

# Reflections and Proposals on Portuguese as a Welcoming Language ‘for’ and ‘with’ international migrant children in Brazil

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## Abstract

In Brazil, the influx of migrants has increased in recent years, leading to an even more diverse and multicultural society. As a result, there is a growing need for language teaching for international migrant children who may not have prior knowledge of Portuguese. In this context, Portuguese can be seen as a Welcoming Language (PWL) that can provide migrant children with access to education, citizenship, and other opportunities. However, teaching and learning PWL also presents challenges which include the lack of resources and trained educators, as well as the need to consider the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of those children. Taking this scenario into account, the goal of this paper is to reflect on the teaching and learning of PWL ‘for’ and ‘with’ international migrant children in Brazil through a qualitative approach. We aim to provide insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with this process, as well as to offer some suggestions by means of a didactic proposal based on the book “The name jar” by Yangsook Choi. We also discuss the genre-based approach which underlies our proposal and the role of literature in the teaching of this audience. Results indicate that

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the use of literature and storytelling through didactic sequences in supportive and culturally sensitive environments provides opportunities for a collective construction of stories that reflect children's backgrounds, experiences and interests. That perspective on PWL considers not only the linguistic needs of the international migrant children but also considers their emotional needs and history.

Keywords: didactic sequence; storytelling; linguistic education.

## Reflexões e propostas sobre Português como Língua de Acolhimento “para” e “com” crianças migrantes internacionais no Brasil

### Resumo

No Brasil, o influxo de migrantes aumentou nos últimos anos, tornando nossa sociedade ainda mais diversa e multicultural. Como resultado, há uma crescente necessidade de ensino de língua para crianças migrantes internacionais que podem não ter conhecimento prévio de português. Nesse contexto, o Português pode ser visto como uma Língua de Acolhimento (PLAc) que possibilitaria às crianças migrantes o acesso à educação, cidadania e a outras oportunidades. No entanto, ensinar e aprender PLAc também apresenta desafios, que incluem a falta de recursos e educadores capacitados, bem como a necessidade de levar em conta os diversos antecedentes linguísticos e culturais dessas crianças. Considerando esse cenário, o objetivo deste trabalho é refletir sobre o ensino e aprendizagem do PLAc “para” e “com” crianças migrantes

internacionais no Brasil por meio de uma abordagem qualitativa. Nosso objetivo é fornecer *insights* sobre os desafios e oportunidades associados a esse processo, bem como oferecer algumas sugestões por meio de uma proposta didática baseada no livro “The Name Jar”, de Yangsook Choi. Discutimos também a abordagem baseada em gênero que fundamenta nossa proposta e o papel da literatura no ensino desse público. Os resultados indicam que o uso de literatura e narrativas por meio de sequências didáticas em ambientes de apoio e culturalmente sensíveis oferece oportunidades para a construção coletiva de histórias que reflitam a origem, experiências e interesses das crianças. Essa perspectiva sobre o PLAc leva em consideração não apenas as necessidades linguísticas das crianças migrantes internacionais, mas também suas necessidades emocionais e históricas.

Palavras-chave: sequência didática; contação de história; educação linguística.

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## Introduction

*Children have a unique nature that characterizes them as beings who feel and think about the world in a very particular way. In the interactions they establish from an early age with the people around them and with the environment that surrounds them, children reveal their effort to understand the world in which they live, the contradictory relationships they witness, and through play, they express the living conditions they are subjected to and their desires and aspirations. In the process of constructing knowledge, children use different languages and exercise their ability to have original ideas and hypotheses about what they seek to unravel. In this perspective, children construct knowledge from the interactions they establish with other people and with the environment in which they live. Knowledge is not a copy of reality, but rather the result of an intense work of creation, meaning-making, and resignification.*

*(Brasil, 1998a, p. 21)*

*[...] we emphasise that educators have considerable power to affect student identity construction in positive (and, unfortunately, in negative) ways. Teachers' instructional choices within the classroom play a huge role in determining the extent to which students will emerge from an identity cocoon defined by their assumed limitations (eg the 'ESL student') to an interpersonal space defined by their talents and accomplishments, both linguistic and intellectual. For this to happen, teachers must 'see through' the institutional labels to the potential within. Our conscious strategy is therefore to trouble essentialised notions of student, teacher and community identities by emphasising that students and teachers alike are in a 'becoming' mode and the interactions they experience shape this process of becoming.*

*(Cummins; Early, 2011a, p. xvi)*

This study is part of several investigations developed within the research group “FELICE” (CAPES/CNPq) from Londrina State University<sup>1</sup>, Brazil, which is composed of researchers from different regions and universities. The object of study of the group involves mainly teachers’ education and the teaching of additional languages ‘for’ and ‘with’ children as we discuss in this work.

