger refugee students are usually more outgoing and less inhibited</u>, <u>while the older</u> <u>students or those with little time in the country tend to open up more gradually.</u>*

The teachers' representation of the students reveals how important the classroom is as a place of refuge, of welcome for these learners to develop and establish dialogue. The

modalization in presenting the transformation of the condition of seriousness to exhibition of speech in N1, and the change in behavior of "*older students or those with little time in the country*", students in N2, whose openness is more gradual, unlike the young ones, who are "*more outgoing*", demonstrates, even implicitly, a representation of someone to whom welcoming is essential, which can greatly cooperate with other teaching practices in the same type of context.

The narratives show numerous processes of modalization and intertexts, amenable to analysis in more extensive studies. For the moment, we realize that these were categories used by the teachers to represent their voices, that of their students, and that of Brazil. Their own, in that they reported the challenging situation of teaching this kind of public. That of their students, as they observed the vulnerable condition in which they find themselves. That of Brazil, which, although it represents itself as a welcoming nation, opening borders, in fact, in social practice, has shown itself to be a country that falls short of this policy in several spheres.

Final considerations

The study confirmed the importance of narratives as a research instrument. The analysis provided the understanding of a situated social practice, in this case the classroom, in which discourses were highlighted and represented by the "voices" of the teacher-collaborators that elucidated in this space a place of welcoming.

In the excerpts recovered from the narratives, it was observed the sensitivity of the teacher-collaborators to see the fragility of the migrants, especially refugees, committing themselves to a singular teaching in which their students were also protagonists of the classroom scene, being met in the demands of this dialogical space.

The discourses revealed in the narratives can contribute to the deconstruction of stereotypes about refugees, contributing to a change of social and pedagogical attitude in the teaching practice of Portuguese as a Welcoming Language. Bringing up these narratives is not only to make them relevant as reports, but also to contribute to the training of professionals who will deal with this public.

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