

**PORTUNHOL AND THE CELPE-BRAS'S WRITTEN EXAM**

***PORTUNHOL E A AVALIAÇÃO ESCRITA DO CELPE-BRAS***

***PORTUÑOL Y LA EVALUACIÓN ESCRITA DEL CELPE-BRAS***

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**ABSTRACT:** The Portunhol can be approached from different perspectives. We aim to discuss its potentialities and its limitations in the large-scale assessment context, such as Celpe-Bras exam. First, we discuss how Portunhol can be related to different language teaching theoretical-methodological perspectives and also to Celpe-Bras exam's theoretical constructs. The data that we analyze was collected in 2020 during an online preparatory course. For the analyses, we selected a set of six texts, which was related to high levels of proficiency. We investigated the scores attributed and the justifications given by the teachers-evaluators. According to the classification of hybrid structures found on our set of texts, we found out that the frequency of Portunhol could have influenced the scores variations. Besides, in the analyzed texts morph-syntactic and orthographic-phonological hybrid structures were more frequent than lexical-semantic structures.

**KEYWORDS:** Portunhol. Language teaching. Language assessment. Celpe-Bras.

**RESUMO:** *O Portunhol pode ser abordado sob diversas perspectivas. É no contexto de ensino e avaliação de larga escala que queremos discutir suas potencialidades e limitações. Problematizamos as discussões sobre o Portunhol a partir de diversas perspectivas teórico-metodológicas para ensino de línguas próximas e dos construtos teóricos do exame Celpe-Bras. Apresentamos uma análise de dados que foram coletados em 2020 durante um curso online preparatório para o Celpe-Bras. Investigamos as notas atribuídas às tarefas escritas e as justificativas dadas pelos professores-avaliadores para selecionar um conjunto de seis textos, sendo três representativos da nota 4 e, três, da nota 5. A partir da classificação de estruturas híbridas dos textos selecionados constatamos que a frequência em que é usado o Portunhol pode ter influenciado a variação de notas. Estruturas de natureza morfossintática e ortográfico-fonológica foram mais frequentes nos textos analisados do que as de natureza léxico-semântica.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Portunhol. Ensino de línguas. Avaliação de línguas. Celpe-Bras.*

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**RESUMEN:** *El portuñol puede ser abordado desde diferentes perspectivas. Es en el contexto de enseñanza y evaluación de larga escala que discutiremos sus potencialidades y limitaciones. Problematicamos las discusiones sobre Portuñol, desde diferentes perspectivas teórico-metodológicas para la enseñanza de lenguas próximas y los constructos teóricos del examen Celpe-Bras. Presentamos un análisis de datos que fueron colectados en 2020 durante un curso en línea de preparación para el Celpe-Bras. Investigamos las calificaciones atribuidas a las tareas escritas y las justificaciones dadas por los docentes-evaluadores para seleccionar un conjunto de seis textos, tres representando nota 4 y tres representando nota 5. A partir de la clasificación de estructuras híbridas de los textos descubrimos que la frecuencia en la que se usa el portuñol puede haber influido en la variación de notas. Las estructuras morfosintácticas y ortográfico-fonológicas fueron más frecuentes en los textos analizados que las de naturaleza léxico-semántica.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Portuñol. Enseñanza de idiomas. Evaluación de idiomas. Celpe-Bras*

## Introduction

Portunhol can be defined as a hybrid language used in different contexts, such as border or frontier Portunhol, literary Portunhol, Portunhol in the classroom, among others. Faulstich (1997), when studying Portunhol in the border territory of Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina with Brazil, states that the concept of language has a sociopolitical and linguistic role and is related to the ideas of state and nation. In this ideological struggle, which intends to delimit and identify the geographical spaces, some positions see Portuguese border Portunhol sometimes as a confusing language and an affront to official languages, sometimes as a language that praises the border identity. In the context of teaching, tension also exists, because Portunhol can be seen as a threat to the discursive space of the standardized variants of Spanish or Portuguese.

Through Portunhol and the representation of writing close to speech, writers accentuate the complex and ambiguous construction of identity in border spaces, where two languages meet and disagree with their social representations. The use of Portunhol in literary productions claims the existence of those minorities who see it as a family and heritage language.

