

VOCABULARY IN PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS FOR KOREAN A1 LEARNERS: A DISCURSIVE-DIALOGICAL ANALYSIS OF ACTIVITY DESIGN

VOCABULÁRIO EM LIVROS DIDÁTICOS DE LÍNGUA PORTUGUESA PARA APRENDENTES COREANOS DE NÍVEL A1: UMA ANÁLISE DISCURSIVO-DIALÓGICA DO DESIGN DE ATIVIDADES

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates the modes of vocabulary presentation in activities from Portuguese as an Additional Language textbooks published in South Korea and aimed at Korean-speaking A1 learners, grounding its analysis in the discursive-dialogical perspective of the Bakhtin Circle (Bakhtin, 2016; Volóchinov, 2017). The research comprised four contemporary Portuguese-language teaching resources funded by the Research Fund of Critical Foreign Languages Education Promotion (CFL): (1) *Material Didático Português Padronizado* (Lim & Lee, 2019); (2) *Conversando em Português* (Lima et al., 2021); (3) *Português em Cena* (Ponciano & Guimarães, 2022); and (4) *Português do Dia a Dia* (Yoon, Cheol & Bok, 2020). A documentary analysis was conducted following an analytical framework based on Lüdke and André (1986), developing two analytical criteria: (1) material structure, investigating the organization of didactic units, vocabulary presentation, and integration of the four language skills; and (2) meaning construction and dialogism, analyzing whether activities contextualize language use and stimulate active student participation. The results reveal that three textbooks present predominantly structuralist activities without adequate contextualization. One textbook, however, displays activities closer to Bakhtin's dialogical conception, fostering autonomous learner participation and effective integration of language skills.

KEYWORDS: Portuguese as an Additional Language, Textbook, Bakhtinian Circle, Dialogism, Vocabulary.

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1. Introduction

In this paper, we analyze how vocabulary is presented in activities in Portuguese as an Additional Language (PAL) textbooks published in South Korea for Korean-speaking learners at the A1 level, adopting the discursive-dialogical perspective of the Bakhtin Circle (Bakhtin, 2016; Volóchinov, 2017) as our analytical framework. Language learning and teaching is a multifaceted area in which we must consider not only the target language, but also the profile of the learners, their cultural background, and how distant their mother tongue is from the language they are learning. These factors are particularly salient when examining how language structure and vocabulary are addressed in pedagogical practice. According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), these elements have historically been treated in isolation, separated from the communicative contexts in which they function – a practice that contemporary pedagogical approaches have systematically worked to overcome. From the perspective adopted in this study, by contrast, vocabulary acquisition must extend beyond the mere memorization and recognition of lexical items, requiring learners to deploy words appropriately within meaningful communicative contexts. This capacity, in turn, depends on an understanding of the social and discursive dimensions of language use (Kaphle, 2024). Therefore, vocabulary learning is understood as a dynamic process of engaging with language as a social practice, one that unfolds through authentic communicative interactions.

According to Clark (1996), language use can be understood as a form of joint action in which people act in coordination with one another to do things, that is, to accomplish communicative purposes in different situations. Developing the ability to participate effectively in such interactions is therefore one of the main goals of most language learners. Considering that vocabulary functions as the core component of all language skills (Long & Richards, 2007), to achieve communicative competence in the target language, mastering a diverse range of lexical items is essential for students, since it is widely known that vocabulary is considered the building blocks of the diverse languages worldwide. Research demonstrates that extensive vocabulary knowledge significantly enhances learners' speaking abilities (Sukendra et al., 2023; Dalimunthe & Haryadi, 2022), while limited lexical resources create major obstacles to language acquisition (Nation, 1990).

Given the importance of vocabulary in language learning, textbooks are expected to present vocabulary through purposefully designed activities that reflect the diversity of words

used across different communicative contexts and spheres of activity. Bakhtin (2016) states that the areas of human activities are numerous and new activities emerge all the time; consequently, the variety of utterances – understood as concrete linguistic expressions produced within specific social interactions – needed for those spheres of activities are also numerous. Considering that textbooks play an important role in guiding pedagogical practices and shaping learner perceptions of what is important to learn (Mäntylä et al., 2024), they work as an intermediary between learners, teachers, and the target language, and it is the place where students will most likely look for vocabulary during their learning process for those diverse spheres of human activities they are exposed to in their target language.

Given the central role textbooks play as vocabulary sources, many studies have examined vocabulary presentation in this type of teaching material. Mikajiri (2023) analyzed formulaic sequences in Japanese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks and in a spoken English corpus. Ahmed (2021) compared vocabulary in university textbooks and in Bangladesh K-12 EFL textbooks to analyze if students are being well prepared for higher education in terms of English vocabulary. Cheng and Chang (2022) compared vocabulary load and readability from high school textbooks and English test papers of college entrance examinations. Korell (2021) analyzed gender-related aspects, including vocabulary, in textbooks of Spanish as a foreign language. Al-Ahmadi (2024) analyzed vocabulary coverage, frequency and repetition in two EFL textbooks. However, despite the abundance of studies on vocabulary in textbooks, the majority employ quantitative methodologies and examine lexical items in isolation rather than analyzing how vocabulary is integrated into pedagogical activities.

