

ETHNOGRAPHIC NARRATIVE ON TEACHING PORTUGUESE AS A HOST LANGUAGE FOR A SYRIAN REFUGEE FAMILY IN BRAZIL

NARRATIVA ETNOGRÁFICA SOBRE O ENSINO DE PORTUGUÊS COMO LÍNGUA DE ACOLHIMENTO PARA UMA FAMÍLIA SÍRIA REFUGIADA NO BRASIL

NARRATIVA ETNOGRÁFICA SOBRE LA ENSEÑANZA DEL PORTUGUÉS COMO LENGUA RECEPTORA PARA UNA FAMILIA DE SIRIOS REFUGIADOS EN BRASIL

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ABSTRACT: When arriving in the new country, refugees are faced with the challenge of learning an often-unknown language and becoming familiar with the new culture(s). This was the case of the Syrian refugee family participating in this research. Our study took an ethnographic perspective (FONSECA, 1999) and aimed, from journals written by the researcher, to register our approach to the family in the context of teaching Portuguese. Furthermore, we describe the institutional construction of a welcoming and teacher formation proposal through the teaching of Portuguese by teachers of the Languages without Borders Program - Portuguese as an Additional Language (IsF-PLA), of the Federal University of Pampa. It was possible to identify that teaching practices were changing as there was an approximation of the family and consequent planning according to the linguistic-cultural needs of the students, from the perspective of teaching Portuguese as a host language (GROSSO, 2010).

KEYWORDS: Host language. Syrian refugees. Ethnographic narrative. Portuguese teaching.

RESUMO: *Quando chegam ao novo país, os refugiados se deparam com o desafio de aprender uma língua quase sempre desconhecida e familiarizar-se com nova(s) cultura(s). Este foi o caso da família síria refugiada participante desta pesquisa. Nosso estudo assumiu a forma de se modificando ao passo que houve a aproximação da família e consequente planejamento de acordo com as necessidades linguístico-culturais dos alunos, na perspectiva etnográfica (FONSECA, 1999) e teve como objetivo, a partir de diários escritos pela pesquisadora, registrar nossa aproximação da família em contexto de ensino de português. Ainda, descrevemos como se deu a construção institucional de uma proposta de acolhimento e formação docente através do ensino de língua portuguesa por professoras do Programa Idiomas sem Fronteiras - Português como Língua Adicional (IsF-PLA), da Universidade Federal do Pampa. Foi possível identificar que as práticas de ensino mudaram à medida que houve uma aproximação da família e o consequente planejamento de acordo com as*

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demandas linguístico-culturais dos estudantes, na perspectiva do ensino de português como língua de acolhimento (GROSSO, 2010).

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Língua de acolhimento. Refugiados sírios. Narrativa etnográfica. Ensino de português.*

RESUMEN: *Al llegar al nuevo país, los refugiados se enfrentan al desafío de aprender un idioma desconocido y familiarizarse con nuevas culturas. Este fue el caso de la familia de refugiados sirios participantes en esta investigación. Nuestro estudio asumió una perspectiva etnográfica (FONSECA, 1999) y tuvo como objetivo, a partir de diarios escritos por la investigadora, registrar nuestro acercamiento a la familia en el contexto de la enseñanza del portugués. Además, describimos cómo ocurrió la construcción institucional de una propuesta de acogida y de formación docente mediante la enseñanza del portugués por profesoras del Programa Idiomas sin Fronteras - Portugués como Lengua Adicional (IsF-PLA), de la Universidad Federal de Pampa. Se pudo identificar que las prácticas de enseñanza cambiaron a medida que hubo una aproximación de la familia y la consiguiente planificación de acuerdo con las necesidades lingüística-culturales de los estudiantes, desde la perspectiva de la enseñanza del portugués como lengua receptora (GROSSO, 2010).*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Lengua receptora. Refugiados sirios. Narrativa etnográfica. Enseñanza del portugués.*

Introduction

The Syrian family participating in our research is composed of: father, mother and three daughters, the youngest with nine years old, another with 13 years old and the oldest with 15 years old.³ They arrived in Brazil in 2014, an involuntary move in search of survival to the Civil War scenario that is found in their city: Aleppo, the largest city in Syria. This situation causes them to be characterized as a “family of Syrian refugees”. After coming to Brazil, they lived in different states, arriving in Bagé in 2016.

Until then, the parents had not been in formal contexts of teaching the Portuguese language. At first, they had help from people from the Catholic Church for communication and displacement situations. All the daughters, after a short period of adaptation, were placed in Brazilian schools, without any type of follow-up or specific support in teaching Portuguese to foreigners. The family's main income is a hairdressing salon, the father's profession, along with a clothing and accessories boutique organized by the mother. Both are spaces that demand a lot of communication with the public to be served.

³That was the age they were in 2018, when the survey was completed.

Teaching Portuguese for refugees is currently becoming a concrete and growing demand. However, Arantes and Deusdará (2015) state that this context is usually erased in the academic environment of educating new teachers of Portuguese as a non-mother language, being a field with a lack of studies and research. The authors also emphasize the importance of efforts and initiatives to institutionalize a specific area of Portuguese for Refugees (PR). This proposal dialogues with Amado (2013) and Grosso (2010), for whom PR needs to be thought of as a “host language”.

