Games and playfulness in Portuguese teaching: an analysis of the Pibid-Letters experience

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Abstract:
This work aims to investigate games and playfulness in teaching of Portuguese language through the analysis of games experiences held by scholarship holders of the Teaching Initiation Program of the Course in Letters – Portuguese Language Program at the Center for Higher Studies of Tabatinga, State University of Amazonas. To achieve this, theoretical notes on the meanings and characteristics of playfulness and games are presented, followed by descriptions of the rules, development, and application of the games held by Pibid scholarship holders, identifying, and discussing, ultimately, relevant aspects derived from this experience. The analysis of the data emphasizes the moments of spontaneity, resistance, and intuitive attitudes displayed by the students. We conclude that games allow the materialization and even the overcoming of aspects highlighted by theory, providing considerations about the underlying conception of education in our analyses and how it must be matured.

Keywords: Games; playfulness; PIBID; Portuguese language teaching.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the main factors that foster the full development of the individual and society. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate means that enable quality teaching and learning for all, especially in the current post-pandemic world moment experienced, in which Covid-19 has increased stress, anxiety, and mental health impairments worldwide. In this context, we understand that playfulness can assist in the development of society. Many schools and teachers are beginning to value and create playful activities, which would allow the interaction and participation of the student in the construction of his knowledge, would stimulate creativity and innovation, and would generate moments of joy and spontaneity among those involved, and other positive potentials for education.

Based on this, this work aims to reflect on playfulness in teaching of Portuguese language, analyzing the experience of games applied by the scholarship holders of the Institutional Program of Initiation Scholarships in Teaching (PIBID[2]), linked to the Letters Course at the State University of Amazonas at the Center for Higher Studies of Tabatinga (CESTB). To accomplish this goal, we present the meaning and characteristics of a game from a theoretical point of view, proceeding to describe the rules, development, and application of the games conducted by the scholarship holders, and thus identify relevant aspects that can be discussed from this experience.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

We understand that traditional classes based solely on the explanation of subjects and the memorization of content, despite having their value, limit students to learning based on cognition. Consequently, it is important that playfulness, understood as a principle of integration of the human personality, is valued when planning and executing school activities. One of the consequences of this is the use of games and play, which propose objectives to be achieved through different strategies, making students capable of inventing, creating, and experimenting, as, during these moments, those involved acquire initiative and self-confidence, since they are allowed to have relative autonomy and freedom. Games also provide the development of language, thinking and concentration.

Playful activities are a basic need of the human personality, body and mind, characterized by being spontaneous (executed voluntarily, without intervention or external stimulus, without being obligated to something), functional (which stimulate natural movements of the human being and

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improve its condition and effectiveness) and satisfactory (capable of causing contentment, happiness, satisfaction, which is enough). Almeida (1998) expresses contributions to playful games, explaining that:

> Play, in addition to enabling healthy growth, also enables permanent enrichment, integrating itself with the highest spirit of democratic practice while investing in a serious production of knowledge. Its practice requires frank, creative, free, critical participation, promoting social interaction and bearing in mind the strong commitment to transformation and modification of the environment (Almeida, 1998, p. 57, our translation).

It is a natural bond of learning, as through its wonderful talents are observed as a basis for individual and environmental security, generating increased self-esteem and good interpersonal relationships, and fostering fruitful social relations. According to Santos (1997, p. 12, our translation):

"Playfulness is a human need at any age and cannot be seen merely as entertainment. The development of the playful aspect facilitates learning, personal, social, and cultural development, contributes to good mental health, and facilitates the processes of knowledge socialization".

According to Ortiz (2005), play is an important tool in the learning process, it is an anthropological phenomenon to be considered in the study of human beings, it is "doing something with a spirit of joy and with the intention of having fun or entertaining oneself." According to the author, numerous proposals are suggested in search of a definition of the topic of games, among which the most representatives are envisioned:

> Playful activity is as old as humanity itself, as it is intimately linked to the human species; it is an anthropological phenomenon to be considered in the study of human beings and a transmitter and dynamizer of social customs and behaviors; it is a free activity and a voluntary occurrence; it is an improvised, creative, and original activity whose final result constantly fluctuates, captivating everyone (Ortiz, 2005, p. 9, our translation).