Research specifically examining vocabulary activities in textbooks remains scarce in the literature. Murray (2016), for instance, examined the presence of formulaic sequences in an EFL textbook and the extent to which activities incorporating these sequences were included. Dung (2022) investigated how English textbooks promote vocabulary acquisition for learners at upper secondary schools in Sweden, and one the goals of this study was to examine what types of tasks there are in the textbooks, and whether the textbooks have a focus on explicit or incidental learning. Even though these studies consider vocabulary activities, they do not present the dialogism concept in their investigations and do not focus

on exploring whether the activities foster an active participation and autonomy of the students throughout the units of the material.

The research paper that brings the most similar analysis to the goals of the present study is by López-Jiménez (2014). It analyzed vocabulary in Spanish L2 textbooks considering the question “Is learner autonomy promoted through vocabulary learning strategies and glossaries in the students’ L1 at the end of the textbooks?”. Although that study addresses learner autonomy through vocabulary activities, it prioritizes glossaries and does not employ an enunciative theory of language as a foundation for analyzing language teaching practices, which is central to the present investigation.

Given the limited number of studies focusing specifically on vocabulary-related activities in PAL textbooks, the present study, as previously mentioned, analyzes how vocabulary is presented across four textbooks from a Bakhtinian perspective. The choice of the Bakhtin Circle's³ perspective stems from the impact of the reception of these ideas on language teaching in Brazil, particularly the teaching of Portuguese, which has systematically incorporated such reflections for more than two decades (Rojo, 2008). For that, the study is guided by two central research questions: (1) To what extent do vocabulary activities in these textbooks reflect dialogical principles as theorized by Bakhtin? and (2) How are these activities structured to foster active learner participation and meaningful engagement?

The relevance of this study lies in the fact that through the analysis of textbooks we can understand part of the education culture of the people from where the book was developed, taking into account who produced it. Additionally, analyzing textbooks, particularly language teaching materials, reveals the complex relationship between students, teachers, and instructional resources. These materials often reflect broader cultures of language teaching and learning, incorporating beliefs and assumptions about language acquisition that influence learner attitudes and practices.

The following sections present the theoretical background of this study, beginning with an explanation of dialogism as conceptualized by the Bakhtin Circle, followed by a discussion of vocabulary's role in language learning. We then provide a brief overview of PAL

³ The Bakhtin Circle refers to a group of Russian thinkers associated with Mikhail Bakhtin, including figures such as Valentin Volóchinov and Pavel Medvedev. In Brazil, the reception of their work has been especially influential in the field of Applied Linguistics, particularly in studies of discourse and language teaching.

education in Korea before detailing the methodological approach and presenting the results of the textbook analyses.

2. Background

2.1. Discourses tied together: the idea of dialogism

Language flows across all spheres of human activity, manifesting itself through utterances, which are concrete linguistic expressions that are both spoken and written and that are produced by language users operating within specific contexts of use and directed toward specific interlocutors (Bakhtin, 2016). Consider, for instance, a doctor talking to a patient during a medical consultation, a waiter greeting and assisting a customer in a restaurant, or a social media user responding to a post from their favorite influencer: of these utterances, though distinct in form, purpose, and intended audience, is fundamentally shaped by the communicative demands, social conventions, and relational dynamics that characterize its particular sphere of activity.

In each case, the speaker has a specific interlocutor in mind – the patient seeking medical guidance, the customer requiring service, the influencer as perceived audience – and this awareness of the addressee directly influences how the utterance is constructed and what linguistic choices are made. Yet even as these utterances vary across different spheres of activity and diverse communicative relationships, the underlying linguistic forms from which they are constructed demonstrate a repetition, inasmuch as every language operates with a finite repertoire of forms that speakers systematically deploy to convey messages of diverse semantic content. Nevertheless, the manner in which these formal, or stylistic, elements are organized and sequenced varies considerably according to specific contextual conditions, the social expectations and values reflected in the subjects themselves, and the relational positioning that characterizes each sphere. These patterns of language use, which manifest as relatively stable forms of utterances within particular social contexts, constitute what Bakhtin identifies as *speech genres* (Bakhtin, 2016). Speech genres function as an important mediating force between abstract linguistic forms and their concrete, contextually-situated realizations across the multiple spheres of human activity, inasmuch as it is through these genres that we communicate with one another. In other words, we do not speak in isolated linguistic units;

rather, we speak through speech genres that have been shaped by the social practices and communicative traditions of our communities.

In that respect, words are multiform and can assume different meanings depending on the context in which they are used. In other words, language cannot be separated from its ideological content. In that sense,

In actuality, we never say or hear words, we say or hear what is true or false, good or bad, important or unimportant, pleasant or unpleasant, and so on. Words are always filled with content and meaning drawn from behavior or ideology. That is the way we understand words, and we can respond only to words that engage us behaviorally or ideologically (Volóchinov, 1986, p. 70).