Thus, the present research had as objectives, from diaries written by the researcher with reports about the interaction with the family since 2016, in the context of teaching Portuguese: (a) register, through an ethnographic perspective (FONSECA, 1999), the approach of the teacher-researcher to the Syrian refugee family in question; and (b) describe how a proposal for the reception and teacher initial education through the teaching of Portuguese language was institutionally built, within the experience lived by the researcher and other teachers, from 2017 to 2018, in the Languages without Borders Program - Portuguese as Additional Language (IsF-PLA), from the Federal University of Pampa - Campus Bagé, in Rio Grande do Sul (RS). Thus, from the ethnographic narrative, we seek to identify the challenges of teaching Portuguese as a host language.

Teaching Portuguese for refugees or immigrants?

To understand the choice of the term 'host language', it is necessary to assimilate the characterization of a person as a refugee, since the use without distinction between “immigrant” and “refugee” in formal and informal discourses has become increasingly common, as well as in the dissemination of media data. Refugees are protected and have rights that are guaranteed by laws that were built historically in situations of extreme need. The Civil War in Syria caused one of the biggest massive displacements of people seeking refuge today.

Therefore, to establish logistics for the flow of refugees and, consequently, for a greater distribution of protection charges, the UN (United Nations) reaches a consensus that these actions should be guided internationally (RODRIGUES; BÓGUS, 2011). In 1951, to establish international protection for refugees, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was created, and, to regulate the legal situation of refugees, a conference was held that became known as the UN Convention. of 1951. Therefore, in contemporary

times, the refugee status is given to those who, according to the criteria of art. 1 of the 1951 Convention:

- I – Due to well-founded fears of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, social group, or political opinions, he is outside his country of nationality and is unable or unwilling to receive the protection of that country;
- II – Having no nationality and being outside the country where he previously had his habitual residence, he is unable or unwilling to return to it, due to the circumstances described in the previous item;
- III – Due to the serious and generalized violation of human rights, he is obliged to leave his country of nationality to seek refuge in another country (BRASIL, 1997, s/p, our translation).

Furthermore, in art. 33, no. 1 of the 1951 Convention, the extremely important right to refugees applies, in which they cannot be forced to return to the country that threatens their life and freedom. On the other hand, the immigrant is placed by UNHCR as one who chooses to move, with planning and, mainly, in search of a better life, such as better jobs and education, or even for a family reunion. Immigrants remain under the protection of their government, being able to return at any time, on the other hand, refugees cannot return to their country and depend entirely on the country in which they took refuge, which is the main difference between an immigrant and a refugee.

Among the refugee's rights, nothing is directly directed to the learning of Portuguese, but if we reflect on what is considered as "social integration", the language is certainly involved, since for full coexistence in Brazilian society, or in any other, it is necessary to necessary to use the new language. Furthermore, through the UNHCR document "Convention Relative to the Status of Refugees (1951)", we find specificities regarding the education rights that must be offered by the Contracting Parties, according to Art. 22 – Public education: refugees must receive the same treatment as other foreigners from different contexts. As for primary education, schools must accept the enrollment of refugees, with the same rights and treatment as nationals. It also provides for the validation of refugee diplomas and university degrees, as well as access to studies in general.

However, when faced with reality, as in the case of the Syrian family participating in this research, despite being inserted with the same rights and treatment as a person from the host country, we can identify a gap in the education that schools offer. to the refugee student profile. In the schools in the region where we carried out our research, foreigners directly enter formal education, without monitoring or supporting policies specific to their linguistic and cultural needs. In other words, without any prior discussion regarding the way these

subjects are inserted in schools, the school is not prepared for the student's reality or vice versa.

Teaching PLE, PLA or PLAc: weaving distances and approximations

Spinassé (2006) discusses in his article the differences between the concepts of Mother Tongue, Second Language, and Foreign Language, while he defends the idea of the language being characterized as foreign when the individual does not establish direct and intense contact with the language, or that is, language is not a fundamental factor for the social integration of the individual. The term Foreign Language is also generally referred to as the language “of the other”, which is foreign to the learner.

As Amado (2013) states, the teaching of Portuguese as a foreign language (PLE) is increasingly gaining visibility in the academic field, being offered in language schools, for workers of large companies, and through extension courses to the academic community. at universities, for professors and exchange students. Considering, therefore, the target audience of PLE, the topic addressed and the linguistic content taught are commonly aimed at corporate work environments and academic space, often focusing on individuals and not a group of families. In addition, since they usually choose the country to enter, there is likely pre-trip planning, on the other hand, the most recurrent in refugee situations is to arrive in the country without having previous cultural and linguistic knowledge from the country.

Another important language terminology that has been emerging in academic studies is that of Additional Language. For Schlatter and Garcez (2009), this concept is associated with a teaching-learning methodology that invites students and educators to use language as a means of expressing themselves and participating socially, moving between different genres of discourse. In opposition to the concept of foreign language, the additional language assumes a position close to the learner, being part of their identity construction, developing an important social role in the integration of the individual (SCHLATTER; GARCEZ, 2009, p. 134-135, our translation). In addition, it also reflects on the role of this language in the life of the individual, “whose language it is and who it can be, what it serves, what each one has to do with it” (SCHLATTER; GARCEZ, 2009, p. 127, our translation).

