# CONTRAST AND INTERLINGUISTIC AWARENESS IN PORTUGUESE FOR SPANISH SPEAKERS IN THE LIGHT OF THE COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR LANGUAGES

## CONTRASTE E CONSCIÊNCIA INTERLINGUÍSTICA EM PORTUGUÊS PARA FALANTES DE ESPANHOL À LUZ DO QUADRO COMUM EUROPEU DE REFERÊNCIA

## CONTRASTE Y CONCIENCIA INTERLINGÜISTICA EN EL PORTUGUÉS PARA HABLANTES DE ESPAÑOL A LA LUZ DEL MARCO COMÚN EUROPEO DE REFERENCIA

María Rocío ALONSO REY[1]
e-mail: rocioalonsorey@usal.es

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**Deputy Executive Editor**: Prof. Dr. José Anderson Santos Cruz

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[1] University of Salamanca (USAL), Faculty of Philology, Salamanca – Spain. Associate Professor in the Department of Modern Philology (Portuguese Area).

**ABSTRACT**: The learning of closely related languages presents its characteristics, when preparing and managing learning situations, particular methodological solutions are chosen, different from those used with speakers of distant languages. This paper reviews the notions of contrast and awareness of difference in Portuguese for Spanish Speakers (PSS) and the Common European Framework of Reference (2001, 2020) to determine the coverage that the latter gives to the field. The results show that they use similar and compatible concepts, but the CEFR has some gaps in productive skills and the PHE regarding receptive skills.

**KEYWORDS**: Contrast. Metalinguistic awareness. Portuguese for Spanish speakers. Portuguese for Hispanic speakers. Common European Framework of Reference.

*RESUMO: A aprendizagem de línguas próximas possui caraterísticas próprias que fazem com que na hora de preparar e gerir as situações de aprendizagem se opte por soluções metodológicas particulares, diferentes das usadas com falantes de línguas mais distantes. Este trabalho revisa as noções de contraste e a consciência da diferença no âmbito do Português para Falantes de Espanhol (PFE) e no Quadro Comum Europeu de Referência para as Línguas (2001, 2020) para determinar a cobertura que este dá à especialidade. Os resultados mostram que usam conceitos semelhantes e compatíveis, mas o Quadro apresenta algumas lacunas em relação com as habilidades produtivas e o PFE com as habilidades receptivas.*

*PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Contraste. Consciência metalinguística. Português para falantes de espanhol. Português para hispanos falantes. Quadro comum Europeu de Referência.*

*RESUMEN: El aprendizaje de lenguas próximas presenta características propias que hacen que, a la hora de preparar y gestionar las situaciones de aprendizaje, se opte por soluciones metodológicas particulares, diferentes de las usadas con hablantes de lenguas más distantes. Este trabajo revisa las nociones de contraste y conciencia de la diferencia en el ámbito del Portugués para Hablantes de Español (PHE) y en el Marco Común Europeo de Referencia (2001, 2020) para determinar la cobertura que este último da a la especialidad. Los resultados muestran que usan conceptos semejantes y compatibles pero el Marco presenta algunas lagunas en relación con las habilidades productivas y el PHE en cuanto a las habilidades receptivas.*

*PALABRAS CLAVE: Contraste. Conciencia metalingüística. Portugués para hablantes de español. Portugués para hispanohablantes. Marco Común Europeo de Referencia.*

## Introduction

Portuguese for Spanish Speakers (PFE) is a field or area of knowledge (SCARAMUCCI, 2013; SIMÕES *et al.*, 2004) that, within the scope of Portuguese as a Foreign Language, investigates the process of teaching and learning the Portuguese language by students whose native or additional language is Spanish. As a field of knowledge, it is based on the fact that Spanish speakers (ES) have specific characteristics in their learning process, different from those found in speakers of more distant languages. Among the experts who have synthesized these characteristics of ES learning are Almeida (1995), who reflects globally on the difficulties experienced by these learners, Simões and colleagues (2004), who provide a synthesis of the former, and Alonso (2012), who systematizes the specifics from a psycholinguistic perspective (Table 1).