Ortiz (2005) explains that game emerges as a psychological response to life, as well as that playful behavior is universal, born and grows with those involved, developing interest and curiosity in exploring the body and the world around them, as there is a great need in children to express themselves and communicate.

> Through play, the child learns norms of behavior to grow and learn to live in society in an integral way. The game fosters the ability to develop norms from childhood to adulthood. Children grow up learning the coexistence habits necessary to live in society. Game provides human beings with an interest in knowledge, an active, positive and critical activity that allows them to gradually integrate into the family, school and life (Ortiz, 2005, p. 27, our translation).

According to Spolin (2005), a game is a natural form of grouping, quite appropriate to the personal freedom necessary for experience, so that, at the time of the game, those involved absorb important techniques and personal skills through the act of playing itself, as it is hoped that, in the moment of fun and stimulation, the player manifests what the author calls psychological freedom – the ability to create a situation imaginatively – to choose his objectives, obeying, above all, the rules of the game. According to her, everyone who wants can play and learn. Furthermore, games also aim to provoke disinhibition and stimulate relevant characteristics such as spontaneity – which is practiced voluntarily, by instinct, without premeditation or human intervention. As the author mentions, this characteristic, once released, is awakened in several aspects: "The objective on which the player must constantly concentrate and towards which all action must be directed provokes spontaneity. In this spontaneity, personal freedom is released, and the person as a whole

is physically, intellectually and intuitively awakened" (Spolin, 2005, p. 5, our translation).

For Spolin (2005), playing is a form of learning that develops physical, intellectual, and intuitive experiences that are highly valued. Spontaneity and the ability to live experiences are inherent characteristics of life. A spontaneous person is the one who expresses and acts without prejudices and without caring about them, believing it to be right. This aspect is a significant behavior, also concerning games because, regardless of the outcome, it equally applies to normal life. Thus, the talented individual, according to the author, is the one who allows themselves to experience – to learn available experiences – once "if the environment allows it, one can learn anything, and if the individual allows it, the environment will teach them everything it has to teach. [...] Experiencing is to immerse oneself in the environment, engaging fully and organically with it" (Spolin, 2005, p. 3, our translation).

Spolin (2005) also indicates the notion of intuition: the ability to act organically, without reasoning or worrying about whether it is right or wrong. According to the author, this characteristic is observed in moments of precipitation, whereby the person courageously transcends the limits of what is familiar and simply does the right thing without thinking through responses that appear "out of nowhere". Therefore, when the response to an experience occurs at an intuitive level, those involved are truly open to learning. The intuitive is a result in the immediate – in the here and now –, it is a deeper level of response.

The need for personal freedom is also addressed by Spolin (2005) when she explains the dichotomy between approval and disapproval. For the author, there is a human need to feel approved. When this happens, those involved lose the opportunity to live a personal experience of self-identity and the simplest movements oscillate between the desire to be loved and the fear of rejection. "In a culture where approval/disapproval has become the predominant regulator of efforts and position, and often the substitute for love, our personal freedoms are dissipated" (Spolin, 2005, p. 6, our translation). The gaming system formulated by Spolin (2005) proposes bodily and intellectual stimuli to those involved and discoveries aimed at creative expressions that allow players to let go of judgments, entering the game with amplitude and vitality, because in the game we can overcome challenges, free ourselves of the rules imposed by society and create different ways of breaking limits.

A healthy relationship among groups is a determining factor for the harmony of the game. Thus, Spolin (2005) names another important aspect, competition, and points out that it can be natural or imposed. For her, natural competition is part of the activity and an incentive for better results, while forced competition generates violence, restlessness and disrespect. This can be worked through game environments that enable healthy and participatory competitions within the possibilities and abilities of those involved, always returning the competition to the effort of the groups, as "remembering that the process comes before the final result, we free the student-author to trust the scheme and we help him to solve the problems of the activity" (Spolin, 2005, p. 11, our translation).

