

A PLURICENTRIC VIEW OF PORTUGUESE AS A NON-NATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING: THE ROLE OF AFRICAN, MACANESE AND TIMORESE LITERATURES

UM OLHAR PLURICÊNTRICO NO ENSINO DE PORTUGUÊS LÍNGUA NÃO MATERNA: O PAPEL DAS LITERATURAS AFRICANA, MACAENSE E TIMORENSE

UNA MIRADA PLURICÉNTRICA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DE PORTUGUÉS LENGUA NO MATERNA: EL PAPEL DE LAS LITERATURAS AFRICANA, MACAENSE Y TIMORENSE

Davi ALBUQUERQUE¹

ABSTRACT: Portuguese language is a pluricentric and international language, being one of the largest in the world, with native speakers and learners in several countries. However, the current Portuguese as a Non-Native Language (PNNL) teaching and its teaching materials focus one of the two existing Portuguese standards, European Portuguese or Brazilian Portuguese. Furthermore, given the scarcity of teaching materials that address the Portuguese language as pluricentric, we propose here a discussion and a guide for PNNL teaching using literary texts as authentic examples of different Portuguese linguistic norms along with intercultural and communicative teaching of Portuguese. Thus, after the introduction, we present a theoretical discussion on the subject followed by an example and a guide for elaboration. Finally, we point out some positive aspects and the impact on students regarding the use of this type of material.

KEYWORDS: Portuguese as a Non-Native Language (PNNL). Linguistic Pluricentrism. Literature and language teaching.

RESUMO: *A língua portuguesa é uma língua pluricêntrica e internacional, sendo uma das maiores do mundo, com falantes nativos e aprendizes em diversos países. Contudo, o ensino de Português Língua Não Materna (PLNM) na atualidade, bem como os respectivos materiais didáticos focam apenas em uma ou outra norma do português, o Português Europeu ou o Português Brasileiro. Assim, diante da escassez de materiais didáticos que abordem a língua portuguesa como pluricêntrica, propomos aqui uma discussão e um roteiro, sendo que em nossa proposta utilizamos textos literários como exemplos autênticos das diferentes normas linguísticas existentes do português junto ao trabalho intercultural e ao ensino comunicativo do português. Desta maneira, após a introdução, apresentamos uma discussão teórica sobre o assunto seguida por um exemplo e um roteiro para elaboração. Finalmente, apontamos alguns aspectos positivos e o impacto nos alunos a respeito do uso desse tipo de material.*

¹ Federal University of Goiás (UFG), Samambaia, Goiânia – GO – Brazil. Member of the Center for Studies in Ecolinguistics and the Imaginary (NELIM). Doctorate in Linguistics (UnB). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1941-6925>. E-mail: albuquerque07@gmail.com

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Português Língua Não Materna (PLNM). Pluricentrismo Linguístico. Literatura e ensino de línguas.*

RESUMEN: *El portugués es una lengua pluricéntrica e internacional, siendo una de las más grandes del mundo, con hablantes nativos y estudiantes en varios países. Sin embargo, la enseñanza del Portugués como Lengua no Materna (PLNM) en la actualidad, así como los respectivos materiales didácticos, se centran únicamente en uno u otro estándar de portugués, el Portugués Europeo o el Portugués Brasileño. Así, dada la escasez de materiales didácticos que aborden la lengua portuguesa como pluricéntrica, proponemos aquí una discusión y un guión. En nuestra propuesta utilizamos textos literarios como auténticos ejemplos de las diferentes normas lingüísticas existentes en portugués junto con la enseñanza intercultural y comunicativa de portugués. En nuestro texto, tras la introducción, presentamos una discusión teórica sobre el tema seguida de un ejemplo y una guía de elaboración. Finalmente, señalamos algunos aspectos positivos y el impacto en los estudiantes con respecto al uso de este tipo de material.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Portugués Lengua no Materna (PLNM). Pluricentrismo lingüístico. Enseñanza de la literatura y la lengua.*

Introduction

In the first studies on pluricentrism, the Portuguese language was recognized as pluricentric, presenting two distinct national norms, that is, two linguistic centers, namely: European Portuguese (EP) and Brazilian Portuguese (BP).

