

WRITTEN PRODUCTION IN PORTUGUESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE/SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: WHEN AND HOW TO INTERVENE

A PRODUÇÃO ESCRITA EM SALA DE AULA DE PORTUGUÊS COMO LÍNGUA ESTRANGEIRA/SEGUNDA LÍNGUA: QUANDO E COMO INTERVIR

LA PRODUCCIÓN ESCRITA EN AULA DE CLASE DE PORTUGUÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA/SEGUNDA LENGUA: CUÁNDO Y CÓMO INTERVENIR?

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ABSTRACT: One of the recurring concerns of Portuguese as Foreign Language/Second Language (PFL/PSL) teachers, especially in the early stages of their teacher training, encompasses the correction of written production. The objective of this work is to present aspects that involve the "correction" of textual productions of PFL/PSL students and discuss when and how to intervene in these productions, based on data presented in Cruz (2019), which were generated from the observations of classes and interviews carried out with all participants; the implementation of a set of activities and also the internship reports of the trainee teachers. Initially, this article presents the concepts of language, teaching, and learning that led and lead the researcher's actions outside and inside the classroom; then, it discusses aspects that may involve the "correction" of the aforementioned text productions and, finally, the work presents some proposals for the intervention of the teacher in the written productions.

KEYWORDS: Portuguese as a Foreign Language/Second Language (PFL/PSL). Initial teacher training. Text production.

RESUMO: *Uma das preocupações mais recorrentes dos professores de Português como Língua Estrangeira/Segunda Língua (PLE/L2), principalmente nos estágios iniciais da sua formação docente, abrange a correção das produções escritas. O objetivo deste trabalho é apresentar aspectos que envolvam a "correção" das produções textuais de estudantes de PLE/L2 e discutir quando e como intervir nessas produções, com base nos dados apresentados na investigação de Cruz (2019), os quais foram gerados a partir das observações de aulas e entrevistas realizadas com todos(as) os(as) participantes; da implementação de um conjunto de atividades e também dos relatórios de estágio do(a)s professore(a)s em formação. Inicialmente, apresenta-se as concepções de língua/linguagem e de ensino-aprendizagem que conduziram e conduzem as ações da pesquisadora fora e dentro da sala de aula; em seguida, discute-se aspectos que podem envolver a "correção" das*

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produções textuais supracitadas e, por fim, apresenta-se algumas proposições para a intervenção do(a) professor(a) nas produções escritas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Português Língua Estrangeira/Segunda Língua (PLE/PL2). Formação inicial de professores. Produção textual.*

RESUMEN: *Una de las preocupaciones más recurrentes de los profesores de Portugués como Lengua Extranjera/Segunda Lengua (PLE/L2), principalmente en los años iniciales de su formación docente, cubre la corrección de las producciones escritas. El objetivo de este trabajo es presentar aspectos que involucren la “corrección” de las producciones textuales de estudiantes de PLE/L2 y discutir cuándo y cómo intervenir en esas producciones, basados en los datos presentados en la investigación de Cruz(2019), los cuales fueron generados a partir de las observaciones de clases y entrevistas realizadas con todos(as) los (las) participantes; de la implementación de un conjunto de actividades y también de un informe de pasantías de los profesores y profesoras en formación. Inicialmente, se presenta las concepciones de lengua/lenguaje y de enseñanza-aprendizaje que condujeron y conducen las acciones de la investigadora fuera y dentro del aula de clase; luego, se discute aspectos que pueden envolver la “corrección” de las producciones textuales habladas anteriormente y, por fin, se presenta algunas proposiciones para la intervención de las profesoras y profesores en las producciones escritas de los dicentes.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Portugués Lengua Extranjera/Segunda Lengua (PLE/PL2). Formación inicial de profesores. Producción Textual.*

Introduction

One of the most recurrent concerns of Portuguese as a Foreign Language/Second Language (PLE/L2) teachers, especially in the early stages of their teacher training, involves aspects related to “how, when and what should or should not be corrected in the written productions of the teachers”. PLE/L2 students”. These were some of the questions that arose during the development of a master's research carried out with undergraduate students of the Degree in Portuguese as a Foreign Language/Second Language at the Federal University of Bahia, who, for the most part, were taking the Supervised Internship discipline of Portuguese as a Foreign Language of this degree (CRUZ, 2019).