The topic of teaching additional languages to children, particularly English, has gained significant attention in Brazil in the past few years (Secatto; Tonelli; Selbach, 2022). This discussion has been driven by a variety of reasons, including the discourse that early childhood is supposedly the best and only age for language acquisition (Kawachi-Furlan; Rosa, 2020), as well as the understanding that learning an additional language is a fundamental right that all children are entitled to.

In recent years, the number of children crossing international borders and seeking refuge has increased significantly, which has become a contemporary phenomenon that shapes our daily lives (Hang-Coleman; Hang; Perreira-Foyle; Schmitt, 2018). Recent surveys indicate that as of “June 2022, there were 61,731 recognized refugees in Brazil, of which 49,829 were Venezuelan refugees. In addition, as of December 2021, there were around 110,000 asylum seekers in the country”. (Cátedra Sérgio Vieira De Mello, 2022, p. 4). This trend has raised a series of dilemmas and ambiguities regarding the need for protection policies and eligibility processes for asylum-seekers. To fully understand the impact of this phenomenon, it is crucial to place the child at the center of the debate (Malta, 2019). By doing so, we can problematize the loss of political agency experienced by children

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<sup>1</sup> The FELICE research group is led by the first author. The second author is a researcher in the group.

due to the silencing and invisibility practices of a system that ignores their presence and denies their participation.

Hence, it becomes essential to recognize that children are not passive actors. Their voices, experiences, home languages and needs must be acknowledged and addressed in the decision-making process. The development of policies and procedures that are child-centered and prioritize the well-being and protection of international migrant children are of paramount importance (Ferreira *et al.*, 2019). Those policies include the access to a language education that is sensitive to their unique needs.

Given this setting, the reasons for learning a new language have taken on a different meaning, especially for international migrant children learning Portuguese. The acquisition of language no longer involves a possible desire to learn Portuguese or any other language. Instead, it has been driven by a myriad of challenges, including language barriers, cultural differences, and social isolation. These challenges can be particularly acute when children must move to a new country where the language is not their home language, as they may struggle to communicate with their peers and teachers and integrate into their new community.

In our perspective, the teaching of Portuguese as a Welcoming Language (PWL) ‘for’ and ‘with’<sup>2</sup> international migrant children in Brazil can help address these challenges while providing the community the migrant children are moving into with opportunities to learn from them. Learning PWL can enable children to communicate with the community of speakers they are living with, including their peers and teachers. This can help them feel more included and get integrated into their new

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<sup>2</sup> In this paper we assume the same reasoning as Malta (2019) that we no longer teach a language to children but also ‘for’ and ‘with’ them, since they should be placed in the center of the teaching and learning process. This assumption is better explored throughout the text.

community, reducing feelings of social isolation and promoting a sense of belonging. Learning PWL can help children – international migrants or not – understand, appreciate, and learn from each other's cultures. By learning additional languages, children can gain insights into each other's local traditions, beliefs and values, and better understand the perspectives of their peers and communities.

Taking this specific scenario of international migration into consideration, the goal of this paper is to reflect on the teaching and learning of PWL for migrant children in Brazil. We aim to provide insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with this process, as well as to offer some reflections and teaching proposals as we understand that PWL can provide migrant children with access to education and citizenship.

In this work, we start by presenting the perspective of PWL 'for' and 'with' children. Next, we discuss the genre-based approach which underlies our proposal as well as the role of literature in the teaching of international migrant children. We then present our proposal of didactic material by means of modules of a didactic sequence, followed by the final remarks.