Even with other national standards under development, mainly Portuguese from Mozambique (PM) and Portuguese from Angola (PA), it is possible to say that the Portuguese-speaking world has changed little in recent decades concerning the predominance of the two large centers (Portugal and Brazil).), with Portugal taking a leading position in actions, policies, and projects for the teaching, promotion and diffusion of Portuguese around the world, while Brazil has only a few specific actions in progress. The other Portuguese-speaking countries have small contributions, either because of certain socioeconomic limitations or because they adopt the EP as a norm. Furthermore, projects that aim to promote Portuguese as an international language, proposing something like a supranational, or panlusophone, norm, for the teaching of Portuguese Non-Mother Language (hereinafter PLNM) usually run into governmental, bureaucratic, and/or ideological obstacles in some of the CPLP countries (Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries). This leads some linguists consider Portuguese as a bicentric (and not pluricentric) language, as well as multinational (and not an international language).

Regarding PLNM teaching materials, the situation is similar, favoring the EP or BP, depending on the authors and the place/publisher where they were produced, and materials that present some proposal close to pluricentrism are rare, limiting them to around three or four, as analyzed by Albuquerque (2021).

In this way, this article aims to present the importance of working with literary texts in the PLNM class, especially fictional works outside the bilateral Brazil-Portugal axis of Lusophony. Thus, after this introduction, we offer a theoretical subsidy regarding the benefits for the learner when the PLNM teacher uses literary works in the classroom. Then, we list the books used by us and propose different didactic units to use with the apprentices. Finally, after the analysis, exposition, and debate made in the body of this article, we write the final considerations.

Literary texts and teaching of PLNM

The place and functions of the literary text in the different approaches and methods of teaching a foreign language (FL) have varied throughout history. As we use in our practice communicative methods and intercultural teaching, which are following a pluricentric proposal, we emphasize that in them the literary texts are used as a type of authentic document, among many others, to develop the “communicative skills, in the sense of interactional and intercultural” (TAKAHASHI, 2008, p. 24, our translation).

Also, in Takahashi (2008), in addition to proposals for activities that work on the reading comprehension of literary texts, the author carries out a survey, carried out through questionnaires with PLNM students, revealing that most learners expect studying literature in classes:

First, it is an expectation, almost a necessity. Students, especially those at intermediate and advanced levels, expect there to be a reference to, or mention of, literary texts by authors representing certain eras, languages or textual genres. Secondly, this expectation is added to by three representations that overlap as a whole in the process of assimilation of a foreign language: linguistic improvement, acquisition of literary knowledge and access to the country's culture (TAKAHASHI, 2008, p. 65-66, our translation).

It is worth noting that in addition to its authentic character, which was produced for purposes other than educational, the literary text also has a fundamental value for the teaching

of PLNМ by simultaneously having linguistic and sociocultural elements that can be explored differently in the teaching-learning process.

Furthermore, Bizarro (2008) highlights that the insertion of the literary text in the FL class has three objectives: the communicative (which corresponds to what we call linguistic), the cultural (or sociocultural), and the formative. The training is related to values, critical thinking, and the learner's relationship with the world, elements present in literary works that can arouse reflection and debate in the PLNМ class.

In this proposal by Bizarro (2008), influenced by Fonseca (2000), activities and specific skills that can be developed in the learner using literature in the classroom stand out. About linguistic objectives, issues of genres and textual typology are addressed; the different styles employed by authors and speakers; discourse analysis themes, such as the subject, ideology, among others; and specific traits of national/local norms being formed, as well as oral vernacular Portuguese, mainly local vocabulary, neologisms, and syntactic constructions. In the cultural objective, literature brings the opportunity for the reader, the Self, to see the world from the perspective of the Other, as the author offers historical and political themes, items of local material culture, different ways of telling stories, etc., creating space for debate on cultural differences and thus developing intercultural competence. While the training objective is related to the discussions that take place in the classroom, which seek to awaken autonomy, critical thinking, and respect for otherness.