**Table 1** - Specificities in Portuguese learning for Spanish speakers

| *Process* | *Highlights* | *Unfavorable Aspects* |
|---|---|---|
| Comprehension | High comprehension ability | No perception of differential elements |
| Knowledge Construction | Extensive use of overlapping knowledge in both languages: positive transfer. | Use of non-shared knowledge between the two languages: negative transfer. |
| Production | High production capacity | Spanish interference |
| Progression | Rapid initial development | Early fossilization or progression stagnation. |

Source: adapted from Alonso (2012)

Considering these characteristics, methodological proposals for PFE teaching have been fundamentally focused on avoiding Spanish interference (as L1 or L2) in production and negative transfer processes[2] in the construction of interlanguage. The emphasis is on addressing the differences between the linguistic systems of both languages and how to approach them in the classroom. Two aspects are central in these proposals: contrast and awareness of differences.

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[2] Following Alonso (2012), a distinction is made between interference in production as a phenomenon of competition between units or rules from both languages and transfer as the use of knowledge from Spanish (as L1 or L2) in the learning or using the target language. The first involves effective contact or knowledge of certain differences but entails inappropriate selection. The second involves a lack of knowledge or access to forms of the target language.

On the other hand, PFE has encountered some challenges in adapting to the Communicative Approach, a type of teaching that has not aligned well with this group's learning process's peculiarities. Evidence of this can be found in both the direct testimonials of some experts and the need for a specific methodology or one with specificities for PFE (LOMBELLO *et al.* 1983; ALMEIDA, 1995; GRANNIER, 2002, 2014; ALONSO, 2020).

The publication and implementation of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) in 2001 entailed, in the European context, a shift in methodological orientation. The CEFR is committed to an "action-oriented approach," transcending the communicative approach proposed in the mid-1970s. While maintaining its communicative orientation, wherein language is considered a means of communication rather than a subject to be studied, it moves away from programs based on a linear progression of linguistic structures or a set of functions and notions. Instead, it adopts programs based on needs analysis and oriented toward real-life tasks. Starting with a description of language use and learning, it defines aspects of language proficiency in terms of what the learner can do (can do) in the different categories of this description.

This study assumes that the CEFR is a descriptive and propositional document that explicitly does not endorse any teaching methodology, so the specific treatment proposed by PFE would not encounter obstacles. However, the Framework presents itself as an approach with a certain view of language and its learning, in which PFE may find better or worse accommodation, as initially happened with communicative teaching.

The overall objective of this work is to determine whether the Framework's stance encompasses the treatment proposed by PFE in terms of contrast and awareness of difference. The following research questions are posed:

- - In what words does the CEFR position these notions?
- - Are they compatible with the PFE's view, i.e., its interpretation of the teaching and learning process?
- - Are they integrated in a sufficiently operational manner for the teaching of closely related languages?

The notions of contrast and awareness of difference in PFE are first reviewed to achieve this. These are then located and delimited in the CEFR (CONSEJO DE EUROPA, 2001, 2020), and their compatibility and suitability for this field are assessed.

## The Contrastive Perspective in PFE

The contrastive perspective can be traced back to the early works related to PFE (see SIMÕES *et al.* 2004, p. 22) and is linked to Contrastive Analysis (CA) and the postulates of Lado (1957). The fundamental assumption is that the most effective materials are those based on a scientific description of the target language compared to the student's language. This assumption is grounded in a learning perspective in which an individual transfers the forms and meanings of their language and culture and their distribution to a foreign language and culture. Based on this mechanism, it would be possible to predict and describe the structures that will pose difficulties in language learning and those that will not.

Tarquínio (1977) represents the original CA perspective and structuralist teaching methods. Starting from the premise that by explicating differential elements, the student can theoretically avoid errors, he aims to alert the student in the early classes to the interferences that occur and anticipate them, demonstrating differences each time an element is introduced in texts.

