

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE DIVIDE: AN ANALYSIS OF TEXTBOOKS FOR TEACHING PORTUGUESE AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

CISÃO ENTRE LÍNGUA E LITERATURA: UMA ANÁLISE DE LIVROS DIDÁTICOS DE PORTUGUÊS COMO LÍNGUA ADICIONAL

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the use of literary texts in three textbooks of Portuguese as an additional language (PAL) adopted by universities in the United States. Specifically, it aims to answer the following research questions: 1) How do the activities based on literary texts promote communication in the target language? 2) What opportunities do the activities offer for the development of literary literacy? 3) How is culture approached in the activities? To address these questions, we consider the following criteria of qualitative analysis: first, modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational), extended discourse, and grammar; second, basic steps of development of literary literacy (i.e., motivation, introduction, and interpretation) and diversity of texts; third, cultural products, practices, perspectives, and the notion of interculturality. Results indicate the textbooks incorporate most aspects examined but inconsistently and in relatively low number of activities.

Keywords: Portuguese as an additional language; literary texts; communication; literary literacy; culture.

RESUMO

Neste estudo, analisamos a abordagem de textos literários em três livros didáticos de Português como língua adicional (PLA) utilizados em três universidades norte-americanas. Especificamente, objetivamos responder às seguintes perguntas de pesquisa: 1) Como as atividades baseadas nos textos literários promovem a comunicação na língua-alvo? 2) Que oportunidades as atividades oferecem para o desenvolvimento do letramento literário? 3) Como as atividades abordam aspectos culturais relacionados aos textos literários? Para responder a essas perguntas, consideramos os seguintes critérios de análise qualitativa: primeiro, modos de comunicação (interpessoal, interpretativo e apresentacional), discurso expandido e gramática; segundo, passos básicos para o desenvolvimento do letramento literário (motivação, introdução e interpretação); terceiro, produtos, práticas, perspectivas culturais e a noção de interculturalidade. Os resultados indicam que os livros didáticos incorporam a maioria dos aspectos examinados, porém de forma inconsistente e em número relativamente pequeno de atividades.

Palavras-chave: Português como língua adicional; textos literários; comunicação; letramento literário; cultura.

INTRODUCTION

Foreign language learning in higher education in the United States is characterized by a divide in departments due to the general lack of dialogue or collaboration that occurs between literature and pedagogy scholars (Montgomery; Nielson, 2019). The structure of departments in many universities favors this divide by establishing separate work groups around these two areas. Such disconnection reduces the odds of interdisciplinary approaches in teaching and isolates professors in their fields who are trying to help students develop language proficiency. This article is based on the premise that the current divide between literature and language instruction is not beneficial to student learning. Additionally, we argue that literary texts can be effectively incorporated in language classes when teaching is based on three important aspects: communication, literary literacy, and culture.

In this study, we are specifically interested in the context of Portuguese as an additional language (PAL) at the university level in the United States, which is where most PAL programs are concentrated in the country. We focus on how three intermediate Portuguese textbooks adopted by major PAL programs in one western and two eastern universities approach the teaching of literary texts. To that end, we look at the following aspects, which were previously mentioned: communication, literacy, and culture. Our research questions are: 1) How do

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the activities based on literary texts in the textbooks promote communication in the target language? 2) What opportunities do the activities offer for the development of literary literacy? and 3) How is culture approached in the activities?

The advantages of studying literature are established and defended in countless studies. Cosson (2021) argues in favor of the “humanizing” potential of reading literature as well as the construction of subjectivities, the development of higher reasoning, an aesthetic sensibility, a mastery of language, and the development of empathy, among other desirable outcomes. Studies such as that by Julie Sellers (2021) also present the advancement of empathetic skills by students exposed to systematic literature study as a measurable result. It is also argued that literary texts bring readers closer to diverse life experiences (Silva, 2019), mobilize intercultural knowledge and awaken individuals to collective or individual interventions, and other consequences of political reach. And major intellectuals such as Barthes (1980) and Cândido (2004) argue in their writings that literature improves individuals’ attitudes on a personal and social level.

To this extent, the choice of what texts to include in university coursework has indisputable importance. Recent studies discuss the urgency of expanding the presence of peripheral and subaltern voices in all levels of the educational system (Machado; Soares, 2021). For centuries, literature in school was tied to authors and works considered canonical, classical, and at times universal. The shift suggested by Machado and Soares (2021) aims to bring to students and readers a wider set of world perspectives, life experiences (albeit fictional), and social issues. The selection of authors and texts and whether they can be considered canonical or socially and critically marginalized is one of the aspects we comment on in this article. We highlight what texts are presented in the textbooks, their relation to the canon, and give suggestions for how they can be explored in class.

Regarding the linguistic or proficiency approach to literature, Ferradas (2009) argues that literary texts provide meaningful context to new vocabulary and language structures, facilitate the progress of interpretation skills, give access to new sociocultural meanings, elicit critical and personal responses, and more. But the use of literature to promote language learning with a focus on vocabulary and grammar is only one of the many advantages of the inclusion of literary texts into language teaching programs. Viewing literary pieces as models of good language use was common in the past, but teaching literature has changed considerably over the past few centuries (Cosson, 2021). Today, language instructors often draw from researchers in pedagogy.

Literature has been often used in PAL classes to practice text comprehension and interpretation, explore specific linguistic traits, and foster communication in the classroom (Gonçalves, 2019). Grammar and vocabulary activities, culture contextualization, discussions, oral presentations, and writing prompts that stem from topics examined in literary pieces are all possible ways to draw on these texts for language teaching, according to Gonçalves, who also observed instructors’ efforts to highlight the aesthetic aspects of literary texts and to develop students’ communicative skills. When literature is used for language instruction in a literacy-based and intercultural competence approach, results include students’ “improvement in structures, functions, negotiation strategies, and vocabulary” (Darhower; Smith; Sherwood, 2021, p. 402). This article assumes the value of including literature in language instruction materials and practices. Next, we discuss the aspects that will guide our analysis of the literary activities – communication, literacy, and culture – in the textbooks.