Finally, we highlight two important points that Takahashi (2008; 2015) and other authors have already researched about, they are: what is the learner's view on the teaching of literature in the PLNМ class and how it should be worked in the classroom to go beyond simplistic and/or stereotyped tasks. Regarding the tasks, Takahashi (2015) elaborates a proposal in which learners can understand and construct different meanings for the literary text, as well as produce critical genres regarding their experiences as a reader. This author's proposal is in line with her previous research, in which she revealed that learners present three representations (linguistic improvement, acquisition of literary knowledge, and access to culture) about what they hope to learn from reading literary texts in the PLNМ class:

[...] Linguistic improvement refers more to situational decoding of language (comprehension) – involving syntax and lexical use – than specific grammatical analysis. The acquisition of literary knowledge concerns the representation of the historical panorama of the country's literature and access to culture is expected by the internalized knowledge that such texts always carry social, artistic, historical, or even moral impressions (TAKAHASHI, 2008, p. 65-66, our translation).

Regarding stereotypes, we based ourselves on the analysis of PLNM textbooks that Diniz, Scaramucci, and Stradiotti (2009) carried out, as the authors criticized the fact that the construction of the image of the Brazilian, in most of these works, does not present space for reflection, discussion, and production of different meanings by the learner, being presented only images recognized with marks of stereotypy, followed by grammatical or textual comprehension activities. Therefore, we consider Takahashi's proposal (2008; 2015) valid for working with the literary text, as it presents a space for the development of different skills in the learner and the (re)construction of meanings.

African, Macanese, and Timorese literatures in the teaching of PLNM

As we share the vision of Portuguese as an international and pluricentric language, using communicative methods and intercultural teaching in our practice, we have always had space in our plans to work with Brazilian literature and other Portuguese-speaking countries in our PLNM class.

In recent decades, professors and researchers have dedicated themselves to the study mainly of African literature in Portuguese, but it is known that both the literature of Portuguese-speaking African countries, Macao, and East Timor are sources of wealth and knowledge in various areas of the world. know.

In Lima (2016), the author lists a series of contributions that the literature of these countries can offer, namely: historical, political, and cultural traits; colonization and post-colonization status; poverty, wars, and conflicts; the question of black people, racism, ethnicities, clans, families, and others; the different collective feelings, and the imaginary of the colonized peoples, especially the themes of hatred, resentment, anger, etc.; the presence of the magic, the fantastic, witchcraft, shamanism, among others; different types of humor and irony; orality and the “telling” of stories; the intertwining of discursive genres in the same work; and linguistic particularities, mainly lexical and syntactic, of the Portuguese spoken in these countries.

In this way, given the proposal by Takahashi (2008; 2015) and Lima (2016), we use African, Macanese, and Timorese literature in our PLNM courses at the beginner and advanced levels, as well as the reading of stories, excerpts, or chapters of novels that serve for the development of the four skills, since, from the understanding and interpretation of texts, we carry out works with communicative tasks, different moments of debate, oral exposition, presentation of works, textual production of the students, and exhibition of films.

The choice of works used by us depends on the specific courses, the needs of the students, the institutions, and the workload, however, we provide a base list in Table 1. The main criteria are the ease of access to the texts (in physical book format) or e-books; marketed by major publishers; found in several countries, such as Brazil and Portugal), and the presence of most of the characteristics pointed out by Lima (2016), allowing each text to enable a series of activities and communicative tasks in classes of PLNM.

