

The representation of culture in an English textbook from PNLD

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Abstract: Considering the importance and popularity of the textbook in the English teaching realm in Brazil, this research analyzes the representation of culture in textbooks of the *Programa Nacional do Livro Didático* (PNLD – in English, National Program of Textbooks) in comparison to the analysis developed by Gray (2010) on the same topic but in a global context. This research is based on the concepts of culture discussed by Motta-Roth (2006) and developed by Holliday (1999): “Culture” with capital “C” and “culture” with lowercase “c”. Besides, the concept of culture is associated with the concept of genre (HALLIDAY, 2014). The *corpus* of this research is the textbook best rated by PNLD and the documents that are part of this program. According to PNLD documents and the textbook analysis, results point out that the collections of textbooks need to approach culture with small “c”, and it seems that this necessity is fulfilled by the textbook. In comparison to Gray (2010), the textbook analyzed here has a more contemporary representation of culture.

Keywords: English teaching; Culture; Textbook; PNLD.

Resumo: Considerando a importância e popularidade do livro no contexto de ensino de língua inglesa no Brasil, esta pesquisa analisa a representação de cultura em livros didáticos do Programa Nacional do Livro Didático (PNLD) em comparação com a análise desenvolvida por Gray (2010) sobre o mesmo tópico, porém em um contexto global. A presente pesquisa está baseada nos conceitos de cultura discutidos por Motta-Roth (2006) e desenvolvidos por Holliday (1999): Cultura com “C maiúsculo” e cultura com “c minúsculo”. Além disso, o conceito de cultura com “c minúsculo” está associado com o conceito de gênero (HALLIDAY, 2014). O material analisado nesta pesquisa foi o livro didático melhor avaliado e os documentos que envolvem o PNLD. Os resultados desta análise indicam que os documentos do PNLD demonstram uma necessidade de que as coleções de livros didáticos abordem cultura com “c minúsculo”, e parece que essa necessidade é realizada pelo livro didático analisado. Em comparação com os resultados obtidos por Gray (2010), o livro didático aqui analisado tem uma representação mais contemporânea de cultura, isto é, cultura com “c minúsculo”.

Palavras-chave: Ensino de Inglês; Língua Inglesa; Programa Nacional do Livro Didático.

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1. Introduction

Considering the importance of textbooks in the teaching of English (GRAY, 2010, p. 21) in Brazil (TICKS, 2005, p. 9) and the inseparable importance of the concept of culture in this context (GRAY, 2010, p. 150), this research analyzes the representation of culture in these materials. Recent approaches to language and culture (HALLIDAY; HASAN, 1989; KRAMSCH, 1993, mentioned in GRAY, 2010; MOTTA-ROTH, 2006a; 2008a; 2010) have shown that culture is already inside language, because meanings are not universal and do not exist in isolation outside cultural context, thus, language cannot be taught separately from culture. Consequently, it is impossible to have a textbook for language teaching without the representation of that language's culture.

The term culture is very complex and difficult to be captured under a single concept. There are several fields that work with this term – Education, Anthropology, Applied Linguistics, for instance, and each of them defines culture for its purposes. Within Applied Linguistics, Motta-Roth (2006a, p. 286) discusses the concept based on the two perspectives of culture developed by Holliday (1999), who differentiates culture with capital “C” from culture with lowercase “c”, or, in the words of Motta-Roth (2006a, p. 288), “global” Culture and “local” culture. The capital “C” Culture is related to nationality or ethnicity, so, in this case, differences that a country has in comparison to other nations are considered, mostly with respect to stereotypes (HOLLIDAY, 1999, cited by MOTTA-ROTH, 2006a, p. 286-287). The lowercase “c” culture focuses on the behavior of any social group, regardless of geographical origin (MOTTA-ROTH, 2006a, based on HOLLIDAY, 1999, p. 287). Examples of culture with lowercase “c” refer to the culture of a university or the usual behavior of a family at the dinner table (MOTTA-ROTH, 2006a, based on HOLLIDAY, 1999, p. 287).