1. COMMUNICATION

Additional language teaching has undergone many changes, trends, and influences since the late 1800s and early 1900s with the advent of the “natural methods”, which challenged the predominant Grammar-Translation Method used for centuries that exclusively focused on reading and writing skills. As Richards and Rodgers (2001) indicate, some of the principles underlying the Direct Method, which was probably the most popular of the “natural methods”, were instruction entirely in the target language, teaching of everyday vocabulary and sentences, oral practice structured around question-and-answer exchanges between teacher and students, focus on speaking and listening skills, inductive grammar teaching, and emphasis on correct pronunciation and grammar use.

Numerous methods and approaches followed, such as the Audiolingual Method and the Cognitive Approach. In the 1970s, linguists started to pay greater attention to the nature of communication and the need to help learners develop abilities necessary to communicate in realistic settings (Schrum; Glisan, 2016). Considering this necessity, a new approach to language instruction – the Communicative Approach – was advanced. This involved, among

other aspects, a focus on communication in real-life situations and a functional teaching of grammar to meet their specific demands (Schrum; Glisan, 2016). The Communicative Approach does not adhere to any particular theory or method, but “it draws its theories about learning and teaching from a wide range of areas such as cognitive science, educational psychology, and SLA” (Brandl, 2021, p. 6) Therefore, “it embraces and reconciles many different approaches and points of view about language learning and teaching, which allows it to meet a wide range of proficiency-oriented goals and also to accommodate different learner needs and preferences” (Brandl, 2021, p. 6).

Other characteristics, as described by Wesche (2010, p. 278) are: frequent interaction among learners through pair and group work to exchange information and solve problems, use of authentic materials linked to real-world contexts, emphasis on links across written and spoken modes of communication, learner-centeredness by taking into account students’ backgrounds, language needs and goals, and opportunities for form-focused language activities based on meaningfully oriented communication. Unlike methods that prescribe specific teaching techniques, the communicative approach focuses on learning outcomes, or what learners can do with the language (Taylor; Bateman, 2011).

Communicative abilities in foreign languages have been historically thought of in terms of four separate skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Schrum; Glisan, 2016). However, skills are used in an integrated manner, not in isolation: “listening and reading are often catalysts for speaking and/or writing; discussion often leads to written communication” (Schrum; Glisan, 2016, p. 173). Such understanding underlies the *World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages* (ACTFL, 2015), which define communication by means of three communicative modes – interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational – that integrate the four skills. The interpersonal mode focuses on the negotiation of meaning as two or more people interact in spoken, signed, or written conversations. The interpretive mode features the interpretation, understanding, and analysis of meaning in oral and printed texts when it is not possible to negotiate meaning with the speaker or writer. Finally, the presentational mode centers on formal, one-way communication to a listening or reading audience that cannot actively negotiate meaning with the presenter.

The development of communicative abilities is also associated with extended discourse, which for the purpose of our study is understood as the production of language that goes beyond single words and short sentences (ROSE, 2018). In other words, learners must practice giving explanations, opinions, justifications, and descriptions. Just as essential for learners is the practice of grammar within a communicative context and avoiding the use of a given literary text as a mere “excuse” for teaching isolated grammar concepts.

2. LITERARY LITERACY

Literacy is more than the ability to read and write that is developed through the alphabetization process. It is what people can do with this ability to fulfill their needs, appropriately interact with others, and influence society as its agents. In Magda Soares’s words, “literacy is not a pure and simple set of individual abilities; it is the set of social practices related to reading and writing in which individuals engage in their social context” (1998, p. 72, our translation). Therefore, literacy entails a social dimension – something that alphabetization, given its structured and more mechanical nature, usually does not.

In his seminal work *Literacy in Theory and Practice*, Street (1984) introduces the general outlines of what he calls autonomous and ideological models of literacy. The first detaches literacy from the social context with which we argue it is intrinsically associated. According to this model, literacy is an independent variable, a neutral technology that can be homogeneously taught and learned, usually with the assumption that its attainment will lead to progress and higher levels of civilization. It focuses on the decoding and writing of words without considering, for example, the implications associated with their use. On the other hand, Street contends, the ideological model acknowledges that the social practices of reading and writing are embedded in ideologies that vary from context to context, culture to culture, and institution to institution. Such understanding of literacy calls upon teachers and students to reflect about reality, opinions, and worldviews, ultimately fostering the development of critical thinking.

From the ideological model springs the pluralized form *literacies*. Soares (2002) asserts that literacy has been a historically plural phenomenon because of the different contexts in which interaction with the written word

occurs and the multiple forms of interaction with the world itself – not only through the written word but also through visual, auditive, and spatial communication. To differentiate between the kinds of literacies, adjectives have been attached to the term throughout the years. Thus, we talk about digital literacy, academic literacy, linguistic literacy, critical literacy, literary literacy, and multiliteracies, to name a few. This article centers on literary literacy as we analyze the approach to literary texts in three PAL textbooks.

According to Cosson's definition in the CEALE glossary, published by the *Faculdade de Educação* of the *Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais*, literary literacy is “the process of appropriating literature as language” (our translation). The author further explains that this process is continuous throughout life and does not happen exclusively at school. When at school, it can be carried out in different ways as long as four characteristics are met. First, it is necessary to give students the opportunity to interact directly with the literary works. Second, there must be the forming of a community of readers where reading experiences can be shared, and texts can circulate. Third, it is essential to expand students' literary repertoire by encouraging the reading of diverse texts. Lastly, it is of utmost importance to conduct continuous and systematized activities directed to the development of literary literacy.

Cosson (2006) argues it is not possible that the sole activity of reading be considered a literary activity at school; it is essential to go beyond the reading of the text to develop literary literacy. The author suggests a systematic approach consisting of four basic steps: motivation, introduction, reading, and interpretation. He explains that by motivating students we try to prepare them for a successful encounter with literary work. Usually, but not necessarily, motivation comes from establishing a situation in which students must answer a question about the theme at hand or give their opinion about it. Next, the teacher briefly introduces the text and the author. This is also the moment to explore paratextual elements such as covers and dust jackets if they are present. Following the introduction, students read the text, individually or collectively, and the teacher provides clear direction and helps with any difficulties throughout the process. Finally, students engage in the interpretation of the work, having the opportunity to reflect on it, externalize it explicitly, and establish a dialogue with the community of readers in class or in more far-reaching settings.

