

Representations of Women in Visual-Linguistic Materialities in High School Portuguese Textbooks

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Abstract:

This paper aims to analyze the social representations of women in Portuguese Textbooks (LDP) distributed in high school programs of state schools and selected based on the Guide of the National Textbook Program (PNLD) 2018. To this end, we draw from the field of Discourse Analysis, more specifically, from Foucault's postulates (2009, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2016) in dialogue with the notion of "gender identity", by Louro (1997, 2008). The corpus of analysis is comprised of visual-linguistic texts collected from the three most chosen collections of high school textbooks by schools of Minas Gerais State. Based on the analyses, we found that the corpus presents visual-linguistic texts that foster possible questions about normalized gender representations for women. However, we could perceive that most of the scenes portray previously normalized roles based on the traditional model of asymmetric gender relations. Therefore, in this paper we present other interpretations of the visual-linguistic materialities of LDPs, outlining possible practices of sexism confrontation in Portuguese language teaching and learning.

Keywords:

Portuguese Textbook; Discourse; Gender Identity.

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INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Drawing from Discourse Analysis as a theoretical and methodological approach, more specifically from Foucault's postulates (2009, 2011, 2013, 2014, 2016) in dialogue with the notion of "gender identity" by Louro (1997, 2008), in this paper we outline as a general objective to analyze the social representations of women in Portuguese Textbooks (henceforth, LDP). The corpus of analysis is comprised of visual-linguistic texts collected from the three most chosen collections of high school textbooks by Minas Gerais state schools, according to data acquired from the State Department of Education, made available to us via private email. We were provided with a table containing the name of the books and the respective schools by which they were chosen, leaving us to count the three most chosen collections, namely: *Português contemporâneo: diálogo reflexão e uso* (Contemporary Portuguese: dialogue, reflection and use), by William Cereja, Carolina Vianna and Christiane Damien (2016); *Novas palavras* (New words), by Emília Amaral, Mauro Ferreira; Ricardo Leite and Severino Antônio (2016); and *Português: trilhas e tramas* (Portuguese: pathways and plots), by Graça Sette, Márcia Travalha, Ivone Ribeiro and Rozário Starling (2016).

It is worth mentioning in advance that gender identities are constructed from historical processes and they are directly related to social dynamics (LOURO, 1997). Thus, the understanding of what is masculine or feminine in socio-historical contexts is anchored in the way these characteristics are represented, how they are valued and also what is said and what is thought about them. In this sense, "in order to understand the place and relationships of men and women in a society, it is important to observe not exactly their genders, but everything that has been socially built on genders" (MOITA LOPES, 1997, p. 20, free translation). In this framework, the notion of "gender" concerns the ways in which sexual aspects are understood and represented in a given historical and social setting (LOURO, 1997). Furthermore, we consider that "gender" constitutes one of the traits that make up the identity of subjects, being shaped and negotiated in the social relations in which they are inscribed. The subjects are immersed in discursive practices underpinned by certain ideologies and sociocultural values relevant to constitute and perpetuate different representations of what it means to be a woman. Hence, thinking about gender identity in LDP entails thinking about discursive constructions that relate to power games that value/legitimize some specific representations of femininity to the detriment of others, thus guaranteeing it a political character.

Looking at gender identity issues in LDP is justified by the fact that, from the first months of life, children are taught to have behaviors considered to be appropriate for boys or girls, thus contributing to a separation of genders (MOITA LOPES, 2002). Throughout life, recurrent social practices perpetuate this separation, making behaviors to be seen not as something constructed by the subjects, but rather natural. When we reflect upon the effects of these distinctions, carried out within societies and governed by a patriarchal model, it is observed that they tend to value the male gender more than the female one

and have even less regard for deviant sexualities¹, thus imposing hegemonic and well-known models as the normal. In this sense, in terms of “identity, we can think of the LDP as a spectrum of representations that arouse other perceptions in the subjects, providing them with a place of belonging” (SOUSA; SANTOS; OLIVEIRA; FIGUEIRA-BORGES, 2021, p. 125, free translation), which leads us to think that truths naturalized in social practices are represented in the most diverse activities worked on in the classroom, and should therefore be the target of discussion/problematicization/confrontation by teachers.

