PORTUGUESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (PFL) TEACHER'S EDUCATION IN A LANGUAGE CENTRE IN A UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

FORMAÇÃO DE PROFESSORES DE PORTUGUÊS COMO LÍNGUA ESTRANGEIRA (PLE) EM UM CENTRO DE LÍNGUAS EM CONTEXTO UNIVERSITÁRIO

FORMACIÓN DEL PROFESORADO DE PORTUGUÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA (PLE) EN UN CENTRO DE IDIOMAS EN UN CONTEXTO UNIVERSITARIO

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ABSTRACT: In this paper, I report on experiences of Portuguese as a foreign language (PFL) teacher education, as pre-service teacher development, in a language center and teacher development extension project at IBILCE-UNESP. Portuguese teacher development in the Letters degree at that university has currently been restricted to only one compulsory course subject about PFL in the curriculum, and to students' participation in extension projects. On the other hand, Letters undergraduates who act as teachers in the CLDP-IBILCE have the opportunity to reflect on the teaching and learning of PFL, to plan courses and course materials, and to teach PFL lessons in co-teaching partnerships with their supervisor. The complementary experience of teacher development in the CLDP has proved to be very satisfactory, besides the fact that PFL courses can be offered to students from both the university and the outside communities.

KEYWORDS: Language center. Teacher education. BA in Letters. Portuguese as a foreign language.

RESUMO: Apresento, neste relato de experiências, a formação de professores de português como língua estrangeira (PLE), enquanto formação pré-serviço, em um Centro de Línguas e Desenvolvimento de Professores (CLDP) do IBILCE-UNESP. A formação específica de professores de PLE no curso de Licenciatura em Letras naquela universidade restringe-se, até o momento, a uma disciplina obrigatória sobre PLE e ao engajamento dos alunos em projetos de extensão. Por outro lado, licenciandos em Letras que atuam como tutores no CLDP da mesma universidade têm a oportunidade de refletir sobre o ensino e a aprendizagem de PLE, de elaborar cursos e materiais didáticos, e de ministrar cursos de PLE em co-docência com seu professor-orientador. Essa formação complementar de professores de PLE no âmbito do CLDP tem se mostrado bastante satisfatória, além do fato de podermos, dessa maneira, oferecer cursos de PLE para alunos estrangeiros da comunidade acadêmica e da comunidade externa à universidade.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Centro de línguas. Formação de professores. Licenciatura em Letras. Português como língua estrangeira.

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RESUMEN: En este relato de experiencia, presento la formación de profesores de portugués como lengua extranjera (PLE) en un Centro de Idiomas y Desarrollo Docente (CLDP) de IBILCE-UNESP. La formación específica de los profesores de PLE en la carrera de Licenciatura en Letras de esa universidad, hasta el momento, se restringe a una disciplina obligatoria, en PLE, y a la participación de los estudiantes en proyectos de extensión. Los graduados en Letras que actúan como tutores en el CLDP de la misma universidad tienen la oportunidad de reflexionar sobre la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de PLE, de elaborar cursos y materiales didácticos, y de impartir cursos de PLE con sus maestro-consejero. Esta formación complementaria de profesores PLE dentro del CLDP ha demostrado ser <u>muy</u> satisfactoria, además de que podemos, de esta forma, ofrecer cursos PLE a estudiantes extranjeros de la comunidad académica y de la comunidad externa a la universidad

PALABRAS CLAVE: Centro de idiomas. Formación de professores. Grado en Letras. Portugués como lengua extranjera.

Introduction

The training of teachers of Portuguese as a foreign language (PLE) is an important area of knowledge and pedagogical action in terms of preparing teachers capable of working in contexts of teaching Portuguese as a non-mother tongue, in Brazil and in other countries. countries. And, despite being characterized as a relatively new area of research in Brazil, "since it is at the end of the 1980s that the first signs of the emergence of the institution and institutionalization of the PLE as a field of knowledge appear" (ALMEIDA FILHO, 2012; ROCHA, 2021, p. 746, our translation) in the Brazilian context, several teaching and research in PLE have already materialized in the last three decades.