In addition, Cosson (2006) asserts the importance of not restricting the reading experience to canonical works although these should certainly be included in the curriculum. He posits that literature is a system constituted of many other systems, the canon being only one of them. The teaching of literature at school must contemplate the reading of works belonging to these various systems to better understand how literary discourse is able to articulate the plurality of both language and culture. Cosson (2006, p. 36, our translation) continues: “That is how the new, the old, the trivial, the aesthetic, the simple, and the complex and all the myriad of texts have a place at school”—and how literary reading becomes an activity of pleasure and knowledge.

3. CULTURE

It is widely acknowledged that language and culture are strongly intertwined even though pedagogical practices and materials may not always reflect this relationship. Due to a lack of understanding of cultural complexities, many teachers find it difficult to explore culture beyond surface elements, whereas a great number of textbooks present cultural content in a reductionist manner. Nevertheless, as Byram and Flemming (1998) point out, the fact is that students learning another language are inevitably exposed to another culture and end up learning something about it. So, an effective language learning experience requires more than a casual treatment of culture. Kramsch (1993, p. 1) highlights that culture is not a fifth skill tacked on to speaking, listening, reading, and writing. It is constantly there “right from day one, ready to unsettle the good language learners when they expect it least, making evident the limitations of their hard won communicative competence.”

Despite the essential role of culture in language learning and many other areas such as history, international studies, and humanities, scholars have not come to one definition of the term. In fact, establishing a universal definition may be both impossible and unproductive since one can look at culture from different angles and with different purposes. According to Saville-Troike (2003, p. 6) culture can be interpreted “as a manifestation of a deeper set of codes and rules . . . in a community or group”. Ting-Toomey and Takai (apud Abrams, 2020, p. 10) define it as “a learned system of meanings that fosters a particular sense of shared identity-hood and community-hood among its group members.” Risager (2006) explains language and culture as social phenomena that have developed as a result of human social life, and therefore culture always includes language and language always

includes culture. Regardless of the definition, all share the same idea of culture as a cohesive force that connects individuals with each other (Abrams, 2020).

For the purpose of this study, we subscribe to the definition of culture as products, practices, and perspectives of a certain group of people (Byram, 1997; ACTFL, 2015). Products are, as the term implies, what the culture produces: foods, handicrafts, literature, music, laws, art etc. Practices are what the group of people do and encompass the people's habits, customs, and traditions. All products and practices have underlying cultural perspectives that explain and justify their existence. That is to say, all products and practices are tied to "beliefs, attitudes, and values that lead members of a culture to do the things they do and make the things they make" (Taylor; Bateman, 2011, p. 245). Learners should have the opportunity to use language to investigate and reflect on the relationship between products, practices, and perspectives (ACTFL, 2015). Such a discussion is essential for the fostering of mutual understanding, respect, and appreciation between members of different cultures. Moreover, as learners reflect on others' cultural perspectives, they become more aware of their own.

We also argue that the study of culture must be a "two-way street": students should not only learn about another culture but also have the opportunity to share, compare, and contrast it with theirs. Mendes (2004) explains that as teachers take a culturally sensitive pedagogical stance, they should promote a dialogue between the target culture and the learners' culture. This approach turns the learning experience into what the author defines as an intercultural one.

4. METHOD

This is a qualitative study of a descriptive nature that analyzes the use of literary texts in activities in the following textbooks: *Práticas textuais: escrita, oralidade e pensamento crítico*, *Portuleiro: língua, cultura e literatura*, and *Viajando através do alfabeto*. These textbooks were selected due to their orientation towards upper-intermediate and advanced-low level classes, where a greater number of literary texts tend to be used. Furthermore, they are adopted by three major PAL university programs in the United States. Specifically, we aim to answer the following research questions, centered on aspects of communication, literary literacy, and interculturality as previously discussed: 1) How do the activities based on literary texts promote communication in the target language? 2) What opportunities do the activities offer for the development of literary literacy? 3) How is culture approached in the activities? By addressing these questions, we hope to contribute to the bridging of the language-literature divide, which has predominated in PAL programs both in Brazil and the United States for many years (Vieira, 2021; Brasil, 2020; Gonçalves, 2019; Montgomery; Nielson, 2019; Takahashi, 2015, 2008).

Our corpus consists of all the literary texts and associated activities present in the three textbooks. However, because of space limitations, we will not discuss each activity individually in this paper. A few texts are excerpts of larger works, such as *crônicas* and novels. Non-literary texts, such as journalistic ones, were not included in the analysis. The textbook *Práticas textuais: escrita, oralidade e pensamento crítico* contains a total of 11 literary texts, whereas *Portuleiro* and *Viajando através do alfabeto* have 32 and 31, respectively.

To answer the first research question, we consider the following criteria of analysis (see section 1): the three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational); opportunities to produce extended discourse; and the practice of grammatical aspects. To address the second question, we focus on the systematic approach suggested by Cosson (2016) (see section 2), which consists of four basic steps: motivation, introduction, reading, and interpretation. We also look at the diversity of literary texts present in the textbooks. To answer the third question, we examine the approach to cultural aspects in terms of products, practices, perspectives, and opportunities for intercultural exchange (see section 3).

5. PRESENTATION OF TEXTBOOKS

5.1 Práticas Textuais

The most recently published among the textbooks analyzed in this article is *Práticas textuais: escrita, oralidade e pensamento crítico* (Santos; Silva, 2023), adopted in upper-intermediate and advanced-low Portuguese

classes at a northeastern American university. An introduction to the textbook explains it is designed to help students develop writing competence but that oral skills are a concurrent focus. The authors present the components of the chapters, which follow a somewhat consistent structure, and give an overview of the themes covered. Although literature is not central to the textbook, it is present in some chapters as a form of incorporating authentic texts.