With this study, we highlight that “although the Portuguese Textbook in general tries to hide issues of gender identity and sexuality, the uniqueness of the students screams for these issues” (FIGUEIRA-BORGES; SANTOS, 2017, p. 186, free translation). This happens because students are “invited to (re)think the materiality of their bodies by soap operas, games, television series, advertisements, etc.” (FIGUEIRA-BORGES; SANTOS, 2017, p. 186, free translation). In this sense, we need to think about a way of teaching and learning the Portuguese language that problematizes bodily patterns for men and women in Brazilian society. By highlighting gender identity issues in LDPs’ visual-linguistic materialities, we outline/present/reinforce that: teachers have at their disposal relevant textual inputs, which are able to foster an interwoven between teaching-learning of language functioning and the problematization of historically crystallized gender identities.

In this paper, we trace a theoretical-analytical path that consists of first problematizing gender issues outlining their relevance in teaching contexts. Next, we address male power exercises and women’s practices of resistance to gender patterns, in ordinary situations of the domestic space.

PORTUGUESE TEXTBOOK AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER IDENTITIES

Moita Lopes (2002) argues that, in Brazilian society, there is a tendency to treat students in the school environment, in the classroom, in textbooks and in scientific productions in a homogenized, idealized and monolithic way. That is, there is an emphasis on male/female, white man/white woman and heterosexual middle class, thus silencing identities that do not correspond to this pattern. In the LDP, in particular, it can be said as an example that “the homogenizing character can be understood as a technique that aims to control bodies, delimiting, for example, spaces for the black body of the servant, such as the kitchen, while the living room is for the white body of the landlady” (MENDES; FIGUEIRA-BORGES, 2017, p. 121, free translation). As we will see in the analyses, no space is allowed for women in the LDP’s visual-linguistic materialities, on the contrary, their emergence is within a complex network of knowledge/powers that determine what they can and what they should do (FOUCAULT, 2016).

In a similar perspective, Louro (2008) reinforces that gender is a construction that occurs continuously throughout life, through various learnings and practices, “it insinuates itself in the most diverse situations, it is undertaken in an explicit or hidden way by an inexhaustible set of social and cultural instances” (LOURO, 2008, p. 18, free translation). This constitutive process is carried out by instances and social spaces, such as family, religious systems, schools, medical institutions, which, for a long time, had their guidelines and teachings considered to be absolute truths.

We conceive identity as a plural concept, as a socio-historical construction that demarcates patterns of gender, race and sexuality. Speaking of gender identity based on the LDP is to think of historically delimited practices for female and male bodies, present in cartoons, comic strips, short stories, novels, chronicles, among others. In this sense, we delimit that issues of gender, race and sexuality are constituent and constitutive elements of discourse and, therefore, emerge from the functioning of the language. Thus,

¹ By deviant sexualities we understand the subject constitutions of the LGBTQIA+, that is, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transvestites, transsexuals, transgenders, queers, intersex (non-binary), asexual. The symbol “plus” indicates the possibility of including even more identities.

we can say that, as much as the book bypasses a problematization of the role of women in society, the materiality of its texts exude gender patterns that cannot and should not be neglected by teachers.