Table1 – List of literary works

LITERATURE OF LUSOPHONE AFRICA
Angola
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luandino Vieira <i>Luuanda</i> • José Eduardo Agualusa <i>Estação das chuvas</i> • Pepetela <i>Mayombe</i>
Mozambique
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mia Couto <i>Terra Sonâmbula</i> • Paulina Chiziane <i>Niketche. Uma História de Poligamia</i>
Cape Verde
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germano Almeida <i>O testamento do Sr. Napomuceno</i>
Macao
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henrique de Senna Fernandes <i>Amor e dedinhos de pé</i> <i>Nam Van. Contos de Macao</i> • Deolinda Conceição <i>Cheong-sam: a cabaia</i>
East Timor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luis Cardoso <i>Crônicas de uma travessia – a época de Ai-dik-funam</i> <i>Olhos de coruja, olhos de gato bravo</i>

Source: Prepared by the author

Regarding historical information and the situation of colonization and the post-colonization period, there are works whose narrative time takes place in the late colonial period, such as the tales in *Luuanda*, by Luandino Vieira, and *Amor e dedinhos de pé*, by Henrique de Senna Fernandes; or encompass the passage of time and the transition from colony to independent nation, through older protagonists with the narrative following the period from childhood to adulthood or the death of the main character, as in *O testamento do Sr. Napomuceno*, by Germano Almeida; or novels in the post-colonial/post-independence period, as in *Niketche. Uma História de Poligamia*, by Paulina Chiziane.

On political issues, wars, poverty, among others, there are the conflicts and wars of independence and post-independence, as well as their harmful consequences for the population, which are portrayed in *Estação das chuvas*, by José Eduardo Agualusa, *Mayombe*, by Pepetela, and *Crônicas de uma travessia – a época de Ai-dik-funam*, by Luís Cardoso.

Ethnic, racial, and prejudice issues in general, both in the relationship between the European and the African, as well as with the Orientals, are addressed in the works of Luandino Vieira, Mia Couto, Henrique de Senna Fernandes, Luís Cardoso, among others, while gender issues and the role of women in different societies are present in works such as *Niketche. Uma História de Poligamia*, by Paulina Chiziane, *Estação das chuvas*, by José Eduardo Agualusa, and *Amor e dedinhos de pé*, by Henrique de Senna Fernandes.

Regarding the intertwining of textual genres, the works listed here are novels or short stories, but in these narratives, it is possible to find autobiographical aspects, as in *Luuanda*, by Luandino Vieira, or in *Mayombe*, by Pepetela; characteristics of a biographical and historical study, such as *Estação das chuvas*, by José Eduardo Agualusa a book in which a biography of the Angolan poet Lídia do Carmo Ferreira is written and which portrays the history of the civil war in the country; even characteristics of travel literature, as in *Crônicas de uma travessia – a época de Ai-dik-funam*, by Luís Cardoso.

After these brief words about the significant contributions of African, Macanese, and Timorese literature to the teaching of PLNM, we list the elements that are part of a kind of script that we use to prepare our classes, being our didactic proposal for the pluricentric work with literature.

The first step is the selection of the works, as we have already mentioned those used by us, and the excerpts to be used in the teaching material, and the classes. It is worth noting that two or more works from different Lusophone countries must be chosen so that pluricentric teaching can be carried out in practice. With the selection made, the teacher must

also think about how the reading will be carried out, only in class or if they will request the extra-class reading of the works.

The second stage consists of inserting information about the authors, the countries of origin, and the historical contexts in which the narratives of the literary texts take place in the teaching material. This information can also be shared in other ways with learners (data show, lecture, social networks, chat apps, groups/class platforms or online classes, etc.).

In the third stage, with the reading started, the focus of the classes should be on the understanding and interpretation of literary texts, exploring aspects of the learners' oral production (conversation, dialogue, debate, opinion, exposition), asking them to expose their doubts, the who they found interesting and their opinions about the plot, the characters' attitude, among other things.