The title and theme of the first chapter is “Nossa língua portuguesa” [Our Portuguese language]. The chapter starts with a textbox explaining what the student will do, see, and learn. The language the chapter uses demonstrates a focus on abilities, such as discerning facts from opinions and writing a blog post. A series of questions to engage students in oral discussions on the chapter theme is followed by activities on vocabulary, descriptions, and infographics. The linguistic topics in this first chapter are neologism, adjectives, and adverbs. A section is dedicated to listening comprehension activities, supported by digital resources. Finally, the section *Vamos ler* [Let’s read] presents a five-paragraph excerpt by Fernando Pessoa’s semi-heteronym Bernardo Soares. The literary text is a first-person reflection on language and how it changes, thus related to the theme around which the chapter is organized.

Chapter 2 has a similar structure to chapter 1 but no literary text. Chapter 3, whose theme is past and present verb tenses, presents three excerpts from detective narratives, accompanied by a short biographical note on one of the authors, questions for discussion about the genre, short notes on inference and intertextuality, and a comparative chart to be completed using information from the three literary passages. The next section, *Elementos linguísticos em uso* [Linguistic features in use], utilizes sentences and paragraphs from the literary texts to explore vocabulary, slang, and verb tenses. Then, the section *Vamos ouvir* [Let’s listen] is followed by *Vamos ler*, which presents a *crônica* by Machado de Assis along with a table to be completed with information about the text. After a short biographical note on Machado de Assis, multiple activities are proposed to explore the *crônica*. Another *crônica*, by Lima Barreto, contains blanks students need to fill in with the correct verb tense. The last section, as in other chapters, is *Vamos escrever* [Let’s write], and it prompts students to write their own *crônica*.

Chapter 4 has as its theme “A arte de contar histórias” [The art of storytelling]. While it presents multiple short stories, presumably written by the textbook authors, it also explores the literary element of the narrator as well as other elements of storytelling such as humor and emotions. Some of the stories are authored by renowned Luso-Brazilian writers. A short biographical note on Monteiro Lobato is followed by grammar and writing activities related to an excerpt of *Reinações de Narizinho*. In the next section, *Vamos ouvir*, students listen to an audio recording about Machado de Assis’s short story “A Cartomante” and respond to comprehension questions. The section *Vamos ler* transcribes the short story “A piscina do tio Víctor”, by Angolan writer Ondjaki, and proposes a series of activities. Like in the other chapters, this one has the sections *Vamos falar* [Let’s speak] and *Vamos escrever*, prompting students to plan and write their own short stories.

In *Práticas textuais*, literature is not present in every chapter, but the textbook contains numerous examples of literary texts by Brazilian, Portuguese and Luso-African authors (mostly considered canonical writers) related to the themes of each chapter. They are authentic texts used in the practice of mainly grammar, vocabulary, and oral and written expressions.

5.2 Portuleiro

The textbook *Portuleiro: língua, cultura e literatura* (Fitzgibbon, 2015), is adopted in an upper-intermediate and advanced-low course of Portuguese at a western American university. The title suggests the intent to focus on three areas, but the preface clarifies that the material is intended for “those that are already orally fluent but need to improve their grammar command in writing” (Fitzgibbon, 2015, p. iii, our translation); thus, a major focus is on grammar. The preface also describes the content of the textbook as a set of grammar explanations followed by exercises, texts on cultural and historical topics, and literary texts by some of the most renowned Luso-Brazilian authors.

A second introductory text explains the organization of the textbook, which is divided into 18 chapters, the first 15 being dedicated to theoretical and cultural matters (Fitzgibbon, 2015). Chapter 16 concentrates on some of the most common questions and doubts expressed by students as well as cultural aspects of the language. Chapter 17 is a collection of grammar exercises on the topics covered throughout the other chapters, and chapter 18 provides the solutions to the exercises in the book except those that are open-ended response. The book’s

introduction also affirms that the textbook is not intended as a complete Portuguese grammar book but is a selection of relevant grammar topics for one semester of instruction. The main objective is: “to level students with different backgrounds, experiences, and exposure to the language, to a level from where they can keep on learning the language more confidently and with a solid basis” (Fitzgibbon, 2015, p. iv, our translation).

The chapters in *Portuleiro* do not follow a consistent, rigid structure, but each chapter is organized in a particular sequence. Chapter 1, for instance, has the title “Formação da Língua Portuguesa” [The formation of the Portuguese language] and starts with a hypothetical conversation between a Brazilian and a misinformed foreigner to explore a range of stereotypes associated with Brazilians. What follows in the dialogue is a series of questions and answers about the national variants of Portuguese, differences between oral and written Portuguese, the Portuguese-speaking community in the world, and questions that students need to research on the internet to answer. The second part of this first chapter presents a map and an informational text about languages derived from Latin, the origins of Portugal and Portuguese language, and questions to elicit personal experiences with the language as well as text comprehension. The final part of the chapter presents medieval literary texts known as *cantigas* [troubadour poems], a short informational text about this literary genre, and two *cantigas* to end the chapter. There are no questions or activities proposed after the *cantigas*, thus leaving instructors to decide if and how they want to explore those readings.

Not all chapters of *Portuleiro* present a literary text, although most of them do; chapter 2, for example, focuses on the structure of Portuguese words and contains explanations on the elements that form a word, a list of the most seen Greek and Latin prefixes, and multiple exercises. Literature is not included in this chapter, but in chapter 3 it is used in two different ways, described in the following paragraph.

The third chapter’s title is *Artigos, Substantivo, Adjetivos* [Articles, Nouns, Adjectives]. The chapter explores these topics by using charts, lists of examples, a non-literary text, and numerous grammar exercises. The last part of the chapter, under the subtitle *Literatura Portuguesa e Cultura* [Portuguese Literature and Culture], presents a short text contextualizing Luís Vaz de Camões’s work and the transcription of three of his sonnets. This time, there are questions associated with the literary texts. Following the sonnets, the textbook presents a passage of the biblical text 1 Corinthians 13 and the lyrics of the song “Monte Castelo” by Brazilian band *Legião Urbana*. The questions explore the intertextuality between the sonnets, the Bible text, and the song lyrics. Finally, a blog on the same theme of love is presented. The chapter ends with a writing prompt derived from the previous discussions and readings on love.