The objective of this article is to present aspects that involve the “correction” of the textual productions of students of Portuguese as a Foreign Language/Second Language (PLE/L2) and to discuss when and how to intervene in these productions, based on the data presented in Cruz's investigation (2019), which were generated from the observations of classes and interviews carried out with all the participants; the implementation of a set of activities, and also the internship reports of the teachers in initial formation.

Initially, I point out the language and teaching-learning conceptions that have led my actions outside and inside the classroom, as I understand that this initial reflection is necessary for the discussion of these aspects, later, I present some propositions about the intervention of teachers in written productions.

Initial thoughts

Currently, I am based on the concept of language-culture.² In this language conception, language-culture is, more than anything, a social practice, an activity, an action performed by the subjects who interact through it, a complex network that considers not only its linguistic dimension but also the sociocultural, historical, and political dimensions. In the words of Mendes (2008, p. 72), “Language that more than part of the cultural dimension, it is the culture itself, it is confused with it”.

In this sense, I also use a language teaching-learning perspective that provokes me to explore complex and multilingual contexts, marked by diversity, inequality, and, many times, by social injustice, and that helps me to choose with autonomy and critical awareness, the representation(s) of language that will be the basis of my actions³. Rayo asserts that:

Nowadays, due to the great advances in the media, migratory movements, international contacts, tourism, the globalization of the economy, and other factors, educational action is required in this direction. The idea of a Europe of united peoples requires the acceptance of cultural pluralism and the urgency of intercultural educational actions (RAYO, 2004, p. 69, our translation).

In the same direction, Souza and Fleuri point out that:

Intercultural education is concerned with the relationships between human beings who are culturally different from one another. Not only in the quest to apprehend the character of various cultures but, above all, in the quest to understand the meanings that their actions assume in the context of their respective cultural patterns and in the willingness to be challenged by the meanings of such actions, and by their constituted meanings. by such actions, and by the meanings constituted by such contexts” (SOUZA; FLEURI, 2003, p. 68, our translation).

Believing in the need of building spaces for dialogue, sharing and active, incessant construction of knowledge, respect for differences, as well as building a set of practices that

² See Mendes (2008).

³ To learn more about the perspective of interculturally sensitive education, read Mendes (2011).

address the different problems of our contemporary world, which are reflected in our classrooms, makes fundamental the constant struggle against all types of social injustice, discrimination, and racism. For this, we need, as Mendes tells us, “To contribute to the creation of these border zones, of these “inter”, “between” or in-between spaces, “third places” (MENDES, 2011, p. 142, our translation). This author, mentioning Bhabha (MENDES 1998, 2011, p. 141, our translation), highlights that this “third place” is marked “by the constant tension between different subjects-worlds and that, like any environment of production and exchange of meanings, this space is fed and structured from this tension between these two sides”.

That said, the intercultural perspective in which I believe seeks to be critical, decolonial and to look at southern and counter-hegemonic elements. That's why:

[...] intercultural education cannot be reduced to a few situations and/or activities carried out at specific times, nor can it focus its attention exclusively on certain social groups. It is a global approach that must affect all actors and all dimensions of the educational process, as well as the different areas in which it takes place. Concerning the school, it affects curriculum selection, school organization, languages, didactic practices, extracurricular activities, the role of the teacher, the relationship with the community, etc. (CANDAUI, 2008, p. 170, our translation).

In this bias:

The development of an intercultural approach to the teaching/learning of FL/L2, before being an exercise in theoretical construction, must obey a careful planning and structuring process, which involves, from the establishment of the guiding principles of pedagogical action to the planning of courses, selection, and production of teaching materials and the elaboration of monitoring and evaluation strategies, always bearing in mind who is the audience for which the pedagogical action is intended, in what context or contexts, and under what conditions (MENDES, 2004, p. 115, our translation).