It is known, historically, that many PLE teachers entered teaching in this area from other areas of language teaching, including Portuguese as their mother tongue and other foreign languages in which teachers were trained. These professionals have been working satisfactorily in the teaching of PLE, both in the Brazilian context and abroad. However, given the growth in demand for teaching PLE²In recent years and the specificities of teaching Portuguese to speakers of other languages, it has become increasingly necessary to invest in specific training for these teachers, similarly, for example, to what already happens in the training of foreign language teachers in courses degree in Letters in Brazil.

In this article, I present experiences on the training of PLE teachers, as pre-service training, in a Center for Languages and Teacher Development (CLDP) on one of the UNESP

²In this article, I use the term PLE (Portuguese as a foreign language) to refer to all the possibilities of teaching and learning the Portuguese language to speakers of other languages, contemplating, for example, Portuguese as a host language (PLAc), as a additional language (PLA) and as a heritage language (PLH).

campuses (Universidade Estadual Paulista "Júlio de Mesquita Filho"). a public university in the state of São Paulo, Brazil. This is the campus of the city of São José do Rio Preto, where the Institute of Biosciences, Letters, and Exact Sciences (IBILCE) is located, one of the three campuses of the aforementioned university in which initial training courses (pre-school) are offered. service) of language teachers, namely, Licentiate in Letters. In these courses, all with a double degree, students are trained as Portuguese language teachers, to teach Portuguese mainly in regular school contexts in Brazil, as well as teachers of a foreign language. In the specific case of the Licentiate in Letters course at IBILCE, the languages regularly offered are Spanish, French, English, and Italian. In previous years, between 2016 and 2018, courses in German, Russian, and Modern Greek were also offered, taught by volunteer teachers.

The training of PLE teachers in the curriculum of the Licentiate in Letters course at the university is, so far, restricted to a mandatory 60-hour subject, currently taught by a professor from the Department of Education at IBILCE, and to student engagement, when possible, in extension projects.

The CLDPs, an extension project implemented and supported by the Pro-Rectory of Extension at UNESP (PROEX), took place on the campuses of the cities of Araraquara, Assis, and São José do Rio Preto since 2013.³

The language classes offered by the CLDPs are taught by teachers called "tutors", who are graduates in Letters interested in additional training and in the experience of teaching a foreign language in which they are quite proficient, usually the foreign language they study in their course of study. graduation. The choice of tutors is carried out annually, through registration and a selection process. Each tutor is guided by a professor from the Department of Modern Literature on his/her campus, who is an expert in the respective foreign language. In the case of tutoring PLE tutors, although I am a professor in the area of English, I assumed this role since the implementation of the CLDP at IBILCE, since (yet) there are no professors hired at UNESP for the PLE area. Tutors receive a scholarship granted by PROEX or from student enrollment funds, both from UNESP (internal community) and from the external community, in CLDP courses. And, more recently, such teaching experience includes teaching PLE courses in the online modality.⁴

³More information about the IBILCE-UNESP CLDP Available at: https://www.ibilce.unesp.br/#!/centro-de-linguas-1/

⁴For more information and reflections on emergency education during the covid-19 pandemic, available at: Cordeiro (2020) and Hodges *et al.* (2020).

Following this article, the next section presents information on the current scenario of PLE teacher training in Brazil; in the subsequent section, an account of the complementary training of PLE teachers at CLDP-IBILCE; then, the final considerations and the bibliographic references used here.

The training of PLE teachers in Brazil

The specific training of PLE teachers in Brazil occurs in the following ways: undergraduate courses; curricular subjects, some of an optional nature; graduate courses; specialization courses (lato sensu postgraduate course); and extension projects. I discuss, below, these possibilities for teacher training in PLE, based on information provided by Scaramucci and Bizon (2020, ALMEIDA; ROCHA, 2021) and by Furtoso (2015), and also obtained through contacts with colleagues who work in the field. PLE area.

Undergraduate courses in PLE are offered at the following universities: University of Brasília (UnB-DF), Federal University of Bahia (UFBA-BA), Federal University of Latin American Integration (UNILA-PR), and State University of Campinas (UNICAMP-SP). More information about these degrees is available on the internet, on the pages of the respective universities, in Almeida and Rocha (2021), and Scaramucci and Bizon (2020). About the Licentiate in the Portuguese Language, from the Instituto Federal de Goiás (IFG), it is mentioned, in a link to publicize the course on the internet (http://cursos.ifg.edu.br/info/lic/lic-letras/CP-GOIANIA), that "The Letters course at the IFG has as a differential the training of teachers of Portuguese as a foreign language", although, according to information received from an IFG teacher, this course does not offer a degree in PLE.