Another example of how literature is included in *Portuleiro* is in chapter 8. The main content in this chapter is *Pronouns*, and it starts with the *crônica* “Papos” by Luís Fernando Veríssimo, which draws humor from the possibilities offered by the Portuguese language for pronoun placement. A section entitled *Literatura – Gênero Dramático* [Literature – Drama], briefly defines the genre, contextualizes Gil Vicente and his theater plays, and calls students’ attention to elements they should pay attention to while they read the passage “Todo mundo e ninguém” from “Auto da Lusitânia”. The chapter ends with more grammar exercises on pronouns.

Our last example is chapter 15, the central topic of which is punctuation. This chapter presents examples, exercises, and a comprehensive list of rules about the use of commas and other punctuation marks. The section *Literatura Feminista e Marginal* [Feminist and Peripheral Literature] presents an author and text excerpt to illustrate each of these literary “niches”. There is a short biographical note about Clarice Lispector, and the short story “A galinha” is fully transcribed. Then it presents a set of questions to check text comprehension (such as: “When and where does the story happen?” and “What is most difficult to understand in this text?”). Next, another reading prompt precedes a passage of “Quarto de despejo”, by Carolina Maria de Jesus. A three-page text about Carolina and her challenges to become a writer ends this section, and a new literature section, *Literatura Contemporânea* [Contemporary Literature], follows. José Saramago is cited as an example of contemporary Lusophone literature and is introduced in a paragraph-long biographical note along with a list of eight of his most recognized publications. The short story “O conto da ilha desconhecida”, by José Saramago, is fully transcribed, and the chapter ends with a set of seven text comprehension questions.

The textbook presents other literary texts, but it is sufficient for the purpose of this article to note how the chapters do not follow a particular structure and how the author selected literary texts from several different genres (the examples mentioned above include poetry, drama, short-stories, and *crônicas*). We also observe that not many activities are proposed in connection with each literary text and that the passages selected to illustrate

literary genres and styles/movements are almost all from literature included in the canon, as signaled by the preface to the textbook.

5.3. Viajando através do alfabeto

The textbook *Viajando através do alfabeto* (Jouët-Pastré; Sobral, 2010) is adopted in upper-intermediate and advanced-low classes at another northeastern American university. This material suits the interest of this article as it is entirely based on a literary collection of *crônicas* by Brazilian author Moacyr Scliar. The title of each *crônica* in Scliar's book *Dicionário do viajante insólito* starts with a letter of the alphabet and is centered on the theme of travel. The textbook is thus organized into 26 chapters, based on Scliar's *crônicas* and named after each respective letter. The structure of the chapters is consistent, as we will describe below.

The textbook preface explains its intent to help students develop reading, speaking, and writing skills in Portuguese in a culturally relevant context. The authors justify the selection of *Dicionário do viajante insólito* by stating that “intelligent and thought-provoking texts encourage students to effectively engage in discussions and debates of various kinds” (Jouët-Pastré; Sobral, 2010, p. ix, our translation). A second reason is the fact that Scliar frequently draws comparisons between Brazilian and foreign cultures in a range of tones – from subtle to astonishing – and the highlighting of such cultural elements could foster students' more active engagement in classroom discussions. Hence, it is clear that the textbook authors aim to facilitate language instruction that stimulates communication and oral argumentation.

The selection of Scliar's collection of *crônicas* can be debated regarding the authors and texts chosen to compose literature syllabi and programs. The writer is a recognized name of twentieth-century Brazilian literature, having been awarded and sanctioned for his extensive production of literary texts in several genres. Like most canonical Brazilian writers, however, he was a white upper-class Brazilian, and he worked as a doctor and college professor, thus speaking from a certain place in society that is the most common amongst writers and intellectuals. On the other hand, the literary genre present in the textbook is not canonical or widely accepted as “high” culture/literature.

The preface of *Viajando através do alfabeto* establishes the value of discussing the *crônicas*, emphasizing that they thematize travel and contacts with different cultures, which could potentially be of interest to most foreign-language learners. The authors also explain how they envision the use of the textbook:

This first part (the pre-reading activity) is usually done orally, with the entire group of students, under the lead of the instructor and preferably in the class section that precedes the reading of the *crônica*. After this reading, there is a series of comprehension and interpreting exercises, short assignments to be done in pairs or groups (Jouët-Pastré; Sobral, 2010, p. x, our translation).

The preface follows with further instructions about what activities should be conducted and in what manner. This instructional part demonstrates the authors' commitment to their envisioning of the material and ultimately to the skills they want learners to develop. The last suggestion is the writing of a text collection throughout the semester. The idea is that, similarly to Scliar's book, the students' productions in class could build a collection of *crônicas* to be appreciated by the group as a culmination and conclusion of the course.

We will describe the structure of chapter “H de Hotéis” to give an example of how this textbook works. The chapter (like the others) opens with the full transcription of Scliar's *crônica*. Immediately following the literary text, the reader finds “Parte A: Desencadeando a fala antes da leitura” [Part A: Eliciting speaking before reading] and “Parte B: Desencadeando a fala depois da leitura” [Part B: Eliciting speaking after reading]. These sections present a few questions to elicit discussion and activate previous knowledge, highlight cultural facts related to the theme, and encourage the use of oral language to describe the story, summarize the story, connect the story with personal experiences (using different verb tenses), opine on the story, and then hypothesize. In this specific chapter, we observe the increasing mobilization of language skills towards a higher proficiency level according to the parameters established by ACTFL to define each level. For example: the first questions in part A are “Do you like... / What is your favorite...”, while the last question in part B is a conjecture that demands the use of subjunctive verbal forms.