The point of concentration (POC), according to the author, acts as a catalyst between one player and another, and between the player and the problem. It is the main focus through which all participate, and its use brings several benefits: it helps with the segmentation of necessary complex techniques, so that they can be fully explored; provides control and discipline when creativity could be a destructive rather than a channeling force; allows the student to focus on a single point in solving the problem; and frees the student for spontaneous action, being a link to an organic and non-cerebral experience. POC makes perception possible rather than prejudice, so it acts as a springboard to the intuitive. In this aspect, the characteristics of the game always presuppose a point of concentration, which is the maximum problem to be solved, towards which all efforts must converge.

For Huizinga (2018), game is a voluntary occupation activity undertaken within certain

limits of time and space, according to freely agreed rules, as well as absolutely mandatory, accompanied by a specific purpose endowed with a consciousness different from everyday life. For the author, play is indeed the oldest playful element of culture, constituting a fundamental part of our experience, but the author also indicates that there is an extraordinary divergence in the face of numerous attempts at definitions regarding its biological function. These origins and foundations refer to terms that the author considers as a discharge of superabundant vital energy, others as simply a need for relaxation or even as satisfaction of what he calls a certain imitation instinct, however, according to him:

> There is a common element to all these hypotheses: they all assume that game is connected to something other than game itself, and that there must be some sort of biological purpose within it. They all inquire about the why and the objectives of game. The various answers tend more to complement each other than to exclude one another. (Huizinga, 2018, p. 4, our translation).

Huizinga (2018) also names important characteristics of game, such as: order (intelligible relationship established among a plurality of elements, organization or structure); tension (state or situation of conflict, in probable moments of conflict, pressure, or intention); movement (set of actions by a group of people mobilized for the same purpose); rhythm (succession of times that alternate with regular intervals) and enthusiasm (state of fervor, of intense emotion).
The author also observes pleasure as a characteristic of play, which would be the enjoyment, delight, or joy, an aspect that defies all logic of interpretation and precisely defines the essence of play.

In this context, the rule must not be presented to "trap" students and strictly define what they must or must not do, but to establish the problem on which they must focus, and within that problem propose several different solutions that make sense. Spolin (2005) contributes by stating that the teacher is not the only guardian of the rules, everyone must be involved in the process, because during the game everyone becomes capable of commenting on results, which gives rise to important observations, reflections and questions that help everyone in learning, expanding participation.

Considering the understanding of the authors about the characteristics of games and playfulness, the efficiency and importance of using them can be seen, as they contribute significantly not only to the development of human beings, but also to social, personal and cultural development, in addition to assisting in process of socialization, communication, expression and construction of thought and naturally contribute to improving skills and learning in general.

Therefore, from this perspective, in dialogue with the proposal of this article, whose focus aims to investigate games and playfulness in teaching Portuguese language, we seek, which will become more explicit in the subsequent chapter, to describe an alternative pedagogical work, indicating each path taken, through in which games, playfulness and education become language activities.

METHODOLOGY

A research study was conducted, with the intention of direct data collection, to gather observations about the application of games executed by the scholarship holders. The games were applied at three different moments. The first observation involved the game *Slang Challenge*, which was performed at the Marechal Rondon State School with 3rd-year students during the morning session; the second was the game *Music Order*, which was also executed at the Marechal Rondon State School with 8th-grade students in the afternoon session; and the last was the game

Punctuation Challenge, which was applied at the Conceição Xavier de Alencar State School, with 3rd-year students, also in the afternoon session. All schools are in the municipality of Tabatinga, Amazonas.