Grigoletto (1999, p. 67, free translation) argues that “one of the ways of disseminating the power that arises from the production, circulation and functioning of discourses in the school sphere is through the textbook, as it works as one of the discourses of truth”. Based on Foucault (2016), the author explains that the production and circulation of a discourse is essential for the establishment, functioning and dissemination of the multiple power relations that cross, characterize and constitute societies. This relationship is necessarily a fundamental aspect for power games, as one of the consequences of the circulation of discourse is the production of truth effects. Thus, there is no possibility of exercising power without establishing a discursive order. For Grigoletto (1999), a discourse of truth is one that, deceptively, imposes itself as a place of completeness of the senses. It is illusory because according to Discourse Analysis, no saying is capable of completing all the meanings of a speech, that is, it is not possible to reach to a single and true meaning of a text, as the meanings are always constituted in the relationship between the linguistic and the historical. In another study, we highlight that in reading practices “subjects make (effects of) meanings emerge through interpretive gestures, which are socio-historical and socio-ideological, given that reading is intertwined with society, with the historical moment and the ideological formations in which the subjects are subscribed” (LUTERMAN, FIGUEIRA-BORGES; SOUZA, 2018, p. 44, free translation).

In this sense, it is worth highlighting some questions: what is the representation of women in the corpus of analysis? Which power relations are legitimized, perpetuated or built in the school material? Without intending to exhaust these issues, we rather intend to take them as guiding points that allow us to look at how female gender identities are constructed in the Portuguese high school textbooks chosen by state schools in the state of Minas Gerais. This is justified by the fact that “the LDP is constructed according to the social context and the ideological aspects that permeate the society in which it is inserted” (MENDES; FIGUEIRA-BORGES, 2017, p. 121, free translation).

Now we are able to look at the first LDP comic strip, in order to deliberate about the issues of gender identity (im)posed in its materiality. Let’s see image 01, present in the unit entitled *Eu e o mundo*, (The world and I), more specifically in the chapter *O romantismo no Brasil (I) - o adjetivo - o cartaz e o anúncio publicitário* (The romanticism in Brazil I - the adjective - the poster and the advertisement), within the section *Língua e linguagem: o adjetivo* (Language and language use: the adjective). The text to be analyzed is used in the textbook to work adjectives.

Image 01: *Lili, a Ex*



Source: CEREJA, W. R., VIANNA, C. A. D., CODENHOTO, C. D. *Português contemporâneo: diálogo, reflexão e uso*. vol. 2. São Paulo: Saraiva, 2016.

The text above is an excerpt from the comic strip entitled *Lili, a Ex* (Lili, the ex), produced by Caco Galhardo. It shows a conversation between Lili and her ex-husband. The comic strip contains utterances that incite the maintenance of meanings previously consolidated in society, regarding the representation of women and the relationships established among them. The relationship theme is illustrated when, in the first frame, the characters talk about having some women interviewed with the purpose of selecting a woman to have a relationship with the male character. From the utterances present in the comics, we perceive a historical connection in which the text echoes “beauty standards that prevail in society, namely, i) that to be accepted in a certain group, the girl/woman needs to meet certain aesthetic requirements; ii) the way men look at women’s bodies; iii) contexts in which the woman is objectified” (SOUSA; SANTOS; OLIVEIRA; FIGUEIRA-BORGES, 2021, p. 132, free translation). Therefore, we have a group of women competing among themselves for the possibility of having a relationship with a man. The choice of the candidate who best meets the criteria is delegated to another woman. Specifically on this aspect, let us observe the place occupied by the women in question and by the man. They are in a significant amount of number, and subjected to a dispute among them and also to the evaluation of another woman, in order to achieve a single objective. In turn, the man is the object of these women’s dispute and the one who delegates the task of choosing the most appropriate female profile; in this case, he delegates it to Lili, who becomes responsible for this task. In this way, positions of power that are quite socially instituted are delimited, as that of a man as a subject who can choose and delegate orders, as well as that of being the object of dispute among women. The women, in turn, in relation to the man, occupies secondary position in the sense of having to dispute a man, of being available to be chosen by him and of carrying out an action based on his demand. Thus, the comic strip reveals a model in which relations between genders also manifest power relations, a thought that is in line with Foucault’s (2016) postulate that when the subject is placed in relations of signification, he is also inserted in quite complex power relations.