It is with this conceptual framework, which is open to the construction and edification of a set of themes and decolonial, southerly and counter-hegemonic practices, which I continue to reflect on the pedagogical practice, the production of teaching materials, the different PLE/L2 classrooms, and our being in the world with our students.

Those who seek to act from an intercultural perspective, therefore, need to be aware of the problems that arise in the relationship between subjects of different languages-culture, which end up not only reflecting in the classroom but in all the elements that constitute linguistic education in general. It also needs to perceive itself (and become) an agent of

interculturality⁴, to contribute to the resolution of different problems that persist or arise in contemporary times.

Reflecting on the concepts of language and teaching-learning that have led my actions outside and inside the classroom allowed me to understand a little more about my teaching practice and the steps that brought me to the development of this work.

Textual production: Teachers' concerns in PLE/L2 education

For the generation of research data, I attended three classes of the Supervised Internship 1 class of Portuguese as a Foreign Language⁵. In the third meeting, we talked about the topic “Corrections of written texts: To correct or not to correct? When, what, how should we correct students' written texts? This discussion was necessary because these questions were asked at different times by the teachers who were studying this subject and who agreed to participate in the research.

In the first meeting I had with this group, Haiti⁶ was the first to talk to me about this topic. After the class, he wanted to know what I thought about the approach that guides the student's exposure to the language, without the teacher's intervention pointing out the mistakes/deviations committed, he also wanted to know if, in the turn of the students' speech, I corrected them.

He reveals that he has doubts about this approach and that he finds it very complicated “to let the student loose, without any guidance”, since, according to this approach, the student, at a given moment, would be able to perceive what is appropriate/correct in the language, that is, in the interaction, the learners would notice the “mistakes” they are making and make the necessary corrections⁷. We talked about some language teaching-learning approaches, especially about the Communicative and Intercultural Approaches. I suggested that he research a little more on this topic since these questions were coming to the fore.

⁴I refer to the ways in which we can act in the interaction with others and in the practices of teaching and learning language towards the construction of intercultural experiences. Being an agent of interculturality is effectively enabling an intercultural dialogue that allows these subjects to find themselves in real situations of language use and that they have the opportunity to get to know themselves and the other and to understand, through this dialogue, the language and the language. culture that are co-constructed in interaction. To learn more, read Mendes (2012).

⁵Curricular component of the PLE degree at ILUFBA.

⁶To preserve the identity of the eight teachers in PLE training who participated in the research, I chose to name them with the names of the countries or continents corresponding to the origin of most of their students, namely: Benin, Gabon, Ghana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Africa, America, Europe.

⁷When I interviewed Africa, she stated that, although she was instructed not to correct the students during their speaking shift, she always tried to point out the “mistakes” and even asks “how they are going to correct the” errors” if they do not know how to identify them?”.

After the second meeting with this class, I met Haiti on my way to the bus stop and he asked me if I had any Thematic Unit (UT) printed, as I would like to apply it⁸. He chose one of the units and then asked me “Just follow the script, right?”. I told him that the class would be conducted at his discretion, and that the script was just a suggestion, that he was completely free to do what he wanted, but that the latest UT activity suggested the production of a campaign against racism and xenophobia in video format and that, during the production process, students could elaborate some written text. At that moment, Haiti asks me “Then we fell into that 'to correct or not to correct?' situation.

This concern also arises with other teachers that are being educated. Congo and Benin, for example, when the students were carrying out the written production of the unit “How is your routine?”⁹, asked me if they should correct the texts produced by the students.

To clarify these issues and encourage this discussion, at the third meeting, I presented some comments produced by my former students and the tutors' students (which are available in the blog *Living in Brazil*¹⁰). At that meeting, each teacher in initial formation received one of these comments, analyzed them, and then shared their opinion with the class.