## **1 Portuguese as a welcoming language 'for' and 'with' children**

According to Lopez (2018), based on the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 65.3 million people globally are recognized as forcibly displaced migrants, a group that includes internally displaced persons, refugees, and asylum seekers, which represents the worst humanitarian crisis since World War II (UNHCR, 2016 *apud*

Lopez, 2018). As the situation becomes increasingly common worldwide, more immigrants are seeking asylum in Brazil. The author also points out that according to a recent report by the Brazilian National Committee for Refugees (UNHCR, 2016 *apud* Lopez, 2018), the number of refugee requests in 2015 was 28,670, representing a 2,867.90% increase from the 966 requests received in 2010. Currently, Brazil hosts 8,863 refugees from 79 different nationalities, predominantly from Syria, Angola, Colombia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (UNHCR, 2016 *apud* Lopez, 2018). The number of migrants in Brazil is even higher when including those who are not classified as refugees under Brazilian law, such as the approximately 85,000 Haitians who live in Brazil (Ministério da Justiça e Cidadania, 2016 *apud* Lopez, 2018).

The teaching and learning of Portuguese as an Additional Language (PAL) for migrant children was addressed by Ribeiro (2018) through an outreach project aimed at international elementary school students. In this project, the teaching of PAL was proposed as a way to welcome Hispanic migrant students who may not have prior knowledge of the language and to reduce the high rates of failure and placement in lower grades that can result from a lack of Portuguese proficiency. The author points out that due to the increasing presence of international students, it is crucial to implement language policies that consider students' linguistic and cultural diversity. Additionally, differentiated, and inclusive teaching methods should be considered, as many of these students come to school without any prior knowledge of Portuguese and begin learning the language with the perspective of their mother tongue. This approach can lead to the exclusion and erasure of the language and culture of these foreign students. Therefore, the project was also rooted in the view that



Portuguese and Spanish are Border Languages in the city of Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil, and that a teaching approach emphasizing multiculturalism and plurilingualism can support the inclusion of migrant students. The goal was to enhance knowledge rather than limit it to monolingual concepts and practices. As the author advocates, it is not possible to eliminate plurilingualism through language policies that promote monolingualism, particularly in border regions where people have frequent, continuous and often challenging interactions with other languages and cultures.

Similarly, Zambrano (2022) reports an experience with the presence of Spanish, translanguaging and transculturality in popular communication spaces managed by Venezuelan migrants in Boa Vista, Brazil. The author discusses the fact that with the increasing presence of migrants and frontier-related issues in Roraima, the flexible usage of diverse linguistic repertoires has led to an overdiversity within the state. In response, alternative media has emerged as a tool for crisis migrants to foster a sense of belonging and to promote integration within the new society. During the research, “Súper Panas na radio” was identified as one of popular communication channels, a program created for and with the participation of migrant children and adolescents from Venezuela. The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and Instituto Pirilampos initiated the project, and the program was launched during the COVID-19 pandemic to promote community ties and encourage education as these children transitioned to Brazil’s educational system. The program primarily focused on promoting rights, community integration and combating xenophobia and discrimination. The content was tailored for two different audiences: children aged 3 to 11 and teenagers aged 12 to 17. The program used both Portuguese and Spanish languages and included segments in the Warao indigenous language.

The findings suggest a rise in popularity of communication radio spaces operated by Venezuelans, which aim to provide a welcoming environment for their compatriots and make use of Spanish and translanguaging in a natural way. This has led to an increase in the representation of crisis migrants' languages and cultures in Roraima, ultimately resulting in a stronger bond of belonging within the local community.

In recent papers, Tonelli and Kawachi-Furlan (2021), in accordance with Malta (2019), have argued about the importance of placing children in the center of linguistic education in additional languages. Therefore, the authors defend that linguistic education is meant not only 'for' the children but mainly 'with' them. In this sense, the child plays a central role in the process and no longer can have their voice silenced. Taking this assumption into consideration, we advocate for a perspective on PWL that considers not only the linguistic needs of the international migrant children but also their emotional needs, their history, and their cultures.