Analyzing the proposal of Schlatter and Garcez (2009) and (2012), we can reflect that, considering the teaching of language to the refugee, it would be expected that the additional language could be developed in the perspective, however, the reflection on the language, to whom it belongs and what it is used for, can generate controversies, as the additional language

needs to become the learner's, so that he does not perceive it as something foreign to him, but as a language of social use that is part of his life, that belongs not only to the other but also to himself. In our research context, we can say that the Portuguese language was not yet seen in this way by the participating mother who, during classes, differentiated Portuguese as the language of Brazilians and constantly marked Arabic as her language. Therefore, we perceive the need to rethink the language teaching practices for the family under study, which led us to the concept of the host language.

The concept of welcoming language began to be used in 2001, as presented by Cabete (2010), since the implementation of the “Portugal Acolhe” program by the Portuguese State. In the situation of the Syrian family that the Brazilian government granted refuge, for example, as the official language of Brazil is Portuguese, for this family Portuguese will then be the host language. It was also possible to perceive in other researches the relationship between teaching-learning and the term host language since they defend the inevitability of being considered the student's context, thinking the linguistic as well as the social and psychosocial. Amado (2013) brings in his article the importance of considering the psychosocial conditions of the refugee, such as the process of fleeing his country, the removal of affective and linguistic-cultural ties, the concern for the future, and the urgency to insert himself in society. and in the job market which, in the case of negative experiences, can create barriers to language learning.

Grosso (2010) also portrays how the concept of Portuguese as a welcoming language (PLAc), although similar, exceeds the concept of PLE: “For the adult audience, newly immersed in a linguistic-cultural reality not experienced before, the use of of the language will be linked to a diversified knowledge, to know how to do, to new linguistic-communicative tasks that must be carried out in the target language” (GROSSO, 2010, p. 68). In addition to the psychosocial and cultural processes that need to be restructured in the lives of refugees, in the context of PLAc teaching it is also necessary to think about acts of xenophobia. Unfortunately, prejudiced and racist attitudes are recurrent in Brazil and many refugees experience situations of discrimination directly associated with their social identities, and this cannot be neglected.

Methodology

The study is inserted in the field of Applied Linguistics, it is qualitative and ethnographic. According to Fonseca (1999), the precept of ethnography starts from the interaction between the researcher and his objects of analysis, 'natives in flesh and blood', in the case of this investigation, the family of Syrian refugees, representing a situated historical and social context. The author also divides this method into five moments: estrangement - the researcher is faced with an event alien to his reality, generating his object of study; schematization - way of collecting and externalizing empirical data; deconstruction - breaking with certain notions of the researcher's culture, to be able to look at the culture of the "other" without prejudice; comparison - making use of the anthropological bibliography to arrive at cases similar to those of the social group studied, but coming from a different context, expanding the view on the topic addressed; and systematization - ordering the data for analysis and final reflections. As explained below, we followed this methodological guideline to try to understand, from the point of view of the Syrian refugee family in question, and the experience of the first author of this article as a Portuguese teacher (hereinafter author-teacher) their needs and specifications that permeate the teaching of PLAc.

Given this, the present research has already gone through all the moments, the 'strangeness', which happened when, at one point in the class, the naturalness of one of the daughters when talking about the marks of gunshots in her home caused indignation and, finally, questions, recorded in a field diary by the author-teacher.

The moment of 'schematization' of this research happened since the second semester of 2016, when the author-teacher met the family and had the experience of teaching Portuguese classes to parents and other Syrian adults, in a curricular component activity of the course of Letters - Additional Languages and Respective Literatures of UNIPAMPA. Soon, in 2017, she started teaching tutoring in Portuguese for children. And then, in 2018, the work expanded, as the pedagogical intervention began to take place through the IsF-PLA Program⁴, also enabling the participation of course colleagues working in the Program, in classes for different family members. Four classes were divided: one for the mother, who already had

⁴The IsF Program, promoted by the Ministry of Education, in full operation at UNIPAMPA from 2014 to 2019, had as its main objective to provide an academic space, in which it was possible to value the teaching practice of foreign languages, in addition to promoting actions in favor of linguistic policies aimed at the internationalization of Brazilian Higher Education#. Because of this, this was the program that provided us with a space in the academic environment to develop classes for the Syrian refugee family, later opening doors for other families also in refugee situations. The IsF-PLA group, today called the Support Nucleus for Intercultural Learning of Portuguese as an Additional and Welcome Language (NAAIPLAA), has experience teaching IsF exchange students, PEC-G and PEC-PG students,

basic proficiency in reading and writing in the language; another for the father, who communicated reasonably in the oral modality and was not literate in Portuguese; the “Book Club” for the two youngest daughters, one 09 years old (Niky⁵) and another 13-year-old (Jessy); and in a separate class, the eldest daughter, 15 years old (Kethy), with classes focused on the school's syllabus, in different areas, although in this intervention the main thing was to work on self-esteem through reading practices sensitive to the culture of the student.