These concepts of culture with capital “C” and lowercase “c” are analyzed in the source textbook of this study. This textbook was selected among the ones approved by *Programa Nacional do Livro Didático* (PNLD – in English, National Program of Textbooks) – a national program by the Brazilian Ministry of Education (*Ministério da Educação* - MEC) that evaluates and selects textbooks of several fields to be freely distributed to all public schools in the country. This ease of access is one of the main reasons for the inclusion of these materials in the present study. English as a subject was only recently included in the PNLD Program, precisely in 2010 (BRASIL, 2012). The books are equally recent publications, so it is expected that contemporary concepts and principles of Applied Linguistics are reflected in the materials, more specifically, genre (MOTTA-ROTH, 2006b; 2008b), multiliteracies (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000), and critical literacy (CERVETTI; PARDALES; DAMICO, 2001).

The objective of this analysis is to verify the representation of culture in a PNLD textbook in relation to recent concepts of culture. More specifically, it aims to compare the representation of culture found by a previous research on textbooks. Gray (2010, p. 55-107) analyzed global textbooks published between 1979 and 2003 in comparison to the representation of culture in “local” Brazilian textbooks published in 2012. As PNLD textbooks usage is purposed to be used in the whole country, the use of the term “local”

can be seen as controversial, considering that Brazil has many differing local realities that one single textbook cannot address. However, the term is used here only to contrast with global textbooks used by Gray (2010).

2. Review of literature

The concept of culture has been widely discussed in the English language teaching and learning area. Culture is associated with the conventional with genres from the perspectives of Critical Genre Analysis, which combines concepts and principles of Systemic Functional Linguistics, Critical Discourse Analysis and Genre Analysis (MOTTA-ROTH, 2008b). Genre is understood as “culturally relevant activities, mediated by language in a particular context of situation, and permeated by different discourses” (MOTTA-ROTH, 2006b, p. 147, our translation). This view of genre includes the concept of culture with lowercase “c” (MOTTA-ROTH, 2006a, based on HOLLIDAY, 1999, p. 287-288), as pointed out in the Introduction section.

In EFL (English as Foreign Language) classrooms, however, culture is traditionally approached as the habits, holidays, behaviors, and customary practices of people from a particular country or ethnical background (LIMA, 2008; GRAY, 2010). In other words, culture is seen as a stereotype, as culture with capital “C” (MOTTA-ROTH, 2006a, p. 290, based on HOLLIDAY, 1999).

This view is insufficient to teach the contextualized use of language. It is relevant to know what language is used in specific routine activities such as ordering food, writing/recording a WhatsApp message to a close friend, reading a recipe, and so on. These routine activities are genres and relate to culture with lowercase “c”. For these activities, it is pointless to know that “the British are never late”, or that “Americans love fast-food”.

Recent studies involving teachers of English as a foreign language (LIMA, 2008) and textbooks (GRAY, 2010) revealed that the representation of culture with lowercase “c” is infrequent. Lima (2008), in order to establish the cultural aspects in English as foreign language teaching, inquired 40 English teachers about the representation of culture in textbooks. Results indicated that when asked if English textbooks approached culture, the majority of them replied “yes”, and then exemplified culture as traditional holidays and foods, geographical aspects, history, music, touristic and historical places. According to Lima (2008), this list of aspects is an example of Culture with capital “C”, and there is not any aspect of culture with lowercase “c” in the list. Similar results were found by Gray (2010), who analyzed four global textbooks from the late 1970s up to 2003. According to Gray (2010, p. 38, citing APPLE; CHRISTIAN-SMITH, 1991), textbooks embody “particular constructions of reality”, and the reality shown is that global textbooks he analyzed privileged those that use standard British English, with little to no space for informal use of English language. Gray (2010, p. 64-66) also found that pervasive sexism has been replaced by evolving feminism and that the community of English speakers is “characterized by success, gender equality and an increasing cosmopolitanism” (GRAY, 2010, p. 174). He also found that “commercial considerations – rather than ethical or educational concerns – are seen to be paramount” (GRAY, 2010, p. 175) in the production of global textbooks and

because of that, there are tensions within the publishing contexts “with regard to the representational practices associated with sexuality, race and disability” (GRAY, 2010, p. 174-175). These results show that the English language is associated with a set of characteristics that stereotype and generalize English users, suggesting an emphasis on the view of culture with a capital “C”.

3. Method

The first step adopted by this study was the selection of the *corpus*: textbooks for the teaching of English as a foreign language. The PNLD program becomes relevant in the Brazilian scenario of textbooks because of the evaluation process it applies to these materials and because of the wide access to them in the context of public schools. For this reason, a textbook collection approved by PNLD was chosen. Regarding the textbook choice, the criteria to decide which title to choose, was the easiest access to the material, and thus the textbook collection *alive!*, was selected. Coincidentally, *alive!* (MENEZES *et al.*, 2012) is the collection that better met the criteria (Table 1) by PNLD (BRASIL, 2013).