Since humans are historical beings situated in a social context, the Bakhtin Circle's notion of dialogism articulates precisely these dimensions: language, individuals, and their history (Volóchinov, 2017; de Santana et al., 2020). When we talk, we carry with ourselves a baggage of knowledge from all the experiences we had and the discourses we were exposed to so we can form an opinion about the world and situations. Therefore, the language we use is never neutral, but ideologically saturated as the words we use refer to something in the world like a profession, an age, a social group, a context, etc. (Rodrigues, 2005).

When language learners are exposed to their target language in a classroom through a textbook, they might expect to be able to communicate in the diverse social situations that exist in the world, and this is accomplished through the various speech genres that operate across different spheres of activity. Bakhtin (2006) contends that living means engaging in various forms of dialogue asking questions, listening, answering, and agreeing, each of which is constructed through an utterance produced by a speaker and a response generated by an interlocutor. Therefore, the dialogism constructed refers to the meaning relations that are established between two or more utterances (Fiorin, 2006).

Taking into consideration the concept of language as conceptualized by the Bakhtin Circle, it involves verbal interaction, the utterance, speech genres, the ideology carried by speakers, and dialogism, which function as the spine that connects all these aspects together (Molon & Vianna, 2012). When we interact with others, or even with ourselves, we carry those four elements with us. Therefore, in a language classroom where there is interaction,

that is most likely what we will see: the integration of their verbal interaction, their utterances produced, their ideologies and the dialogism of the discourse present in the discussion with previous discourses the learners were exposed to.

During interactions with other human beings, we show ourselves as axiological beings inserted in a cultural context and who will respond according to that context (Faraco, 2009). If this is the case in one's mother tongue, it is expected it happens in other languages we are exposed to as well. In this sense, textbooks are built to reflect that and help students fully express themselves and not only use words as signals, but as a means of participating in society discussions in the diverse spheres of activities.

2.2. Vocabulary and language learning

“There is not much value in being able to produce grammatical sentences if one has not got the vocabulary that is needed to convey what one wishes to say [...] While without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed” (Wilkins, 1972, p. 97). When learning a new language, teachers, students, and everyone somehow involved in the process of acquiring a language agree that vocabulary is essential to succeed in one's language learning endeavors (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020). Nation (1990) adds to this idea, affirming that the difficulty learners face when acquiring a new language is intricately connected to the insufficient vocabulary they have in their repertoire

Vocabulary is a key element for language learners, since its absence hinders communicative competence, both spoken and written, as well as comprehension of the language (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020; Alqahtani, 2015). It can therefore be regarded as a core component that operates across all four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Long & Richards, 2007, p. xii). For instance, studies indicate that comprehending a text adequately requires knowing roughly 98% of its words (Hu & Nation, 2000), and that reading materials such as newspapers and novels demands a repertoire of 8,000 to 9,000 word families (Nation, 2006), a figure that approaches the lexical knowledge of a native speaker (Nation & Coxhead, 2021).

Such results emphasize the importance of knowing a big number of words and indicate that becoming more proficient in a language means, consequently, to be able to use

and understand a variety of words in different situations. In that respect, language classrooms are very rich environments where students can be exposed to and practice diverse types of words. In addition to that, language classrooms provide students with different emotions during lessons through the several topics language learning allows us to explore. When students acquire new words that are connected to emotions, recalling those words happens much easier (Driver, 2022). As a result, classrooms can furnish students with the amount of words, emotions through the themes explored in the lessons, and the explicit repetition and exposure that can help them become proficient.

However, despite being widely known and proven the importance of vocabulary in language classrooms, different factors interfere both with teaching and learning it. This results in teachers and learners being unsure about how to deal with it, especially because textbooks “have typically been negligent in providing clear descriptions and guidelines” (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020, p. 161). Therefore, identifying how textbooks portray vocabulary, considering the target students, their mother tongue and the target language, is extremely important for us to understand how vocabulary can be better taught in language classrooms. Since the present study focuses on Portuguese for Koreans, it is important to understand the cultural differences as well as the language distance aspect in order to comprehend how the textbooks analysed were constructed that way.

2.3. Portuguese language in South Korea

South Korea is a country that actively works on the promotion of language learning among its citizens. That is accomplished through the Critical Foreign Languages Education Promotion (CFL), which is a government initiative to promote the education of critical foreign languages. It is a part of the National Institute for International Education (NIIED) and aims at encouraging the expansion of languages that are not commonly taught in Korean schools, but are regarded as having importance in the global scenario (CFL, 2026). This initiative defines a critical language as any language that was mandated by international agreements and that is considered essential for the development of the country. Among the languages considered as critical in South Korea, Portuguese is included.

Currently, this program is spread in the country through some universities considered institutions that are specialized in critical languages education. These universities include (1)

Busan University of Foreign Languages, (2) Dankook University, which has a partnership with Chungwoon University, and (3) Hankuk University of Foreign Languages. As part of the program, these universities work on the development of curriculum orientation, development and publishing of textbooks and dictionaries, offering of in person and online courses, and the offering of proficiency tests for the languages taught in the universities.