Let us now pay attention to the tone of perplexity and indignation expressed by him when he said that, among a group of two hundred women, none was chosen. The gestures made with the arms and with the mouth give more impetus to his questioning of the situation. As can be seen in the first frame, the subject has his arms half open, a position socially used to reinforce a contestation. In the second frame, the character fully raises his arms, opens his mouth even more, indicating an increase in the tone of his voice when he verbalizes that, in addition to her having interviewed a large number of women and having chosen none, some of them even had the physical characteristics he considered quite positive. Furthermore, the character says, there was a great variety of women, “blondes”, “redheads”, “brunettes”, all physically considered to have a high standard of beauty, which can be confirmed by the adjectives “beautiful”, “stunning” and “sculptural” in the second frame. These utterances legitimize the thought that the assessment of women is based on their physical appearance. Thus, the text constructs the delimitation of women as an object of choice, in the sense of not being considered anything other than their appearance, as if they were available on the market and placed in a varied catalog of options, being only necessary to men choose the one that best suits the demand. In this case, we have represented the “way in which gender relations are marked by inequality, which is always present in the discourses and practices in our society. The woman is subjected to man’s orders and desires.” (SOUSA; SANTOS; OLIVEIRA; FIGUEIRA-BORGES, 2021, p. 130, free translation).

In the relationship among the subjects, the interviewer Lili is responsible for applying arbitrary and severe physical appearance requirements to other women, reiterating the widespread idea that women are the worst critics of other women. The phrase “you didn’t find **a single one** for me” along with the emphasis on the number of women, the diversity and the valued physical characteristics reinforce the idea that, for him, there was an excess of inexplicable demands on the selection criteria applied by his ex-wife.

These data lead to an interpretation that Lili did not find any woman with enough qualification for her ex-husband because, in fact, she wanted to make his relationship with another woman impossible. Thus, Lili's way of dealing with the situation is to dismiss all candidates and justify her action by disqualifying them and characterizing them as "garbage". In its literal sense, this term designates something totally worthless or useless and that must be discarded. Moreover, the evaluator (Lili) also targets the women, but with an even more derogatory charge, as none of their other characteristics was taken into account or valued, since, when transposing the term "garbage" normally used for objects to (des)qualify humans, she keeps the meaning of something to be discarded and also tells of a lack of moral and/or physical qualities. This data takes us back to Foucault (2011, p. 132, free translation) when he states that "the body is the object of such urgent and imperative investments; in any society, the body is trapped within very tight powers, which impose limitations, prohibitions or obligations on it", which allows us to say that "the body is, notably, shaped, scrutinized and trained to (re)produce certain socio-historical practices, maintaining regularities of male supremacy" (SOUSA; SANTOS; OLIVEIRA; FIGUEIRA-BORGES, 2021, p. 128, free translation).

Therefore, in relation to the representation of women, the comic strip focuses on a process of understanding aimed at reinforcing the idea of woman as an object and the maintenance of a practice deeply rooted in our society, that is, of female rivalry, in which the relationships among them (Lili and the other women) are naturally driven by hostility and competitiveness for a man's attention or love.

Let's verify image 02, inserted in the unit called *Literatura e leitura de imagens* (Literature and Image Reading) inside the chapter *Humanismo* (Humanism), used to work with text interpretation, in which the inscription of women in the domestic space stands out for the purpose of this paper.

Image 02: *Helga e o trabalho de casa (Helga and the household chores)*



Source: SETTE, M. G. L.; SILVA, I. R.; TRAVALHA, M. A.; BARROS, M. R. S. *Português: trilhas e tramas*. 2. ed. v. 2.

São Paulo: Leya, 2016.

In this comic strip, we see Helga, Hagar and Honi, wife, husband and daughter, respectively. The two female figures maintain a dialogue about domestic work. They occupy a supposedly prominent place in the comics, since they are the interlocutors presented in it. In the first frame of the comic, Honi, looking very distressed, goes to her mother and talks about the possibility of someday someone inventing something capable of eliminating household chores. In turn, Helga, the mother, with a stunned facial expression, replies that they've already invented it. Then, in the second frame, Helga claims that divorce is the aforementioned invention. Her speech, in line with the drawing in the second frame, indicates that Hagar (the father) is the source of all work, because, as can be seen, he is making a lot of mess in the environment.