If, on the one hand, Portunhol is celebrated in literary productions and in everyday conversations on the border, in the school system, Portunhol affronts the maintenance of the myth of monolingualism. Frontier poet Fabián Severo says that the Uruguayan school system rejects Portunhol, as it is classified as “poor speech” or “incorrect”. Although Portunhol is part of the process of linguistic contacts and the construction of subjectivities, we wonder to what extent the use of the hybrid language may or may not be a sufficient linguistic resource.

Portunhol challenges the language notions of many teachers and evaluators, given its hybrid nature. Through this research, we propose to discuss how the interpretation of the grade to certify proficiency in Portuguese as an additional language can be influenced by the use of Portunhol. We will discuss the use of Portunhol in the written tests of the Certificate of Proficiency in Portuguese Language for Foreigners (Celpe-Bras).

Before approaching the evaluation, we present a discussion of theoretical-methodological proposals and their potential contributions to the teaching and evaluation of Portunhol. In the end, we present an analysis and a discussion about the interpretation of Portunhol in the context of the correction of written tasks of the Celpe-Bras exam.

### **Interlingua, teaching, and assessment of Portunhol**

Baralo (2004) define the concept of interlanguage as a transitory state between L1 and L2<sup>3</sup> in which there are interferences from the L1 in the target language. Interlanguage studies have as main objective to understand the cognitive nature of second language acquisition. The fundamental question of interlanguage studies refers to how much L1 interferes or not with L2 acquisition. Such research had an impact on how second languages are taught and learned to reinforce the distance between the L1 and the L2 learning process. The relationship between L1 and the teaching and learning process has become a conflict. The scenario becomes even more complex when one adds, to the malaise of the relationship between mother tongues and additional languages in the teaching process, the power issues involved in language policies, and the prestige relations between languages.

Although the theoretical-methodological proposal of interlingua goes back to comparing two linguistic systems with a third intermediary linguistic system, called interlingua, some points explain its influence in the pedagogical scope. The idea of a standard language as a target language presupposes a reference model to explain and predict interferences and errors. The reference model adds to the predilection for structural education, which are still, unfortunately, the most widespread language construct in Brazilian educational systems. Furthermore, a teaching proposal supposedly based on interlanguage would position learners at a specific level of learning, based on the types of mistakes they make when speaking or writing so that teaching and learning tools are designed to help learners at each stage of interlingua. In

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<sup>3</sup>The terms L1 (first language) and L2 (second language) are used to refer to the mother and foreign languages, respectively, in the context of the interlanguage debate. We will not discuss the differences between these concepts within the field of acquisition.

the context of assessment, the classification of error by examinee's level still underpins language assessment exams, especially those that base the assessed items on interferences or inadequacies of specific linguistic forms. At Celpe-Bras, for example, linguistic resources are also evaluated, but their degree of adequacy in specific contexts of language use is evaluated.

We recognize the importance of contrastive studies, of error analysis, especially in the debate on second language acquisition, or interpretation on the accuracy of language use in the context of teaching and assessment, as is the case of this work. However, we consider it a limiting factor when the language teacher takes on the task of classifying errors in the teaching process when he should be encouraging the use of language and linguistic reflection in different contexts. Below we discuss two theoretical perspectives that welcome the presence of the L1 in the process of teaching and learning the second language in a less conflictive way, such as translanguaging (CANAGARAJAH, 2011; JASPERS, 2018) and intercomprehension (ESCUDE; OLMO, 2019).

### **Translingualism, teaching, and assessment of Portunhol**

Translanguage emerges as a pedagogical approach for multilingual learners and assumes that languages should not be considered as separate systems. According to Canagarajah (2011), languages interact and form a unique linguistic repertoire, so that the individual can choose the necessary elements to communicate and be understood in each situation. The author points to the need to study the communication strategies employed by multilingual speakers, so that the focus becomes the engagement of individuals in social and discursive practices that promote the development of their linguistic repertoire, valuing the linguistic biographies of students. Language teaching would aim to negotiate meanings and uses. About the norm, Canagarajah (2011) advocates against the teaching of grammatical rules.

However, claiming that students' linguistic repertoire can always be used positively not reflect the social and cultural complexity of education. Regarding the limitations of the translanguage perspective, Jasper (2018, p. 18, our translation) warns “that even a school based on translanguage will likely require students to renounce certain parts of their linguistic repertoire (sexist and racist language, youth slang, jargon of game) to expand new skills (academic writing, for example)”. The author defends the politicization of the debate about what and why to learn and unlearn, since, for the social development of the individual, it is necessary to learn and develop new knowledge and tools and, at the same time, to reformulate or forget what is not considered “appropriate” culturally. Jasper (2018) argues that the linguistic

repertoire of learners must find a balance between the individual dimension and the collective dimension. This debate is directly related to the interpretation of Portunhol in evaluation contexts since Portunhol will not always be a sufficient resource.