As for the moments of 'deconstruction' and 'comparison', they happened concomitantly with the other stages, since, in addition to the situation of the participants not being familiar to those in our position, the deconstruction of stereotypes was necessary from the first contact with the family, when comments emerged about cultural differences between informal conversations and classroom interactions. At that moment, it was important to resort to studies on the historical, cultural and social contexts of the refugees' country of origin. Finally, the last moment of this study was the 'systematization' of the data for description and analysis.

The data generation was built along with the approach and involvement of the author-teacher with the family. The data generated in the research were organized as follows: I - the field diaries, built from living with the family, described in notes and expanded critically over time, were our main sources of data, generated since 2016, when the author-teacher started her experience with the family, in formal and informal moments; II - notes, during the years 2017 and 2018, carried out during meetings of the IsF-PLA group, which took place weekly, in which the other teachers reported on the process of preparing the classes to be taught and also the results of experiments, they served as support for the verification of an institutional mobilization and the construction of a culturally sensitive pedagogy in the preparation of the classes; III - recordings of the classes of the courses offered through the IsF-PLA program and the materials we produced were also data for analysis for this research. All participants were aware that the data was being generated and would be used by the teachers for research. Thus, they gave their consent/assent for use for educational purposes.

Once we adopted the ethnographic research perspective, the narrative proved to be the best option as a writing methodology, considering the nature of the object studied: the construction of teaching Portuguese as a host language for a family of Syrian refugees from the point of view of author-teacher. It is the author-teacher who assumes from here the voice in the first person singular, to narrate how the experience was constituted with the teaching of

⁵The names are fictitious.

Portuguese to the Syrian refugee family. The following narrative is divided into three moments: (a) when we thought of teaching Portuguese to refugees as an additional language; (b) when, then, we faced needs and adaptations in our teaching practice, which led us to reflect on the teaching of Portuguese as a host language; and (c) when, finally, we were able to teach Portuguese as a host language.

Teaching Portuguese as a foreign or additional language for refugees

My first contact with the Syrian refugee family took place through a mandatory curricular component, Teaching Portuguese as an Additional Language (EPLA), offered in the Degree in Languages, Additional Languages (English, Spanish) and Respective Literatures, on Campus Bagé from UNIPAMPA. This was due to the didactic proposal of the regent teacher, which included the possibility of planning and developing Portuguese classes for foreigners. Choosing to plan and develop classes, we had to choose between the following contexts: a school in Aceguá (Uruguay) for children, or, for two exchange students whose mother tongue (LM) is English, with an advanced level in Portuguese, or even, for a group of Syrian refugees with a basic level of Portuguese. My interest in oriental culture, and the challenge of being a basic level class, made me prefer and participate in teaching Portuguese to a group of Syrian refugees: the mother, the father, and the two youngest daughters of the family participating in the research. and two Syrian refugees who worked as bricklayers and were family friends.

This group of Syrian students had been formed specifically for the classes to be given by students of the aforementioned curricular component. Teachers in initial studies should each teach 3 hours of class, so that at the end of the day at least 5 students would go through the experience. So that I could carry out my first practice, I had to follow and observe the application of a diagnostic activity by the regent teacher of the discipline and a class for the group of refugees in question. The classes would take place on the university campus, but the lack of linguistic knowledge made it difficult for the group to use public transport and travel on the day of the diagnostic activity. After noticing this difficulty, we were able to relocate the classes to a room in a public elementary school, at night, with the consent of the school principal. As the school was located in the center of the city, it was easier for refugee students to access.

During the diagnosis, the mediation of Jessy, the middle daughter, was necessary as an “interpreter”, as she translated what we said into Arabic for the others and then translated

their answers into Portuguese. That was our first contact. Another detail was the political state in which his country found itself. Since the Syrians differed in opinion among themselves, we deduced that it was not a theme or subject to be addressed in initial classes. On this day, I had my first (of many) estrangements. I felt lost and distant as I listened to them speaking in Arabic. It also made me strange to hear the comments about the political situation in their country and, after that, I decided to seek information and 'try' to understand the tangle of political conflict that permeate the country.

Two weeks later, they became my students, so I planned and developed two classes of 1h30min each, based on a task that the teacher of the course showed us. So, I decided to talk about “food”, a topic that is present in all cultures. So, I immersed myself in research on Syrian cuisine and found several typical dishes that are not strange here in Brazil, so I chose to leave it more comprehensive and talk about the influence of Syrian-Lebanese cuisine in Brazil. In this initial class, everything was different: for them to understand and copy, I wrote in capital letters on the board, as if they were all capital letters. Being attentive to use more everyday words and making use of images and even “mime” was very important and present on this day.

Providing a class in which these students could “perceive themselves in us”, the exchange of experiences, was what led many of the linguistic topics I taught that day, on October 6, 2016. This class was a clear example of what, according to Fonseca (1999), we can call 'deconstruction', both on my part and the part of the students. (Field diary, November 5, 2016).

[...] I had to research and get to know a new world, which until then was so distant to me, Arab culture was the theme of the first class, making the students practice the language, which is still a little strange to them, to talk about what they already know so well!

In the second class, a surprise, because only the mother appeared. When we asked about the others, she replied: “They want to learn how to talk properly, learn things from work” (Field Journal, October 20, 2016). The other bricklayer didn't come to my first class. Soon he gave up, warned the others that he would not be able to follow the classes. "What is your name?" was the only information he could answer. Like him, the father also did not attend classes anymore, having found it difficult to follow, which signaled that we needed to reflect better on the methodology and teaching purposes.