Other authors also adopt a contrastive perspective based on CA, although they distance themselves from its teaching proposal (structuralist) or learning approaches (behaviorist). Garrison (1979) is an example; without explicit adherence to any learning theory, he proposes an approach based on his classroom experience, which involves a direct comparison of the two systems in the classroom to present differences, with an orientation close to the classical grammatical method.

Since the late 1970s, several authors have positioned themselves, from a learning perspective, within the scope of Interlanguage Theory. Azevedo (1978), for instance, suggests complementing contrastive analysis with Error Analysis (EA) without losing sight of the content and, in particular, what he calls "areas of resistance," where errors are particularly persistent. He focuses on establishing problematic areas, i.e., selecting content based on contrastive analysis.

This theoretical position has endured in PFE in the subsequent decades and is characterized by (1) abandoning the behaviorist theory of learning, such as habit formation and based on the transfer mechanism, while not relinquishing contrastive analysis; (2) advocating the use of error analysis as a way to verify the practical occurrence of deviations in the differential aspects between languages.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the idiosyncrasies of the learning process for Spanish-speaking learners led to the idea that Portuguese courses for Spanish speakers should differ from courses for other foreign learners (ALMEIDA, 1995; LOMBELLO, 1983; LOMBELLO *et al.*, 1983; PATROCÍNIO; COLÍN, 1990) and the contrastive perspective is maintained under the premises of the weak version of Contrastive Analysis (CA) by Wardhaugh (1970). In this view, CA would serve to focus on areas of difficulty in course preparation, aided by Error Analysis (EA), and to detect whether these errors are caused by the native language (LOMBELLO, 1983; LOMBELLO *et al.*, 1983; SANTOS, 1998).

Other authors advocating the contrastive perspective adhere to the moderate version of CA (ALMEIDA, 1995; PLETSCH, 1993; FERREIRA, 1997). The learning process is understood as a creative phenomenon, wherein there is a process of comparing patterns of the L1, resulting in potential interferences and intralinguistic phenomena.

Thus, CA is considered in its explanatory role (rather than predictive) and as a precautionary measure to avoid misinterpretations of linguistic data (ALMEIDA, 1995; JORDÃO, 1991). Furthermore, its use in content development is conceived as an economical form of learning by focusing on differential aspects, assuming that similarities are visible to the learner (ALMEIDA, 1995; JORDÂNIA, 1991; PLETSCH, 1993). This results in intensive or accelerated courses for this group of students.

Entering the 21st century, interest in CA remains on the same terms. The transfer is a recognizable phenomenon in learners' production (though not the only one), and some experts go beyond its use in content development, proposing its explicit use in the classroom (JENSEN, 2004; AKERBERG, 2004; ALONSO, 2012, 2020; BATEMAN, 2017).

However, some authors challenge the restrictive use of CA as a content selection tool, considering that both convergent and divergent aspects should be incorporated into the content to be worked on in the classroom (SANTOS; SILVA, 2004; ALONSO, 2020; BATEMAN, 2017; CHILD, 2013).

In summary, the contrastive perspective is teacher-oriented, focusing on the teacher's intervention to help overcome the difficulties that the learner experiences in the areas of divergence between the two languages. The role of Contrastive Analysis (CA) relates to the approach or treatment of content the teacher selects to bring to the classroom and its explanatory potential for the difference. Similarly, these proposals are constructed from a comparative analysis of the two languages, from which a set of differential aspects is extracted to be explored in the classroom. This treatment does not necessarily exclude similar aspects, at least in more

recent approaches, and the differential aspect can be explicitly worked on in the classroom or as supplementary material outside the classroom or be indicative and used implicitly through exposure and activities. However, the current dimension of the contrastive perspective cannot be understood without the shift in orientation that occurred in the 1990s regarding the differential aspects between the two languages.