From the perspective of translanguaging, we can say that the presence of Portunhol in the teaching, learning, and assessment process would no longer be a negative manifestation of an interlanguage, but part of a linguistic repertoire. However, if we think about the process of interaction in Portunhol, it is worth reflecting and debating its limits in certain situations of language use. About assessment processes, translanguaging is a perspective that challenges linguistic assessment instruments based on a language construct as structure, norms, and normative standards. It is worth mentioning here that the Celpe-Bras exam operationalizes the language construct in its assessment tasks to take into account various aspects of language use and not just the appropriate or inappropriate use of its forms. We can say that priority is given to the examinee's linguistic repertoire when assessing their performance when engaging in assessment tasks that simulate the use of language in the real world. However, we ask ourselves in this work if there is and where would be a balance between the individual dimension and the collective dimension of the use of Portunhol in this context of the written evaluation.

### **Intercomprehension, teaching, and assessment of Portunhol**

Both the translanguaging and intercomprehension perspectives assume that it is natural for human beings to negotiate meanings when interacting in various languages. Both theoretical perspectives were dedicated to offering pedagogical guidelines for language teaching. Although translanguage and intercomprehension defend plurilingualism in school systems, each perspective proposes a didactic that welcomes other languages in the process of language education of students.

According to Escudé and Olmo (2019), intercomprehension refers to a phenomenon associated with observable communicative practices in which there is a spontaneous effort between speakers of different languages and varieties to understand each other. From the comparative historical studies of linguistic systems within and outside the group of Romance languages, intercomprehension emerges as a pedagogical approach based on the exploration of similarities and/or transparencies between languages.

Starting from the dynamics of identification and distancing, the authors claim that intercomprehension has the pedagogical objective of increasing the ability to understand between languages. Linguistic forms are part of the pedagogical process of language teaching,

unlike what translanguaging proposes, by encouraging the cancellation of teaching with a focus on form. From the perspective of intercomprehension, the aim is to develop the perception of language traits, which belong to two or more languages, are similar and distant, promoting reflection on aspects of language that are or are not exclusive to a group of speakers and/or appropriate or not to an interaction context.

Although intercomprehension does not encourage Portunhol or mixtures of linguistic codes in the pedagogical scope, unlike translanguaging, the notions of intentionality and the right to imprecision are two major contributions mentioned by Escudé and Olmo (2019), which we can apply in the pedagogical and educational context. evaluation of Portunhol. The notion of intentionality is related to the interlocutor's attitude. To have intercomprehension, the interlocutors must intend to understand each other, in our case, it would be related to the evaluator's attitude towards the Portunhol. In the context of evaluation, it is important to relate intentionality to how much the belief system, the language conception, prejudices, and stereotypes of evaluators interact with the evaluation guidelines to facilitate or hinder the dialogue between evaluators and evaluators.

The notion of the right to imprecision is related to the degrees of acceptance of Portunhol. The right to print in the context of the assessment implies the choice not to describe the highest level of proficiency in exams, concerning the educated native speaker. The Celpe-Bras exam, for example, operationalizes the examinee's right to imprecision by accepting at the highest levels of proficiency a description of linguistic performance with inadequacies regarding the use of linguistic resources, for example.

Having made a brief theoretical review of different pedagogical perspectives that help us to think about the teaching and assessment of similar languages in the Portuguese-Spanish pair, we will discuss the Celpe-Bras exam.

## Celpe-Bras

The Celpe-Bras exam was developed in the context of negotiations in the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) in the 1990s, together with the Argentine Spanish exam CELU (Certificado de Español: Lengua y Uso). On the relationship between the Celpe-Bras exam and the policies to promote the spoken language in Brazil, Dell' Isola and Scaramucci (2003) state that the consolidation of linguistic assessment parameters constitutes a political tool of the state that claims and delimits a language before the others. Although the delimitation of languages can harm the school environment, such as the tension over the use of Portunhol in border schools, the consolidation of a language certification instrument has a positive effect on the promotion of Portuguese spoken in Brazil by the Brazilian state in the context of soft-power educational and cultural policies.