It seems appropriate to consider that the text has traces aligned with the ideals of female emancipation, such as questioning the traditional organization of domestic work, considered a form of

control intrinsically embedded in everyday life and historically naturalized in society. For Foucault (1987), the naturalization or familiarization of some social practice is a fundamental strategy for the power game, because when it acquires this status, it is not easily perceived and starts to be reproduced without any examination. In view of these mechanisms, we consider that the concern of this organization consists in a possibility of movement in the configuration of power relations that place women in a position of servitude to men. As stated by Foucault (2013), power is reproduced at every moment, as its emergence and functioning occur in the relationships between subjects. This dynamism opens up the possibility of reactions and responses to previously (im)posed actions.

When we observe the characters' hats, a symbol of the Viking culture, we see that the couple is alike, indicating that the wife occupies a position analogous to the husband's. However, the idea of equality of power is deconstructed with the roles played by each of the three characters. Note that only Helga does the cleaning while her husband only produces garbage and clutter, apparently without worrying about the effects of his actions. Furthermore, when comparing the way Honi and Helga are presented, it is possible to infer that the daughter does not participate in the tasks either, as she keeps her arms behind her while her mother holds a broom. Her clothing also lacks the apron, one of the symbols of housework, which her mother is notably wearing. It is important to highlight that Honi is the one who initiates the reflection, however, she does not contribute to the execution of the household activities.

Helga is angry and dissatisfied with the situation, but still resigned to fulfilling her duties. Her husband, conversely, shows himself very indifferent to the consequences of his actions and does nothing to change his attitude of throwing scraps of food everywhere, further increasing the mess. He keeps messing the house while Helga, although dissatisfied, cleans it. He soils the environment despite Helga's complaint. Furthermore, it is important to pay attention to this situation: there is a woman who speaks but is not heard, as a wife whose speech is ignored by the husband, and presented as if she did not have the strength to promote any change. In this sense, the relationship among Helga, Hagar and Honi, built in these scenes, illustrates a power dynamic that maintains a socio-historically naturalized place for female and male subjects, that is, of wives being the only ones responsible for domestic activities, in addition to being silenced in their condition of difference and inferiority in relation to men.

POSSIBILITIES OF RESISTANCE FOR THE FEMALE BODY IN THE LDP

According to Foucault (2013, p. 242, free translation), in power relations there are necessarily imbricated actions that induce and respond to each other reciprocally, therefore, these power relations refer to "an action of some onto others". Thus, this conception of power entails continuously dynamic networks, underpinned between those over which power is exercised and the subject who wield the power. Another characteristic is that the possession of power is not fixed and permanent to a single subject in the relationship, on the contrary, its transit happens in a dynamic and constant way. Given this dynamic, there is the possibility of the emergence of a field of responses, reactions, effects and inventions. In the words of FOUCAULT (2013, p. 243, free translation), the exercise of power consists of "a set of actions over possible actions; it operates on the field of possibility where the behavior of active subjects is inscribed; it fosters, induces, deflects, facilitates or hamper, expands or limits, makes it more or less likely". It can also be said that, in discursive practices, power "coerces or hinder absolutely, but it is always a way of acting over one or several active subjects, and to take action on how much they act or are likely to act. [Power is] An action over actions" (FOUCAULT, 2013, p. 243, free translation).