## Awareness of differences in PFE

In general, in the 1990s and early 21st century, the contrast began to be reinterpreted from the learner's perspective. A change may be associated with adopting and consolidating the communicative approach to language teaching. In this perspective, the focus is no longer on the teacher using CA to show the differentials but on the student being aware of the differences between the two languages. The tool to achieve these differences continues to be contrasted, but the focus shifts from its role in teaching to its role in the learning process. Fundamentally, contrast, used as a pedagogical tool, allows drawing attention to the divergences between languages and arousing awareness of the difference, which is often not assumed or visible to these learners.

In Almeida's (1995, p. 18, our translation) words, "At the level of awareness, the use of salient contrastive aspects between the two languages can be used to change a sense of differentiation that is numbed in the face of neighboring languages". It also suggests that awareness of the nature of proximal aspects, misleading beliefs, and stereotypes about language should be achieved by openly raising the issue with students or through specific materials. This would lead to a re-sensitization to the differential characteristics of Portuguese (see also AKERBERG 2004; GRANNIER, 2000, 2004, 2014; JENSEN, 2004; SIMÕES *et al.*, 2004a). Awareness of the difference would be developed in the classroom from the differential aspects that would be explicitly addressed (AKERBERG, 2004, 2017; GRANNIER, 2004; JENSEN, 2004).

This aspect is also related to the ability to manage learning and the pursuit of self-awareness about the conditions or functioning of language (ALMEIDA, 2004; SIMÕES *et al.*, 2004a), in other words, awareness of the difference is interpreted in terms of metalinguistic awareness.

According to Carvalho and Silva (2008), learners with Spanish as their L1, in controlled tasks, rely on Spanish intuitively, yielding less precise results than learners with Spanish as their L2, who exhibit a higher level of metalinguistic attention and use that knowledge. In a

case study, Alonso (2016) also observes that in production activities, L1 Spanish speakers do not extensively utilize their metalinguistic and interlinguistic knowledge in electronic editing and production control processes.

Consequently, it is considered necessary to draw the learner's attention to the non-salient formal aspects of the target language through metalinguistic explanations, stimulating the ability to abstract the rules and principles of the target language. This way, they can extract points of convergence and divergence (ALONSO, 2020; CARVALHO; SILVA, 2008; CARVALHO *et al.*, 2010; CRIANÇA, 2013).

In summary, it is understood that the learner's metalinguistic awareness consists of the ability to extract information about the functioning of the language from linguistic data. One of the mechanisms or operations would be comparison with available knowledge, for example, from other languages and, in this specific case, from Spanish. Therefore, Awareness of difference is the ability to perceive convergent and divergent aspects. The result of this comparison operation can allow the inference of rules, i.e., making explicit knowledge about the language, interlinguistic, and contrastive knowledge when aspects are divergent.

In learners of Portuguese as a Foreign Language (Spanish/Spanish speakers), this ability to recognize differences is not always activated, either due to the phenomenon of undifferentiated perception (see Table 1), because the linguistic aspect is not salient or visible, or because the skill is not sufficiently developed (for example, in the case of L1 FE versus L2 FE).

It is proposed, therefore, to stimulate the comparison of the target language with the native language to (1) develop interlinguistic capacity, i.e., as training in the ability to recognize similarities and differences between languages, and (2) offer or bring to interlinguistic knowledge resulting from this operation into awareness.

It is assumed that these insights will impact their interlanguage and, consequently, on reception and production processes that mobilize available linguistic knowledge. This impact extends to the strategic dimension of these processes, particularly in control and repair operations.

Contrast is a metalinguistic operation based on comparison, a cognitive process in which the learner relates data from two languages. The result provides information about convergences and divergences between them, from which similar or different functioning can be inferred, likely to become interlinguistic knowledge. The teacher can anticipate this

operation through contrastive analysis in lesson preparation to explore these contents and guide the student in developing this process.