Is it necessary to politicize the debate about when? It's because? Is the certification requirement adequate or not? We consider it pertinent, for example, that postgraduate candidates in Brazilian Higher Education Institutions, whose mother tongue is not Portuguese, prove able to attend classes and write academic papers in Portuguese. In many postgraduate selection notices, the certification issued by Celpe-Bras is mentioned as a possible document proving proficiency in Portuguese by speakers of other languages.

One of the characteristics of Celpe-Bras is its communicative nature. In the words of Bachman (2003, p. 84, our translation) communicative language skills can be defined as “knowledge, or competence, and the ability to implement or execute this competence in the communicative use of language, in an appropriate and contextualized way”. Scaramucci (2001) states that Celpe-Bras refers to a speaker of “full non-native proficiency”, that is, an individual who has complete operational control of the language, although lapses and inaccuracies can be observed. Depending on the degree of adequacy of the answers, the examinee can be classified into four proficiency bands, namely: intermediate, upper-intermediate, advanced, and upper-advanced.

In the context of Celpe-Bras, the interpretation of Portunhol implies several challenges. If we compare the communicative skills of Spanish-speaking examinees with those whose mother tongue is not Spanish, the Spanish-speaker will likely have more skills to negotiate meanings, although there may be inadequacies of linguistic resources and misunderstandings. About the potential and limits of Portunhol in the context of the exam, Scaramucci (2001, p. 89, our translation) asks:

Is the consideration of the communication criterion that the exam is encouraging the manifestation of Portunhol? And can Portunhol meet the communicative needs of candidates? On the other hand, how not to go to the extreme requiring a native proficiency level as a proficiency parameter?

The teacher summarizes in the questions above the great dilemma present in several evaluation situations faced by both beginners and experienced evaluators. If, on the one hand, the fact that Portuguese and Spanish are closely related languages facilitates communication between speakers of both languages, on the other hand, to what extent is Portunhol an adequate resource? This is a fundamental question that generates a lot of debate in situations of discussion of grades, because, in the context of the assessment, exam formulators and evaluators are required to have a common assessment guideline to guarantee the reliability of the exam scores. However, even though there is a well-informed evaluation guideline through manuals, training, and scales, several performance evaluation specialists endorse the assumption that there is an interaction between task, evaluators, and scale (FULCHER, 2003). Therefore, we seek to discuss in this work, based on the experience in a preparatory course for the Celpe-Bras exam, what is appropriate or not regarding the use of Portunhol in different situations forged in the exam tasks through the analysis of texts.

### **Linguistic resources and Portunhol in the written assessment of Celpe-Bras**

The written test is composed of four tasks that generate open answers that are evaluated by two or more evaluators, based on a common evaluation grid. The notes are independent and there is discrepancy control. As for the design of the written test, in task 1 the examinee must write a text after watching a video; in task 2, audio; and in tasks 3 and 4, read printed texts. To exemplify a command, we analyzed task 3 which was part of the 2016 test. 2.

You have a blog about healthy eating and, after reading the news about the registration of vegetable gardens in São Paulo, you decided to implement this initiative in your city. Write a text on your blog to ask readers to participate in the registration, explaining how the information collected works and how it works (BRASIL, 2016, p. 6, our translation).

The command above is accompanied by the reading text entitled “Looking for gardens in the heart of São Paulo” published in the lifestyle section of the Estadão news portal. The text is about an initiative called Wikiversity, which consists of collaboratively mapping vegetable gardens in urban areas through an online platform. In the command, the textual genre is defined: post; the interlocution: blogger writing for readers; as well as the purpose of writing: to ask readers to participate in the registration of vegetable gardens in a defined city. It is also expected

that the examinees recontextualize in their text information from the Estadão report regarding the functioning and usefulness of the information that will be collected.

The definition of the situation and context of language use by the command directs how the items that make up the evaluation grid of written tasks will be interpreted. The adequacy regarding the dialogue in the proposed discursive genre, the performance of the requested action and the recontextualization of information are evaluated. The evaluation of the use of linguistic resources mobilized in the text depends on the fulfillment of the task.