The fourth stage presents a work with lexical and grammatical competences. Regarding vocabulary, the teacher should pay attention to lexemes that learners had difficulties or did not know, as well as culturally-specific lexical items, such as names of dishes, local flora, and fauna, among others. As for grammatical competence, we recommend that the teacher take advantage of the categories and constructions that often appear in the chosen literary works. As most of them are narratives of the characters' lives and historical events in Portuguese-speaking countries, what we find regularly are the classes of pronoun, conjunction, verb, and questions of inflection, agreement, regency, and types of clauses can be addressed in Portuguese. Thus, the teacher chooses one of these topics, shows them how it appears in the texts, and uses various assignments to teach.

It is worth remembering that the steps are intertwined, one being related and continuing the other. In this way, the fourth stage is based on the knowledge that the teacher had of the difficulties and the speeches of the learners, as well as the choice of works, to prepare the material related to the teaching of lexical and grammatical competencies. In the same way, the fifth and sixth stages resume the activities of the previous stages, namely: with the fifth stage, the teacher returns to the debate of the learners' opinions about the works read, ask them to produce a written literary text in which they make some changes in the plot, giving a different ending to the book or a different destiny for one of the characters. It is worth mentioning that the size of the text that the teacher must request must be following the students' proficiency level: while for beginning students it is recommended that the teacher request only one paragraph, for advanced students it is possible to have a greater written production. In the sixth stage, the teacher asks each student to present his/her produced text to

the class, not doing a reading but narrating in his/her own words what changed in the narrative of some of the works read and also justifying why to make such changes.

To finish this didactic proposal, the teacher brings a lusophone film that was adapted from a literary text, we usually show one or two of the films, listed below: *Amor e dedinhos de pé* (Dir. Luís Filipe Rocha, 1992), and *A trança feiticeira* (Dir. Yuan-yuan Cai, 1996), based on the homonymous novels by Henrique de Senna Fernandes; *O testamento do Sr. Napomuceno* (Dir. Francisco Manso, 1997),), adaptation of the novel by Germano Almeida; *Terra sonâmbula* (Dir. Teresa Prata, 2007), and *O último voo do flamingo* (Dir. João Ribeiro, 2011), adaptations of Mia Couto's novels; and *O vendedor de passados* (Dir. Lula Buarque, 2015), adaptation of the novel by José Eduardo Agualusa. The selection of films was also not random, as we chose to bring films from both the works worked in the classroom and films of texts which we did not request to read. If possible, the teacher could show two movies to the students, one based on a text read in class, and the second, about a text they don't know yet. The main objective of this activity is to create a debate with the learners, talking about issues like the difference between the movie and the literary text, the changes made from the book to the screenplay, and similarities between both cultural objects.

Here is a list of the seven stages of pluricentric work with literary texts:

Selection and reading of literary works;

Information on the authors, countries, and historical context of each narrative;

Debate on different cultural aspects found in the works and the learners' opinions about the characters' behavior;

Work with lexical and grammatical skills;

Written textual production about what the student would change in the plot;

Oral presentation of students telling their version of the story (based on written production);

Watch a movie and have a debate about it, relating it to the literary texts read.

In this way, what we highlight in the seven steps above is that it is a script, which can be followed step by step, altered, reduced, or developed to carry out a didactic work both with a literary text only and with several, the which is his main idea. It is also worth remembering that this script can be replicated and adapted to address different linguistic and/or cultural issues in the teaching of PLNМ and relate them to the literary text, as well as work with other artistic languages, such as music, dance, theater and painting/drawing.

Final considerations

In the present work, we developed a didactic proposal to work with Lusophone literary texts, with emphasis on Africa, Macao, and East Timor, in the PLNM class, according to a pluricentric perspective. Thus, we start by defining Portuguese as a pluricentric language, and then we explain the importance of using literary texts in the teaching of PLNM.