After the implementation of the classes, we invited the mother to participate in a conversation circle with our class at the university. It was interesting, as many students asked

questions that we had not asked before, and she was very open to answering. She spoke about the robes, explaining that not all women wear the 'burqa'. As she follows Catholicism, she can dress like us here in Brazil, with 'normal' clothes. All these cultural questions were important to me because I could see that we were not that far apart, and I could also stop seeing the other as 'exotic'. There were also many questions about the Civil War situation in which Syria found itself. She reported the situations of fear and anguish she experienced with her family, as a simple act we do every day, like going to the window, it could cost him his life. She told about the days and nights when plane bombs flew over the building they lived in, the way her daughters cried and didn't understand what was happening. It was not easy to understand these reports, putting yourself in the other's shoes had never been so difficult. The linguistic difficulties to express themselves were resolved as some understood a word, others understood a sentence and so we were connecting what each one understood to understand their story. Mom didn't always understand what we were talking about either, so some questions were left unanswered. Putting yourself in someone else's shoes has never been so difficult. The linguistic difficulties to express themselves were resolved as some understood a word, others understood a sentence and so we were connecting what each one understood to understand their story. Mom didn't always understand what we were talking about either, so some questions were left unanswered. Putting yourself in someone else's shoes has never been so difficult. The linguistic difficulties to express themselves were resolved as some understood a word, others understood a sentence and so we were connecting what each one understood to understand their story. Mom didn't always understand what we were talking about either, so some questions were left unanswered.

After the conversation with the mother, we had time to reflect among ourselves on what that conversation added to us concerning intercultural learning and how we perceive linguistic aspects, two important focuses to be considered when teaching practice. That day, the comment that struck me the most was when one of the undergraduates expressed her distrust of the quality of the service provided at the family's hairdressing salon, associating her vision with an alleged language barrier, because as she explained, "they wouldn't know what to do, since they can't even read a shampoo label. This was another day in which I went through successive processes of deconstruction and reconstruction.

According to Oliveira and Silva (2017), language barriers occur when little knowledge or lack of knowledge of the language of the host country can generate a violation or hinder the migrant's access to human rights. In this case, we can see that the little knowledge of

Portuguese by the mother generated a linguistic and social prejudice, a case that can be repeated with other people, generating negative consequences in her line of work.

During this process of teaching the language, there were some complaints from students about the contents worked in class. By saying that they wanted to learn “things from work”, it was a request for us to teach the language for “immediate” use in a state of urgency that we gradually understood. We still didn't recognize our student-interlocutors. Even mobilized, we still followed a teaching model that did not correspond to the expectations of learning and that was more guided by a teaching perspective of PLE, sometimes PLA. As part of the proposed EPLA subject activity, we had to write a final report about our experience, which led me to the following question: “What is learning in their cultural, social and historical context, for them?” (Field diary, October 22, 2016).

When we started to consider teaching Portuguese as a host language

After the classes, which took place in the second half of 2016, I kept in touch with the Syrian family through social media. In 2017, I went to have my eyebrows done at the family's beauty salon and I received a request from my mother to help the two older sisters with the school content, as Kethy was no longer going to classes and Jessy was having a low income.

As I already knew the two youngest and was sensitized by the whole context in which this family was inserted, I soon got ready to help them. I started visiting them and getting to know them more, as well as their needs. Soon, I started the classes, as a personal project. On a day of school with them, among Jessy's accounts, there was one that impressed me the most. When showing her Portuguese textbook to me, I couldn't understand many of the words she wrote, so I decided to ask and she replied with “I don't understand handwriting, I just copy what's on the board, I don't know what it is”.

This report by Jessy and Kethy's giving up on going to school led me to research that investigates the educational scenario of Congolese refugee children and adolescents in the municipality of Duque de Caxias-RJ, where there is a centralization of refugee students per school, carried out by Almeida (2017). Based on a bibliographic survey, interviews at *Cáritas Arquidiocesana do Rio de Janeiro* with the pedagogue, the psychologist, and the official interpreter of Congolese refugee mothers, and analysis of three documents that govern Brazilian education, two at the national level and one at the municipal level, Almeida (2017) reports that even if they manage to enroll, refugee students are deprived of assistance, and face difficulties in learning and insertion in the school environment.

One day, while she was teaching them, the mother came home a little early with her youngest daughter, so Niky took her notebook and took it to her mother, to ask for help. The mother looked at the notebook and told her daughter that she could not help as she did not understand what she had written there and asked her to ask her sisters. However, she came to me, asked me to read and explain to her, I stopped what I was doing with the others so I could help her.

After a few private lessons for the older daughters, I realized that the two had different needs. Kethy knew Portuguese nomenclatures, but could not interpret according to the discursive genre, unlike Jessy, who understood the message but did not understand what 'plural and simblular' were, as she said. Because of this, I decided to talk to the teacher who guided us in the classes in 2016, and at the time was also the coordinator of the IsF-PLA, to ask for help with the planning of the classes. So, after talking and presenting what had happened in the classes until then, we decided that it would be better to include more people in this pedagogical support action with the family. Then, a colleague of mine, who was already part of the IsF-PLA group, was invited to give tutoring lessons to one of the girls. To decide how the classes would take place, we paid a visit to their house at a later time so that everyone could be present. In this visit, many moments of prejudice that occurred within the school were reported by the girls and the mother (Field Diary, June 2017).