## The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Contextualization

Contrast and awareness of difference are related to the notion of multilingualism within the Framework. This concept and multiculturalism are part of the plurilingual dimension of communicative competence and are introduced in section 1.3 of the 2001 CEFR. Initially underdeveloped, this notion is revisited in the complementary volume (CONSEJO DE EUROPA, 2020, p. 39-40), where its theoretical basis is expanded and defined in more detail, and three specific scales for this competence are developed.

In general terms, the notion of plurilingualism is defined in opposition to multilingualism. The latter refers to the coexistence of different languages at a social or individual level, while plurilingualism refers to a user or learner's dynamic and evolving linguistic repertoire (CONSEJO DE EUROPA, 2020, p. 39). This perspective implies a shift in the view of the purpose of language teaching, as it aims to develop "communicative competence in which all linguistic knowledge and experiences contribute, and languages relate to each other and interact" (CONSEJO DE EUROPA, 2001, p. 4, our translation). A conception more in line with an increasingly diverse and interconnected social reality.

The Framework presupposes that "all linguistic knowledge and experience contribute to the development of communicative competence" (CONSEJO DE EUROPA, 2020, p. 137, our translation), making it compatible with the perspective of PFE that posits a set of characteristics of FE that, based on the proximity of languages, facilitate learning.

Multilingual competence is defined as the ability to flexibly use an interrelated, irregular, and multilingual repertoire for various purposes; of these, three explicitly mention the use of previous languages (CONSEJO DE EUROPA, 2020, p. 39):

1. Using knowledge of different languages (or dialects or linguistic varieties) to understand a text;

2. Recognizing words from an international common background that appear in a new form;

3. Contributing with one's entire linguistic baggage, experimenting with alternative forms of expression.

Thus, plurilingual competence implies, among other things, three skills or "can do" with the mediation of a source language, occurring in communication actions and characterized by being associated with reception processes (1,2) and production (3).

## The notions of interlinguistic awareness and contrast in the Framework

PFE understands interlinguistic awareness as a type of metalinguistic awareness that involves the ability to perceive convergent and divergent aspects, requiring attention or alertness to the functioning of systems. The Framework refers to this notion on several occasions. One of them is to indicate the effects or reasons for promoting multilingualism: "It produces a better perception of the general and specific aspects of the linguistic organization of different languages (a form of metalinguistic, interlinguistic, or, so to speak, 'hyper linguistic' awareness)" (CONSEJO DE EUROPA, 2020, p. 40, our translation).

It is a metalinguistic awareness because it is related to linguistic organization but refers to "different languages," hence called interlinguistic or hyperlinguistic (when it encompasses more than one language pair). The use of expressions like "a form of" and "so to speak" in formulating this concept is noteworthy. However, it later opts to use linguistic/plurilingual and cultural/pluricultural awareness (CONSEJO DE EUROPA, 2020, p.18).

Therefore, it is understood that the CEFR understands interlinguistic awareness as the perception of organization in different languages. However, it does not specify whether this awareness is only perception or results in some operational knowledge.

In contrast, in PFE it is understood as a metalinguistic operation of comparison (related to interlinguistic awareness) from which it is possible to determine coincident and divergent aspects and, ultimately, infer the differences between languages, constituting interlinguistic knowledge.

In the Framework, there are several references to this operation, such as "the ability to approach the 'otherness' to identify similarities and differences" (CONSEJO DE EUROPA, 2020, p. 137, our translation) or

> "The ability to be proactive and use the knowledge of certain languages to understand new languages, seeking cognates and internationalisms to make sense of texts in unfamiliar languages, while being aware of the danger of false friends" (CONSEJO DE EUROPA, 2020, p. 138, our translation).

This operation is characterized by serving communication, and more specifically, the communicative process it is oriented towards is reception. In other words, the comparison/contrast operation is performed in contact with linguistic data for comprehension.

On the other hand, it explicitly mentions two procedures based on this operation: the search for cognates and awareness of the danger of false friends. The first is the comparative operation, the second may be related to the alertness or awareness of the possibility of divergence in PFE.

