

**TEACHING PORTUGUESE AS A NON-NATIVE LANGUAGE: AN EXPERIENCE
OF TEACHING-LEARNING AND HOST**

***O ENSINO DE PORTUGUÊS COMO LÍNGUA NÃO-MATERNA: UMA EXPERIÊNCIA
DE ENSINO-APRENDIZAGEM E ACOLHIMENTO***

***ENSEÑAR PORTUGUÉS COMO LENGUA NO MATERNA: UNA EXPERIENCIA DE
ENSEÑANZA-APRENDIZAJE Y ACOGIMIENTO***

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ABSTRACT: This paper aims to report an experience of teaching Portuguese as an additional language to host a family of Libyans and Algerians who currently live in the city of Marília, in the countryside of the State of São Paulo. The described process has been developed as part of scientific initiation research, with a grant from the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), by a student of Languages at a public university located in the countryside of the State of São Paulo. The theoretical contribution is based on an intercultural approach to language teaching. The final considerations point to the need to share these experiences to strengthen the area of Portuguese as a Non-Native Language.

KEYWORDS: Portuguese Non-Native Language. Host. Experience report.

RESUMO: *O presente artigo tem como objetivo relatar uma experiência de ensino de Português como Língua Adicional (PLA) para o acolhimento de uma família de líbios e de argelinos que, atualmente, vive na cidade de Marília, no interior do estado de São Paulo. O processo descrito vem sendo desenvolvido como parte de uma pesquisa de iniciação científica, com bolsa do Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq), de um estudante do curso de licenciatura em Letras de uma universidade pública situada no interior do estado de São Paulo. O aporte teórico fundamenta-se em uma abordagem intercultural para o ensino de línguas. As considerações finais apontam para a necessidade de se compartilhar essas experiências para o fortalecimento da área do Português como Língua Não-Materna (PLNM).*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Português Língua Não-Materna. Acolhimento. Relato de experiência.*

RESUMEN: *Este artículo tiene como objetivo relatar una experiencia de enseñanza de Portugués como Lengua Adicional (PLA) para acoger a una familia de libios y argelinos que actualmente vive en la ciudad de Marília, en el interior del estado de São Paulo. El proceso descrito ha sido desarrollado como parte de una investigación de iniciación científica, con*

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una beca del Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq), de un estudiante de la carrera de Letras de una universidad pública ubicada en el interior del estado de São Paulo. La contribución teórica se basa en un enfoque intercultural de la enseñanza de idiomas. Las consideraciones finales apuntan a la necesidad de compartir estas experiencias para fortalecer el área del Portugués como Lengua No-materna (PLNM).

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Portugués como Lengua No-materna. Acogimiento. Reporte de experiencia.*

Introduction

This article aims to report an experience of teaching Portuguese as an Additional Language (PLA)³ for a family of Libyans and Algerians who currently live in the city of Marília, in the interior of São Paulo state. The process described has been developed as part of scientific initiation research, with a grant from the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq),⁴ of a student of the Licentiate Degree in Letters at the Faculty of Sciences and Letters of Assis, Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP).

The growing reduction of borders – not from a geographical point of view, but from a social, economic, and political point of view – between different countries and the different cultures that emerge in them, puts their peoples in a situation that is often one of shock. And this shock, even before being cultural, is linguistic, behold, their different languages also come to relate more closely, with the need, in this sense, to get to know each other and, almost as a consequence, to learn the language of the other so that this and many other relationships (in the social, cultural, political, etc.) scope can come to fruition without conflicts and misunderstandings. It is at this moment that the need arises to (re)think methodologies and approaches for the development of teaching non-native languages, to enable not only communication but also to understand different world comprehensions, cultures, and contexts.

It is noted that there are several reasons and different reasons that place certain individuals in contexts of cultural and linguistic manifestation different from those of their

³We chose to refer to the teaching-learning process that has been developed with this family as PLA, because, according to the lesson of Schlatter and Garcez (2009, p. 127, our translation), it is the configuration of an addition/addition of another language for all of them, not forgetting, therefore, the presence of their mother tongue in this process, Arabic, and the second language in which most of them have some fluency, English. With this, the occurrence of a possible silencing of these subjects is avoided (ANUNCIACÃO, 2018, our translation), by seeking to contribute to their reception in Brazil.