She (Jessy) says that the teacher calls her Turkish, then the other girls also call her that, she says it's okay, but soon her mother answers asking why she got mad the other day, complaining about it, she says it's because she is not Turkish, but Syrian. Her mom says she wanted to go complain to school about the teacher, but Jessy says she didn't want to because it was no big deal.

This excerpt is what Jessy tells us about a teacher who, in the classroom, calls her "Turkish". For Jessy, this mode of treatment causes discomfort and speeches like this one from a teacher made it possible for students to see an opening to do the same, without understanding how harmful this could be for their colleague. On the same day that we visited the family, Jessy reports something she went through at school: "I had to read a chapter of a book, but I stop reading, then they (colleagues) laugh, so I asked 'Niky ' read to me, I recorded (memorize), on the day I pretended I was reading" (Field diary, June 2017).

After this conversation with the family, we left a little exhausted, as there were many stories and our interlocutors demanded to be heard. The father didn't speak, he just listened,

the mother tried to understand and mediate, she had already commented a few times that the girls had the habit of fighting speaking in Portuguese, so she didn't understand.

In the same month that we made this visit, classes with a more individualized focus began. I continued teaching Kethy once we got close. My colleague stayed on as Jessy's teacher and so we split, focusing on each one's needs and teaching Portuguese as we studied materials from different subjects with them.

In this way, we head towards July, the vacation period. As we resumed classes, Kethy seemed even more unmotivated. I was also facing some problems, like the fact that everyone was home at the same time and Kethy couldn't keep her attention to what was being explained, in addition to her very relaxed and accommodating posture. So, we decided that it would be appropriate if the classes took place somewhere else, an alternative space to their home. The coordinating teacher of the IsF-PLA had the idea of asking for help from the Diocesan group located near the house where the family lived, seeking support with space to teach Kethy. I went to see the place and had the first conversation with two women responsible for the organ in Bagé. After contacting my teacher about the situation, space was given for me to teach classes.

However, Kethy only attended three classes and then started unchecking, saying she wasn't well, or just didn't show up. With that, I decided to talk to her. It was during this conversation that the young woman showed me pictures of her house and we had the conversation in the first paragraph of this article. This was the moment that most surprised me, it was when I started to question my teaching methods, what it's like to teach language to a girl with this emotional baggage, how it affected her at school, and her interaction with her classmates. Classes are back at the family home.

After that day, I had many questions, which remained until, during orientation, I decided to tell my concerns. Thus, my advisor noticed how much the term “reception” was repeated in our speeches, and, then, we started to think about the teaching of PLAc. After this conversation, I reached the moment of “comparison”, the hours of research on PLAc teaching were long, however, the results were few.

The social and emotional support of the daughters was revealed as an essential factor for the planning of classes. For Grosso (2010), “action-oriented, the host language has a know-how that contributes to real interaction, everyday life, living conditions, social conventions and others that can only be understood in a bidirectional relationship”. Often, a child's real social interaction is built in the school environment, and the reports by Kethy and Jessy showed that linguistic knowledge and cultural identity have become elements of

exclusion for their schoolmates. Thus, it was necessary to think about teaching-learning sensitive to the students' experiences.

Teaching Portuguese as a host language

It was already June when we resumed the follow-up project for Jessy. Since Kethy had stopped going to school classes a while ago and had no interest in going back. Once again, it was a request from the mother, as the school coordinator called her to warn her that Jessy was almost failing a grade and that she could lose her scholarship. So, I went to their house to talk to Jessy and try to understand what was going on. She showed me her diary, with several messages from the teachers to the parents, warning that the student did not do her homework, did not take her notebook to class, or simply did not respond to writing activities. Upon leaving the house, I went to the salon, their place of work, to talk. I started by asking if they read her schedule, her mother said she didn't understand the teachers' handwriting, Dad still couldn't read, so when I told him why Jessy might fail, I could see the frustration in Dad's eyes. He ran his hands through his hair, sat up, took a deep breath. Mom asked me if it was all the errands about it, and I said yes. Once again, I was able to witness in these parents a feeling of helplessness caused by a language barrier.

That same day, still during the conversation with Jessy, she told me that some girls, the same ones who call her “Turquinha⁶” at school, spread a speech that “she came to Brazil to steal our boyfriends”. The school's history teacher, realizing these conflicts, asked Jessy to do a work to present to her class. In this work, she would have to talk about her experience when she arrived in Brazil, what it was like to come here and explain what is happening in Syria, with a free writing part to deliver. Her dissatisfaction with the job was having to write. She said she could go up front and just talk and that's it. She also reported that she didn't understand very well what was happening in Syria, she knew it was a war, political conflicts, but she didn't understand why. So, I decided to work with Jessy to build a comic book that could tell her story.