In this regard, it is understood that power refers to the action of leading a subject to have a certain conduct or behavior. Because we understand that this power fluctuates from one subject to

another and, in power relations there is the possibility of different behaviors, reactions and modes of behavior from a given action, then we understand that the analysis of gender relations needs to consider the complexity that emerges from each situation. For Foucault, there is no exercise of power that does not establish resistance practices. In the words of REVEL (2011, p.127, free translation), “resistance happens necessarily where there is power, because it is inseparable from power relations”. Effectively, resistance is what calls into question the objectifications that affect the constitution of subjects. It can be said, indeed, that “resistance is the possibility of opening spaces for struggle and managing possibilities for transformation everywhere” (REVEL, 2011, p. 127-128, free translation). In this sense, it can be said that “The female body was educated for seduction or to concealment (by the male body), and now it becomes a body that fights and resists; undoubtedly a political body” (FIGUEIRA-BORGES, 2019, p. 144). Specifically in these spaces of struggles, such as the domestic environment, is where we see the women that will be analyzed below, claiming other identity constitutions for their bodies, based on their relationship with their husbands.

In this sense, from image 03 we can start to look at some resistance practices of the female body in specific contexts of the domestic space. Next comic strip seeks to deal with the use of onomatopoeias, communication situations and text interpretation. It is in the section *Língua e linguagem: funções da linguagem* (Language and language use: language functioning), present in the chapter *Literatura na Baixa Idade Média: o trovadorismo - variedades linguísticas - o poema* (Literature in the Late Middle Ages: the troubadour - linguistic varieties - the poem).

Image 03: *Eulália, a campainha!* (*Eulália, the bell!*)



Source: CEREJA, W. R., VIANNA, C. A. D., CODENHOTO, C. D. *Português contemporâneo: diálogo, reflexão e uso.* vol. 1.

São Paulo: Saraiva, 2016.

As we read the comic strip, the name of the female character draws our attention, as it is the junction of the pronoun “I” in Portuguese language “Eu” plus the postpositive formation element “-lália”, of Greek origin, referring to the idea of speech, language and pronunciation, which contrasts with the fact that there is no verbalization coming from Eulália whatsoever in the text. In the first scene, the situation represented is the male character reading a book; he hears the sound of the bell, remains in his activity and asks Eulália to answer the door. When he hears the sound again and realizes that the woman has not followed his request, then he remains seated with the book in his hands and start screaming at Eulália, showing an expression of rage.

The next frame of the comic presents the character who had received the order. An elderly woman, who, after hearing the man’s screams, goes towards the place where the sound is produced

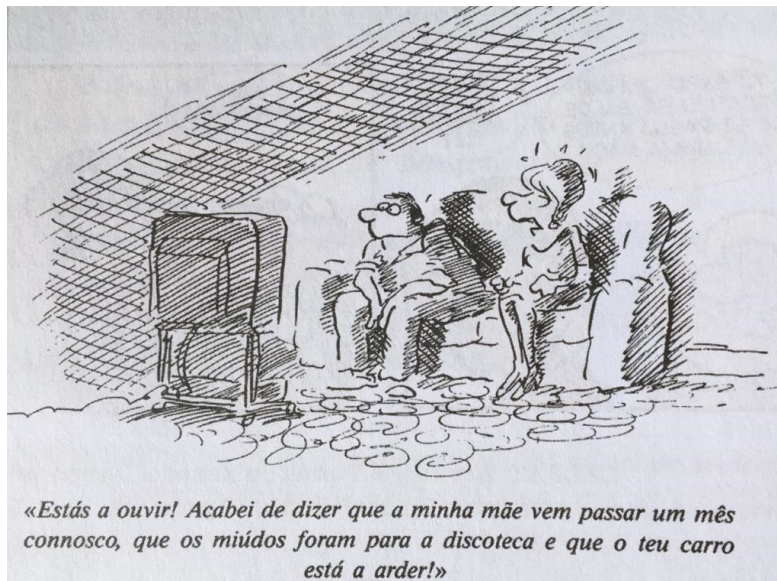
instead of answering the door. In this scene, she passes by him, heading towards the doorbell. In this comic strip, it can be observed that the man heard the sound, that Eulália did not answer the door as she was told and that he was closer to the doorbell than the woman was when the bell rang, so he acted as if only she had the obligation to perform that action. The comic does not show what Eulália was doing when the bell rang, but it is shown that, regardless of what it was, she should stop doing it to fulfill a domestic function, different from the man, who was reading a book. Thus, we see that the comic evidences “gender hierarchies, mobilizing a construction of superiority for man, crystallized in history” (FIGUEIRA-BORGES; SANTOS, 2017, p. 196, free translation). The fourth and last frame of the comic, in which Eulália rips the bell off and takes it to her husband, allows for different understandings of the communicative situation, but in all of them there is a discursive effect that demonstrates the exercise of social roles determined by patterns, verified in a sexist society, established from the relationships in the sexist division of work, in which women are responsible for the control of household chores. In this sense, pulling the bell off demarcates a breakdown in power relations and opens up a space for resistance to be exerted. This is because power, from a Foucaultian perspective (2013), does not have a negative characteristic, but demarcates a positivity of possible relationships from resistance fronts.