We are in line with Cameron (2001), who advocates for an educational approach that prioritizes children's growth and development. By placing the focus on the student, the teacher can help bring out the child's inherent potential, allowing them to become active and engaged learners. For this approach to be effective, the quality and type of interactions throughout the teaching and learning process are critical. The author emphasizes that positive and meaningful interactions are key to fostering a supportive learning environment. These interactions should be tailored to each student's individual needs and abilities, allowing them to feel valued and empowered in their learning journey.

Cameron (2001) also highlights the importance of orality in the process of language learning as speaking and listening

play a central role in language learning situations. Language is then perceived as language in use, as a tool for communication and interaction, rather than as a set of rules to be memorized. To develop strong discursive skills, the author suggests that children need to actively participate in discourse, which means engaging in conversation, expressing their ideas and listening to the ideas of others. Through this process, children can develop their ability to communicate effectively, build their vocabulary and improve their comprehension skills.

Hence, in this article, for the purpose of the suggestion of activities, we emphasize PWL 'for' and 'with' children and present activities based on social interactions and on the concept of language as social practice by means of storytelling, as suggested by Tonelli (2005) and Selbach (2014). We advocate that PWL can be carried out by means of storytelling since literary texts provide different possibilities to involve international migrant children in the new language they are being exposed to without disregarding their life experiences as well as their home language, even though many of them arrive in very early ages. In the next sections, we present the main underlying principles of our proposal, rooted in a genre-based approach which mobilizes literary texts.

## **2 A genre-based approach**

In the last few years, there has been an increase in the number of research devoted to the teaching of additional languages to children in Brazil by means of textual genres (Tonelli, 2005; Ferreira; Tonelli, 2020; Magiolo, 2021) given the central role language plays in social activities. It is a consensus

amongst researchers that the teaching by means of genres has the potential to create a meaningful context in which children can experience and live in additional languages (Rao, 2023).

When it comes to the teaching of English to young children, activities aiming at developing the students' language capacities have been proposed based on children's literature or storytelling. Tonelli (2005) was the first Brazilian researcher to develop the didactic model of the genre 'children's literature' and to indicate the main characteristics to be considered when organizing English teaching activities to young children. Besides identifying the structure of the genre that suggests some possibilities for planning activities, the author also discusses the reasons to use that genre in English classes so as to provide meaningful teaching and to move away from uncritical and instrumental teaching which does not consider language as a medium of instruction.

In the same way, Selbach (2014) advocates for the importance of storytelling as it constitutes life experiences that expand the opportunities for the student to act discursively in the world. More than the acquisition of a set of linguistic structures and skills, the learning of additional languages assists in the integral development of the student and also encourages "an appreciation of the customs and values of other cultures, contributes to the development of the perception of one's own culture through the understanding of foreign cultures" (Brasil, 1998b, p. 37), which contributes to the learner's critical awareness on the purpose of language use.

We consider the importance of organizing activities aiming at developing children's language capacities (Dolz; Pasquier; Bronckart, 1993). They are defined as "the capacities required of the apprentice for the production of a genre in a given interaction

situation” (Dolz; Schneuwly, 2004, p. 97), which are segmented into three levels: action capacities, discursive capacities, and linguistic-discursive capacities. In accordance with Dolz, Noverraz and Schneuwly (2004), we favor the Didactic Sequence (DS) as an important and meaningful pedagogical device that can guide the teaching of PWL in a flexible way.

As proposed by Dolz, Noverraz and Schneuwly (2004, p. 97), a DS is “a group of school activities that are systematically organized around an oral or written textual genre”. Moreover, it seeks to help students to engage in a certain textual genre, enabling them to write or speak more appropriately according to a certain communication situation.

Text genres are constituted by three language capacities/plans: action, discursive and linguistic-discursive (Bronckart, 2006). The action plan/capacity refers to the context of production and is related to situational objectives. The discursive plan/capacity refers to the organization and is related to discursive objectives. The linguistic-discursive plan/capacity refers to linguistic units and is related to discursive-linguistic objectives. As emphasized by Dolz, Noverraz and Schneuwly (2004), there should be an adaptation to the communication situation for communication to be effective. Despite the fact that there are many genres, some regularities can be observed, and it is these ‘regularities’ that characterize a genre and, therefore, make communication possible.