It is important to emphasize, in this context, that data collection, being limited by the little time available to complete the research, was executed in the return of in-person activities after the restrictions of the pandemic period and conducted through non-participant observation. Another limitation originated from the connection of the researchers with the activity, since they were, respectively, a student external to the PIBID team, who was not involved in planning the activity and was having contact with it for the first time, and a professor coordinating the project area, which restricted participation at the time of application of the proposal, in which the leading role belongs to scholarship holders. In this way, the role of the researchers was to, being present at the time of the activity, evaluate from a distance the attitudes of the responsible scholarship holders, the behavior of the students and the general functioning of the game. Although the results obtained in this way proved to be relevant, we also realized that some facts observed would require further methodological development to be treated appropriately, as we will discuss later (cf. Final Considerations).

The game *Slang Challenge* aimed to present slang from different regions and social groups in Brazil and began with the division of classes into five groups with approximately seven students. Each group should write the meaning of the selected slang term. When starting, the slang words were placed on the floor of the room, right in front, for a volunteer member of a group to choose one of them. Papers were distributed to each group, on which members would write the possible meaning of the chosen slang (the first thing that came to mind or something that the group deemed suitable for that word). Next, the proposed meanings would be collected and displayed on the board, adding the correct meaning of the slang, not yet revealed to the students. Each group chose the meaning they believed to be correct, and then points were awarded to the group that got the true meaning right and also to the groups that received votes for the meaning they proposed, so the group that obtained the highest score would win. The slang terms chosen randomly by the volunteer students were: "levar o farelo", "mocar", "alçar a pena" and "palmear"[3]. There were even more roles with slang to be chosen, but the schedule was concluded.

The game *The Order of Music* was conducted with the objective of enhancing the awareness of the various linguistic varieties of Portuguese through popular music songs. In this game, students had to put together the verses of the songs correctly, and, in this way, accumulate points. At the beginning, the scholarship holder divided the room into five groups with approximately seven participants, distributed ribbons in red, yellow, black, purple and blue, and the ribbons were placed as bracelets to identify each group. Then, to each team, the scholarship holder transmitted a phrase corresponding to a verse of the lyrics of a song, with the five verses of the same song comprising part of the complete lyrics. Teams had to memorize the verse for one minute. After that, the nominated group had to speak or sing the verse out loud, a maximum of three times, and once all groups had recited their verses, five minutes were given for the members to discuss, trying to identify the correct order of the song. Subsequently, the team that thought they had completed would go ahead and speak or sing the complete verse; if the participant committed a mistake, the turn would pass to the next groups. If no one provided the correct answer, the position of one or more verses would be provided (at the discretion of the scholarship holder), and the attempts would commence once more. Once a verse was entirely correct, the game would recommence with another song, and this process would repeat. The songs from which the verses were recited included: *Samba do Approach* by Zeca Baleiro, *Samba do Arnesto* by Adoniram Barbosa, and *Cuitelinho* by Pena Branca and Xavantinho.

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[3] In Portuguese, "levar o farelo", depending on the context, means "to have problems", "to get frustrated", "to get hurt" or "to die". "Mocar" means "to hide something". "Alçar a pena" (literally, "to raise the feather") means "to ride a horse." Finally, "palmear" means "to observe or to keep an eye on something or someone".

The game *Punctuation Challenge* constituted the final activity undertaken by the scholarship holders, aiming to score and accurately recite the passages displayed on the slides, which comprised excerpts extracted from essays authored by the students. Initially, the room was partitioned into three groups, each consisting of three participants, owing to the limited number of students present on the day of the game. During each round, the scholarship holder randomly selected two participants from each group, with one tasked with scoring and the other with recitation. To punctuate the passages, teams were permitted to utilize commas (,), periods (.), question marks (?), exclamation marks (!), colons (:), semicolons (;), and ellipses [...]. Upon presentation of each slide, the scoring team had 30 seconds to convene and deliberate over the appropriate punctuation. Subsequently, a member of the team was designated to write the punctuation on the board, employing a paintbrush, also within a 30-second timeframe. Following this, the achieved score would be assessed, with each accurate response meriting 1 (one) point. Following the scoring phase, the group drawn for reading would indicate a member to recite the text out loud, considering the punctuation. The scholarship holder would then assign a score for the recitation, ranging from 1 to 3 points. At the culmination of the game, the group attaining the highest score would win.