We list the works used in our courses, as well as present a script of how the classes and teaching materials of PLNM are prepared for pluricentric teaching through literary texts. Our script deserves to be highlighted because it serves as a basis, which can be replicated or changed, both to work with other texts, as well as other artistic languages and even other cultural themes of the Portuguese language.

Furthermore, the pluricentric proposal arises when using more than one literary text from different origins, debating with the learners specific linguistic and cultural aspects that appeared in these texts from Lusophone countries and comparing them with the linguistic norms of Portuguese.

To evaluate the impact of the pluricentric proposal, we applied questionnaires and made brief interviews at the end of the course, having as a theme the situation of Portuguese in countries less known or unknown by the learners, as well as the linguistic and cultural “peculiarities”, when compared with Brazilian and European standards, which they may have learned during the course. Advanced level students highlighted the knowledge about the Portuguese language in Africa and Asia (Macao and East Timor) as positive for their training and also stated their curiosity to know more about it in future courses. However, it is worth noting that among beginner learners the results were divided, with a part that liked and intends to learn more but the other part didn’t want to continue their Portuguese studies, to have basic knowledge of the language, and they consider that cultural emphasis was not so interesting to what they were expecting.

Finally, we hope that this article may have contributed to the practice of PLNM teachers, providing subsidies for a pluricentric work in the classroom, since, despite the rich theoretical discussion of pluricentrism, Lusophony, and Portuguese as a pluricentric language and an international language, existing publications, and materials are reduced. With this, in addition to the contribution to teachers and the teaching practice of PLNM, we hope that our research can fill this gap, and encourage other professionals to research on this topic.

REFERENCES

- ALBUQUERQUE, D. Materiais didáticos pluricêntricos e avaliação em aulas de Português Língua Estrangeira (PLE). **Revista Linguagem**, v. 38, n. 2, 2021.
- BIZARRO, R. Linguística e Literatura: uma relação produtiva na aula de LE. *In*: OLIVEIRA, F.; DUARTE, I. M. (org.). **O Fascínio da Linguagem**. Porto: Universidade do Porto, 2008. p. 355-364.
- DINIZ, L. R. A.; SCARAMUCCI, M. V. R.; STRADIOTTI, L. M. Uma análise panorâmica de livros didáticos de português do Brasil para falantes de outras línguas. *In*: DIAS, R.; CRISTOVÃO, V. L. (org.). **O livro didático de língua estrangeira: múltiplas perspectivas**. Campinas, SP: Mercado de Letras. 2009. p. 265-300.
- FONSECA, F. I. Da inseparabilidade entre o ensino da língua e o ensino da literatura. *In*: REIS, C. *et al.* (org.). **Didáctica da língua e da literatura**. Coimbra: Almedina/ ILLP/ Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra, 2000. v. 1, p. 37-45.
- LIMA, S. I. **Desenvolvimento da competência intercultural e literatura lusófona em aulas de PLE**: relato de uma experiência em turmas de nível B. Relatório de estágio. 2016. Dissertação (Mestrado em Português Língua Segunda/ Estrangeira) – Faculdade de Letras, Universidade do Porto, Porto, 2016.
- TAKAHASHI, N. T. **Textos literários no ensino de português-língua estrangeira (PLE) no Brasil**. 2008. Dissertação (Mestrado em Letras) – Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2008.
- TAKAHASHI, N. T. **Leitura literária em português-língua estrangeira (PLE)**: representações, compreensão e produção textual. 2015. Tese (Doutorado em Letras) – Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, 2015.

How to reference this article

ALBUQUERQUE, D. A pluricentric view of Portuguese as a Non-Native Language teaching: the role of African, Macanese, and Timorese literatures. **Rev. EntreLínguas**, Araraquara, v. 7, n. esp. 6, e021145, Dec. 2021. e-ISSN: 2447-3529. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29051/el.v7iesp.6.15427>

Submitted: 30/08/2021

Revisions required: 11/10/2021

Approved: 22/11/2021

Published: 28/12/2021