Table 1 presents the textbooks chosen by PNLD and the nine specific criteria which were considered and which qualify each collection, to Brazilian schools. The qualification of each textbook is related to three shades of color, the darker the color, the better the collection served the criterion. The evaluation of the *alive!* collection is highlighted in the blue frame. The criteria and the evaluation will be discussed in the Results section.

The second step of the study was to establish the analytical procedures. They are divided into two stages: contextual analytical procedures and textual analytical procedures.

The contextual analysis includes a discussion of two documents that are part of the larger context of the textbook *alive!*: 1) the *Guia de Livros Didáticos PNLD 2014 - Ensino Fundamental Anos Finais* (BRASIL, 2013); and 2) the sections *Introduction*, *The sections of your book* and *Contents* of the textbook (MENEZES, 2012). This contextual analysis aims to identify concepts and principles that can be related to the representation of culture of the textbook.

Table 1 - PNLD criteria to evaluate textbooks

LÍNGUA ESTRANGEIRA	CÓDIGOS DAS COLEÇÕES	CRITÉRIOS ORGANIZADORES AVALIADOS								
		PROJETO GRÁFICO-EDITORIAL	SELEÇÃO DE TEXTOS	COMPREENSÃO ESCRITA	PRODUÇÃO ESCRITA	COMPREENSÃO ORAL	PRODUÇÃO ORAL	ELEMENTOS LINGÜÍSTICOS	QUESTÕES TEÓRICO-METODOLÓGICAS	MANUAL DO PROFESSOR
INGLÊS	27320COL44									
	27394COL44									
	27492COL44									



 (+) níveis de qualificação (-)

Source: Brasil (2013)

The textual analysis considers the representation of culture in *alive!* based on three of the aspects analyzed by Gray (2010), namely: 1) representation of social actors (VAN LEEUWEN, 2008) in terms of gender, profession, ethnicity, and age; 2) genre repertoire; and 3) topics addressed by the units in the textbook. The analysis considers representations in two semiotic resources: images and verbal language. According to Gray (2010, p. 112-136), patterns of representation in relation to these aspects can be associated with how English is represented, values associated with the English language, indicating who and what is included and what is excluded when the student learns English. Thus, if you were to become a user of English, you may be able to travel, have wonderful breakfasts, be free of problems, be always happy, be white, rich, use only a formal and error free variety of English, and so on, as found by Gray (2010) in his analysis of global textbooks.

4. Results

The aim of this section is, firstly, to present the results of a contextual analysis based on the PNLD program; secondly, to describe the textbook chosen for this analysis in relation to the pedagogical orientation as defined by its authors, and the general organization of the contents of the book; and, thirdly, to present an analysis of the representation of culture present in this textbook, following Gray (2010). Lastly, to see if the representation of culture found in the present analysis is different from the view obtained by Gray (2010) in his corpus or if it is similar to it.

4.1. Contextual analysis

This subsection presents the results of two documents that are part of the larger context of the textbook *alive!*: 1) the *Guia de Livros Didáticos PNLD 2014 - Ensino Fundamental Anos Finais* (BRASIL, 2013) and 2) the sections *Presentation*, *The sections of*

your book and *Contents* of the textbook. The analysis of these documents emphasizes the specific evaluation and orientation of the textbook *alive!* by PNLD (BRASIL, 2013) in relation to how culture is treated in this material.

4.1.1 The evaluation of the collection *alive!* by PNLD

The evaluation presented in the *Guias de Livros Didáticos PNLD 2014 - Ensino Fundamental Anos Finais* (BRASIL, 2013), henceforth “PNLD guidelines”, on the collection *alive!*, considered the book as having a “clear organization, coherent and functional, appropriated to its pedagogical proposal” (BRASIL, 2013, p. 47, our translation). Also, the themes of the units were evaluated as suitable for the grade to which it is directed. The evaluation criteria of the PNLD guidelines (BRASIL, 2013) are presented in Table 1, in the method section. The criteria are described above.