⁴Public notice of the Scientific Initiation Scholarship Program (PIBIC) of UNESP.

core, being migration,⁵ which, many times, ends up being forced to seek refuge in other countries, due to political conflicts and others, such as armed conflicts and war in their country of origin. Thus, when developing the teaching of non-mother languages to these “new speakers” – with a focus here on Portuguese as Non-Mother Language (PLNM) –, it is important to take into account that learning the language of the other not only contributes to the effectiveness of dialogue, communication between these diverse individuals in their particularities but also in the case of migration – even more so in a refugee situation –, for the possibility of granting an adequate reception to those who come to learn a non-mother language, for the improvement of their quality of life, which starts again in another country.

Objective

It will seek to report the experiences that have been constituted as a result of a research of scientific initiation that focuses on the teaching and learning processes of PLNM, developed from a partnership between the Center for Languages and Teacher Development (CLDP)⁶ from the Faculty of Sciences and Letters of Assis/UNESP and the Teaching Directorate of the Marília Region, state of São Paulo.

In this research/extension project, remote PLA classes have been taught through the Google Meet platform to contribute to the reception of a family from Libya and Algeria, countries in North Africa, composed of the father, M. (aged 50), mother, B. (aged 43), and their five children, Y. (aged 16), S. (aged 14), S. (aged 9), S. (7 years old) and A. (5 years old),⁷ who migrated to Brazil approximately 04 (four) months ago and, since then, seek to integrate into this new reality of a distinct cultural and linguistic context from their own, especially in the city of Marília, where they have lived since they arrived in Brazil and where the children of the couple M. and B. were promptly enrolled as students in the state school system.

Theoretical foundation

As a theoretical contribution, the process has been based on an intercultural perspective for the teaching of foreign languages (KRAMSCH, 2011), seeking to understand

⁵According to a survey by the Migration Data Portal (2020), the number of migrants around the world, throughout 2020, reached an average of 280.6 million people.

⁶Extension action.

⁷To preserve the privacy of the members of this family, it was decided to refer to them using only the initials of their first names.

the implications that touch the construction of an in-between place of interlocution (MENDES, 2011). According to Kramersch (2011), while communicative competence is characterized by the negotiation of meanings in authentic contexts of the language in use, intercultural competence deals with the circulation of values and identities through cultures often hidden behind an illusion of effective communication.

It is based, therefore, on an intercultural vision of the process of teaching and learning languages, in which, in the teaching-learning events, the subjects involved build different ways of relating to the language they teach and learn, more or less foreign, more or less familiar or close (MENDES, 2011, p. 139, our translation).

In addition, the process has also been guided by the search for the development of a “bidirectional relationship” (GROSSO, 2021, p. 71, our translation) with M. and her family, through which “[...] teacher and learner cooperate and learn together, they go beyond everyday issues, they are integrated for well-being, for trust” (GROSSO, 2021, p. 71, our translation), seeking, with this, to enable, through the teaching-learning of PLA, the reception that has been necessary for M. and her family since they migrated from Libya to Brazil.

A teaching-learning experience as a form of welcoming

The first contact

The first contact with M. and her family took place on May 6, 2021, remotely, through the *Google Meet* platform, with the hope that not only the presentation between the students and teacher would take place, from then on but also that it was possible to observe and identify what their real conditions would be after migrating to Brazil, as well as the needs that have arisen in their new daily life, in the interactions in which they began to be inserted and were inserted,⁸ so that, in this way, the classes could be planned and taught to, as was possible and their real conditions allowed, contribute so that M. and her family had, in parallel with the learning of Portuguese as their non-mother language, – as an additional language –, the minimally sufficient reception in their new home, on Brazilian soil.