Regarding the Portuguese language, only three universities have established Portuguese departments: Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Busan University of Foreign Studies, and Dankook University⁴. These universities have been working together for the organization of the Korean Association Lusophone Area Studies (KALAS), which organizes and hosts academic conferences for the promotion of studies concerning Portuguese-speaking countries in the whole world. In addition, the association, together with the Korea Brazil Society (KOBAS) and the higher education institutions introduced earlier, organizes the annual National Portuguese Speech Contest, in which students compete for prizes while demonstrating their Portuguese-speaking skills.

As mentioned above, one of the purposes of the CFL is the production of teaching and learning materials. Concerning that, the Portuguese departments of those universities work, many times in partnership, for the development and publishing of textbooks that can be helpful for the students in their learning process. Among the public that will use such books are university students and also elementary school students. The books analyzed in the present study were all funded by the CFL and were designed for Korean university students specifically. They were produced for different purposes, for example, some focus on oral communication whereas some have a more grammar-focused approach; but despite their differences, they are used in the three universities for Portuguese classes.

⁴ Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS) has two departments where Portuguese is taught. However, one of them, located at the Yongin campus, is currently in the process of being closed. The Department of Portuguese at the Seoul campus, established in 1966, is the oldest Portuguese department in South Korea. Over the years, it has promoted a wide range of academic and cultural activities and developed several initiatives, including the Camões Portuguese Language Center and lectureship programs supported by Camões, I.P. and Brazil's Guimarães Rosa Institute. The other two Portuguese departments in South Korea were established more recently, in 1985 and 2014, respectively.

3. Methods

3.1. Corpus

This is a qualitative, interpretative documentary study, grounded in the understanding that any written material capable of serving as a source of information about human behavior can be regarded as a document (Phillips, 1974 *apud* Ludke & André, 1986). The corpus comprised four textbooks of Portuguese for Korean learners, beginner level (A1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages - CEFR). All the books selected for analysis were funded by the Research Fund of Critical Foreign Languages Education Promotion (CFL), either in their online or paper version. Books funded by the CFL were readily available in the Department of Portuguese of the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and they were all produced by experienced professors of Portuguese for Koreans, including Korean, Brazilian and Portuguese authors. The books analyzed are as follows: (1) *Material Didático Português padronizado* (Standardized Portuguese Textbook) (Lim & Lee, 2019); (2) *Conversando em Português* (Talking in Portuguese) (Lima et al, 2021); (3) *Português em Cena* (Portuguese on Stage) (Ponciano & Guimarães, 2022); and (4) *Português do dia a dia* (Daily Portuguese) (Yoon, Cheol, Bok, 2020).

3.2. Analytical framework

The analysis was performed following the stages proposed by Lüdke and André (1986) for documentary analysis as shown in table 1. The first stage was to select the type of document to be analyzed. We chose textbooks as the source of information for analysis considering that they are a natural source of contextualized information (Lüdke and André, 1986) and can provide data about that context through the organization of the material, its content and the kinds of activities present in it.

Stage 2 refers to the process and criteria used to select the textbooks to be included in the analyses. The aforementioned criteria were adopted because the books funded by the CFL were readily available free of charge at the library of Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS), in the case of print versions, while the digital copies were provided by a professor in the Department of Portuguese at HUFS.

Stage 3 includes data collection and coding. In order to do that, reading of the selected material was carried out aiming to explore the content and summarize it. This stage involved

becoming familiar with the textbooks. Regarding coding, the four books were coded as shown in table 1. Stage 3 comprised data collection and coding. The selected materials were read to explore and summarize their content, a process that also involved becoming familiar with the textbooks. For coding, each of the four books was assigned an abbreviation: the *Standardized Portuguese Textbook* was coded as SPT; *Talking in Portuguese* as TIP; *Portuguese on Stage* as POS; and *Daily Portuguese* as DP.

After that, in stage 4, the books were read again so regularities and patterns could be identified. In this stage, the reading and rereading was done by looking at structure similarities among the units, their sections and what they focus on (grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, listening, speaking, cultural aspects, etc), and also by examining how the books are similar or different. For instance, if a textbook was designed for developing students' oral communication skills, its content is certainly different from a book which focuses on grammar.

Then, in stage 5, the analysis was performed following the criteria adapted from Bulla, Lemos, and Schlatter (2012), which are specified in the next section. Finally, in stage 6, the data collected were recorded and organized through a table that summarizes the analysis performed. An overview of the six stages of the analysis process is presented below: (1) type of document, defined as the analysis of a technical document, the textbook; (2) selection of the documents, comprising textbooks of Portuguese, published in printed or digital form, that were funded by the Research Fund of Critical Foreign Languages Education Promotion (CFL); (3) data collection and coding, through inductive coding aimed at summarizing the content via an exploratory reading of the selected materials; (4) reading and rereading, in order to identify regularities, patterns, and tendencies; (5) analysis, in which the textbooks were examined according to the criteria adapted from Bulla, Lemos, and Schlatter (2012); (6) recording and organization of the data, through a table that summarizes the analysis performed.

3.3. Analysis criteria

The analysis was carried out based on two main criteria: the structure of the material, focusing on how the didactic units were constructed; and meaning construction, with an

analysis grounded in the dialogical concept proposed by Bakhtin (2016). Guiding questions were established for each criterion.