Nine teachers in initial education were present at this meeting. One of them worked in the Special Monitoring Program for Portuguese as a Foreign Language (PROEMPLE) as a monitor, the others were tutors in this program¹¹. These highlighted that the students responded to the command charged in the activity (respond to the post) and demonstrated that they understood the text of the post, although their comments did not, for the most part, present adequate punctuation, presence, and adequate use of connectives and prepositions; moreover, the meaning, in some passages, showed some compromise. They evaluated that, using the words of one of the teachers, “they are doing well and suddenly they want to say something that they do not know the meaning of, how to say it, and then they try to adapt to what they think but the phrase ends up losing its meaning”.

⁸The main objective of these first two meetings was to present my research and invite them to participate in it. At that moment, I presented them with three Thematic Units: “How is your Routine”, “Prejudice” and “Racism”, it is a set of activities that I developed during the data generation stage to be implemented by teachers in training. in your PLE classes.

⁹The written production activity suggested the production of a post to be published on the *Falando Português* blog on the theme “My life in Brazil.

¹⁰www.vivendonobrasil.blogspot.com.

¹¹PROEMPLE is a sub-program of the Foreign Language Proficiency Program for Students and Employees at UFBA (PROFICI), which has been dedicated, since 2014, to offering PLE courses to foreign students with regular enrollment at undergraduate and graduate levels and citizens of developing countries with which Brazil has educational and cultural agreements. For more details on monitoring and mentoring, see Cruz (2019, p. 53-55).

For the students to pay attention to these aspects, Gabon indicates that it would correct the concordance errors and other grammatical aspects (lack of cohesion), since they are in the process of acquisition and, in the following semester, they would take the Portuguese Language Proficiency Certification Exam for Foreigners (Celpe-Bras). Along the same line of reasoning, another teacher¹² shares that I would seek to guide them to write a text a little more formal, for example, working with punctuation, cohesion, construction of shorter periods, closing ideas, and using words of contrast – *porém*, *contudo* - that some of them already use, but “a bit out of whack”.

Congo mentions that, when applying the UT, he preferred not to correct the comment during the class because he understood that it was a learning space and, later, the student could, in the future, see how he wrote, in addition to also considering that a blog - environment informal way of using language - would allow him to write that way.

At the end of this meeting, the last teacher in initial education to expose himself says that, concerning the connectives, conjunctive phrases, conjunctions, punctuation, he believes that this did not make it difficult to understand the text, because the teacher could read and put the punctuation. He/she believes that it would be more productive and better for students if we focused “on facilitation, on the way the person emits, on the way the person expresses his/her idea, instead of focusing on punctuation”.

From their point of view, this can be done reflectively, asking the student the following questions: “Do you think you made yourself understood well, do you think your colleagues are understanding what you are saying? is talking?”; suggest them to ask their colleagues if the text is understandable, and for them to read their texts to the classmates. He/she believes that it is not up to him/her to tell the student whether or not what was said (written/spoken) is understandable, since he/she does not believe in the idea that “I have the language, I will pass”.

As mentioned by Congo, this teacher-in-formation also comments that the comment was posted on a blog, and the internet environment allows the student to write in that way, it would be enough to see how Brazilians themselves use the virtual environment. For him/her, perhaps these analyzed aspects do not, in fact, reflect a problem of learning Portuguese, as we do not know how these students were educated until they arrived here. He/she reveals that this has attracted his/her attention in PROEMPLE and he/she feels like asking his/her students to write the first text in their mother tongue (“Write anything in your language there”), so that is

¹²I do not name him/her, as this teacher in initial formation did not effectively participate in the research.

possible to identify if the student makes the same mistakes/deviations when using the mother tongue.

As the teachers were exposing their perceptions, I also ended up exposing what I believed in. I presented how we could approach the grammatical and pragmatic aspects of the language from those productions, since, in several moments of this meeting, one of the teachers¹³ made, at different times, the comments set out below, in excerpts [1] and [2]:

Excerpt [1]

I liked the text, in view of not having the structuralist importance of the thing, but I think it was understandable, understanding. This question of commas, punctuation, I think is normal. So, I don't see it, actually, I don't think I see anything that I can work with him, I have to look at this, because maybe I needed a study, guidance so that I could, in a way, promote this instruction to him. (Notes in the field diary).

