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Pois Não: Brazilian Portuguese Course for Spanish Speakers with Basic Reference Grammar (review)

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which will include class observation in a later version. Cowles and Pires' data, consisting of learners' essays on their own acquisition process, raise questions that need to be addressed in future studies. Similarly, Milleret's paper poses several questions (yet to be answered) on needs analysis and program evaluation. However, the inconclusiveness of the results may get readers' attention to upcoming publications.

Three studies, two of which also support the notion of typological proximity, trigger significant inference questions. Silva analyzes pragmatic transfer in cross-cultural communicative events. The data compile the participants' use of greetings and farewells in virtual chat-rooms; yet, the concepts of formality and informality have not been addressed. Akerberg draws a comprehensive comparison between two verb-tenses in Portuguese and Spanish. The cross-linguistic analysis involves different groups of learners at different levels. However, the distinction between *acquisition* (mentioned in the title) and *learning* has not been considered. Rodea is the only one who questions the notion of language proximity (from the perspective of interactional sociolinguistics). Such a controversial claim invites further investigation, which should include speakers of other languages (for comparison). Nevertheless, it must be mentioned in passing that the contributors' contrasting theoretical perspectives certainly broadens the book's scope.

All in all, despite occasional flaws (spelling, punctuation, syntax), the book reads well. The style is simple even when complex concepts are involved. It may appeal to graduate students, language teachers and/or researchers in Applied Linguistics. I recommend it because it constitutes a good source of information on the teaching/learning process (and to a certain extent on the acquisition) of Portuguese for Spanish speakers, one of the few joint-efforts to disseminate this vast field of research.

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Simões, Antônio Roberto Monteiro. *Pois Não: Brazilian Portuguese Course for Spanish Speakers with Basic Reference Grammar*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2008. Appendixes. Vocabulary. Index. CD-ROM. 571 pp.

Many learners of Portuguese at colleges and universities across the United States are speakers of Spanish, be it as first, second, or heritage language. However, materials for this large population of students are quite limited. In this scenario, a textbook such as *Pois Não*, written specifically for this audience, provides a serious option for those who work with Portuguese for Spanish speakers.

The book is divided into nine units plus an introductory chapter, and is written in three languages (English, Brazilian Portuguese, and Spanish), each with its domain (such as English for directions). As the author states in the Preface, “[p]

pronunciation and grammar are the focuses” of this text (xx). With its emphasis on pronunciation, the book is accompanied by a CD-ROM with recordings of dialogues and pronunciation exercises, as well as videos for exercises on visual identification of sounds. This feature allows for further practice of phonetics of Brazilian Portuguese (such as pronunciation of final *m* and *l* in BP). However, the author calls attention to the fact that the recordings may not match exactly what appears in print, with written dialogues serving only as a guide.

Pois Não frequently contrasts Brazilian Portuguese with Spanish, not only in vocabulary lists (which provide Spanish, but not English, translations for BP words), but also in translation exercises, some pronunciation exercises, and some grammar explanations. This contrastive approach is perhaps most obvious in the Introduction, which highlights false cognates, common mistakes, morpho-syntactic differences, and, naturally, pronunciation. Regarding the latter topic, the table on p. 21 is quite useful, for it presents possible pronunciations for letters and digraphs (such as *rr*, *lh* and *nh*). Nevertheless, the table on p. 25 may be misleading: its 34 rows may have the reader believe that the Portuguese alphabet has 34 letters, not 26 (as per the “Acordo Ortográfico” now in effect)—the table includes digraphs and the *ç*, which had been previously introduced but are not part of the alphabet. On the other hand, the section on accentuation, which follows the alphabet, is quite clear and should serve as reference whenever the need arises.

As is normal in language textbooks, the introductory lesson does not follow the same pattern as other units. The numbered lessons (Units 1–9) open with a list of objectives, followed by a dialogue and a few comprehension questions. Then, a grammar topic is presented and explained. Grammar practice appears in form of drills (substitution, fill in the blanks, etc.) that are mostly decontextualized. Following the first grammar topic (verbs) is a pronunciation section. Other grammar points, as well as dictation and translation exercises, appear next. Several units contain a spelling section; reading and writing sections are included in others. Towards the end of each unit, we find one or two songs by eminent composers such as Chico Buarque, Caetano Veloso, and Gilberto Gil. Each unit also contains a section with situations to help learners develop their communicative competence.

As mentioned above, the focus of *Pois Não* is on pronunciation and grammar. The explanations and exercises related to phonetics are well done and quite thorough. However, reading and writing practice would have to be added by the instructor. In the Preface, the author suggests several websites that may serve that purpose; other websites, as well as more “traditional” forms of the printed word, can be explored by learners. Naturally, reading is not writing, and speakers of Spanish need extensive practice in formal and informal writing if they are to use Portuguese—not “portunhol”—in different spheres. Students may also profit from contextualized grammar practice that would complement the drills presented in the book.

Even if instructors using *Pois Não* may have to complement the text (which is nothing new for foreign language teachers), such a textbook is welcome, for it addresses a need that clearly exists in the United States: a starting point for those teaching Portuguese to speakers of a sister language. While speaking Spanish is an initial advantage for learners of Portuguese, there are many areas where students may “trip up and fall,” as it were. After all, as the text by Daniel Samper Pizano in the Introduction makes clear, Portuguese is not merely “un dialecto derivado del español” (3). *Pois Não* shows that, even though Portuguese may not be “el idioma más fácil del mundo” (3), it is also not “el idioma más difícil del mundo” (4): with guidance and enough practice, Spanish speakers will enjoy learning the beautiful language spoken in Brazil.

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