The way women establish a practice of resistance towards the abusive practice of men, whether in speech or in their expressions of anger, are also marks of learned behavior for each gender. This aspect is related to a subversion of what is taught to women, that is, that they should be delicate in their gestures, in their ways of speaking, always obedient and, above all, that they should not resort to exposing physical strength. For Fernandes (2009), considering the accelerated socio-political and economic changes of contemporaneity, the generations that experience senility in the 21st century have experienced unequal power relations throughout their lives, in an even fiercer way and for a longer period of time.

We understand that it is not just the presence of a text in the LDP that guarantees a problematization of gender issues, above all, it is the treatment given to it, as the absence of productions that pose a reflection on unequal power relations would be a way of not recognizing and neglecting them (FOUCAULT, 1996). Thus, we observe that in this comic strip, four exercises related to linguistic and textual aspects are proposed. The fifth, in turn, asks students to analyze four statements about the text, discuss and justify their answers based on elements of the text and contemporary social facts, thus requiring analytical skills and critical thinking. The fourth statement deals with aspects of gender relations, as we can see: “The comic strip reproduces a sexist reality of our society, in which the woman performs domestic tasks while the man takes care of his private interests” (CEREJA ET AL, 2016, p. 72, free translation). The verbalization of this question configures, in our view, a trace of recognition of asymmetric gender relations experienced between men and women in a sexist society. However, the work of description and discursive analysis related to gender issues is the responsibility of the teacher and the students, unlike the treatment given to the linguistic comprehension of the text, which included several exercises formulated in order to address different linguistic aspects. It should also be noted that despite the LDP highlighting the sexism that structures society, it does not problematize possible resistance actions for the subjects. We have to think of a way in which Portuguese language teaching and learning not only highlights machismo in the functioning of the language, but also presents daily coping techniques and mechanisms to deal with something that has been killing women daily.

Now let's look at image 04, which seems to present a resistance technique to tackle the exercise of male power over women. The text is found in the unit *Gramática* (Grammar), within the chapter *Noções e variações linguísticas* (Linguistic notions and variations), and it is used to work on some differences between the Portuguese language spoken in Portugal and that of Brazil.

Image 04: *O mundo louco do futebol* (The crazy world of football)



Source: AMARAL, E.; PATROCÍNIO, M. F. do.; LEITE, R. S.; BARBOSA, S. A. M. *Novas Palavras*. 3. ed. v. 1. São Paulo: FTD, 2016.

In this comic, we have the representation of two characters, a woman and a man, sitting side by side on a sofa facing a television. When we read the title, *O mundo louco do futebol* (The crazy world of football), we are informed that a football match is the TV program watched by the male subject. The gesture of the woman with her hands closed placed on her legs and the lines drawn above her head suggest a state of tension. This body posture and the half-open mouth indicate that she is the one to deliver the verbal text presented. The man, with his body totally turned to the television, with eyes wide open and a mouth completely closed, is very attentive to the TV and indifferent to what is being said by his wife.