At that moment, M. was with his wife B. and their oldest children, Y. and S., at the school where they are enrolled in the city of Marília. Right from the start, it was observed that they still had difficulties in speaking longer sentences in Portuguese and in the pronunciation

⁸At that moment, we sought to carry out the analysis procedure, as highlighted by Leffa (2016, p. 105-106), aiming at the development of the following steps, which would start from the planning of classes and the production of materials in accordance with the needs presented by M. and his family members.

of certain phonemes, and then it was possible to verify that this was because they confused such phonemes with what would be, in thesis, “equivalents” in the English language (either vowels or some consonants), in which they are more fluent, since, as they later informed, it is the second official language adopted in Libya, after Arabic.

In the case of the minor children of M. and B., the girls S. and S. and the boy A., the contact took place only after the first class taught, which will be reported later.

The different demands

Given the age difference between the members of M.'s family, it was necessary to divide them into two groups of students, due to the different demands that this age difference would impose during classes, whose focus and objectives, in addition to the approaches and teaching methods, it would not be possible for them to be the same. In other words, it would not be feasible to group them all in a single class, as this would harm not only the progress of the classes but also their learning of Portuguese, which would not be the desired result either by them or by us.

Thus, the groups were divided between the oldest, including M. himself (50 years old), his wife B. (43 years old), his eldest son, Y. (16 years old), and the youngest daughter. old woman, S. (14 years old); and the youngest, being the daughters S. (09 years old) and S. (07 years old) and the youngest son A. (05 years old).

This division was important, as it was observed that the youngest needed classes whose objective was to focus on the development of their literacy and literacy in Portuguese, and in the case of S. (aged 07) and the youngest son A. (05 years old), were still in the process of learning to read and write in Arabic, in Libya, before migrating to Brazil with their parents and siblings, and, in the case of S. (09 years old), even though he was already at a higher level. advanced literacy in his mother tongue, Arabic, it was found that it would be necessary to develop his understanding of basic elements of Portuguese, from the perspective of literacy, which could be carried out in classes together with his two younger brothers.

In the case of the others, parents M. and B. and the oldest children Y and S., their demand was observed to be the development of their oral and written production in Portuguese, aligned, of course, with the development of their reading and listening to that non-mother tongue. Since they have some fluency in English, it is clear that their learning of the PLA has taken place in a less complex and arduous way, as it could be, for example, in the

case of being only Arabic speakers – a language much more “distant” from Portuguese. than English, in terms of speaking and writing.

The teaching material

Although the migration situation of M. and her family is not characterized as a refuge,⁹ it was observed that didactic materials developed for such a situation could also help in the planning of classes to be taught to them, considering that one of the desired objectives would be to enable their reception in Brazil, through learning the PLA.

Among the materials that have served as support for the classes, we highlight:

- Pode Entrar: Brazilian Portuguese for Refugees and Refugees, provided by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR);
- Open Doors: Portuguese for immigrants: basic and intermediate notebook, made available by the Pedagogical Coordination of the Municipal Department of Education of the city of São Paulo/SP;
- Portuguese for speakers of other languages: the independent user in the host country, provided by the Directorate-General for Education of Portugal;
- Intercultural Brazil: Brazilian language and culture for foreigners: basic cycle – levels 1 and 2, organized by Edleise Mendes.
- Intercultural Brazil: Brazilian language and culture for foreigners: exercise book: basic cycle – levels 1 and 2, organized by Edleise Mendes.

At this point, it is important to clarify that, by having such didactic materials as support for the classes that have been taught to M. and her family, it is not intended to make us just “simple administrators of the chosen book” (BRASIL, 2006, p. 40, our translation). Faced with the migration situation of these students, the contents covered in the highlighted teaching materials have helped in the planning of classes, which, far from being guided by what the authors of these materials “considered as most appropriate” (BRASIL, 2006, p. 40, our translation), have focused on the real conditions and needs presented by M. and her family since her arrival in Brazil.

Classes as a form of reception

Up to the time of writing this report, 13 classes were given to the two different groups into which M. and her family members were divided. Classes have been held weekly, on

⁹For example, M. is still working at his old job in Libya. Which, according to him, he has been doing remotely.