The description of such items evaluated in the grid is done holistically, that is, there is a unique description for each grade from 0 to 5, which corresponds to the certification ranges provided for by the exam. In the descriptors of each track, the degree of adequacy of the response to the tasks concerning what was requested in the command is granulated. Regarding the evaluation of linguistic resources, the object of analysis of this work, a text grade 5 corresponds to “an autonomous, clear and cohesive text, in which the linguistic resources activated are appropriate to configure the dialogue relationship in the requested genre, and possible inadequacies rarely compromise the fluidity of reading” (BRASIL, 2020, p. 39, our translation). In the description of note 4, regarding the adequacy of linguistic resources, it is defined that “the linguistic resources activated are appropriate to configure the interlocution relationship in the proposed genre, building a clear and cohesive text in which possible inadequacies can compromise, in localized moments, the fluidity in reading.” (BRAZIL, 2020, p. 39, our translation).

The linguistic resources are evaluated both in terms of a context of dialogue forged in the command of the tasks and the degree of impairment of reading fluidity due to possible linguistic inadequacies. We can infer that Portunhol in the written assessment of Celpe-Bras, although it is not the object of assessment of the test, is related to the use of linguistic resources. It is from how the examinee's answer can adequately establish the dialogue, the purpose and offer the pertinent information that the use of Portunhol will be interpreted to attribute a grade. Unlike exams focused on form, Tosatti (2012) reiterates that, in the context of assessing communicative skills, sociocultural, and situational factors for the production of speech are as important as grammatical rules.

The lack of definition about what is or is not considered, regarding the use of Portunhol, as an inadequacy that compromises or not the reading and understanding of the answer written by the examinees makes the evaluators, in the context of resolving discrepancies in grades, negotiate degrees of tolerance or leniency when assigning grades. To better discuss the issue, I cite two examples, the first being: “Já no final tem um espaço com milhes de sobrenomes

gravados numa parede.” and the second: ““O importante é que a gente este mais saudável e ajudar para que outras pessoas conheçam este site.” In example 01, we interpret that the inadequacy in “milhes” does not compromise the global understanding of the idea, but in example 02 the inadequacies impair the understanding of the sentence because in place of the verb “esteja” is written “este”, which in Portuguese is a pronoun demonstrative “this boy”. In addition, the construction “o importante é que a gente (...) e ajudar...” makes understanding difficult, probably compromising the fluidity of the evaluator's reading of the text. That's why we present analysis and discussion below to elucidate the evaluators' degrees of tolerance towards Portunhol in the context of the written evaluation of Celpe-Bras.

## Methodology

Data were collected during an online Celpe-Bras preparation course. The course was offered from August to October 2020. All twenty students active in the course had Spanish as their mother tongue. The teaching team consisted of eight undergraduate students in Letters. Of the eight, five were almost graduating and three had completed less than halfway through graduation. That is, the profile of the evaluators of this work is close to the profile of the evaluators of the exam. The delivery of four written assignments for the Celpe-Bras exam was part of the course's planning. The same text was independently corrected by more than one teacher. In pedagogical meetings, the discrepancy of the previously assigned grades was resolved individually and a final grade was negotiated between the team and the coordination. In this way, we tried to bring the context of the research closer to the situations of real assessment of the written tasks of the Celpe-Bras exam.

In this edition of the course, approximately 60 texts were delivered by the course participants and 200 notes were generated. Based on the experience during the process of monitoring the discrepancy meetings and analyzing the grades, we chose in this work to discuss the discrepancy of grades that varied between 4 and 5, which corresponds to the advanced and advanced-higher range, respectively. The variation of 1 point does not mean a significant discrepancy for revaluation of the grade (BRASIL, 2016). The choice is justified because we intend to gather information to discuss the possible characteristics of a Portunhol that is related both to the use of linguistic inadequacies that rarely compromise reading fluidity, as described in note 5, and to texts that, according to the description in note 4, they present inadequacies that compromise “in focused moments” the understanding or fluidity of the evaluator's reading.

This choice is also because, according to the evaluation grid, the items evaluated in tracks 4 and 5 that refer to discursive adequacy would be adequate, leaving the evaluator to judge more how the linguistic resources were used to fulfill the task or as the performance of the task than the performance of the task itself. We assume here that the examinee, whose grade ranged from 4 to 5, managed to establish the dialogue and fulfill the purpose of the task, we must inquire about what would be the manifestations of Portunhol or inadequacies that would be guiding the evaluators' interpretation to attribute grade 4 and 5. Next, we outline an answer to this question based on the data presented and analyzed.