The first class was based on the construction of characters, with readings and analysis of examples. In the second class, we worked on “who am I?”, when she would have to start building her character, describing herself physically and psychologically. The activity ended up being a homework assignment, as I was teaching her at her parents' hairdressing salon and, with the movement of people, she ended up getting very distracted. During this time in the

⁶ In English, *Little Turkish girl*.

hall, I could notice a few things. As her mother was in São Paulo buying merchandise that she resells at the boutique, her father was taking care of the salon and the boutique with the help of the girls. Customers would come in to look at the clothes and ask questions about prices. Jessy would ask her father in Arabic, who would also answer in Arabic, and Jessy would answer people in Portuguese. I witnessed some “grimaces” when listening to the Arabic language, perhaps because I could not identify the language or what was being said. However, a “prejudice” was evident when a customer came in very happy and asked the price of a piece of clothing. As usual, Jessy asked her father in Arabic. At that moment, the woman's smile disappeared, she made a “surprise face”, said she didn't need it anymore and left the store. On that day, it was repeated and confirmed that the (non) use of languages played a role in the construction of a language barrier (OLIVEIRA; SILVA, 2017) that indexes social prejudices, such as xenophobia.

As we were talking about her coming to Brazil, Jessy ended up saying that they didn't want to come to Brazil, especially Kethy, saying that “she gave a lot of trouble”, but didn't explain why. She said that she doesn't remember much, just that she cried a lot, whereas Niky, “she was very young and didn't know anything” (Field diary, July 2018). From this report, we are faced with a barrier pointed out by Amado (2013), in which the removal of affective and linguistic-cultural ties, in the case of Kethy, who had resistance to leave her country, can be a generating element of barriers in their participation in social life in the new context. In this sense, we understand that the PLAc concept should also consider children and adolescents and not just adults. Regardless of age, the foreigner will experience feelings of displacement associated with an affective demand for the reception that, in the case of younger people, can even be more violent, due to other processes in progress in their formation as a citizen.

At the same time, together with my teacher, we were trying to solve another problem for Kethy. She was already a year and a half without studying, she needed to return to her studies. Her mother had already tried to enroll in two schools, but she had not been successful and, during a conversation on July 3, 2018, she explained why Kethy was not enrolled. This narrative took place at a meeting at the Municipal Department of Education, with the presence of my advisor. The mother told of her dissatisfaction with her daughter without studying, how she went to school to register and it was all right for Kethy to start studying at EJA, but she was informed that there was an error: Kethy was not yet 15 years old and that could not do the EJA yet. She, however, did not understand, because for her Kethy is 15 years old, according to her culture and the way that, until then, they celebrated birthdays. Then, she understood the difference, which was a little complicated to explain to others, as well as those responsible,

who also had difficulties understanding, I don't know if it was due to a linguistic lack or because they came across a very different cultural aspect. They just said: “Okay, but how old is she really? Is there any document of her there so we can know her birthday?”.

Coincidentally, in the same month that we had this conversation, the mother brought us another demand. The family needed to go through the process of Ordinary Naturalization, and it had come into effect the New Migration Law – Law no. 13.445/2017 – article 12, II, among the changes, one made parents very concerned, the mandatory certification of proficiency in Portuguese (Celpe-Bras). The mother was asking for our help so that they could take this exam. She also informed us that other refugees, some from Palestine, wanted to participate in the course. In one meeting, my first officially as part of the IsF-PLA team, we discussed what should be done about the mother's request. At that time, the team was working with the exchange students of the Fulbright program - English Teaching Assistantship (ETAs) in partnership with Unipampa. So, we had to conciliate all the groups, according to the students' proficiency levels and schedules, as well as the availability of the teachers, who were students of the Unipampa degree course, scholarship holders, and volunteers from the IsF-PLA program.

I was responsible for the Familiarization course with Celpe-Bras, for the ETAs, the mother, and the other refugees. However, the mother ended up not going to the first classes because of the schedule, since she conflicted with her work period. The other refugees did not attend any class and the reasons were not explained. So, I started teaching the ETAs in the morning and teaching the mother at night. There were two classes per week, 2h/class for the exchange students, for the mother there were 1h30m classes. At this moment, I was able to go beyond the comparison of biographies and theoretical texts, I was able to actively witness the difference between teaching Portuguese to the exchange students' group and the refugee mother from Syria.

In addition to the literacy of discursive genres, it was also necessary to change the rhythm of the class, to bring examples of her daily life that involved her family, her work, and her experiences, which required getting to know her better. Another important point was to find myself calling the language “our”. At certain moments in a class, I found myself saying: “Our syllable is usually formed by a consonant and a vowel, but sometimes it is different”, “You realize that when we speak, we say the 'i' too, but to write it doesn't appear” (Recording of the class on September 24, 2018). In my Field Diary of this same class, I reflected: “In these moments I considered the 'we' and 'we', being me and the mother, but I am questioning if she also understood in this way”. Consequently, I began to pay attention to how the mother

referred to Portuguese. Going back to the recordings of other classes and other diaries, I realized that he was referring to the “language of you (Brazilians)”.

Meanwhile, at the beginning of September, Kethy turned 15 and her mother needed to enroll her in school. My guiding teacher accompanied them. Soon, the teacher told us about this day, how much her presence was necessary to mediate between the school coordinator and the mother. She also told us how Kethy's nervousness was noticeable before entering the room, as she started attending classes on the same day, and a hug between them made a lot of difference. And that's what she explained to the regent teacher of the class that Kethy would be a part of, that, at this moment, the important thing was the humanitarian reception, to make her feel included.

