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The idea of teaching and learning of Portuguese as a foreign language

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Abstract
Now a day's several studies are being carried out to teach languages. Each language has its own importance in this global world. The current scenario of the world gives us an indication that language as a mode of communication is an important tool for diplomatic and business relations between various countries. In this context the teaching of Portuguese as a foreign language is important for India as it is a member of BRICS. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to talk about some important didactic material as well as present some theoretical precepts on language teaching, communicative teaching and language acquisition.

Keywords: Portuguese, didactic material, language teaching, linguistic

Introduction

With all the new perspectives that is emerging in education, language teaching is increasingly being discussed. The teaching of language must go beyond the mechanical teaching of rules and norms. This study aims to demonstrate how the didactic material and various method is developed for learning Portuguese as a foreign language.

Preparation of teaching materials for language teaching

The collection of didactic material is not a simple task for teachers who teach languages. Most of these professionals do not have material, they simply select a heap of material which is often outdated, failing to consider the basic criteria, which are indispensable for the students.

Leffa (2003) [13], in his studies on the collection of didactic material for the language teaching, establishes four stages which he considers important namely: Analysis, development, implementation and evaluation. Following the author's considerations, I would briefly like to explain these steps:

Analysis: we must analyze the needs of students, checking what they really need to learn. Such needs must match with the personal context and desires of the learner. It must not lie below their expectations. Therefore, the material delivered to the students needs to be of the same level equivalent to the set of knowledge, the content they have developed in their minds. It is important to trigger the student's knowledge world as this condition will help in the success of a particular material. The student must be aware not only of the environment in which he is studying but also must possess knowledge about the community and should be aware of the main genres that are part of our daily social actions. For example, one should be able to write a letter to a newspaper complaining, giving opinion or congratulating on a particular subject.

Development: Defining the objectives that are proposed after the analysis of the needs. By clearly defining the objectives, we can develop activities with the use of didactic material. With the goals well defined, the students know what is expected of them.

Implementation: The implementation stage lies with the person who prepared the didactic material and who will apply it. Leffa (2003) [13] has pointed out three basic situations which I have explained briefly:

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1. The material to be used by the teacher himself: In this situation the implementation is given in an intuitive way, complemented by the teacher who orally explains to the students what should be done.
2. The material to be used by another teacher: In this case, there is a need of instructions on how the material should be presented and used by the students.
3. The material to be used directly by the student without the presence of a teacher.

In the latter situation, we have two major challenges as stated by Leffa in which he says that the first challenge is to establish contact with the student, ideally offering neither less nor more than their needs, descending to their level of knowledge without distorting the complexity of the knowledge that needs to be seized. The second challenge is to try and predict what can happen. As the teacher is not present during the execution of the task, it is necessary to have an idea of the possible doubts of the student.

Evaluation: The evaluation of the material may be informal and formal. The informal evaluation involves a single teacher who teaches lessons, applying it in the class to see how it works, applying it a second time with a different group of students, without reaching out to a concrete definition. When the material is produced by a group of teachers, the evaluation takes a formal character and can be done by the advice of a specialist or by questionnaires and interviews with the students.

According to Leffa (2003) [13], the production of materials varies: Both the approaches, the traditional approach, which puts the teacher at the centre of learning process as well as the most recent approach which stresses the student's role, the material production is neither centred by the teacher nor by the student rather it is task focused.

In this way, producing didactic material is not an easy task, since the teacher needs to create and establish parameters that are feasible for the teaching-learning process of apprentices, primarily meeting their needs and their expectations in and out of the classroom.

Communicative approach for language teaching

The elaboration of didactic material for the teaching of languages, generally is based on the study of a form i.e the grammar. For knowing a language it is often a possession of a knowledge of the right form, but this knowledge alone is of little use. What we need is really a teaching approach that enables the student to interact in a foreign language so that one is able to build his own capacity to acquire that communicative competence.

The teaching of languages for communicative purposes, according to the precepts of Giovannini (1996) [7] is that he puts emphasis on the social context, as well as the characteristics of communication. This type of communication is basically a way of social interaction that develops in the contexts, which impose certain conditions. The use of the language at the same time provide keys that allow the correct interpretation of the statements.