Curricular subjects on PLE, some of which are optional, are offered by the following universities: UnB-DF, UNICAMP-SP, Federal University of Juiz de Fora (UFJF-MG), Federal University of Latin American Integration (UNILA-PR), State University of Londrina (UEL-PR), Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS-RS), State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ-RJ) and São Paulo State University "Júlio de Mesquita Filho" (UNESP-SP). In the specific case of IBILCE-UNESP, as mentioned above, it is the subject "Portuguese as a foreign language: teaching and teacher training", with 60 hours, mandatory for students of the Licentiate in Letters courses on that campus.

Disciplines on PLE and strictu sensu graduate level projects (Master's and Doctorate) are present, for example, at UNICAMP, UNESP, Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF-RJ) and Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR-PR).

In terms of specialization courses, lato sensu postgraduate courses are offered, for example, at IBILCE-UNESP, at the State University of Londrina (UEL and at the Fluminense Federal University (UFF).

Regarding extension projects, considered the "most robust part of the tripod" (teaching/extension/research) in PLE in Brazil, according to Furtoso (2015), there are projects, for example, at the Federal University of Amazonas (UFAM-AM), at UNESP, at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG-MG), at the Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar-SP), at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (PUC-RJ), at UFPR, at UFRGS and at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ-RJ).⁵

Although some degree courses in PLE have been created in Brazil in recent years, in addition to the existence of the other training modalities mentioned above, teacher training in PLE in the Brazilian context is still limited, considering, for example, the demands of teaching and learning PLE in Brazil and in other countries, and the fact that Brazil is the largest country where Portuguese is spoken as a mother tongue.

The training of PLE teachers at CLDP-IBILCE

UNESP's CLDPS have two main objectives: offering optional foreign language courses to members of the university's internal and external communities, and the complementary training of foreign language teachers.

As mentioned above, the tutors of the languages offered by the CLDPs are students in training for teaching, that is, they take courses in languages and foreign literature, didactics, Applied Linguistics and teaching practice, which are important for their initial teacher training; in addition to the mandatory subjects of teaching internships, in the last years of the Licentiate in Letters courses. However, according to reports from students in the last years of the aforementioned course, their training does not always cover, in a comprehensive and sufficiently deep way, issues of language teaching and learning that are important for their training for research in the areas of Linguistic Studies and Literature. Therefore, the opportunity to act as tutors in the CLDPs provides them with an opportunity for complementary training, including theoretical and practical issues of language teaching not covered in the subjects of their degree.

⁵More information on the training of PLE teachers in Brazil Available at: Almeida and Rocha (2021), and Scaramucci and Bizon (2020).

In the last three years, there has been a significant increase in interest and in the number of tutors working in the CLDP-IBILCE, mainly due to the increase in demand for language courses and the possibility of receiving scholarships, made possible thanks to the support of UNESP and funds collected from enrollment in these courses.

The PLE courses currently offered by CLDP-IBILCE are as follows:

Basic level (A1.1, A1.2, A2.1, A2.2)⁶

Intermediate level (B1)

Courses with a specific name: "Aspects of Brazilian Culture" (intermediate level); "Oral Interactions: Academic Interactions" (basic level); and "Oral Interactions in Brazilian Portuguese" (intermediate level).

In the initial years of operation of the CLDPs, between 2016 and 2017, online PLE courses were planned and implemented on the Moodle Platform, at levels A1, A2, and B1, to serve foreigners in the process of coming to Brazil, to study or carry out research projects. on UNESP campuses. At the same time, an online placement test was developed for PLE, also on the Moodle Platform.

The training of PLE teachers at CLDP-IBILCE, implemented in the actions of the teacher-advisor, through regular pedagogical meetings and monitoring of the tutors' teaching work, is characterized by six main aspects, namely: suggestions and guidelines for course planning and lesson preparation by tutors; course planning, content selection, and development of teaching materials by tutors; teaching in PLE courses; reflection of tutors, with the advisor, on the classes taught; submission and presentation of communications and panels at academic events; and submission of articles for publication, usually in co-authorship with the supervisor.