Thus, it is convenient to raise the following problematization: Why does the wife deal with the issues considered important and delicate in a marriage (visit of the mother-in-law, children at parties, a burning car) while he has his attention turned to the football game? We consider that, in asymmetrical relations of power exercising within a marriage, the subjects develop enunciative techniques to resist and to establish certain meanings that affirm/support/materialize their socio-historical constitution. It seems to us that the woman's practice of talking to her husband about sensitive issues during the television broadcast of a football match configures a technique of resistance based on knowledge of herself and the other (FOUCAULT, 2014). From a Foucaultian perspective, it is the "principle of self-care that underlies her needs, commands her development and organizes her practice" (FOUCAULT, 2014, p. 57, free translation). The context figured in image 04 inserts the subjects in a complex network of power exercises in which it is up to the man to decide whether the mother-in-law stays in "his" house or not, whether the children go out at night or not, and what can be done with the fact that their car is burning. Thus, talking to the man at a time when he has his attention elsewhere, marks a technique used by the wife to subvert power relations and have her wishes taken into account.

We cannot fail to observe that, in the verbal text, the first sentence explains the repetition of something already said and informs that there was no verbal response from the interlocutor, demonstrating, on the one hand, his great interest in what he is watching and, on the other hand, the lack of attention to the woman's words. The technique of self-care "constituted, therefore, a social practice, giving rise to inter-individual relationships, to communication exchanges" (FOUCAULT, 2014, p. 58, free translation). When looking at image 04, we realize that it is in inter-individual relationships and communication exchanges that resistance practices and self-care take place.

The scene also brings us to the idea that, in our society, football is a sport that is represented and developed for men and the vast majority is truly fascinated by it. Concomitant with this idea, women would have no participation or interest in these games. Consequently, social actions are guided by this conception, especially with regard to the development of body skills, since children, girls and boys are exposed to developing practices that are separated by a sexist logic. These actions contribute to building/providing guidance, information and value systems, establishing and distributing roles, social positions and rules of conduct, for example, that football occupies priority positions in men's daily lives, as well as that women are generally not interested in this sport.

In the course of this analysis, we considered it important to highlight that, when reading the exercises in image 04, we observe a work focused on linguistic issues, such as the traits that identify the Portuguese spoken in Portugal. We did not notice a discursive treatment for understanding the comic strip in the textbook. We consider that this comic would be an opportunity to address, not only linguistic issues, but also social issues, as the school is a space that (re)affirms the representations of gender identities, whether in physical education classes or in games during breaks, in the classes or in teaching materials. Thus, the school space could also be a place for deconstructing representations that cause harm to subjects, such as those of asymmetrical power relations that exclude and diminish the importance of women in relation to men.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Through the analysis of the data, we verified that the corpus presents visual-linguistic texts that allow the emergence of questions about socio-historically gender representations that are normalized for women in our society. Thus, it is possible to affirm that, in Portuguese language teaching and in the analyzed teaching materials, there are possibilities to establish reading practices so as to face male domination over females. However, for this to occur, it is necessary for the teacher to take a position in relation to what is presented by the textbook, stimulating the students during the reading to rise other problematizations, based on the potential of the analyzed comic strip, for a critical interpretation in the field of gender and sexuality.

In the analyzes undertaken, most of the scenes presented replicate roles already normalized and entrenched in the traditional model of gender relations, in which the figure of the woman is subjugated. Furthermore, in most occurrences in the LDP exercises, there was no discursive work on social issues experienced/confronted by women. It is from the intertwining of both aspects that we affirm that the corpus retains traces of a more traditional and naturalized social logic regarding gender relations, and that this need to be problematized by teachers in the context of Portuguese teaching-learning.

Therefore, with this study, we show that working with gender issues is relevant in teaching-learning contexts, as we consider that the education of students who aim at being proficient in a language (maternal or foreign) implies the responsive and responsible use of it in language practices (Bakhtin, 2010). With this, we highlight the importance of the Portuguese language teaching-learning process to build possibilities to think/implement practices of analytical skills and critical thinking that destabilize the asymmetrical power relations between women and men in Brazilian society.

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