Another mention of this comparison operation is reported in the Council of Europe (2020, p. 38, our translation) regarding the implications of multilingualism on the roles of the student and the teacher: "It means allowing them to use, when necessary, all their language resources, encouraging them to see similarities and regularities, as well as differences between languages and cultures."

Thus, the contrast appears in the Framework as part of a broader, comparatively grounded process for perceiving differences and similarities, with the object being language resources (as well as cultural aspects). It is an operation performed by the learner in reception processes.

The comparison operation is clearly explained and involves the search for similar forms in two languages to attribute meaning or value to them. Regarding divergences, on the one hand, there is talk of "awareness of danger" or awareness of non-correspondence; on the other hand, there is an operation to identify differences between the two languages, which would be contrasting.

### Interlinguistic Awareness and Contrast in the Framework Scales.

The next part of the analysis focuses on the Framework scales to determine if the reflection of these notions in the descriptors is operational for the teaching/learning of PFE. The complementary volume proposes three scales of multilingual and multicultural competence (CONSELHO DA Europa, 2020, p. 137): using the multicultural repertoire, multilingual understanding, and the multilingual repertoire. The last two are reviewed.

In the Multilingual Comprehension Scale (CONSEJO DE EUROPA, 2020, p. 140-141) the main notion upon which the descriptors are built is the ability to use knowledge and proficiency in one or more languages as support to access texts in other languages and achieve a communicative goal. As key concepts related to the studied notions, it specifically

contemplates "making use of similarities, recognizing false friends," the comparison/contrast operation.

It is also indicated that the scale progression should be graded based on two aspects (see Table 2):

- The type of linguistic resource it applies to, namely lexical for A1, grammatical and functional for B1, and textual for B2;

- The complexity of the operation, which would be recognizing similarity in A1, as opposed to contrast in B1 and B2, considers the latter as a "more analytical skill" that "exploits similarities" (CONSEJO DE EUROPA, 2020, p. 141, our translation).

**Table 2 -** Comparison/Contrast Operation in the Multilingual Comprehension Scale

| A1 | Recognizes internationalisms and common words/signs in *different languages (...)* |
|---|---|
| A2 | - |
| B1 | Recognizes similarities and contrasts in how concepts are expressed in *different languages* to distinguish between identical uses of the same word/sign and "false friends." They use their contrastive knowledge of grammatical structures and functional expressions in *languages in their multilingual repertoire* to facilitate understanding. |
| B2 | They use their knowledge about contrasting textual genre conventions and patterns in the *languages of their multilingual repertoire* to facilitate understanding. |

Source: Adapted from the Council of Europe (2020)

A1, therefore, includes the ability to make comparisons between languages that facilitate the transfer of word meanings from their form, i.e., recognizing coincidence or establishing identity, accompanied by the transfer of meaning. At the B1 level, the contrast operation is added to the previous one, making it possible to distinguish differential uses (false friends) from identical services. Furthermore, this operation is extended to grammatical and functional elements. Finally, at the B2 level, the contrast operation is extended to discursive competence.

In summary, the ability to perform contrast and its use for comprehension is associated with the B1/B2 level. This "more analytical" or complex operation involves detecting divergences and recognizing differences in meaning/related values.

However, a new dimension of contrast is introduced here, substantiated by the expression "makes use/uses their contrastive knowledge" contained in the descriptors of B1 and B2. In Section 2.2, it was argued that the concept of multilingual or interlinguistic awareness and contrast was not explicitly associated with interlinguistic knowledge. Therefore, it is in the

multilingual comprehension scale that this notion is introduced, and the existence and use of this knowledge in receptive processes are contemplated.

The other scale of multilingual competence in which the notions of contrast and awareness of difference would fit is that of leveraging the multilingual repertoire developed by the Council of Europe (2020, p. 141-142). This scale contemplates the learner's ability to use all linguistic resources to communicate effectively in a multilingual context and in the classic mediation situation where others do not share a common language. This scale measures the practical and functional capacity to take advantage of the multilingual, although it mainly focuses on code-switching or alternation and would involve some metalinguistic, adaptive, and anticipatory reasoning, as described in the Framework.