In this analysis, the teacher reflects that, although he liked the text and pointed out some structural aspects which, at that moment, he considered as normal deviations of use, he needs a study, an orientation to learn to instruct better the students. This was the second teacher in initial education to read and analyze the comments posted by students on the blog. During the activity, after other texts are also read and analyzed, he/she asks:

Excerpt [2]

Just taking advantage here because I've already seen here that some texts are in the same line. Realize that there are errors here that we identify, errors, inadequacies, that we perceive certain inadequacies. But, for example, for me, I have great difficulty in how to work these things. You don't go through that, people? Or is it just me, folks? [...] Not with grammar, there are certain classic inadequacies that are normal, they are inadequacies, we do not doubt about that, but how to work with meanings, I don't know. (Notes in the field diary).

I observe here that this teacher in initial education is aware of an aspect that needs to be worked on in the classroom: the text and the construction of meanings. As it turned out, he/she admits to having a lot of difficulty with what this approach would be like and asks classmates wanting to know if they also go through the same situation.

This brief (but significant) account of these three meetings with teachers in PLE/PL2 training reveals some concerns of teachers, especially those who are in the early stages of their teacher education, and the desire to learn to guide in the best possible way the textual

¹³I do not name him/her, as this teacher in initial education did not effectively participate in the research.

production of their PLE/PL2 students. I believe that the main aspects that involve the “correction” of the students' textual productions were emanated in this activity of reading and analyzing the written productions of PLE students.

After all, when and how to intervene. In general terms, given what I have been able to discuss so far, the teacher's intervention should occur when:

Figure 1 – Intervention of the teacher

1. O(A) aluno(a) realiza superficialmente ou muito superficialmente ou não realiza a ação solicitada no enunciado/comando da atividade.
2. O(A) aluno(a) não cumpri o(s) propósito(s) exigido(s) no enunciado/comando da atividade.
3. O aluno(a) apresenta dificuldade para produzir o texto no gênero discursivo solicitado.
4. O aluno(a) não usa ou usa parcialmente os recursos linguísticos esperados para o determinado nível de proficiência.
5. A construção de sentidos está parcialmente ou seriamente comprometida.
6. Há truncamentos de períodos e/ou justaposições de orações comprometendo a fluidez da leitura.
7. Há interferência(s) de outra(s) língua(s) no texto.