The *first criterion* is related to the organization of the textbook. It questions how adequate and legible are the drawings, fonts sizes, words, references, indication of CD tracks, and glossaries, also if the textbook displays the “ethnic, cultural and social diversity of the Brazilian population” and of “the communities of the regions and countries where the foreign language is used” (BRASIL, 2013, p. 44-45, our translation). The *second criterion* inquires if the textbook present groups of different communities of speakers of the English language, and if it contributes to a comprehension of the “cultural, social, ethnic, age-group, and gender diversity” (BRASIL, 2013, p. 45, our translation). This criterion also concerns the variety of oral, written, verbal, non-verbal, and visual-verbal genres and language (BRASIL, 2013, p. 45). The *third criterion* questions if the activities propose pre-reading, reading and post-reading activities, it also explores reading strategies and the development of critical thinking. The *fourth criterion* inquires if the written ability is related to a communicative parameter, and if the activities promote the conception of the writing as dependent on the conventions of contexts and genres. (BRASIL, 2013, p. 46). The *fifth criterion* considers if the collection brings an audio CD, and if there are activities of oral comprehension with language variation (BRASIL, 2013, p. 46). The *sixth criterion* inquires if the collection proposes practices of interaction in the foreign language in different situations (BRASIL, 2013, p. 46). The *seventh criterion* is about the presence of a grammatical systematization contextualized with situations of language in use, as well as the language variation (BRASIL, 2013, p. 46-47). The *eighth criterion* concentrates on the theoretical and methodological approaches with six parameters, which are: 1) coherence between theoretical bases; 2) promotion of progression in the teaching-learning process; 3) integral evaluation process that “harmonizes linguistic-discursive and cultural aspects”; 4) “contributes for the apprehension of relations established between the foreign language and its sociocultural functions”; 5) “favors the development of autonomous and critical thinking”; and 6) “proportionates articulation between the study of the foreign language and manifestations that value affect and mutual respect, creativity and the playful nature that this teaching has to have” (BRASIL, 2013, p. 47, our translation). The *ninth criterion* is about the teacher’s manual. It is not

considered here because they are extra materials, so they are not objects of this analysis.

The term culture is used in four criteria – first, second, eighth, and ninth. In the first criterion, the guidelines show concern about the extent to which the visual resources in the book show the cultural diversity of the Brazilian and of the foreign population. The second criterion questions if the texts selected for the book encompass cultural diversity – different social spheres. The eighth criterion is directed to the aesthetic/artistic sphere and asks if *alive!* considers productions of both the national and the foreign culture. Finally, the ninth criterion evaluates if the theoretical and methodological approach goes beyond the lexicogrammatical and semantic levels, including cultural aspects in the study of language. These four mentions of the word culture shows that it is mostly associated with the concept of genre and sphere, therefore, with the representation of culture with lowercase “c”. Nevertheless, culture with capital “C” is also used in the guidelines in the eighth criterion, which links culture to geographical borders.

According to Table 1, out of the three possible shades of color, the textbook *alive!* fulfills five criteria: the first being the “graphic design project”, the second the “text selection”, the fourth the “writing production”, the seventh the “linguistic elements” and the eighth the “theoretical methodological aspects”. The textbook was considered average in three criteria, the third - “writing comprehension”, the fifth - “oral comprehension” - and the ninth - “teacher’s manual”. Only in the sixth criteria - “oral production” - was the textbook *alive!* considered unsatisfactory (lightest shade of the color). This evaluation clearly indicates that in relation to the four skills traditionally associated with foreign language learning – speaking, writing, reading, and listening, the textbook is “good” at promoting writing, “average” at promoting reading and listening, and “bad” at promoting speaking. The focus on writing in this textbook for elementary level students shows a shift in foreign language teaching in the Brazilian public school context, where the focus on reading has traditionally been advocated because of several reasons, among them, crowded classrooms, low number of weekly hours of the foreign language on schedule, lack of a technological infrastructure for developing oral production/comprehension skills (MOITA LOPES, 1996).

Another interesting aspect is that this evaluation shows a contrast between text selection – highly praised, and text exploration – showing gaps. In the textbook review presented by the PNDL guideline (BRASIL, 2013), reviewers indicate that the textbook includes a variety of genres and spheres (media, artistic, personal). However, the activities that explore these texts are incomplete, because of the low presence of post-reading activities, and because the few questions asked focus only on the opinion of students (BRASIL, 2013, p. 34), suggesting that “critical thinking”, one of the aspects considered in the evaluation, is developed poorly. Similarly, pre-reading questions are also evaluated as incomplete because they only address previous knowledge or hypothesis raising (BRASIL, 2013, p. 34). The low frequency of reading activities that promote critical thinking is not uncommon in the context of PNLD textbooks as shown by Kummer (2015), and one reason could be the lack of theoretical tools to do so.