After the oral discussion comes part C, with eight questions that focus on specific words and expressions that appear in the *crônica* and prompt writing of sentences or paragraphs. For example: “Give the synonym of *prescindir*”; “Write an original sentence”; “Write the words in the singular”; “Write the first paragraph using

the simple past and the imperfect tenses”. This set of questions is almost entirely centered on grammar and vocabulary, which connects to the following section of the chapter: a review of the *mais-que-perfeito* verb tense. This grammar section is prolonged with a review of the *imperfeito do subjuntivo* verb tense, this time with a shorter explanation and an exercise for students to fill in blanks in a text using the correct conjugation.

The chapter has two other sections: a short explanation on figures of speech, two activities on the same topic, and a final prompt asking students to write their own text on the theme travel, whose title should start with the letter H, to be included in the student-authored collection previously mentioned. This prompt and a short Portuguese-English vocabulary list appear at the end of each chapter. The structure of the other chapters is similar: the literary text, parts A and B with questions for discussion, part C with grammar and style questions, a review of a grammar topic with exercises, a short section with examples of figures of speech, the final writing prompt, and the vocabulary list.

6. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

6.1. Communication in the textbooks

The textbook *Práticas textuais: escrita, oralidade e pensamento crítico* seeks to promote the development of the three modes of communication (interpersonal, interpretative, and presentational) in its activities involving literary texts. The textbook is a welcome effort in the bridging of the language-literature divide commonly found in university intermediate and advanced-level classes of PAL. Furthermore, the approach to the literary texts reflects the authors’ objective to develop students’ four skills in the language. For example, in preparation for the reading of an excerpt of *Livro do Desassossego* by Bernardo Soares, students are asked to interact orally in pairs about what adjectives and nouns could describe the Portuguese language, also justifying their opinion. Next, students interpret what different people say about the language while listening to an audio excerpt. After a few more activities, students are invited to read and interpret the literary text to identify its main idea. Several interactive and interpretive activities follow, including one in which students discuss what passage about the Portuguese language from the text impacted them the most. As mentioned before, all chapters end with a prompt to write; in this case, students focus on the presentational mode by writing their own description of the Portuguese language in a blog.

To promote communication, *Práticas textuais* also provides opportunities for engagement in extended discourse rather than limiting students’ utterances to single words or short phrases. Frequently, this takes the form of asking students to give their opinion about a topic or to justify and/or compare opinions. For instance, while working with the short story “A piscina do tio Víctor” by Angolan writer Ondjaki, students are asked to compare and contrast the narrator’s and their own perceptions of the main character. In pairs, students are also prompted to discuss what kind of effect the author intends to cause by using certain expressions to describe the character. These and other extended discourse activities, besides providing opportunities for proficiency development, allow students to delve deeper into the text and go beyond mere comprehension questions.

However, activities that involve extended discourse and one or more communication modes do not accompany every literary text. For instance, the *crônicas* “De que forma...” and “Ex-homem” by Lima Barreto are used solely for grammar practice. The same can be said about an adapted excerpt of the novel *O Mistério da Estrada de Sintra* by Eça de Queirós and Ramalho Ortigão, the short story “Doutora Saladina, Bruxa para todos os Males” by Teresa Lopes, and an excerpt of the fantasy book *Reinações de Narizinho* by Monteiro Lobato. In fact, all works of literature in the textbook have at least one grammar-focused activity associated with them. Although the study of grammar is important and literary texts can certainly serve as a basis for it, the exclusive focus on grammar is not as conducive to language learning and a better understanding of the readings.

Unlike *Práticas textuais*, *Portuleiro* is by and large a grammar-oriented textbook. Its objective is to help students develop written and oral skills through an intensive study of Portuguese grammar in the context of literary and non-literary readings. Despite this focus, we have examined the textbook with the premise that the development of written and oral skills entails communicative practice, which can be greatly supported by literary texts. However, the activities analyzed do not directly prompt engagement in interpersonal communication; for the most part, they consist of comprehension questions that students can answer silently on their own unless

teachers specifically ask for pair/group work or promote a class discussion. For example, there is no prompt after the reading of the *crônica* “Você é um número” by Clarice Lispector to instruct students on how to carry out the activity. There is only the subtitle “Exercício de compreensão de leitura” (Reading comprehension exercise) and the following questions: 1) “According to the author, what types of numbers do we receive when we are born?”; 2) “What happened in the backlands of Pernambuco because of a number? What does that show?”; 3) “Why are people given numbers instead of names in a war?”; 4) “What does the author suggest at the end of the short story?”. In total, 14 out of 32 literary texts in *Portuleiro* present activities for the interpretive mode, but none explicitly promote interpersonal exchange. The presentational mode is explored after the readings “Sermão do bom ladrão” by Padre Antônio Vieira and “Meus oito anos” by Casimiro de Abreu. In both cases, students must write their own texts (a sermon and a poem) and read them to the class.

Sixteen literary texts do not have any associated interpersonal, interpretive, or presentational activity. Most of the texts are approached in such a way that gives little or no opportunity for extended discourse (oral and/or written). An interesting activity is proposed after the reading of the short story “A galinha” by Clarice Lispector and excerpts of the book *Quarto de despejo* by Carolina Maria de Jesus. Although it is not clear if and how students should interact with each other, they are asked to compare the two texts and discuss the challenges of marginal literature in Brazil. Later, students read the short story “A ilha desconhecida” by José Saramago and talk about the author’s writing style.

Like in *Portuleiro*, it is not totally clear which activities are intended for interpersonal communication in *Viajando através do alfabeto*. We assume the sections “Desencadeando a fala antes da leitura” (Eliciting speaking before reading) and “Desencadeando a fala após a leitura” (Eliciting speaking after reading), included with all 31 literary texts, are meant for that kind of practice although pair/group work and/or class discussions are not specifically mentioned. The interpretive mode of communication is explored through comprehension questions after each text, but there are no activities involving the presentational mode.