Regarding the other courses, during the weekly meetings, the reports of the other teachers contributed to reinforcing this difference that was already being built between the planning of classes for refugees and exchange students. The teacher of the IsF-PLA literacy course reported several times the moments of “conversation” she had with the students, the way she needed to know more about the culture, the experiences, getting to know their daily lives, and this helped her to plan the lessons since she adapted the classroom practices to the students' needs. Another teacher on the team, who taught Portuguese to a family of Venezuelan refugees, said it was important to talk before classes or at the end, as these moments became determining factors for the planning of classes, as they revealed life issues put on the agenda by the students. students, without the thematic induction of the teacher.

The teachers of the youngest girls from the Syrian family, at Clube do Livro, gave reports very similar to the ones I did, when I started teaching Jessy and Kethy, in 2017. They commented on how the attitudes of some teachers at the school generated an erasure of the girls' identity as foreigners. As for Kethy's tutoring, they were given by a teacher from Unipampa, from the Chemistry Degree course, who joined the group because Kethy was very fond of science. The teacher was sensitized to the context and offered to help her. Even though the classes were focused on the school's syllabus, in this intervention the main thing ended up being to work on self-esteem through reading practices sensitive to the student's culture.

On the first day of October 2018, applications for the Celpe-Bras Exam began. As we suggested to the family, they did not participate in this application, but they would do so next year, as they would be more prepared and Unipampa de Bagé would already be an Application Station. On October 3rd, a new change was published about the documentation required for Ordinary Naturalization, the Celpe-Bras exam being no longer mandatory, but

any course and diploma recognized by the Ministry of Education that proves the applicant's ability to communicate in Portuguese. The preparatory classes for Celpe-Bras were concluded, but the Literacy Course and the Book Club continued, even if only with Niky, since Jessy decided to stop, just as Kethy stopped going to the reinforcement classes. The mother also stopped going to the Celpe-Bras Familiarization classes. She explained that she was out of time and needed to take care of the boutique, the salon, and the house.

Four years after arriving in Brazil, the father and the bricklayer wrote, in the Literacy course, their first words, their first sentences, and produced texts related to the world of work. Two years, one month, and twenty-four days have passed since my first and only class with them. That's right, “with them” and not “for them”, because I realized that in all the teaching moments reported here, I also assumed the role of a student. Only in this way was it possible to reach what we can now call “reception” (Field diary, October 22, 2016).

I learned many things during all this work, I think that is what being a teacher is, reinventing yourself, always learning, it's an exchange of knowledge. I understood the importance of dialogue between teacher and student, listening and rethinking are part of the profession. A unique and incredible experience, I will never forget my first students, my first challenges, mistakes, and successes, in this world that there is still so much to explore.

Final considerations

Our ethnographic narrative shows that, initially, we sought to teach Portuguese as an additional language, a proposal that considers social practice, to promote the increase of the student's performance within the society in which he lives (SCHLATTER; GARCEZ, 2009, p. 134-135, our translation). We went through challenges such as the insertion of students' need for linguistic knowledge aimed at the immediate use of the language in daily practice. The moments of estrangement (FONSECA, 1999) were extremely important to lead us to questions, searches, and reflections about teaching for this specific target audience, refugees.

Already sensitized, throughout the second period of the narrative, it was possible to establish a relationship with the family, which allowed the author-teacher to get to know them and accompany them. In this process of approximation, the author-teacher experienced what Fonseca (1999) puts it as moments of “deconstruction” and “comparison”. It was also during this period that we began to establish an institutional link with the IsF Program, through support actions by the IsF-PLA Group.

The ethnographic narrative registered changes in the teaching perspective implemented by the teachers, who came to know the contexts of refugee students, their experiences, and needs. Thus, the field experience impacted the education processes of Portuguese teachers for foreigners, influencing their planning and actions. The affective component of students and their social integration came to be considered as important as their linguistic and cultural learning. This care can be seen both in the practices of the author-teacher and in the reports of the other teachers of the IsF-PLA Group.

With this, it was possible to identify even more the need for specific teaching and learning for refugees, in which their teachers can reflect on displacement experiences and associate them with their pedagogical practices. Thus, for this profile of students, we chose to adopt the PLAc concept, in the perspective of being attentive to the psychosocial and cultural processes involved in the learning of Portuguese by these groups. In addition, the teaching of PLAc led us to know more specifically the needs of students, to accompany them, and to understand that our actions are actions of social justice since we seek to collaborate with language teaching focused on the first moments of life for refugees in the new country.

In this context, we understand that the teaching of PLAc presents a humanistic power for dialogue, which is not restricted to learning that tries to objectify the “language”. Based on the experience with PLAc, the refugee learner may be able, in his way and whenever he wants, to make Portuguese his additional language, in the sense of Schlatter and Garcez (2009), a language that he recognizes as his own; that not only welcomes in urgency, but that can “expand its performance through the understanding of the society in which it lives” (SCHLATTER; GARCEZ, 2009, p. 134-135, our translation).

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