The central proposal of working with a DS is to explore genres over which the students do not have command or those in which they need to improve. Dolz, Noverraz and Schneuwly (2004) propose that a DS be built in four stages, namely:

1. Presentation of the situation;
2. An initial production (or first production);
3. The modules;
4. The final production.

In general terms, the presentation of the situation consists in the explanation of the communicative project and the introduction of a reflection on the characteristics of the situation. This is a fundamental stage, since it defines a communicative activity that must be performed and offers guidance on producing texts. At this point, the class project is presented to the group. The project will involve a significant practice of the use of language, crystallized in texts. Additionally, a detailed description of the tasks the students must undertake is provided.

After this stage, students prepare an initial text (either oral or written) using the genre being explored. It is at this stage that the teacher can diagnose the capacities over which the students already have command, and those that need to be further developed. The modules include various activities that may provide tools to the students for working on the chosen genre, and for systematizing and further developing the issues presented in the initial production.

Another fundamental characteristic in this teaching proposal is the fact that, in the modules, the teacher can adapt the activities to the needs of the class, to certain groups of students or to the specific needs of a single student. For these reasons, we believe that the work with textual genres, using the DS tool, can greatly contribute to PWL since there are international migrant children of different ages, nationalities and previous knowledge levels of the language itself. Besides, the activities in the modules can cater to the emotional needs of the children since, as discussed above, the focus of PWL goes beyond the

teaching of the language and include children's well-being in a new country, new reality and, in most of the cases, controversial life conditions.

Finally, in the final production stage, students put in practice the knowledge they have explored. This phase is also used to assess the textual and/or linguistics aspects worked with during the DS.

Considering that the DS is a device to teach languages by means of textual genres, in the next sections, we advocate for the literary texts as a meaningful genre to be explored in PWL to migrant children.

### **3 The role of literature**

The use of literary texts in the teaching of additional languages to children, mainly the English language, has been discussed by authors who understand literary texts as a gateway to new perspectives and intercultural awareness (Tonelli, 2005; Tonelli; Cordeiro, 2014; Bland, 2019). In the case of English, as stated by Bland (2019, p. 270), "[i]t is now understood that literary texts form a gateway to new perspectives and intercultural awareness – in the case of English through the many literatures in English from nations throughout the world". The author argues that "the inclusion of literature in English language teaching may embrace postcolonial and migrant literature in an almost overwhelming array of formats". (Bland, 2019, p. 270).

The use of storytelling is not limited to reading books to the children. It also involves constructing stories with the children, allowing them to use their imagination and creativity to create stories that reflect their experiences and interests. This proposal can be particularly effective for international migrant children

who may have a limited understanding of the Portuguese language and culture as it allows them to express themselves in a safe and supportive environment.

The benefits of using narratives and themes in language teaching and learning are also highlighted by Cameron (2001). By incorporating these elements into the curriculum, teachers can create a more engaging and meaningful learning experience for their students. This approach can be particularly effective for teaching PWL to migrant children, as it allows students to connect language use with real-life situations and experiences. By presenting language in a context that is relevant and interesting to students, they are more likely to be motivated and engaged in their learning. This approach can help students retain information more effectively, as they are able to associate new language concepts with familiar experiences and stories.

Moreover, Cameron (2001) suggests that using narratives and themes can also facilitate participation in various discursive events in an additional language. When students are familiar with the context and content of a discussion or debate, they are more likely to feel comfortable participating in the conversation. This can be particularly beneficial for migrant children who may feel hesitant or self-conscious about speaking in a new language.

Concerning PWL, our perspective is based on the understanding that learning an additional language can be best achieved through immersion in the language and culture. Hence, the use of literature and storytelling to engage the children can help them connect with the language on a personal level. Storytelling is a powerful tool that can be used to create a fun and engaging learning environment. It allows children to connect with the language in a meaningful way and encourages them to use it in a variety of contexts (Tonelli, 2005).



Firstly, learning Portuguese facilitates social interaction as it enables migrant children to engage with the local community. When children move to a new country, they may feel isolated and alone. Learning the language of the country can become a way to support them in communicating more easily, integrating into the local community and making new friends (Osadan; Reid, 2016).