The variety of genres and spheres highlighted by the review show a variety of cultures being included in the book, as pointed out in the “general overview” (BRASIL, 2013, p. 31, our translation): “The collection is emphasized for the treatment given to different artistic manifestations as means of aesthetic fruition and an expansion of cultural horizons”. The review, thus, underlines the representation of culture with lowercase “c”.

4.1.2 Description of the collection *alive!* by its authors

In the sections *Apresentação*, *As seções do seu livro* and *Contents* of the collection *alive!*, the authors (MENEZES *et al.*, 2012) present it as addressed to young students as a result of their needs, as expressed by them in informal surveys. These needs are to have a book that teaches English “through music, recent topics, technology, and that, in addition, is beautiful” (MENEZES *et al.*, 2012, p. 3, our translation). According to the authors (MENEZES *et al.*, 2012, p. 3), the book contains all these aspects, with everyday language, illustrated with authentic oral and written texts, and a concern with creating opportunities to use the English language beyond the classroom.

4.1.2.1 Description of the textbook *alive!* for the 6th grade

The organization of the textbook *alive!* is in four parts, each part contain two units, totaling eight units and 175 pages, the book is directed to the 6th grade. The four parts of the book are organized into subjects - Part 1: *People and school*; Part 2: *Family and home*; Part 3: *Eating and living*; Part 4: *Acting the world*.

The emphasis of the textbook is in specific learning strategies, respectively: vocabulary, reading, self-study and speaking. The eight units are organized differently from one another in terms of the subsections that constitute each one. Table 2 presents the titles of the sections in each unit and their occurrence.

All titles were included in the table, except for those that address topics particular to the unit, namely: *Let's learn about greetings*, *Let's learn about numbers!*, *Let's learn school objects!*, *Let's learn about school subjects!*, *Let's learn about family members!*, *Let's learn about furniture!*, “*Let's learn about food!*, *Let's learn about routines!*, *Let's learn about body and sports!* and *Let's learn about bullying!*” (MENEZES *et al.*, 2012, p. 6-7). All these titles are related to the vocabulary and the main theme of each unit (MENEZES *et al.*, 2012, p. 4).

According to Menezes *et al.* (2012), the title *Let's start!* is the section which initiates each unit and its aim is activating previous knowledge about the unit's content, it also aims to present new vocabulary and structures which will be studied in the unit.

Let's act with words! appears at the end of each unit. This section is related to developing writing skills of different genres in several steps, such as planning, writing, evaluating, and rewriting (MENEZES *et al.*, 2012). *Let's focus on language!* is the grammatical systematization contextualized with the language in use (MENEZES *et al.*, 2012), it also appears in all eight units.

Let's read! is the title that appears in five different units and it is concerned with texts of different genres and different activities to develop the student's ability to read critically (MENEZES *et al.*, 2012). The section *Art corner* is in four units and it is related to different art expressions, such as painting, sculpture, photography and so on (MENEZES *et al.*, 2012, p. 5).

Let's listen! appears in three units. In this section, the listening ability is related to different oral texts, such as dialogues, a part of a movie or a TV show, podcasts, etc., about the main subject of the unit. The aim is to develop the student's ability to comprehend global and specific information of an oral text (MENEZES *et al.*, 2012).

Let's talk! is the section which proposes activities of oral production in English about different contents related to the theme of the unit (MENEZES *et al.*, 2012). At this point, it is relevant to recall the evaluation of *alive!* by PNLD (BRASIL, 2013), which indicates oral production as the weakest aspect of the collection (Table 1).

The section *Let's read, write, and talk!* relates these three skills, and has the purpose of giving the opportunity for students to experience the use of English language in a richer context (MENEZES *et al.*, 2012). The section *Let's sing!* presents songs with lyrics for students to sing/read. The activities in this section are related to oral comprehension and critical discussion of the song's themes (MENEZES *et al.*, 2012).