The guiding questions on the structure of the material explored how the textbooks are organized and how vocabulary activities are integrated into them. We examined whether the units were divided into sections and what each section focused on (practice, grammar, reading, culture, and so on); whether the books included a dedicated vocabulary section with both exposition and practice; whether vocabulary was presented in isolation or in contextualized utterances, a question that begins to address dialogism; and whether the activities integrated the four skills. This last point is particularly relevant, as the integration of language skills has been shown to benefit learners by engaging them in authentic tasks and exposing them to contextualized vocabulary and grammar (Labone, 2004; Nation, 2009), in line with the goal of this study. Table 3 presents these questions.

Criteria	Guiding questions
1. Structure of the material	a) Are the didactic units organized in sections? b) What is the focus of each section (activities, explanation, culture, etc)? c) Is there a section specifically for vocabulary or is vocabulary spread throughout the unit? d) How is vocabulary presented: isolated or inserted in utterances and social contexts? e) Do the activities promote the integration of the four abilities (speaking, listening, reading, and writing)?

Table 3 - Criteria and guiding questions about the structure of the textbooks.

The guiding questions for the second criterion concern meaning construction and how the textbooks reflect the concept of dialogism. To analyze this, we first asked whether the speech genres approach is present in the books and then examined whether the vocabulary activities include utterances that contextualize language use, indicating who the interlocutor is and what the purpose of the activity is. According to Bakhtin (2016), this reflects what we do in real-life situations, where we always have a purpose and someone we are addressing. This is closely connected to the last three questions, which concern students' participation in the activities. From a dialogical perspective, students participate actively by sharing their experiences and interacting with other learners, rather than mechanically answering questions

whose responses merely reproduce a text. The guiding questions related to the second criterion, meaning construction, are presented in Table 4.

Criteria	Guiding questions
2. Meaning construction	a) Is the speech genres approach seen in the activities? If so, which speech genres? b) Do the activities present utterances that explain the context of the language use, the interlocutor, and the purpose of the activity? c) Do the activities encourage an active response of the students or do the learners are only asked to reproduce the text? d) Do the activities consider the experiences of the students, connecting them to what is being asked in the exercises? e) Do the vocabulary exercises or the activities involving vocabulary promote interaction among subjects in meaningful communicative situations?

Table 4 - Criteria and guiding questions about meaning construction in the textbooks.

After the four books were analyzed, a summary of the information collected was organized into a table so the patterns and regularities would be more easily recognized, and we could have an overall view of each book as well as compare them.

The next section presents the results of the analysis following the analysis criteria and their respective guiding questions, bringing examples that illustrate, when pertinent, the characteristics of the vocabulary activities in the textbooks.

4. Results and discussion

Following the criteria outlined in the methods section, we analyzed the four selected Portuguese textbooks for Korean speakers in order to determine whether they present activities that align with the Bakhtinian principle of dialogism, seeking to identify possible points of alignment. This section is organized according to the structure of the materials and the meaning construction, each accompanied by its respective detailed discussion.

4.1. Structure of the material

Regarding the organization of the textbooks, all four textbooks are organized into units divided into sections. SPT comprises 12 units, with dedicated vocabulary sections from units 3 to 6 and remaining sections devoted to grammar, listening, reading, and writing. TIP has 10

units, with sections covering speaking games, grammar, listening, and a review game. POS, designed specifically for oral communication practice, contains 8 units focused solely on listening and speaking. DP consists of 7 units centered on understanding dialogues through translation, expressions, and grammar explanations.

As observed, the only book that displays units containing a specific section for vocabulary is the SPT. In those units, vocabulary activities involve listening to words and repeating them out loud or listening and writing them. The other units in that book had vocabulary spread throughout them and showed the same pattern of activities. The other three textbooks had vocabulary activities spread throughout the units.

The TIP textbook is an oral communication material, and, therefore, it contains many games and exercises that focus on listening and interaction; however, despite being a communicative book, its vocabulary activities are not inserted in contextualized social situations with an interlocutor. Even though sometimes we can infer the context, they are not present in the utterances in the book. One example is an activity in which students interview a classmate to ask what time they perform routine activities, such as waking up or taking a shower. The page then displays several clocks, each accompanied by a routine verb or expression below it, so that students can use these actions in their interviews. We can infer that the goal of this activity is to practice telling the time as well as routine verbs and activities. Nonetheless, when this scenario is put into a real-life situation, there is a context in which it is clear who the two people talking are and their relationship, and also the purpose for the use of these words. Volóchinov (1986) explains that an utterance is produced based on the conditions of social situations.

Utterance? as we know, is constructed between two socially organized persons, and in the absence of a real addressee, an addressee is presupposed in the person, so to speak, of a normal representative of the social group to which the speaker belongs. The word is oriented toward an addressee, toward who that addressee might be: a fellow-member or not of the same social group, of higher or lower standing (the addressee's hierarchical status), someone connected with the speaker by close social ties (father) brother, husband, and so on) or not. There can be no such thing as an abstract addressee, a man unto himself, so to speak. With such a person we would indeed have no language in common, literally and figuratively. (Volóchinov, 1986, p. 85)

Considering that, it is important for an utterance to be inserted in a contextualized social situation so learners can see more clearly the applicability in real life of the activities done in class.