The textbook provides opportunities to produce extended discourse with each text. Students must always do an oral summary of the readings and often give their opinion, share experiences, discuss ideas, and explain something. For example, after reading the *crônica* “N de Neve”, students are asked the following questions: “Do you think the cold weather affects people?”; “What are some theories people have related to countries where it gets cold?”; “Do you agree with these theories?”. After “G de Gueixa”: “Have you ever asked for something in a foreign country and received something different?”; “Describe the situation”. After “V de Ver”: “What was the most incredible picture you have ever taken (or someone took and gave to you)?”.

Opportunities for extended discourse are also provided while learning new vocabulary. In “F de Frustração”: “Find in the text a synonym for ‘to save’; ‘Do you know other synonyms for this word?’; ‘Do you save money? How?’”. In “T de Turista”: “What does the expression ‘falar pelos cotovelos’ mean?”; “Explain and write an original sentence using this expression”. In “U de Urgente”: “What does ‘dica’ mean? Let’s guess! Give some ‘dicas’ to the rest of the class and they will try to guess what you are hiding”.

Grammar is a prominent feature in *Viajando através do alfabeto*, but it is studied after students have already had practice with the interpersonal and interpretive modes of communication. Thus, the texts are not turned into mere springboards for grammar instruction, as often happens in language learning materials. The grammar points covered are based on each literary text and are organized under the headings “Parte C: A estilística e a gramática com estilo” [Part C: Stylistics and grammar with style] and “Revisão” [Review]. There are different kinds of activities, which give variety to practice even though some of them are conducted outside of a “real life context”. Besides the fill-in-the-blank type of exercise, students are prompted to, among other things, retell a famous literary character’s life by using the simple past and imperfect tenses, change an excerpt of a text from one verb tense to another, find examples of a specific grammar topic in the text, create sentences, and interact with a partner by asking and answering questions using a certain grammar point.

Following this descriptive analysis, we present the percentage of activities dedicated to the practice of the modes of communication, extended discourse, and grammar in each textbook.

Table 1. Activities focused on communication, extended discourse, and grammar.

	Interpersonal	Interpretive	Presentational	Extended Discourse	Grammar
<i>Práticas textuais</i>	29.3%	29.3%	4.3%	38%	18.4%
<i>Portuleiro</i>	-	18.7%	2.8%	10%	14.2%
<i>Viajando</i>	50%	16%	0.2%	39%	15%

The presentational mode of communication is the least explored in the three textbooks, whereas the interpersonal mode has the most activities dedicated to it – except in *Portuleiro*, which does not make it explicit whether students should engage in conversation about the readings. *Práticas textuais* and *Viajando através do alfabeto* offer a relatively high number of activities focused on extended discourse. Although *Práticas textuais* and *Portuleiro* include literary texts for the exclusive purpose of grammar practice, this kind of activity is rarely included. Our analysis indicates that, overall, the number of activities with a focus on the modes of communication, especially the presentational one, and on extended discourse could be increased so that students have more opportunities to develop their language abilities.

6.2. Literary literacy in the textbooks

The textbook *Práticas textuais* provides motivational activities for few literary texts. For example, before reading an excerpt of a detective novel, students are asked to share their thoughts about a picture featuring different objects associated with the story. They must also talk with a classmate about their favorite short story before reading “A piscina do tio Vítor” as well as share their feelings, experiences, and opinions about the Portuguese language in preparation for reading an excerpt of *Livro do Desassossego*. However, most of the texts are not accompanied by any activity aiming to spark students’ interest. Such is the case with the *crônicas* “De forma que...” and “Ex-homem”, meant to be read immediately after the study of the simple past and imperfect tenses. These and other texts serve the exclusive purpose of grammar practice, so no attention is given to the development of literary literacy. Some are accompanied by short introductions about authorship although they appear after the texts themselves, perhaps suggesting the information is considered irrelevant for the reading. The *crônica* “1º de Novembro de 1877” by Machado de Assis and the short story “A piscina do tio Vítor” are examples of texts followed by interpretation activities. For instance, in relation to the latter text, students are prompted to discuss what effect they believe the author intended by using specific expressions. Students are also encouraged to create their own dramatization by acting out a specific scene of the short story. Despite the great importance of interpretation activities to promote literary literacy, the textbook contains relatively few of those activities.

In *Portuleiro* we have identified no motivational activities before the texts. Students either start the reading right away, like in the case of the *crônicas* “Os bons ladrões” by Paulo Mendes Campos and “Lixo” by Luís Fernando Veríssimo, or they are first presented with an introduction about the author, such as in the sonnet “Amor é um fogo que arde sem se ver” by Luís Vaz de Camões and the poem “Auto da Lusitânia” by Gil Vicente. Some texts are followed by interpretation activities; for instance, after the poems “No meio do caminho”, “Poema das sete faces”, and *José* by Carlos Drummond de Andrade, students are prompted by the question “What impression is left on the reader after reading these poems?”.

The textbook *Viajando através do alfabeto* presents motivational activities before each text. In “J de Jerusalém” students are asked: “Is there any city that has left a deep impression on you?”; “Is there any place in your own country where you would like to take friends from abroad on a visit?”; “What place would it be and why?”. For “W de Wunderkammer”, the prompts are: “Make a short list of souvenirs we can buy when we travel”; “What is a Wunderkammer?”; “Do you have a Wunderkammer?”; “What do you have in it?”. Since Moacyr Seliar is the author of all the *crônicas*, he was introduced in the preface of the textbook. Pictures accompany each text, but they are not explicitly explored as another form of introduction to the texts. Interpretation questions are present in 20 of the 31 texts. In “B de Briga”: “What is the main message of the *crônica*?”; “What do you think of the term Third World?”. In “Q de Quando”, “Is this a sad *crônica*? A happy one?”; “If there is one, what is the moral of the story?”.

Next, we present a table featuring the percentage of activities in each textbook that promote literary literacy according to the basic steps proposed by Cosson (2006).

Table 2. Activities promoting literary literacy.