Figure 1 - Execution of the game *Slang Challenge*
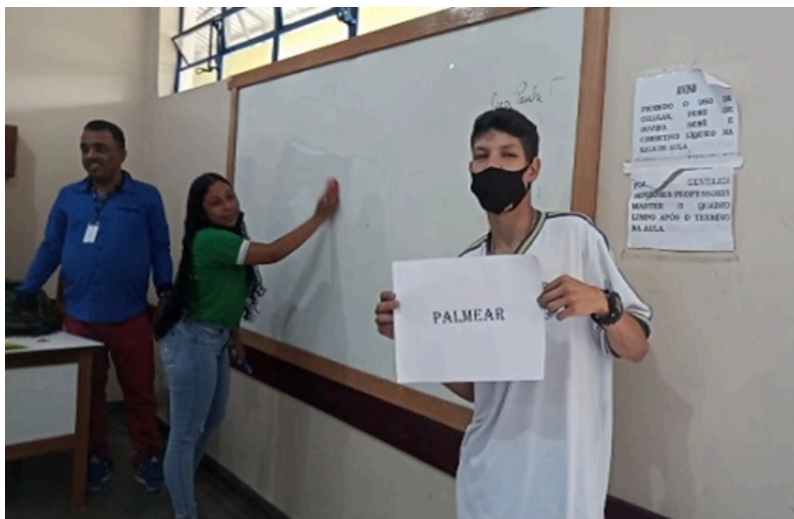
Source: Collection of Diana Vieira Rodrigues (field research, 2021).

Figure 2 - Execution of the game *The order of music*

Figure 3 – Execution of the game *Punctuation Challenge*

ANALYSIS

The present results identified here were acquired through observation of the games conducted by the scholarship holders in the schools. During the observations, we identified that the scholarship holders divided the room into groups so that all participants could engage in the game, agreeing with what Spolin (2005) states, that healthy relationships among groups are a determining factor for the harmony of the game and the natural form of grouping appropriate to the personal freedom necessary for the experience. This division enables a balanced environment that directs competition towards group effort, as well as natural competition, rather than directing it towards individual effort, in which only a few participate, thus avoiding forced or imposed competition, which in turn generates violence and disrespect among those involved. The harmony of the game depends greatly on the healthy manner in which groups participate. In this way, a basic objective is achieved: that the instructor ensures that all students are participating, as was done by the

scholarship holders.

In the game *Slang Challenge*, there was a moment when the scholarship holder was writing the answers of the group on the board, interrupting direct communication with the students, which took several seconds and caused a relaxation of attention and posture among the players. Spolin (2005) explains that there may be resistance from students to the point of disrupting concentration, which appears when they do not focus on the specific problem and start doing other things (such as playing, telling stories, making jokes, for example). As seen in the reference of this work, the point of concentration allows the student to focus on what is important in the game, which helps in problem-solving. Spolin (2005, p. 21, our translation) emphasizes that "as each acting problem is intrinsically interrelated with the other, the teacher keeps two, three, and sometimes more points of guidance in mind simultaneously", meaning that presenting the points in a segmented way frees the player to act at each stage of their development. Therefore, the point of concentration prevents players from becoming distracted, so care must be taken to always keep the attention of all participants focused on the problem, thus leading even the shyest individuals to greater involvement in the game, contributing to greater personal performance. We understand that the disruption of rhythm, which would be the succession of alternating periods between regular intervals, leads to a loss of concentration, as the aforementioned fact, which led the students to experience a slight loss of concentration, in other words, a momentary interruption of the game.

We know that the game aims to provoke uninhibited behavior and stimulate important traits such as spontaneity. In this context, we observed in the game Slang Challenge that uninhibited behavior and spontaneity were manifested during various moments. The students showed spontaneity when responding to slang terms without truly understanding their meanings, for example: "se dar mal"[4] and even "quando as coisas sobram pra mim"[5] for the slang term "levar o farelo"[6]. They were also spontaneous when laughing at the slang terms chosen by them and acted with naturalness and simplicity, drawing the attention of their peers when interrupting the game in any way. According to Spolin (2005, p. 4, our translation), "the energy released to solve the problem causes spontaneity," and furthermore, "it's the moment of discovery, of experience, and of creative expression." A spontaneous person is someone who expresses themselves and acts without prejudgment or concern for right or wrong.