As a data analysis tool, we opted for error analysis, based on contrastive studies to examine the linguistic interferences derived from the L1. Errors in the context of this work refer to hybrid constructions or linguistic inadequacies. The choice is justified by the need to systematize and organize the hybrid structures related to Portunhol present in the corpus.

### **Analysis and discussion**

We analyzed the written production of two students, Paula and João, in three different tasks. Tasks 3 and 1 refer to the editions of the first semester of 2016 and, to tasks 2, of the second semester of 2017. The analysis cut is justified by the standard of the grades. When analyzing the scores independently assigned by three evaluators, we could see the variation between grades 4 and 5. It should be noted that, in most cases, the evaluators of Paula's texts justified grade 4 by arguing that linguistic inadequacies were frequent and that influenced the fluidity of reading the text. In table 1, below, the pattern of grades of Paula and João is organized, whose answers to the tasks will be analyzed next.

**Table1** – Notes for tasks 3, 1, and 2

Course participants	Paula				João			
Evaluators	Evaluator 1	Evaluator 2	Evaluator 3	Final grade	Evaluator 1	Evaluator two	Evaluator 3	Final grade
Notes attributed to task 3	4	3.5	3.4	3	5	5	5	5
Notes attributed to task 1	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5
Notes attributed to task 2	4	4	4	4	5	5	5	5

Source: Authors' collection

Task 3 was the first to be done by the course participants, it is worth mentioning that in the first task the grade 5 was unanimous among the evaluators of João's text, while Paula's first grade was slightly lower than those assigned for her next productions. By analyzing the grades of the three tasks assigned by three independent evaluators, we can see little variation from the grade 4 assigned to Paula and from the grade 5, to João's texts. For this reason, we analyzed the set of six texts.

We categorized the hybrid structures in the texts and their frequency. Then we compare and discuss the data. The analysis was performed by a researcher, speaker of Spanish as a first language and Portuguese as an additional language, graduated in Letters, and reviewed by a Brazilian professor specialized in contrastive analysis.

In the following table, the most frequently found hybrid structures have been classified. In general, the structures referred to the influence of the mother tongue, in this case Spanish. In others, we could infer little mastery of textuality mechanisms. We identified and classified three categories, namely: Morphosyntactic (MS), Orthographic-phonological (EOF) and Lexicon-semantic (EL). In table 2, we present their definitions and examples.

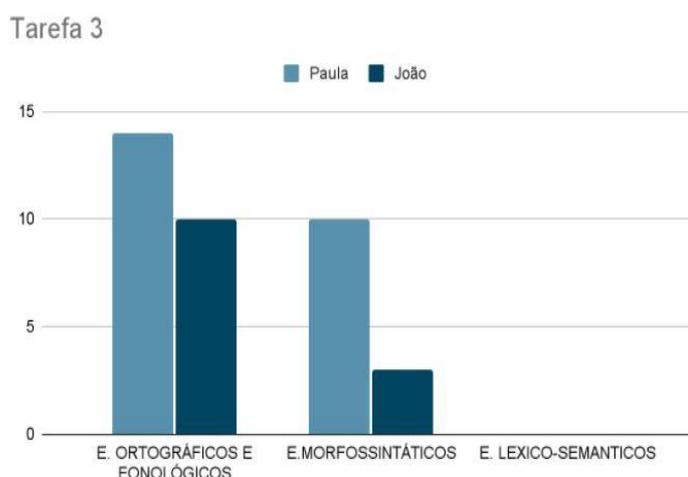
**Table 2** – Category of analysis of hybrid structures:

Categories of hybrid structures	Definition and examples
Morphosyntactic	Transfer of functional linguistic structures from L1 to L2 resulting in inadequacies that may or may not compromise comprehension.
Orthographic-phonological	Learner's difficulties to identify L2 phonemes, establishing in some cases graphic correspondences with L1 phonemes.
Lexicon-semantics	Transfer of words from L1 to L2 that may or may not compromise understanding.

Source: Authors' collection

In graph 1 below, we present a qualitative analysis of the classification of the hybrid structures of the texts in response to task 3, Cadastro de Horta (BRASIL, 2016).