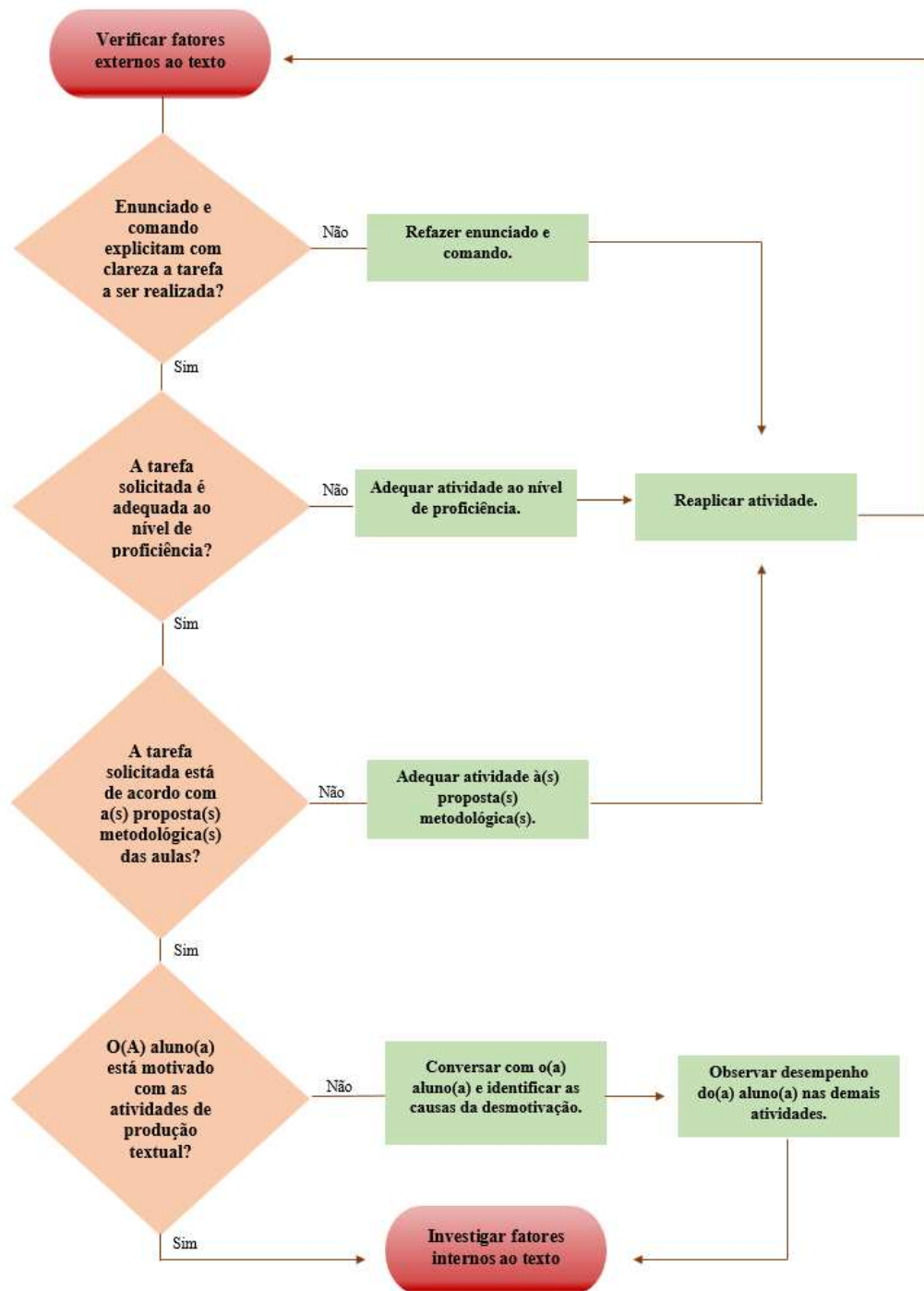
Source: Authors' collection

When identifying any of these scenarios¹⁴, it is important to verify and/or investigate whether external or internal factors to the written production caused the aforementioned situation(s), since the intervention may be different depending on the situation(s).

To check for factors external to the text, the teacher can follow the flow presented below.

¹⁴It is important to say that the elaboration of these scenarios and the flowcharts presented below is also based on the evaluation criteria of the written part of Celpe-Bras (BRASIL, 2020b) and the writing of ENEM (BRASIL, 2020a).