Another important factor is being able to observe the spontaneity directed towards students responding to slang based on a more familiar language, their everyday language. As the example we cited shows, students felt a certain freedom to use a language that is often not well-received or accepted in school tasks; it would be highly unlikely for someone to write "sobrou pra mim" or "se deu mal"[7] in a formal essay requested by a teacher, for example, and yet, during the games played, students expressed themselves naturally, without apparent fear of judgment. We understand this as the emergence of spontaneity not only at the intuitive, physical, or bodily level focused on by Spolin (2005), but also at a linguistic level. This seems to us to be the main finding of our observation: that the relationship between games, playfulness, and Portuguese teaching must consider linguistic spontaneity both as an objective, so that the main purpose of the game is indeed achieved, and as a means of access to linguistic attitudes and ideologies that can, from the game, be discussed and worked on, in order to lead students to a greater understanding of the social devices that regulate the usage of language. If it is true that "the prescriptive tradition of our language teaching tries to prevent people from using their efficient linguistic intuition when producing their written texts" (BAGNO, 2012, p. 356, our translation), it is useful to realize that linguistic spontaneity arising amidst playful activities can be a path to the practice and maturation

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[4] The expression "se dar mal" means "to have a bad time" or "to get into trouble".
[5] The expression "sobrou pra mim" means that something was left or ended up being the responsibility of the person in question. It is similar to the expressions "it fell to me" or "it ended up on me."
[6] The expression "levar o farelo" means "to have problems", "to get frustrated", "to get hurt" or "to die".
[7] The expression "se deu mal" is the same as "se dar mal", but in the past tense.

of this intuition.

One of the rules within the game *The Order of Music* stipulated that the verses must be sung. However, we noted that after the scholarship holder distributed the paper containing the verse to be sung, the students requested for the song verses to be recited rather than sung. This request stemmed from their difficulty and unfamiliarity with the melody of the song. This request from the students was accepted by the scholarship holder, who agreed to this small modification. As we mentioned, the rule is presented not to confine or strictly define what must or must not be done, but to establish the problem on which they must focus. Therefore, in our view, the scholarship holder acted correctly, as the instructor is not an unconditional protector of the rules; everyone must be involved in the process, aiding learning and expanding participation. It is suggested that the instructor must be flexible, willing to alter plans if advisable, once, as Spolin (2005, p. 34, our translation) says, "if the work environment is cheerful and free of authoritarianism", everyone will participate in the game and become open to knowledge.

Among the aspects observed in the game *The Order of Music*, it was possible to identify important characteristics of the game, particularly concerning the mobilization of all involved towards the same goal, which was to solve the problem of discovering the correct order of the verses of song. Additionally, conflicts emerged at various moments during the game, for example, when teams vied for the opportunity to move forward, attempting to pass their turn to another group merely to have the chance again to succeed, while other groups complained about having fewer opportunities. This generated a natural competition, which, according to Spolin (2005), is an organic part of an activity, stimulating the efforts of the group and potentially leading to greater immersion in the environment, thereby encouraging better results. Tension, along with competition, must be a natural part of the activity among players, without the game ending in conflict. In this perspective, the game continued with great enthusiasm, becoming increasingly fervent with each correctly identified verse. Participants celebrated with applause, shouts, laughter, and energetic movements of joy and happiness such as jumping and running, reflecting what Huizinga (2018, p. 5, our translation) states: "no theory can explain the playful character of the game," and that "the enjoyment of the game resists all logical interpretation.