After the selection of students who will act as tutors of PLE, the general characteristics of the courses to be offered are discussed in the first orientation meetings, such as day(s) of the week and time, workload, (expected) profile of the students, course level (as per CEFR levels), and teaching methodology. Tutors are instructed to search for content in teaching materials available in a set of PLE textbooks owned by CLDP, in other textbooks they may find, in materials previously used in CLDP courses and on the internet. Each class is designed along the lines of a lesson plan structure, which includes information about the objective(s) of the class, the teaching methodology, materials, and didactic activities, the teacher's role, the students' role, and the expected results.

⁶Levels based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for language proficiency.

After preparing the plans for the first lessons of each course and the materials to be used - for example, organized in a PowerPoint presentation and handouts in Word format, the plans and teaching materials are evaluated by the advisor and discussed with the tutors, and necessary adaptations and/or modifications are made. The advisor participates fully in the first classes and, as far as possible, in the other classes of each course.

As pointed out by Saujat (2004, p. 13-14, author's emphasis, our translation),

The conception of the *reflective practitioner* (SCHÖN, 1983) is based on an empirical approach that characterizes professional thinking as a reflection on the course of action, reflection that focuses on this action and on the conduct in a given context. This knowledge is not formulated, but is incorporated and is the source of the efficiency of the professional activity, which can be represented as a dialogue between professionals and the problems of the situations they face.

Weekly, the advisor and the tutors meet to discuss the results of the classes taught during the week, which characterizes a "reflection on the course of action". In these discussions, tutors are led to reflect on the classes taught: if the activities were successful, if the students participated, if the objective(s) of the class were achieved and if there were difficulties, for tutors, in dealing with certain situations that occurred in class. After listening to the tutors, the advisor makes comments on these aspects, on the teacher's speech, whether this speech occurred in Portuguese or in one of the students' languages,⁷and offers suggestions for improving the tutors' teaching actions. In this way, reflection is carried out in the course of action, as postulated by Schön (1983), in the context of the proposal of the CLDP courses and the teaching actions of the tutors, in a dialogue between facts, theories, the advisor's experiences and the experiences of the tutors. Student-tutors. The experience of reflecting on action a posteriori, that is, after the lessons have been held, provides new knowledge for teachers in training.

Saujat (2004, p. 14-15, our translation), citing Altet, presents, within the scope of the so-called ecological approach to interactive processes, in which, in an ecological description of the class, "the complexity of the teacher's task is related to the events that take place there. occur", the contextualized interactive processes paradigm, defining teaching as "an interactive, interpersonal, intentional process, finalized by student learning" (ALTET 1991 p. 16, our translation).

According to Altet (1994 apud SAUJAT, 2004, p. 16, our translation),

⁷PLE tutors usually speak, in addition to Portuguese, Spanish, French, or English.

Esse processo requer uma cultura profissional que se baseia em seis critérios (ALTET, 1994): (a) uma base de conhecimentos ligados ao agir profissional; (b) uma prática adaptada em situação complexa; (c) uma capacidade de dar conta de suas próprias competências e atos; (d) uma autonomia e uma responsabilidade pessoal no exercício de suas competências; (e) uma adesão a normas coletivas constitutivas da identidade profissional; (f) um pertencimento a um grupo que desenvolve estratégias de promoção e valorização.

PLE tutors who work at CLDP-IBILCE add knowledge acquired in undergraduate courses, through readings indicated by the advisor and in other student experiences, to their teaching practice in the specific situations of the courses they teach, reflecting on and evaluating their teaching performance and student learning, inserted in a broader scenario of language teaching and learning, namely, CLDP, UNESP and the Brazilian context.

Specific actions to enrich the teaching training of CLDP tutors take place as the need to strengthen this training is verified, as happened at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic when the decision was made that all language courses of the CLDPs would be offered only in online mode. So, to prepare tutors for remote teaching, before starting these online classes, tutors were offered a 30-hour course, also in online mode, on principles, methodology and electronic resources available for language teaching. The course was taught by three doctoral students, from the UNESP campuses of Araraquara and Assis, supervised by their respective supervisors. As part of this training action, a lecture by Consolo (2020) was also offered, on assessment in language teaching and learning.