**Graphic1** – Hybrid structures in task 3



Source: Authors' collection

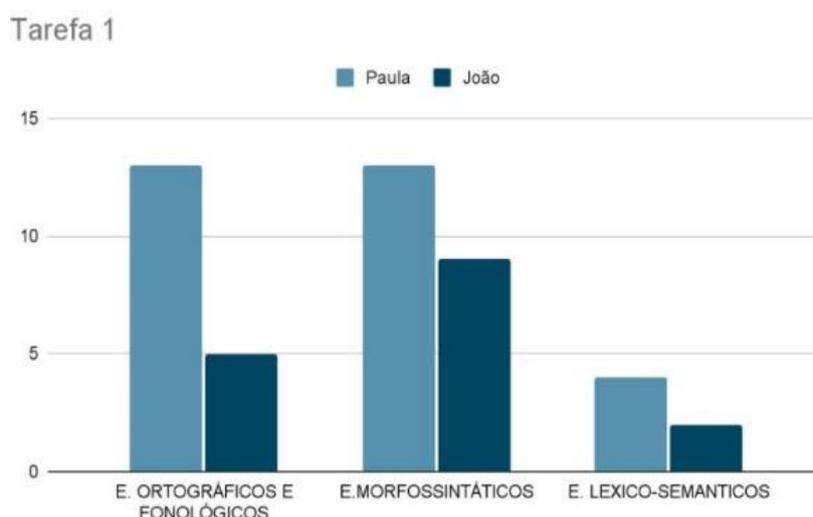
In Paula's text, representative of grades 4, a greater number of hybrid structures were found within the orthographic and phonological category, when compared to João's text. grade 5 could also be explained by the evaluators' notions of language. As this was the first task corrected, many evaluators morphosyntactically justified their scores with arguments that pointed to a strongly normative language/language view. Throughout the course, the evaluators were able to reflect on the consistency between their interpretations of linguistic inadequacies and the language construct operationalized in the exam. Inadequacies regarding the fulfillment of the task can also affect the grade of Paula's text, but we will limit ourselves to the linguistic inadequacies.

In task 3, hybrid structures in terms of orthographic and phonological patterns were the most frequent in the texts of both examinees. Such structures can refer to issues of phoneme identification or linguistic interference as in the words “coexistence”, “quera”, “historia”, “precissa” and “libre”. Furthermore, in Paula's text there is a greater presence of morphosyntactic structures clearly influenced by Spanish, which justified the grade 3-4 attributed to her text, according to one of the evaluators. Some hybrid structures that we can mention within this category are phrases such as: “desde o 2015”, “a cidade a qual facilita”, and “ajudar aos”.

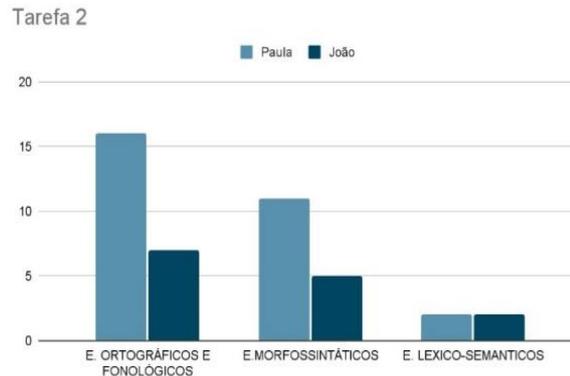
No hybrid structures of the lexical-semantic category were found. Could it be because these types of structures are less frequent at advanced levels, according to the Celpe-Bras proficiency bands? Further research could verify this hypothesis.

In the following Tasks 1 (BRASIL, 2016) and 2 (BRASIL, 2017), Paula got a grade of 4 and João, a grade of 5. According to graphs 2 and 3 below, we can again notice the great discrepancy between João and Paula's texts regarding the number of inadequacies classified as morphosyntactic and orthographic and phonological, together with the lexical-semantic inadequacies.

**Graphic 2 – Hybrid structures in task 1**



Source: Authors' collection

**Graphic 3** – Hybrid structures in task 2

Source: Authors' collection

Concerning hybrid structures categorized as lexical-semantic, although they were identified in the texts, they were less frequent and the frequency was similar in the response to task 2 of both students. By making a qualitative analysis of this hybrid structure, we point out that the degree of acceptance of this type of structure may depend on how far the loan is, for example: “barrios” and “bairros”; “Alemania” and “Alemanha” seem to be more tolerable than “compartir” and “compartilhar”.