It was possible to observe in the game *Punctuation Challenge* that not all members of the groups participated in the activity. Specifically, the members of one group, consisting solely of girls, refused to take part in the game. During the game, none of the members of this group agreed to go to the board to score or read the displayed phrases, and they also disagreed with the scholarship holder choosing one of them randomly. Despite the insistence of the scholarship holder that they participate, they refused, and after several unsuccessful attempts, the opportunity was passed to another group. According to Ortiz (2005, p. 15, our translation), "the word 'play' means to engage in an activity with a spirit of joy and the intention of having fun or entertaining oneself." In this aspect, Spolin (2005) adds that among the characteristics of the game is the need for approval and disapproval as an important factor to be observed because, when subjected to it, few are capable of establishing direct contact with reality. Fearing disapproval, they become creatively paralyzed and attempt to shield themselves from possible attacks by building fortresses and becoming timid, dependent on judgments, which results in a serious loss of personal experience. Spolin (2005) also states that the first step to playing is to feel personal freedom and allow oneself to experience the available experiences in the here and now. It can be understood that these students did not feel free to participate and, fearing disapproval, demonstrated shyness and fear, thus manifesting an act of resistance as they did not venture out or allow themselves to experience. We understand that both players and instructors must be aware of themselves and their self-confidence in the game environment. They must be open to experiences of new personal, cultural, and social discoveries. Similarly, we understand that the instructor must know when the student is truly experiencing or not; otherwise, little will be achieved from the objective or problem.

Another moment of resistance occurred in the game *Punctuation Challenge* when we observed that all texts were punctuated solely with periods (.) and commas (,). As Spolin (2005) states, when the intuitive level is not present, the student works only on a constrained intellectual plane, that is, based on what they already know, only reasoning and not allowing the solution to occur spontaneously; the individual do not venture out and do not allow itself to play according to the rules of the game, but only work with what is experienced in the everyday school experience, in textbooks, in texts provided by the teacher, which generally are restricted to periods and commas, not containing question marks, ellipses, or semicolons, for example. Therefore, this act is also understood as a manifestation of resistance, based on the fear of disapproval and judgments, which intimidates and prevents them from venturing out and experiencing, proposing different solutions, limiting themselves only to what is familiar.

We know that, through games, players can also develop intuitive perceptions that will place them at the forefront of understanding the world. Intuition, understood as the ability to identify or presuppose things that do not rely on empirical knowledge, rational concepts, or a more specific assessment, without the aid of reasoning, was also a relevant characteristic identified in the execution of the games. The manifestation of the intuitive level appears in the behavior of the participants during the games, as they attempt to answer questions without much thought, or as seen when, multiple times in the game *Order of Music*, they stepped forward and recited the music without the correct order, or when they responded to the slang in the game *Slang Challenge* without worrying if it was right or wrong. We understand that the game allows the player to introduce their reasoning, reflection, and consequently, the construction of knowledge. As stated by Spolin (2005, p. 4, our translation):

> All parts of the individual work together as a functioning unit, like a small organic whole within the larger structure which is the game. From this integrated experience, the total individual emerges, and arises the support and trust that allows the individual to open up and develop any skills necessary for communication within the game.

Therefore, we understand the need for the practice of games to be more constant in the school environment and the daily lives of the students, so that intuition is more enhanced, as with this we can realize that the process of symbolic construction undertaken by the students not only occurs but also it is also based on the environment and experience with games, through the development of intuitive experiences in their relationship with meanings.

CONCLUSION

When starting the work, there was a need to investigate means to enable quality teaching and learning for all. Therefore, this research aimed to investigate the possibilities of games for teaching Portuguese language, through the analysis of experiences with games applied by PIBID scholarship holders affiliated to the Letters program.

To substantiate the findings presented by the conducted research, it is possible to say that the results complement the theoretical framework, as they agree with each other. Through the analysis argued here, we observed the characteristics described by the authors during the implementation of the games, and thus, games allow the execution of activities in a dynamic, motivating, and proactive manner, indirectly working on collaborative and competitive concepts by following rules and overcoming problems.