Table 2 - Titles of the sections present in each unit of the collection *alive!* and its respective occurrences

Name	Let's start!	Let's act with words!	Let's focus on language!	Let's read!	Let's listen and talk!	Art corner!	Let's play a game!	Let's listen!	Let's talk!	Let's read and write!	Let's listen, talk and sing!	Let's read, write, and talk!	Let's write!	Let's talk and write!	Let's sing!	Pronunciation!
Unit 1	x	x	x		x		x				x	x				
Unit 2	x	x	x	x	x	x							x	x		
Unit 3	x	x	x	x	x			x								
Unit 4	x	x	x	x		x										
Unit 5	x	x	x			x		x	x							
Unit 6	x	x	x				x	x							x	
Unit 7	x	x	x	x		x				x						
Unit 8	x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x						x
Total	8	8	8	7	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1

Source: the author.

With the exception of the titles *Let's start!*, *Art corner!* And *Let's play a game!*, the other titles presented in Table 2 can be classified as focusing on the four general skills

(speaking, listening, writing and reading), as evidenced by the lexical choices “listen”, “read”, “talk” and “write” in *Let’s listen, talk and sing*. Table 3 shows which of the 16 titles in Table 2 can be associated with those four skills just by the nature of the title.

Table 3 - The titles of the units according to the four skills

Name	Let’s start!	Let’s act with words!	Let’s focus on	Let’s read!	Let’s listen and talk!	Art corner!	Let’s play a game!	Let’s listen!	Let’s talk!	Let’s read and write!	Let’s listen, talk and write!	Let’s read, write, and sing!	Let’s write!	Let’s talk and write!	Let’s sing!	Pronunciation!	Total
Listening					x			x			x						3
Speaking					x				x		x	x		x	x	x	7
Reading			x	x						x		x					4
Writing		x								x		x	x	x			5

Source: the author.

Table 3 shows that 13 titles explicitly focus on one or more of the four skills, with production skills of speaking and writing being more frequent than reception skills of listening and reading. Having that in mind, two points called our attention: 1) the contrast between the high frequency of sections that address speaking and “oral production” being the weakest aspect of the textbook according to PNLD (Table 1 - BRASIL, 2013), which evidences that the problem is not quantity, but the quality of the oral production proposed in the textbook; 2) a possible change of focus in the teaching of foreign language in the Brazilian public schools context, from reading to speaking (and writing, as pointed out by the Table 1 evaluation).

The evaluation done by PNLD guidelines (BRASIL, 2013), concerning oral production in the textbook *alive!*, differs from the quantitative results found in this research, where speaking is the skill that appears the most in the titles of the sections, suggesting it is a central skill developed through this material. Table 3 shows that the speaking skill (oral production) appears in seven different titles, while the writing skill, (writing production), appears in five different titles and was evaluated by PNLD guidelines (BRASIL, 2013) as the strongest one. The listening (oral comprehension), and reading (reading comprehension), skills were evaluated as on average and they appear less than the other skills, in three and four titles.

Considering the topic of this work – representation of culture and the recurrent titles of the sections that compose each unit, these do not address culture explicitly by means of indicating the variety of spheres, as mentioned in the guidelines that evaluate the textbook (BRASIL, 2013). The following section explores the representation of culture inside the body of the units by means of three aspects: representation of social actors (gender, age, profession and ethnicity), variety of genres and variety of topics.

4.2 Textual analysis

Considering the textual analysis, three aspects were taken into account to investigate the representation of culture: 1) representation of social actors (VAN LEEUWEN, 2008) in terms of gender, profession, ethnicity and age, 2) genre repertoire, and 3) topics addressed by the units in the textbook. These aspects were also analyzed by Gray (2010) and the results obtained here will be compared to the results obtained by the author, in order to verify if and how culture is represented differently in a less global way in more recent textbooks.

4.2.1 Representation of social actors in *alive!*

The representation of social actors was observed based on the images in *alive!*, including all the images that represent human participants, making a distinction between drawings and photographic images.

403 images with 463 represented social actors were identified. In relation to the representation of gender in the textbook *alive!*, there is a difference between the presence of female (202) and male (261) social actors, even though this difference is smaller than in the global textbook from the late 1970s, as observed by Gray (2010) (Table 4). According to Gray (2010, p. 64), the disproportionate representation between male and female social actors in textbooks as “discrimination against women on the basis of gender.” (GRAY, 2010, p. 64).