The textbook POS brings vocabulary exercises that are inserted in a context presented through authentic videos of daily situations that people go through, such as watching advertisements on TV or Brazilian TV shows excerpts. Based on the videos, students are encouraged to answer questions that involve vocabulary related to the topic of the video. For instance, after watching a coffee advertisement, students should answer questions about how they like their coffee. For that, four antonyms are shown: “Sweet / without sugar”, “with chocolate / milk”, “hot / cold”, and “strong / mild”. Although there is the presence of authentic material to bring students closer to a real situation of life, like one that people living in the country that speaks the target language experience, the utterance does not show the interlocutor and a specific purpose for that activity, being only a communicative activity but not dialogic.

In the DP material, vocabulary appears throughout the sections, particularly at the beginning of the book, where the topic is the gender of words. Practice, however, occurs only at the end of each unit, through fill-in-the-blank and word-matching exercises. In other words, vocabulary is presented in isolation, lacking a social context. This kind of form-focused practice can be particularly beneficial in contexts of large typological distance, where many features of the target language are absent from the learners' L1, carry a higher learning burden, and are therefore unlikely to be acquired incidentally (Nation, 2013; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). In such cases, explicit attention to form has been shown to yield substantial gains (Spada & Tomita, 2010). From the theoretical perspective we adopt, however, instruction cannot rely solely on decontextualized, form-focused practice.

As can be observed, the textbooks present vocabulary activities that are not contextualized, even though in some of them we can infer the situation, it is not explicitly present in the materials. Additionally, the activities can many times be done by the students on their own. That means that the exercises are more structuralist and appear in a more controlled manner so the learners can learn the content and practice that in a sequence of level progression. This corroborates the findings of Martins (2025), which shows that speakers of distant languages can benefit from more controlled materials, especially learners that are not

in an immersion situation, such as the Korean students who use these materials in Korean universities. However, in spite of the beneficial aspects, having a contextualized scenario based on lusophone countries could enhance linguistic competence through cultural awareness and a more proactive learning process (Vásquez, 2019). This requires, both from students and teachers, an initial extra effort so the learners can become familiarized with the target language and overcome cross-linguistic influences, which is the transfer of someone's mother tongue to the language they are learning, and it can happen very frequently even in the context of distant languages (Martins, 2025).

Concerning the integration of the abilities, with the exception of the DP textbook that includes activities that do not promote integration of the abilities and the students can do them all on their own, all the other materials promote the integration of abilities in some level. The SPT material used the reading activities as a model for the writing tasks at the end of each unit, in which students read a short text about the topic of the unit and then had to write a short paragraph similar to what they read. The TIP textbook displayed integration between speaking and writing through the many interview activities where students have to write the answers while interviewing their classmates. The POS material shows the integration of listening and writing (watch a video and answer questions) and listening and speaking (watch a video and talk about advertisements in their countries, for instance). Pradhani (2025) conducted a study which showed that the teaching and learning approaches that use integrated methods of the different abilities yields higher language proficiency skills when compared to methods that segregate them. This was specially seen in the aforementioned study when listening – speaking and reading – writing skills were integrated, which was observed in the POS and SPT materials, respectively.

4.2. Meaning construction

Bakhtin (2016) states that all the spheres of human activity are connected to the use of language, and since human activities are multifaceted, we use different speech genres to communicate depending on the type of message we want to convey, the situation, and our interlocutor. In this regard, all the books analyzed used some form of speech genre in the vocabulary activities. Table 6 specifies the speech genres included in all the textbooks. Description of the routine was the speech genre most seen, being present in all four books,

followed by dialogues, present in three of the textbooks (SPT, POS, and DP).

Although a variety of speech genres appear in the materials, not all of them are contextualized, as mentioned in the previous section, and, therefore, do not specify the interlocutor and the purpose of the activity. In the SPT material, in the vocabulary activities the students are asked to listen and repeat, listen and fill in the blanks or read a text or dialogue to answer questions. As a consequence, students are not encouraged to respond actively and bring their experiences, except when they have to write short texts introducing themselves. Even in this simple activity, if they are not provided with the interlocutor and the purpose, learners can spend too much time thinking about this context, and any information they write will have to suffice. In this sense, we can think about the context in the commands of the activities as a detailed explanation about what learners will have to produce, either orally or in written form.

In the TIP textbook, although there are meaningful situations throughout the units, the utterances of the activities do not mention a context that includes an interlocutor and a purpose for the activity. Utterances are very straightforward, as seen in unit 6, which is entitled “What do you like?”. In one of the activities, students are supposed to interview a classmate and ask what they like and what they do not like. These are very broad questions, and the command does not specify what things they should talk about. In this case, any answer would be acceptable. Since the unit opens by presenting foods Brazilians like and then a list of foods students must say whether they like, we can infer this activity is also about food. Although the textbook includes questions in which learners talk about themselves, it does not aim for elaborate answers, offering instead options to choose from. In one interview, for example, students ask a classmate which of two options they prefer, eliciting a short, straightforward reply. The material also rarely encourages students to express opinions, the exception being one activity where they rate the difficulty of pronouncing certain letters and letter combinations.