Figura 2 – Verificação de fatores externos



Source: Authors' collection

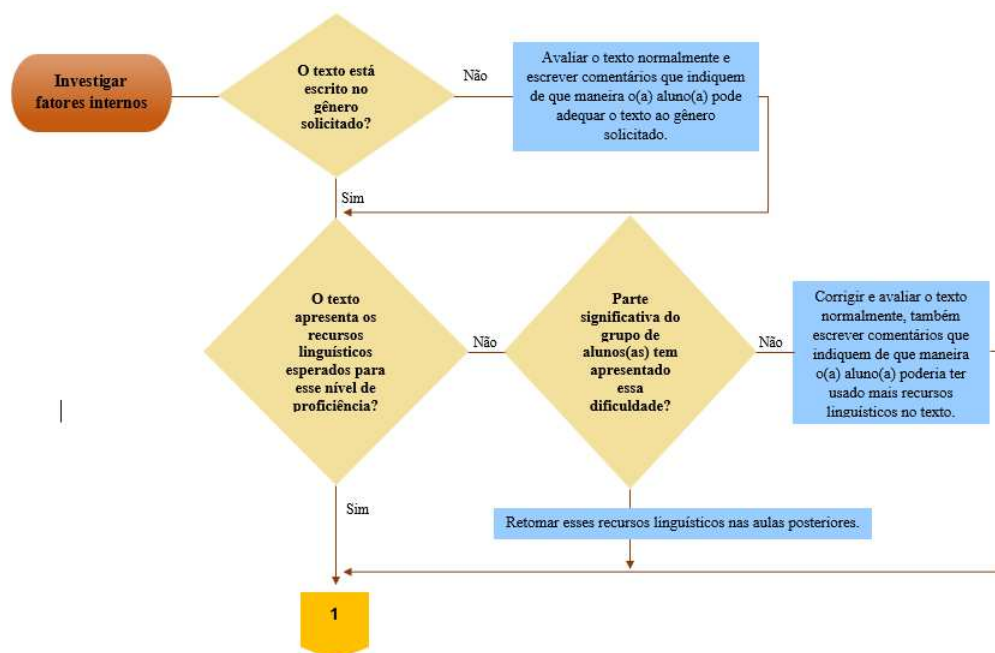
Figure 2, as we have seen, presents a flowchart with four situations that can limit the student's textual production process and with actions that can be carried out by the teacher to repair recurring "errors" in the elaboration of this type of activity. I understand that external aspects to the text produced by the student may be factors that could lead him/her to perform

superficially or very superficially or not to perform the requested action in the activity statement and/or to not comply with the purpose(s) required in the activity statement.

In addition to these, I identified other situations that may (or may not) compromise the student's performance in the activity, and the teacher is responsible for investigating the internal factors to written productio, as well as, depending on the situation, its variables.

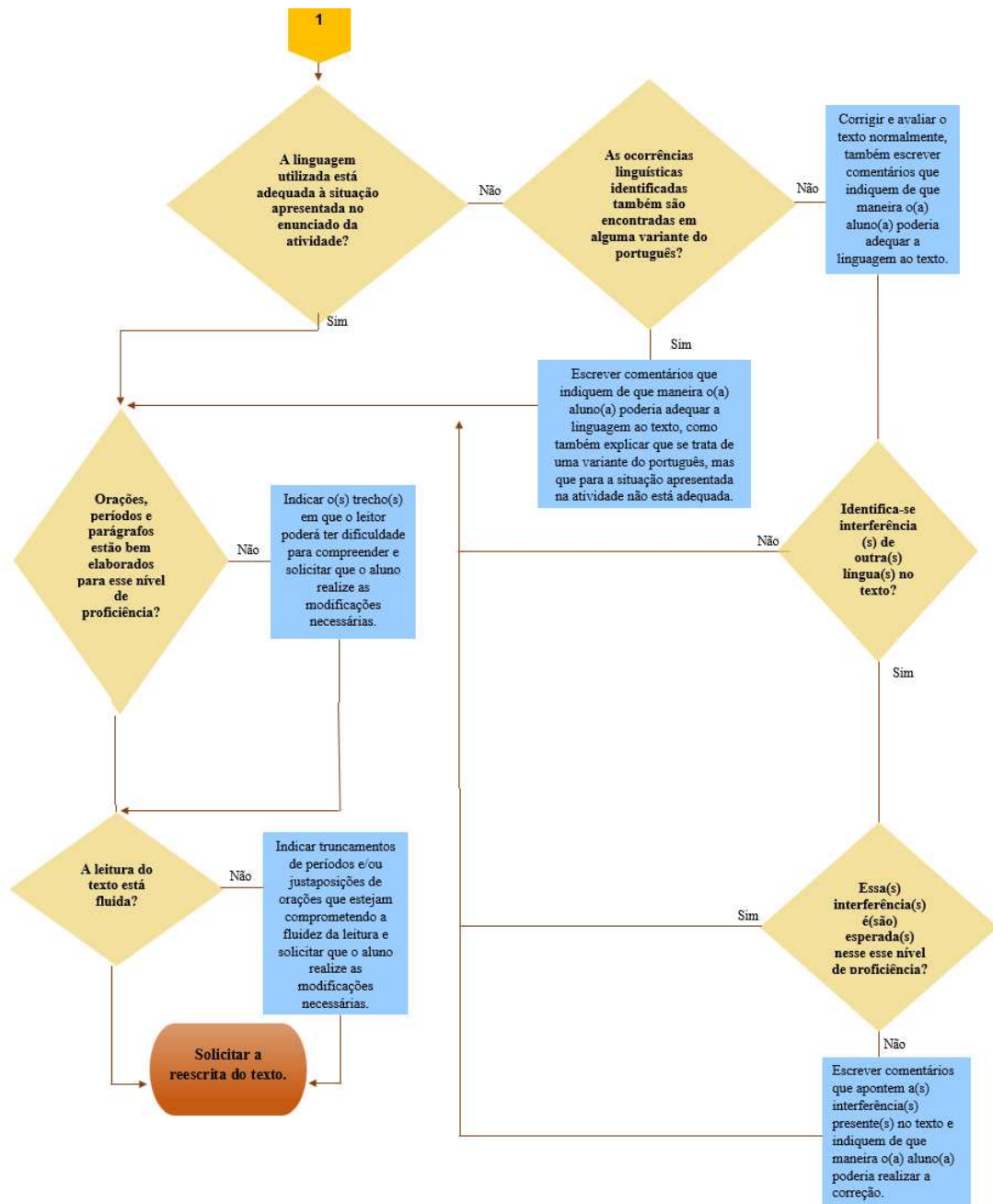
To begin the investigation of these factors, the teacher can follow the flow presented below.