We highlight the ambivalence of this dialogue with the theoretical framework, because, in our view, this dialogue with the authors arose both to understand the moments of the game that

were more successful and those in which it seemed that something was missing or poorly executed, thus managing to go beyond what the books say, as is clear in the example of the slang "levar o farelo". Thus, we can learn that the theoretical framework is not just here to be confirmed, but to be an aid in observation and in concrete empirical practice, to help us work through our concerns, and also to be overcome, to lead us to discover new things.

The time and the connection restrictions that characterized this study, as we mentioned above, and its consequent methodological limitation, provoke some reflections on the treatment of data that we proposed, especially regarding to moments of failure of the strategies adopted by the scholarship holders. We report, for example, about the students who, despite the insistence of the scholarship holder, did not accept to participate in the game *Punctuation Challenge*, and we point out, as a possible reason for this gesture, the unwillingness to the experience and the fear of making mistakes. However, other possible responses seem equally possible to us, including some diametrically opposed ones: it is possible that, from another point of view, the gesture of the students did not have a negative connotation, of refusal to the proposed experience, but rather of resistance, of demarcation of a position of power compared to the authority of the scholarship holder, or even a different way of participating in the activity, in which observation was more important than action. We can conclude that, to discuss more precisely the nature of this type of attitude, another methodological strategy would be necessary, possibly closer to a school ethnography, in which researchers would become members of their own group, thus being able to offer arguments more identified with the real dynamics of youth groups.

Finally, it is important to highlight the reflections that arise, from this work, regarding the pedagogical conception that must underpin teaching work. At the beginning of our study and research, we believed that games would be more directly associated with student-centered teaching, in which the focus was on student behavior in the process. Therefore, what we tried to emphasize throughout our observation were the actions of the students that attested to their involvement in the activity: the effusive interactions, the laughter, the attempts to get things right, etc. However, when taking a panoramic look at all of our analyses, we conclude that another fundamental dimension, which would need to be observed more carefully, are the attitudes, decisions and interventions of the scholarship holders who were directing the games, seeking to analyze these attitudes served as strategies for motivation, encouragement of desirable behaviors, and primarily, for generating learning and knowledge. In other words, it seems important to us to shift the pedagogical stance from a "student-centered" conception, to make it closer to a conception centered on the quality of the process, which is built dialectically in the interaction between educator and student, and not just restricted to what the latter manifests. It is essential to remember here the criticism made by Duarte (2001) and other researchers of historical-cultural psychopedagogy to the "strength that the New School Movement ideology has to this day in pedagogical common sense" (Duarte, 2001, p. 92, our translation), which produces the effect that "even today, many educators hesitate when it comes to the transmission of experience and knowledge to the child, for fear that it will restrict the development of their intellectual autonomy" (Duarte, 2001, p. 94, our translation). The author advocates for a change in the school and the stance of the teacher, which, without abandoning attention to the specific processes of students, should always be aware that their activity must be directed by the educator, as they "hold the vision of the pedagogical objectives towards which these interactions [of the students] must be directed" (Duarte, 2001, p. 90, our translation). From this debate, we understand that the present research represents a turning point in our conception of games in education; in subsequent works, we must consider more carefully the attitudes of transmitting experience and knowledge manifested by teachers, expressed in oral and written interventions, explanations, interruptions, dialogues with students, among other more or less ostensive gestures.

It is also important to emphasize that the observations we made about games are only small examples or isolated manifestations of the true "power" of games in education, but they already

reveal many positive aspects about them, allowing us to assert that games are an indispensable tool for teachers, facilitating the advancement of the teaching and learning process in the assimilation of social roles and understanding of effective relationships, as well as primarily in the construction of knowledge. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers, through personal initiative, but also for the school as a collective institution guided by a project, to promote activities that motivate and stimulate diversified development, and games are a tool that, due to its playful characteristic, contributes to physical and cognitive formation and broadens and deepens the development of the individual, preparing their intelligence and character. It is essential, therefore, for the presence of playfulness in schools to surpass spontaneity, often predominant, and to be seen as a structured dimension, whose foundations must be duly considered by all.

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