The way the exercises are displayed in the TIP textbook, even though they lack an encouragement of more active participation of the students, they corroborate the description of east asian students made by Williams (2017) and can be suitable for them, as beginners, to progress steady and slowly in the language. The author mentions East Asian students are mostly introverted and can be resistant to nontraditional pedagogies, such as the one that is

student-centered. By having very straightforward questions for the learners to practice strictly what is being studied in the unit can be beneficial for Koreans to feel more comfortable during classes, especially in a non-immersion context, as the one the students at HUFS experience. Also, because this book is designed for A1 level students, it might take some time for them to become used to a distant language like Portuguese.

On the other hand, in a study carried out by Francisco (2018), Korean students learning Portuguese mentioned that the preferable way to learn a language is through classes with dialogues, debates and student presentations, which goes against the activities that do not encourage students to actively respond, give their opinions and talk about their personal experiences. The same study showed that the most difficult aspects for them to learn Portuguese, in their own opinion, include grammar, followed by listening and speaking. Following a more dialogical approach, students would have more opportunities to put the language into practice in situations that represent real social contexts, and, besides that, they could also be more exposed to the Brazilian culture, which was one type of classes that students mentioned they prefer, staying behind only of classes that contain dialogues, debates and presentations (Francisco, 2018).

The POS textbook brings a variety of activities, including more straightforward questions as well as task-based activities. Regarding the more direct kind of questions, an example is seen in an exercise that says “read the sentences below and then connect them to the corresponding image”. In this kind of vocabulary activity, students are not encouraged to actively respond, but rather only reproduce loose sentences. On the other hand, even though the utterances are not contextualized, towards the end of the book students start to be encouraged to give their opinion, but there is no activity that encourages them to talk about their experiences. For example, in unit 5, after watching an advertisement about internet plans, one of the questions about the video is “in your opinion, how does the dressmaker feel for not subscribing to Net?⁵”. In this question, students are encouraged to talk about their own thoughts, going beyond the reproduction of what they heard in the video. According to Bakhtin (2016), the production of short daily dialogues, which are extraordinarily diverse, are also within the scope of the speech genres, and, in this case, it is something people do in their daily lives, and, therefore, this kind of question reproduces a real life situation. In addition to

⁵ Net is an internet service provider in Brazil.

encouraging active responses from students, the POS textbook brings many opportunities for learners to express themselves in an active manner considering their life experiences. This is done through open questions, such as “when you have an exam, what do you do to prepare for the exam?”.

At the end of units 6 and 7 of the POS textbook there are task-based activities the students must accomplish, and they are related to the topic studied in those units. For example, in unit 7, whose topic is survival guidelines for university freshmen, they have to produce a student guidebook. It is not clear, though, who the interlocutor is and the purpose of the activity, considering the aspects discussed above regarding the relationship the speaker has with the interlocutor and the situation of communication. In other words, the real situation of communication present in the utterance comes from the bilateral act of the speech, meaning an interlocutor, and who that person is, is essential (Volóchinov, 2017). However, although we can infer what the context is, it is not explicitly stated in the utterance of the task. By task, we refer to the definition from Breen (1987) that it is an interaction socially constructed aiming problem solving. Rozati (2014) explains that one major characteristic of the task-based approach is that the task reflects real world activities, which corroborates the idea of dialogism described by Bakhtin.

The last textbook we analyzed, DP, follows a different pattern because it is a book that significantly brings grammar and expressions explanations, not opening too much space for practice, which is seen only at the end of each unit with fill in the blank type questions and word matching exercises. Therefore, students are not encouraged to engage through active responses and do not have the opportunity to bring their personal experiences during the learning process.

Another aspect that was analyzed was the promotion of interaction among students. The textbooks SPT and DP do not promote interaction through their vocabulary activities. These books present exercises that students can do on their own, so an interaction partner is not necessary. On the other hand, the TIP material, because it is an oral communication textbook, displays many opportunities for students to interview each other, so there is a clear promotion of interaction, although it is controlled, given the level of the students. Although the POS material fosters listening and speaking throughout the units, it only explicitly promotes interaction among learners in the last tasks of units 6 and 7. The other parts of the

units as well as the other units encourage speaking through questions that are not specified whether they should be answered in pairs or groups or individually.

The aspects contained in the meaning construction section of the analysis criteria might look similar to the communicative approach proposed by Hymes (1972). However, although the communicative approach and the discursive-dialogic perspective have in common that both critique structuralist language teaching, their theoretical foundations are distinct. The communicative approach was developed primarily from the notion of communicative competence introduced by Hymes (1972). According to this approach, knowledge of a language involves not only mastery of grammatical rules but also the ability to use language appropriately in different sociocultural contexts. This perspective was further strengthened by the contributions of Halliday (1973, 1978), who conceived language as a resource for the performance of social functions, and by the proposals of Wilkins (1976), who advocated curriculum organization based on notions and communicative functions rather than isolated grammatical structures. In this sense, teaching is organized around communicative functions and situations of language use, aiming to prepare learners to act linguistically and effectively in specific communicative contexts.