Secondly, learning Portuguese may support migrant children in preserving their cultural identity including their home language. Moving to a new country is a challenging process for children, and they may feel like they are losing a part of their identity. Through a culturally sensitive approach to language, learning Portuguese has the potential to help them maintain a connection to their culture and heritage by incorporating elements of their home language and culture into the language learning process (Cummins; Early; Stille, 2011). This approach recognizes the importance of language as a cultural identity marker and seeks to validate and celebrate the child's linguistic and cultural background (Leoni *et al.*, 2011). It also holds the possibility to help them engage in social practices in Brazil and even assist family members who may not speak the language. Migrant children who learn Portuguese can act as language brokers for their family members, helping them navigate daily life and even access important services (Bauer, 2016).

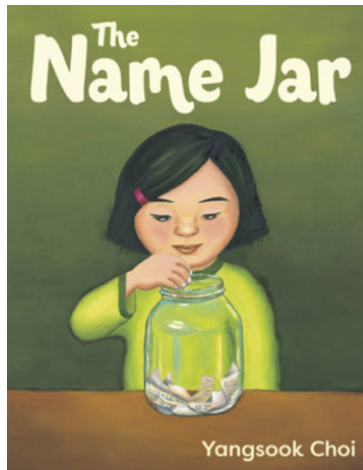
Thirdly, learning Portuguese may contribute positively to the academic performance of migrant children. Studies have shown that children who learn an additional language have improved cognitive abilities and academic performance (Cummins; Early, 2011b; Leoni *et al.*, 2011). Learning Portuguese can assist children in developing better critical thinking and problem-solving skills. It can also improve their memory, attention, and focus.

Finally, learning Portuguese can have long-term benefits for migrant children. As the world becomes more globalized, proficiency in more than one language has become increasingly important. Learning an additional language can therefore have a positive impact on future opportunities for children, including in the job market. The employment probabilities and earnings of immigrants vary significantly based on their ethnic origin and language acquisition (Dustmann; Fabbri, 2003). According to the authors, learning an additional language can have a strong and positive impact on employment probabilities.

#### **4 Proposal of didactic material by means of a didactic sequence**

As a proposal to the teaching of PWL, we present the storybook ‘The Name Jar’<sup>3</sup> (Picture 1) by Yangsook Choi.

**Picture 1 – Cover of the book ‘The Name Jar’**



**Source: Choi (2003)**

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<sup>3</sup> More information on the book in: <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.ca/books/27340/the-name-jar-by-yangsook-choi/9780375806131>.

The story shows the importance of being proud of who we are, of our identity, culture, and background. The Name Jar is about Unhei, a new student who has just moved from Korea to an American school. She is worried that her American classmates won't be able to pronounce her name correctly and is anxious to make friends. On the first day of school, she decides not to introduce herself and instead tells the class she will choose a name by the following week. Her classmates create a jar filled with name options to help her choose, but she ultimately chooses her own Korean name, Yoon-Hey, with the encouragement of her new friends. As pointed out by McCaffrey (2015):

The story is age-appropriate for younger students and makes allusion to weightier issues immigrants face while transitioning to a new life. A name change may appear as an exterior change, but is representative of the numerous internal shifts immigrants make in assimilating to a new home. Two questions among many immigrants face when relocating are: What do we culturally keep? What do we leave behind? Unhei decides that her name is one facet of her life she will keep despite its unusualness in America. [...] Unhei's thoughtfulness regarding a possible name change demonstrates reflection, personal strength and cultural pride. Name changes can have deeper implications beyond self; a name change can affect an individual's family and cultural identity (McCaffrey, 2015, p. 2).

Based on this literary text, a storybook, a DS was created in order not only to teach Portuguese to migrant children<sup>4</sup> but also to provide them a comfortable environment in which they can share their home culture, their home language and feel safe about who they are (Selbach, 2014). As suggested by Brasil (1998a),

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<sup>4</sup> This is an ongoing Project which has been carried out in the city of Rolândia located in the North of Paraná State, Brazil. The activities created are part of an undergraduate research project under the supervision of the first author which is inserted in the broader research project 'Praxiologias colaborativas na educação linguística (em línguas adicionais) com crianças'. CAAE (58932722.4.0000.5231).

families' knowledge can be incorporated into educational projects and activities. By involving parents and other relatives, not only cultural and regional matters but also family motivations and emotional topics can be included in daily pedagogical routines: “[f]or instance, the story of choosing children’s names, parents’ favorite childhood games, life stories, etc. can become integral parts of projects [...]”. (Brasil, 1998a, p. 79).