As pointed out earlier, PLE tutors are encouraged to present papers at academic events and to produce articles for publication, usually in co-authorship between tutors and/or with the tutor-professor.

Among the presentations of works, I cite the following:

- ✓ CONSOLO, DA; SONSINO SOARES, G. Oral interactions in an experience of teaching Portuguese as an additional language in a multilingual context. Poster. III SINEPLA, 2021.
- ✓ CONSOLO, DA An online placement test of Portuguese as a foreign language: Development and implementation. Poster. LTRC, 2021.
- ✓ CONSOLO, DA Experiences of assessing and testing Portuguese as a foreign language (PFL): students online and in the classroom. Communication. IX EMEP, 2020.
- ✓ CONSOLO, DA Assessment and Testing in PLE in Online and Face-to-Face Modalities. Communication. II CIPLiNM, 2020.
- ✓ CONSOLO, DA Training of PLE Teachers in a Language Center in a University Context. Conversation Wheel. II CIPLiNM, 2020.
- ✓ CONSOLO, DA; SANTOS, VM Cultural Aspects, Teaching and Training of PLE Teachers. Communication. I CIPLiNM, 2019.

- ✓ CONSOLO, DA; SANTOS, VM Cultural aspects of Brazil: a didactic experience in the formation of PLE teachers. Communication. SIMELP, 2019.
- ✓ CONSOLO, DA Preparation and Initial Training of Teachers in an Online PLE Course. Communication: SELE – IBILCE/UNESP, 2017.

Regarding publications, I highlight the following works:

- ✓ CONSOLO, DA; SONSINO SOARES, G.Oral interactions in an experience of teaching Portuguese as an additional language in a multilingual context. Article submitted to the journal BELT, special volume, proceedings of the III SINEPLA 2021 (in press).
- ✓ CONSOLO, DA; SONSINO SOARES, G.; TOJEIRA-RAMOS, JP 2021. PORTUGUESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (PLE): online teaching and teacher training in a pandemic context. Open Minds International Journal, v. 2, no. 1, 2021, p. 22-35.
- ✓ CONSOLO, DA; SANTOS, VM Brazilian culture(s) in the classroom: teaching Portuguese as a foreign language in a multilingual classroom. Portuguese Language Journal, v. 13, 2019, p. 82-104.
- ✓ CONSOLO, DA Preparation and Initial Training of Teachers in an Online PLE Course. In: SIPLE Symposium 2017, 2018, Lisbon-Portugal. Anais do SIPLE SYMPOSIUM 2017. Londrina-PR: University of Londrina (UEL), v. 1, 2018, p. 146-156.
- ✓ CONSOLO, DA; SILVA, VP Development and Implementation of an Online Proficiency Test of Portuguese as a Foreign Language. MOSAIC. UNESP: São José do Rio Preto, v. 15, 2016, p. 691-716.

The complementary training of PLE teachers within the scope of CLDP-IBILCE includes, therefore, discussions and reflections for the preparation of courses; teaching and a posteriori reflection; search for alternatives and solutions for eventual difficulties and limitations encountered by tutors in teaching; presentations of works in academic events and publications.

Final considerations

The training of PLE teachers within the scope of the CLDP-IBILCE, along the lines described above, has proved to be quite satisfactory. Tutors have significant experiences of teaching Portuguese to speakers of other languages, from the preparation of their classes and the preparation and/or selection of teaching materials, and the preparation and use of instruments and/or assessment procedures, to reflections on these experiences, with the professors-advisors, and resulting referrals for their future PLE classes.

In addition to this complementary training – and specific to PLE; I highlight the fact that we can, in this way, offer PLE courses to foreign students from the academic community and the community outside the university. And, with the reality of courses offered online, in 2020 and 2021, we have expanded the scope of teacher training for tutors and have served students from different parts of the world.

The success of the complementary training of PLE teachers in the CLDPs of UNESP should not, however, prevent the existence of plans and the implementation of a more robust training in PLE at the aforementioned university, for example, with the creation of the PLE area in the Departments of Letters. Modern, the hiring of professors-researchers in these areas and the creation of specific degrees for the training of Portuguese professors for speakers of other languages.

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