In contrast, the discursive-dialogic perspective is grounded in the conception of language developed by Mikhail Bakhtin and the Bakhtinian Circle. They consider that the real unit of communication is neither the sentence nor the communicative function, but the concrete utterance produced in social interaction. From this perspective, language is conceived as a historical, ideological, and dialogic phenomenon materialized in socially constituted speech genres. Thus, whereas the communicative approach emphasizes the development of competence to perform communicative actions in different social situations, the Bakhtinian perspective takes speech genres as the central unit of teaching and focuses on subjects' participation in concrete discursive practices and on the understanding of meaning-construction processes that emerge from the relationships among utterances, social voices, and historical contexts.

This distinction can be observed in pedagogical practice. In a communicative approach, an activity about travel plans, such as the one present in the TIP textbook, students have to plan a trip based on questions about what they want to eat, go sightseeing, when to leave, etc. In this activity the activity is organized around the communicative functions of

planning a detailed trip and asking a friend about their plan, with assessment focusing on whether learners can achieve their communicative goals appropriately. In a Bakhtinian perspective, on the other hand, the focus shifts to the speech genres that circulate within this social sphere, such as hotel reviews on digital platforms, consumer complaints, or institutional responses to customers, for instance. The objective is not only to determine whether students can communicate a message, but to understand how these utterances are socially organized, which values and positions they express, and how individuals participate in historically constituted discursive practices. In this way, communication remains relevant, but it is understood as part of a broader process of social interaction mediated by discourse genres.

5. Final remarks

The concept of dialogism used in the present study to analyze the textbooks refers to the responsive position we hold in relation to a concrete utterance. This response is what leads us to agree or disagree with something, since we all hold a point of view shaped by our past experiences and by the discourses to which we have been exposed. The same occurs when students use a textbook in a language class: they are not merely exposed to its content and activities but interact with them and respond according to their own knowledge and beliefs.

The analyses performed here suggest a tendency in textbook development toward emphasizing grammar explanations and treating the skills separately, as seems to be the case with the SPT and DP textbooks, a pattern already observed in other studies on Portuguese materials recently published in South Korea (Martins, 2025; Martins & Silveira, 2024). The TIP and POS books were designed with a focus on oral communication, and, therefore, they tend to bring more interaction activities. However, despite displaying differences in terms of the skill focused on in the materials, all of them lack in bringing an interlocutor and purpose of the activities. According to the Bakhtin Circle, these elements are important to real-life communication, since there is always someone who responds to what we say and always a purpose and context in which it occurs.

As these materials are used in Portuguese classes for Korean university students, who are therefore in a non-immersion learning situation, and as Portuguese and Korean are two typologically distant languages, a textbook with more controlled input, in which vocabulary and structures are introduced gradually and in a simplified form, can be very beneficial for

beginner learners, who need to become familiarized with the language and its system. This controlled scenario is seen especially in the SPT, TIP and DP textbooks. Because the POS material contains authentic videos, such as Brazilian TV shows and advertisements, it may be a little more challenging for beginner learners due to the variety of vocabulary used that they were not exposed to yet.

This study sought to understand the design of activities in Portuguese-language teaching materials for Korean speakers published in South Korea, drawing on the perspective of Brazilian applied linguistics, a field in which the resonance of Bakhtin's ideas has profoundly shaped reflection on language teaching and learning. We hope this study contributes to bringing researchers of PAL in Brazil closer to Korean language teaching practices, better preparing them to welcome these students into Brazilian Portuguese classrooms. We also hope it offers those involved in the design of new materials an opportunity to reflect on traditions and innovations in Portuguese language teaching and learning.

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RESUMO: Este estudo investiga como o vocabulário é apresentado em livros de Português como Língua Adicional publicados na Coreia do Sul e destinados a falantes de coreano de nível A1, sob perspectiva discursivo-dialógica do Círculo de Bakhtin (Bakhtin, 2016; Volóchinov, 2017). A pesquisa contemplou materiais contemporâneos de ensino de língua portuguesa financiados pelo Fundo de Pesquisa para a Promoção da Educação em Línguas Estrangeiras Críticas (CFL): (1) *Material Didático Português Padronizado* (Lim & Lee, 2019); (2) *Conversando em Português* (Lima et al., 2021); (3) *Português em Cena* (Ponciano & Guimarães, 2022); e (4) *Português do Dia a Dia* (Yoon, Cheol & Bok, 2020). Foi realizada uma análise documental seguindo um quadro analítico baseado em Lüdke e André (1986), a partir do qual foram desenvolvidos dois critérios de análise: (1) estrutura do material, investigando a organização das unidades didáticas, a apresentação do vocabulário e a integração das quatro competências linguísticas; e (2) construção de sentido e dialogismo, analisando se as atividades contextualizam o uso da língua e estimulam a participação ativa dos estudantes. Os resultados revelam que três livros didáticos apresentam atividades predominantemente estruturalistas, sem contextualização adequada. Um livro didático, contudo, apresenta atividades mais próximas da concepção dialógica bakhtiniana, promovendo a participação autônoma dos aprendentes e a integração efetiva das competências linguísticas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Português como Língua Adicional; Livro didático; Círculo de Bakhtin; Dialogismo; Vocabulário.