According to the data in Graph 2, in Task 2, there was an increase in the morphosyntactic constructions of João's text of Task 3, even so, he kept the grade 5. Within these structures we can mention: “a ser um local”, “onde pode-se” and “as vindas pelos imigrantes”. On the other hand, we emphasize that the most common morphosyntactic hybrid structure was the inappropriate use of the relative pronoun “a/o qual” instead of “que”, as in the following sentences: “a turma a qual vai”, “médicos os quais demoram” and “o lugar o qual fica perto”.

Finally, within Tasks 1 and 2, hybrid orthographic and phonological structures were found that caused debates among the evaluators, as in the phrases: o museu já **tive**”, “Hoje (eu) **veio**”, which can be explained as the inappropriate use of the verb tenses or perhaps the difficulty of identifying the sounds [e] vs [i], in the case of the verb have. Although they do not seem to be a hybrid structure, it is worth mentioning this data, as such structures are very frequent in Spanish-speaking productions that could potentially be classified in the advanced and upper advanced ranges of the exam.

## Discussion of results

In general, we can say that the text grade 4 presents a greater number of hybrid structures if we make a comparison to the text grade 5. In the context of analysis of this work, we conclude that the amount of hybrid structures can justify the variation between grades 4 and 5. From the data, it is possible to point out that the final grade can be influenced more by the accumulation of hybrid structures or *Portunhol*, than by a specific structure.

However, on the categories of hybrid structures mentioned, the results indicate that the morphosyntactics and spelling-phonological are the ones that could most influence the classification of a text in grade 4 or grade 5. As a lower occurrence of lexical-semantic structures in the analyzed corpus, we infer that such forms may not be related to the performance corresponding to advanced examinees classified in *Celpe-Bras*. On the other hand, we indicate that the morphosyntactic hybrid structures may have varying degrees of tolerance by the evaluators, since literal translations from Spanish can compromise the fluidity of reading the text.

Another aspect that could influence the attribution of grades is the evaluator's profile. Evaluators with a structuralist language conception tend to justify the grade by emphasizing formal aspects of language use, penalizing more often the use of *Portunhol*, without necessarily interpreting it within a context of interlocution proposed in the task. Teacher-evaluators who had Spanish as their mother tongue also tended to assign lower grades, justified by the use of *Portunhol*.

## Final considerations

In this work, we were able to review different perspectives on the role of the mother tongue in the process of teaching and learning additional languages. In opposition to linguistic normativism, defenders of plurilingualism declare that the promotion of a fixed and uniform model as a reference for the use and study of additional language has been shown to be ineffective in the field of education, as it ignores the multifaceted potential of language that presupposes the existence of processes of hybridization, creativity, identity, identification and subjectivity. From the perspective of translanguaging, *Portunhol* could be a manifestation of the linguistic repertoire that can be used and valued within the classroom, which presupposes accepting the mixture of linguistic codes. According to intercomprehension theorists, the mother tongue is a key part of the teaching-learning process. The tension over the presence or absence of the mother tongue, in the form of what is classified as *Portunhol*, in responses to the

written tasks of students considered advanced in the Celpe-Bras assessment system was the object of discussion in this work.

We selected and analyzed the hybrid structures of six texts, three representing grade 4 and three representing grade 5. We could see that the frequency in which Portunhol is used can influence the discrepancy between written productions with grade 4 and 5. The main results indicate that the accumulation of certain hybrid structures, more than the presence of a specific hybrid form, can influence the way the text is evaluated. Regarding the classification of hybrid structures, the ones that most generated divergences in the interpretation of the note were those of a morphosyntactic and orthographic-phonological nature. Those of a lexical-semantic nature, in turn, do not seem to influence the decision of evaluators.

The study was limited to discussing the manifestations of Portunhol in a limited set of texts that corresponded to the advanced and advanced-superior ranges. In this sense, it is worth noting that, although the focus of this work is the presence of Portunhol, the process of evaluating written texts by Celpe-Bras is not limited to the interpretation of these types of linguistic inadequacies, as there are other evaluation parameters. which, due to space limitations and scope of analysis, were not discussed in this work.

It is, therefore, an exploratory research. Other works are necessary to understand the interpretation of Portunhol in texts written in the context of exams. Aspects such as the relationship between the acceptance of Portunhol from more or less informal writing situations or the profile of the evaluators, in particular, need further analysis.

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