Table 4 - Representation of the gender of social actors in textbooks over time (compared to GRAY, 2010)

Author	Textbook's title	Gender of represented social actors		TOTAL
		Male	Female	
DUARTE (2015)	<i>alive!</i> (2012)	261 (54%)	202 (44%)	463
GRAY (2010)	<i>Streamline English Connections</i> (1979)	245 (64%)	138 (36%)	383
	<i>Building Strategies</i> (1984)	115 (50%)	114 (50%)	229
	<i>The New Cambridge English Course</i> (1990)	260 (61%)	165 (39%)	425

Source: the author.

In relation to age, the social actors were divided into four groups: child, teenager, adult, and elderly. It was found that there are more children and teenagers (227) than adults (182) and elders (17), and, among the children, there are more boys (137) than girls (90). These results are different from the ones obtained by Gray (2010), where all units featured mostly adults. The high representation of young social actors in *alive!* can be associated to the target audience of this book, as it is addressed to 6th graders in the Brazilian school system, that encompasses students between 10 and 13 years old.

In relation to ethnicity, there are more white (391) social actors than social actors of other ethnic backgrounds. There are 68 afro-descendants and only 04 indigenous social actors. The white representation is mostly male kids (115), and the social actors that are black are mostly female kids (24). In Gray (2010), the representation of race is also limited. According to him, almost all represented participants are white.

Concerning the occupations/jobs of the social actors, it is important to mention that it was only possible to identify the occupations/jobs of 141 (30%) out of the 463 social actors. There seems to be a reasonably even distribution between female and male social actors, as shown in Table 4. Still, the professions of pilot, cop and political leader are only related to male social actors. In the analysis presented by Gray (2010), “men are represented as occupying a wider range of occupations than those occupied by women” (GRAY, 2010, p. 64).

Table 5 - Distribution of jobs between male and female social actors

Occupations	Student	Soccer player	Sportswoman/ Sportsman	Actress/ Actor	Singer	Teacher	Pilot	Journalist	Political leader	Cop/officer	
Female	17	03	15	04	03	02		01			
Male	22	15	27	07	07	02	02		01	01	
TOTAL	39	31	41	11	10	04	02	01	01	01	141

Source: the author.

In relation to the type of image (drawing or photographic), the social actors are mostly represented by photographic images (233) rather than fictional images (170) (Table 5). The social actors represented by photographic images are mostly white men (66), and the social actors represented by drawings are mostly white kids (57). This higher presence of photographic images differs from the results obtained by Gray (2010). Gray (2010, p. 56) explains that drawings allow the use of “ludic style reminiscent of British children’s comics, whereby represented participants are generally depicted as brightly colored, with minor anatomical exaggerations, often with comical names [...], curiously dressed, or in situation which might be deemed amusing”. The author uses words such as “play text”, “funny”, “element of comedy”, “entertain” and cites Anderson (2002, cited in GRAY, 2010, p. 57) who suggests that “a fun approach with little intellectual challenge is a defining feature of many English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom practice”. Gray (2010, p. 56) also points out that the predominance of fictional social actors is also congruent with “the contrived nature of accompanying written texts”. The representation of fictional situations, that is, of unauthentic scenarios in language textbooks, goes against contemporary views of language as genre, of pedagogical approaches that aim at building critical consciousness (CERVETTI; PARDALES; DAMICO, 2001) and at helping students transform and improve their social realities (COPE; KALANTZIS, 2000).

Table 6 - Distribution of drawings and photographic images in *alive!*

	Gender		Occupation		Age group				Ethnicity			Type of image	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Child	Teenager	Adult	Elderly	Black	White	Indigenous	Real	Drawing
Duarte (2015)	261	202	90	45	146	37	182	17	68	391	04	293	170
Gray (2010)	A higher difference between male and female social actors		Men are represented as engaging a wider range of occupations		Adults are the most represented				Limited representation of race			Drawings are more represented than real images	

Source: the author.

The presence of more photographic images in *alive!* may indicate that the textbook focuses on “real” world situations and, therefore, on language used in social practices that may be relevant to students.

4.3 The topics covered by in *alive!* according to the Threshold Level

According to Gray (2010), the Threshold level is an European set of suggestions of topics for textbooks to attend, which “are considered appropriate for students working towards a basic level of foreign language proficiency” (GRAY, 2010, p. 63). This is the case of the textbook *alive!*, directed to students of 6th grade, the first year of foreign language teaching in public schools in Brazil, so the target audience of this textbook is considered as having a basic level.