In the proposed activities, the book was translated to Portuguese since it is currently only available in English. Due to the length and purpose of this article, we are not presenting the complete SD but suggesting some of the activities inserted in it according to each step as proposed by Dolz, Noverraz and Schneuwly (2004). Therefore, some activities allocated in the initial production and Modules 1 and 2 will be presented to give a panorama of how we conceive the benefits of using literary texts in PWL classes for/with children. Furthermore, the final production is also presented as the class project within the context of PWL.

#### **4.1 Initial production**

For the purpose of welcoming the children (Tonelli, 2005; Bland, 2019), the initial production involves reading the book in the Portuguese version and, after that, the following activities (Table 1) would be carried out aiming at assessing the different backgrounds in the classroom (García-Azkoaga; Zabala, 2015). That assessment is not only concerned about students’ linguistic repertoire as its main goal, but also aims to get to know students’ names and create a positive atmosphere concerning the theme explored. At this point, the teacher can ask the students some questions to assess their understanding about the content of the

story. It would be important to provide them with the opportunity to use their home language to answer the questions, as the objective is not to impose the use of Portuguese but rather to create a comfortable environment for their participation.

**Table 1 – Activities of Initial Production**

Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Teacher brainstorms with children the words they can remember from the story. The words can be written on the board or just pronounced orally.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Teacher invites children to identify the words in Portuguese which are similar to their home language. Teacher asks children to compare the initial sounds of the words.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•On small pieces of paper, teacher (or children themselves, depending on their ages and level of literacy) writes students' names on it.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Teacher and students insert the slips of paper in a jar. After that, teacher takes the names one by one and reads them aloud so the whole group can learn how to pronounce the names correctly.</li></ul>

**Source: The authors**

After these activities, it is expected that the children become familiar with each other's names and are able to pronounce them appropriately. Considering the flexibility of the didactic device, the teacher can decide if all the activities will be carried out and if they will be developed by all the children in the classroom or by just one group. That decision will be based on the students' ages, interests, and pedagogical needs.

Besides being in accordance with the conception of a DS (Dolz, Noverraz, Schneuwly, 2004), the activities proposed in the initial production can contribute to raise students' awareness about different names and the importance of knowing their pronunciation, as it is by the name that one is identified. Moreover, all the activities proposed in this stage of the DS are based on the story being explored, which highlights the challenges faced by the main character and can create a sense of wonder in the

students (Selbach, 2014).

After these activities, the project will be presented to the whole class: they will produce a storybook about their own names. For this purpose, the genre will be carefully explored beginning with the cover of the book and the elements that are usually present in it: the title, the author’s name, and the illustrator.

In the next section, we describe some of the activities designed for two modules of the DS.

**4.2 Modules**

In Module 1, the purpose will be to develop students’ language capacities (Dolz; Pasquier; Bronckart, 1993), mainly the action capacities related to the storybooks. The activities (Table 2) explore the purposes of writing a book, who writes and for whom, as well as its main elements: author, illustrator, main characters, plot, and sequence of events – which characterizes a narrative – and the possible moral or lessons that can be learned.

**Table 2 – Activities of Module 1**

Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Teacher asks children about their favorite storybooks and what the stories are about. The answers can be written on the board.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Teacher asks children the following questions: a) Who writes a book? b) Why are books written? c) For whom are they written?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Teacher shows the book and explores the elements present in the cover: illustration, title and author with the group.</li><li>•Teacher reads the title of the book and asks children what the story could be about.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Teacher performs the storytelling for and with the help from the children, exploring the main characters, plot, sequence of events and possible lessons to be learned.</li></ul>

**Source: The authors**

Taking the activities described into consideration, all the elements explored were identified by Tonelli (2005), who elaborated the didactic model of the genre and its teachable elements. In Module 1, the multimodal aspects of the book can also be explored by the teacher as Choi’s illustrations use bold, vibrant colors that cover the entire page and are part of the genre being explored. The illustrations are known for their expressive close-ups of faces, and for capturing the characters’ expressions and enhancing their depth (McCaffrey, 2015).