The only allusion to comparison/contrast operations is C2: "Explores similarities and differences between metaphors and other stylistic language figures in the *languages of their multilingual repertoire* for rhetorical effect or fun."

As seen, the Framework provides a very partial and restricted development of the multilingual repertoire. Only multilingual and mediating contexts are considered, significantly limiting the potential for interlinguistic awareness and derived knowledge (interlinguistic knowledge) by not considering other linguistic contexts and activities.

There may also be issues with the notion of code-switching. On the one hand, it distinguishes between intentional uses of L1 forms (code-switching) and cases of undifferentiated use of the two systems (interference), particularly at lower levels, where the Framework affects its use in the face of knowledge gaps to ensure communication.

## Final considerations

Regarding the first two questions posed, namely, how the CEFR proposes the notions of contrast and awareness of difference and whether they are compatible with the perspective of PFE, i.e., with its interpretation of the teaching and learning process, it is concluded that similar and compatible concepts are used.

Regarding the notion of awareness of difference, in the Framework, it is understood as the perception of organization in different languages. Implicitly, this awareness or perception is assumed to result in some interlinguistic knowledge (reflected in the descriptors). A similar view is found in PFE, so there would be no problem in terms of conceptual compatibility.

Regarding contrast, the Framework is framed as part of a broader, comparative-based process for perceiving differences and similarities concerning linguistic resources (as well as

cultural aspects), and it is an operation performed by the learner in receptive processes. PFE also shares this view but has traditionally focused more on the ability to perceive differences.

On the other hand, the operation of contrast seems to be associated with two distinct approaches: the identification of differences (in the same terms as similarities are identified) and the "awareness of danger," that is, as an alert to non-correspondence or awareness of the possibility of divergence. Both notions are also addressed in PFE.

Regarding the third question, i.e., whether they are sufficiently integrated for teaching closely related languages, the scale of "Exploration of the multilingual repertoire" presents some problematic aspects. Its development is partial and restricted, as only multilingual and mediating contexts are considered, so the potential for interlinguistic awareness and knowledge in other contexts and language activities is not explored. On the other hand, code-switching is problematic for closely related languages, especially at lower levels, as it is not always distinguishable from transfer phenomena.

In conclusion, the position of the CEFR (CONSEJO DE EUROPA, 2001, 2020) encompasses the treatment proposed by PFE regarding contrast and awareness of difference at a conceptual level. However, it poses some operational problems, particularly with the scale of leveraging the multilingual repertoire. However, as the Framework itself points out:

> They are illustrative scales in that they are examples and not unbreakable rules, but also because they only offer illustrations at different levels of competence in the respective area. On the other hand, they focus on new and salient aspects without providing an exhaustive description of all relevant elements; they are open and incomplete scales (CONSEJO DE EUROPA, 2020, p. 53, our translation).

Expanding the scale of use would involve the inclusion of descriptors that develop this operation in other productive processes and contexts, ultimately expanding the functionality of multilingual competence in the Council of Europe (2020, p. 39, our translation). Just as is proposed for comprehension, "drawing on knowledge of different languages (...) understanding a text," it is also a matter of considering that this knowledge is operative for production, expanding its functionality beyond a mere resource for "[experimenting with] alternative forms of expression."

Regarding pedagogical and research implications, it is observed in the Practice of Teaching Portuguese as a Foreign Language (PFE) that contrast and awareness of difference are predominantly directed towards production, specifically towards knowledge construction and mitigating interference errors. On the other hand, in the Framework, these elements are

primarily associated with receptive processes. The intention is to strengthen the proposals of PFE regarding these processes, an area traditionally neglected.

Similarly, due to its focus on interference and productive skills, PFE has neglected contrast, the general process in which it is embedded—namely, comparison and exploration of similarities—taking this part of the process for granted and resolving.

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