Fridays, with classes for the younger children of M. and B., S., S. and A. taking place first; and, in sequence, the classes given to M. and B. and their two eldest children, Y. and S.

In the classes given to S., S., and A., they have to develop their literacy in Portuguese, and this process was still in progress even in their mother tongue, Arabic, before migrating to Brazil. We have sought to plan classes and activities that could, in addition to promoting their learning of the PLA, contribute, mainly, to their insertion in the teaching context experienced in Brazilian schools, which they have encountered since they arrived to Brazil. All of them were enrolled in Brazilian basic education, specifically in the city of Marília, shortly after they had migrated from Libya with their parents and older brothers.

It is important to highlight that M. and her family migrated to Brazil during the COVID-19 pandemic, which, among many other sectors of society, has impacted, in ways that are not yet possible to measure, the continuity and regularity of the education on Brazilian soil and in many other countries. Therefore, the children of M. and B. started their journey in Brazilian basic education taking remote classes, which made it impossible, for example, to immerse them in Portuguese, which would be possible in case of having face-to-face classes, through direct contact with the language in which they were taught. Their use, either because of their Brazilian teachers and their schoolmates, also Brazilians, with whom they would have daily contact.

The same is observed about the older children of M. and B., Y. and S. It is noted that Y., being more fluent in English than her sister S., has been facing fewer difficulties in learning during PLA classes. S., however, needs translation at times to understand the contents taught, most of the time into Arabic, which is done by the parents or by brother Y.

At this point, it is also important to note that, as for the younger children S., S., and A., during classes, they have been accompanied either by their parents M. and B. or by their older brothers, Y. and S., in moments of miscomprehension of the contents that have been presented during the classes, those who accompany them seek to translate the explanation into Arabic, so that they can understand the meaning of certain words, expressions, and other elements of the Portuguese language.

In turn, in the classes given to M. and B. and to their two oldest children, Y. and S., the planning of contents has been sought to enable the learning of communicative aspects of Portuguese, to provide their autonomy in the use of this non-mother language in the different situations that have arisen since their arrival in Brazil, as well as cultural aspects, considering that they migrated from Libya, a country with significant differences in terms of socialization and cultural manifestations to Brazil. All of them are Muslims, which certainly places them in

a much more diverse context and, in certain points, the opposite of what they previously found in Libya.

Despite this, during the classes all of them have been very open to learning the Portuguese language – since, according to what they said, they intend to establish residence in Brazil for a long period –, always being participative in the activities proposed during the classes and in those proposals of complementary way. During the classes, they raise many questions about the contents that are presented to them and, given the relationship that we have already established during this time, they talk about subjects not only related to the contents covered in the classes but also about those that arise from it.

Therefore, although there was a need to divide M. and her family members into two groups of students, proposing content that aims to meet the demands that the age difference between them has made emerge at that moment, in general, it has been sought to provide, in addition to their PLA learning, the reception of all of them to this new daily life they have experienced after migrating to Brazil.

As it has been possible to verify so far, from what M. and her family members have been expressing, they understand that the classes taught to contribute to their better integration in this new context, in this new country and address, being, for example, requested by M. and B. that the classes given to their youngest children S., S., and A. continued even after the return of face-to-face classes at the school where they are enrolled, in the city of Marília, which occurred at the beginning of August 2021. Thus, seeking to provide them with a welcoming environment, PLA classes were held for them on Fridays, but during the morning, as their classes at school take place in the afternoon.

Final considerations

The experience shared in this report makes it possible to highlight, albeit briefly, the dimension of how much there is to be done in this field of PLNM, especially in its specificity of PLA and PLAc. Recent world events – such as the migratory phenomena of refugees, emerging wars, the rise of authoritarian regimes, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the return of extremist movements that have increasingly disregarded human rights – are factors that will make this challenge even greater for the coming years.

In this sense, sharing these experiences can contribute to building a network of research and projects that meet this social demand.

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