According to the same author (1996), in order to make sure that the activities are programmed within a communicative perspective, we must consider four major fields:

A form: It involves everything that is connected to the structure of the language: grammar, vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, etc.

Communication: This field covers all that is concerned the use a language that a speaker makes of the language.

Socio culture: It is a process of familiarization with the culture of the community that speaks that language.

Learning: To learn a language, the language must be studied sincerely and effectively.

The communicative approach attaches great importance to the production by the students in the sense that they favour these productions, this gives the students the opportunity of producing in the foreign language, helping them by removing various obstacles and not by systematically correcting it.

Therefore, a teaching plan is recommended for teaching a language which would work in the classroom. The communicative approach is interconnected with the social and cultural aspects of a particular society, since this process enables the student to interact in real situations of language use in the context of insertion.

Acquisition of a foreign language

It is known that, in the literature, theories of language acquisition are linked to three distinct ways of explaining the intellectual capacity of the human being corresponding to the three guiding conceptions which are related with - behaviour, innateness and interaction.

The first theory related with the behaviour defends the idea that experience determines the knowledge, i.e we acquire a language by imitating other people. On the acquisition of a mother tongue, the child imitates the speech of adults making it a continuous practice. As time passes, the child then internalizes the correct linguistic patterns of language use. The language is understood as a social behaviour in the view of this aspect in which the subject imitates, practices and learns the target language. The role of the mind becomes that of only organizing of these ideas.

The second theory related with innateness defends the idea that the mind plays a role fundamental in the learning of knowledge. Human beings are born biologically programmed to perform functions such as speech, and the environment together with the experiences contribute. However, they are of little importance.

And the third theory related with the interaction defends the idea that the individual acquires a due to the interaction between two factors. According to Richter (2000) [15], these two factors are the learner's inborn mental program and the language produced jointly by the learner and an interlocutor with command of the language.

Cognitively speaking, the acquisition of a second language, according to some linguists, including Ellis (1986) [6], presents some important approximations with the acquisition of the mother tongue. This means that some theories attach particular importance to the innate characteristics of others and emphasize the essential role of the environment for learning, and still others seek to investigate learners' characteristics and the factors in the explanation of how the acquisition of the second language occurs, exactly as it happens in the aforementioned theories.

The term second language refers to any language learned in addition to the language and may be referred to the learning of a third or fourth language. If the student is learning a language naturally, that is, living in a country where the target language is spoken, or even learning the language

with the instruction of a teacher, it can be said that the student is learning a second language. Now, if the student in your country is learning another language, then one can say that he is learning a foreign language.

According to Krashen (in Ellis: 1986) [6], he says that it is only possible to acquire a language naturally, that is by communicating. Apart from this conception the student, as it is in a context of immersion is forced to communicate in the target language which further contributes to more effective learning. On the other hand, this same student does not leave aside his mother tongue but tries to find a link between the two languages. Without disregarding other mechanisms of acquisition, they transfer the knowledge from one language to another thus forming a unique language and a linguistic system that is between the mother tongue and the target language. This is called hybridism.

About the acquisition, Krashen (1982) [11] considers that the acquisition comes by fluency, by practice and is unconscious, that is the learners are only aware of what they are able to and they perceive themselves communicating in the new language similar to acquisition of the mother tongue. Learning, on the other hand refers to the awareness of the rules of language, which follows a natural and predictable order of learning depending on the degree of difficulty. However, we only use them consciously when there is time to do so, when we are focusing on the form when we know the rule.

Conclusion

There is a long way to go as far as Portuguese language is concerned. The domain of this language is greatly increasing its insertion in the international market, where Brazil is reinforcing its economic and cultural power every day. The material presented above attempts to show some important methods aimed towards learning this language.

Learning a language is a way of being in the social world. Social interaction plays a key role in cognitive development and is motor of learning and intellectual development. Coming in contact with the culture of the language motivates and accelerates the learning and enables growth leading to the linguistic development in lexical, grammatical and syntactic competences. In this way, there is a more experienced feeling during the learning process.

I believe that those who will teach and learn this language are aware of the importance of this language. In an increasingly competitive world the mastery of a language and understanding its local culture and customs are advantageous for building important bilateral relations.

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