Figure 3 – Investigation of factors internal to the text



Source: Authors' collection

Figure 4 – Investigation of factors internal to the text



Source: Authors' collection

In Figure 3, we see a flowchart that seeks to explore factors that concern the production of the text in the requested discursive genre, the use of linguistic resources expected for a given level of proficiency, the construction of meanings, the fluidity of reading, and interference(s) of other languages. I believe that this material can help the PLE/L2 teacher, especially in the early stages of their teacher education, to reflect on the actions that can be performed during the process of correcting the written productions of their students.

These are some of the aspects that may involve the “correction” of students' textual productions, which emerged during the reading and analysis of written productions by PLE students, with teachers in PLE training. We have, here, an initial contribution and that, therefore, these aspects need to be deepened.

Final considerations

Based on the data generated in the investigation by Cruz (2019), a research carried out with undergraduate students of the Degree in Portuguese as a Foreign Language/Second Language at the Federal University of Bahia, which revealed, among other aspects, the desire of these professors in learning to guide in the best possible way the textual production of their PLE/L2 students, I tried, in this work, to present some scenarios and, through two flowcharts, to encourage verification and the investigation of external or internal factors to the written production that can limit the student's textual production process and/or compromise the student's performance in the activity, proposing actions that can be carried out by the teacher to repair recurring “errors” in this process. These actions can prevent:

- Elaboration of written production activities to evaluate only the surface of the text. In this action, the idea of text as a pretext for grammar correction becomes evident.
- Elaboration of activities without the evaluation criteria having been defined. These criteria must be consistent with the actions and skills developed and with the content covered during the course, in addition to being aligned with the level of proficiency in question. It is important that these criteria are presented to the students.
- Correction is a time to evaluate the ideas, thoughts, experiences shared by the student. A teacher who seeks to act in a culturally sensitive perspective creates spaces for “exchange” of ideas, thoughts, experiences, and information about the languages-cultures in contact, enabling the expansion of the student's world view. student and resignifying their beliefs, their values and, therefore, their worldview.
- Delegitimation of the various uses of the varieties of Portuguese, whether spoken or written, whether formal or informal, in favor of socially prestigious linguistic varieties. It is up to us, here, not only the reflection but, above all, the action of teaching Portuguese in a pluricentric perspective.

Having said that, although this work is an initial contribution that needs further development, it is important because it shows the PLE/L2 teacher, especially those who are in the early stages of their teacher education, actions that need to be re-signified.

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