In Module 2, children revisit the storybook’s plot and begin the discussion about the story behind each student’s name (Table 3).

**Table 3 – Activities of Module 2**

Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Teacher discusses some aspects of the plot with children through the following questions: a) What is the story of Unhei about? b) What does 'Unhei' mean in Korean? c) How did she feel about her name as soon as she got to the US and to school? d) What is the story of Unhei's family?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Teacher makes a clothesline and provides copies (illustrations out of order) of the main sequence of events from the story for children to unscramble.</li> <li>•Children take turns picking an illustration and hanging it on the clothesline. As a group, children retell the story.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Teacher asks children if they know the meaning and the story of their names through the following questions: a) Do you know the meaning of your name? b) What is the story of your name (after someone in the family, some family member's choice)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Teacher asks about children's family (if they have any siblings, what the names of family members are) and write the answers on the board.</li> <li>•Teacher asks about the story of migrant children's family.</li> </ul>

**Source:** The authors

In this module, the activities aim at developing mainly the student’s discursive-linguistic capacity (Dolz; Schneuwly, 2004), since the focus is on specific characteristics of the Portuguese language, including lexical choices. Moreover, in accordance with Bland (2019), children can feel more comfortable with

a language which is new for them because the activities are derived from a literary text.

It is important to highlight that the use of their home language is part of the children's linguistic repertoire and the teacher's role is to provide opportunities for the children to establish connections between the languages being explored.

### **4.3 Final production**

In the Final Production, the students collaboratively produce a storybook about their own names. The group can visit other classrooms to show their production and present the story of their names to other students. The book can be displayed in the classroom and later in the school library. As stated by Cummins, Early and Stille (2011, p. 31),

[...] classroom project work (such as identity text creation), associated with the students' cultural and linguistic capital [...] promotes identities of competence among students from marginalised community groups, thereby challenging the devaluation of these students' cultures and languages in the wider society.

The proposal of this final product is inspired by a project developed by Selbach (2014) that involved the development of a collaborative story in English with 4-5-year-old children, which was then transformed into a book crafted by the class. After the completion of the project, the class presented the collective story in English to 2-3-year-old students in the same school.

Throughout the project, each student was given the chance to invent, draw, and narrate their own part of the story. At the end of the project, children should be able to produce a collective story through the development of listening, respect, and solidarity



skills, illustrate the part of the story they authored and accept the invitation to publicly tell it to other students in the school, using all their available linguistic resources.

Selecting a theme that appeals to children, planning, connecting content to activities and different types of language use, organizing materials, making decisions collectively, managing activities and resources, paying attention to the quantity and quality of language used, continuously assessing progress as well as using final products to motivate and engage children are effective and important steps to be taken when designing a teaching plan (Cameron, 2001) 'for' and 'with' children (Malta, 2019). According to Cameron (2001), the creation of a public final product as well as the interaction with parents, other classes, or teachers can encourage students to practice and improve their writing, speaking, and listening skills.

## Conclusions

Teaching and learning PWL for international migrant children in Brazil are complex processes that require the support of educators, policymakers, and the broader community. In this sense, this work has provided reflections and insights into the challenges and opportunities associated with this process. The perspective of PWL 'for' and 'with' children has been presented, emphasizing the importance of placing all children's culture, heritage, interests and needs at the center of the teaching and learning process. The genre-based approach, grounded on literature and storytelling, has been discussed as a means to engage children and create a meaningful context for language learning. Modules of a didactic sequence based on the book "The Name Jar" by Yangsook Choi have been proposed, highlighting the use of storytelling as a way to provide opportunities for international migrant children and their peers to interact and

learn about each other in Portuguese. In this regard, Leoni *et al.* (2011, p. 56)'s questions remain vital: "Does our pedagogy acknowledge and build on the cultural and linguistic knowledge (social capital) of students and communities?"; "To what extent are we enabling all students to engage cognitively and invest their identities in learning?"

In line with the authors, it is our view that by creating a supportive and culturally sensitive environment, children can engage in meaningful language learning experiences that consider their linguistic, emotional, and cultural needs.

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