	Motivation	Introduction	Interpretation
Práticas textuais	8.7%	6.5%	10.8%
Portuleiro	-	15.7%	31.4%
Viajando	13.8%	-	7.1%

Considering the total number of activities associated with the literary texts in each textbook, our analysis shows that overall, few of the textbooks promote literary literacy in terms of motivating students for the reading, providing an introduction about the author/text, and stimulating interpretation. We have also observed that even when textbooks do have a greater percentage of activities dedicated to one of these aspects – such as interpretation in *Portuleiro* (31.4%) – they do not accompany every text. We have found that although the textbooks have incorporated most principles to some degree, literary literacy could be more effectively promoted if the appropriate activities were applied more consistently with the literary works.

6.3. Culture in the textbooks

Activities with a focus on culture are scarce in *Práticas textuais* despite literary texts being a rich source for this kind of learning. Only the excerpt of *Livro do Desassossego* is accompanied by activities that draw on cultural products, practices, perspectives, and interculturality. First, there is a question encompassing two different forms of spelling in Portuguese (cultural product), the official one and the one Bernardo Soares used when writing the text in the beginning of the 20th century. The question is: “Originally, the text [...] was written using the Portuguese spelling of the beginning of the 20th century. In your opinion, what would be the author’s reaction to the spelling currently used in this text?”; “Explain”. Second, students are asked about the “Acordo Ortográfico de 1990”, another cultural product: “How does the comment in this passage relate to the controversies around the Portuguese Language Orthographic Agreement of 1990?”; “Explain”. Students are also prompted to answer questions about the cultural practice of word borrowing and to think in intercultural terms while considering this practice. English spelling has changed very little over the last centuries compared to Portuguese. It would have been interesting if the textbook posed a question that directly addressed this intercultural difference as well as why (from a cultural perspective) new Language Orthographic Agreements are relatively frequent in Portuguese.

Portuleiro presents very few activities involving cultural products and practices and none involving perspectives and interculturality. The products and practices relate to the poem “Navio Negreiro” by Castro Alves and the short story “Pai contra Mãe” by Machado de Assis, both of which explore the theme of slavery during colonial and imperial Brazil. The questions posed are: “What were some objects commonly used on enslaved people in Brazil?”; “What was the tinplate mask?”; “What was a foundling wheel?”. Because of the superficial approach to the texts, students are not encouraged to reflect more deeply about this grievous social practice, how it has impacted current cultural products, practices, and perspectives in Brazil, or its similarities to and differences from slavery in the United States.

In *Viajando através do alfabeto*, we find a greater number of activities with a focus on cultural products, practices, and perspectives. At least one of these aspects is present in 30 out of 31 *crônicas* even though they are few when compared to other kinds of activities. In “E de esperteza”, students talk about how Brazilian and American tourists are characterized in the text and in real life, a discussion that involves products, practices, perspectives, and interculturality. In “Y de Yard Sale”, we find the following prompts that tackle practices and perspectives: “The narrator makes a series of comments about Americans and the USA. Identify these comments and share your opinion about the narrator’s view of the USA and its people”; “Why do you think there are no yard sales in Brazil?”; and “Do you agree with the narrator’s statement about the puritan spirit?”.

The table below presents the percentage of activities encompassing products, practices, perspectives, and interculturality in the textbooks.

Table 3. Activities with a focus on products, practices, perspectives, and interculturality

	Products	Practices	Perspectives	Interculturality
Práticas textuais	7.6%	3.2%	-	1%
Portuleiro	5.7%	1.4%	-	-
Viajando	8%	7.4%	9.4%	0.9%

The number of activities related to cultural products, practices, and perspectives was low across the textbooks. The number of activities was even lower in the case of interculturality. This generates a concern because an important part of learning a new language is to increase cultural awareness, which will enable learners to perform more effectively in multiple contexts where the language is used. Literary texts are among the richest sources of cultural content that can help learners accomplish that goal. Additionally, cultural knowledge is crucial for a deeper understanding of literary texts; therefore, disregarding it may jeopardize the reading experience.

FINAL REMARKS

Textbooks still play a major role in language teaching and greatly influence how programs are structured and how classes are conducted. This influence is felt by seasoned teachers but perhaps even more so by newer ones, who often rely on adopted textbooks as they gain more experience. Such pedagogical materials often become informal instruments of continuous teacher development as well as good indicators of how language teaching theories have been incorporated into real classrooms.

Considering the impact textbooks may have on the teaching and learning process, we have found it relevant to analyze three textbooks of PAL regarding their approach to literary texts, which are intrinsically outstanding sources of language and cultural input. We have examined the activities associated with the texts in terms of communication, literary literacy, and culture. Results show that although some activities incorporate one or more of these aspects, their overall presence in the textbooks is low and inconsistent. We believe this is less effective for language learning and assert that a focus on communication, literary literacy, and culture when using literary texts in the classroom is a more promising approach.

Nevertheless, we acknowledge the analysis of three textbooks is not representative of all textbooks of PAL in Brazil and the United States. Future studies with larger corpora will provide a more detailed and complete assessment of the issue. Still, our study indicates that the language-literature divide is present to some degree in our field and that there is room for improvement. We consider training to be essential so that teachers are better equipped to evaluate textbooks, and adapt and create materials reflecting principles (communication, literary literacy, and culture) that can contribute to bridging the language-literature divide. To our knowledge, there are no studies that research the process and outcome of applying these specific principles in the classroom, an investigation we deem necessary. Additionally, it would be interesting to carry out a comparative study about the approach to literary texts between PAL textbooks and those of different additional languages to identify similarities and differences as well as what we can learn from them and what we can share.

We hope to contribute to the discussion about literature in PAL classes through this study. Literary texts have an important role to play in language learning but can often be underused or underestimated in their potential to promote communication, literacy, and cultural knowledge. In conclusion, this is the case with the textbooks we analyzed although two of them (*Práticas textuais* e *Viajando através do alfabeto*) are highly commendable for their initiative to make literary texts a prominent part of their curriculum. Ultimately, this study presents implications for material development and teacher practice for the bridging of the language-literature divide.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Both authors contributed significantly to the writing of this manuscript and participated actively in the process of research.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare there is no conflict of interest.

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