In Gray’s (2010) analysis, he considered the units as a whole to identify which topics were included in the textbooks, but in this analysis, due to limitations of time and space, only the *Table of contents of alive!* (MENEZES et al., 2012, p. 6-7) was analyzed. Table 7 compares the results obtained by Gray (2010) with the ones obtained in this research. There are fourteen topics, as suggested by the Threshold Level, and eight units in the textbook *alive!*.

Table 7 - Number of units in which Threshold Level topics are addressed in *alive!*

TOPICS	Trade, profession and occupation	Travel	Free time, entertainment	Relations with other people	Shopping	Services	Food and drink	Personal identification	Home and house	Home and welfare	Education	Places	Weather	Other
Gray (2010)	12	09	06	05	05	03	01	01	01	01	01	01	01	39
Duarte (2015)	01	00	01	02	00	00	01	01	02	01	01	00	00	02

Source: the author.

As Table 7 shows, eight topics of the European Threshold Level are present in the *Table of contents* (MENEZES *et al.*, 2012, p. 6-7) of *alive!*, so all units of the textbook include one or more topics of the Threshold Level. The topics included in *alive!* are the following: personal identification, home and house, trade, profession and occupation, free time, entertainment, relations with other people, health and welfare, food and drink. In addition, there are two units that feature different topics related to “acting in the world” (MENEZES *et al.*, 2012, p. 6-7); those are about different kinds of protests. Gray (2010) found, in the textbook *Connections*, at least one mention to each topic, and there was a higher number of units related to other topics. In global textbooks, Gray (2010) found that there is a tendency towards “aspirational” topics, such as trade, travel, food, shopping, food and drink, which represent the foreign culture associated to English as wealthy, happy and problem-free. In *alive!*, however, traveling and shopping are absent, and the presence of topics associated to protesting indicate a different representation of culture, which may be more connected to the national, local identity and reality of Brazilian students and focuses on relevant situations of language usage.

4.4 The genres present in *alive!*

The analysis of the genres presented in the textbook *alive!* comprehends the first part of the textbook, which is composed by two units. The genres presented and their frequency are as follows: “scrapbook” (2), “profile” (4), “personal conversation” (2), song (1), comic strip (1), “dialogue” (2), “Wikipedia profile” (1), “interview” (1), “bingo”(game) (1), “phone book” (1), “report card” (2), “list of materials” (1), “guessing game” (1), “classroom poster” (1), “dictionary” (1), and “self-learning report” (1).

The first genre, “scrapbook”, is a collection of memories. The second genre is a student “profile” that includes their name, nickname, nationality and occupation. The third genre is a “personal conversation” between sportswomen and sportsmen. The fourth genre is a song by The Beatles. The fifth genre is a Garfield’s comic strip. The sixth genre is a “dialogue” regarding personal information. The seventh genre is the “Wikipedia profile” of César Cielo. The eighth genre is an “interview” between the students. The ninth genre is a

game, “bingo”, which students should play together. The tenth genre is a “phone book” that students should create. The eleventh genre is a “report card” by which students should use to learn about school subjects. The twelfth genre is a “list of materials” that the student should use to learn about the names of school materials. The thirteenth genre is another game, guessing names. The fourteenth genre is “dictionary”, advised by the textbook as a strategy to learn vocabulary. The last genre is a “self-learning report” that students should write to evaluate their learning.

The presence of these genres in the first part of the textbook *alive!* is related to the daily life of the student, so, it is possible to affirm that the focus of this textbook is on language in practice, which is related to the concept of culture with lowercase “c”. Even though there are references to cultural products such as The Beatles and Garfield that are associated to the “English culture”, there are more activities that emphasize local culture by means of the genres addressed. Even the comic strip is relevant in this context, as it probably is a genre familiar to young students, even though it may not be originally addressed to them (CATTO, 2013).

5. Conclusion

Considering the importance and frequency of the use of textbooks in language classrooms and the fact that language and culture cannot be taught separately, this research analyzed the PNLD guide (contextual analysis) and the textbook *alive!* (textual analysis) in order to see how culture is being represented, also how this representation changed over the years. To do so, the results were compared to the study developed by Gray (2010) with older and global textbooks.

In order to verify which concept of culture the textbook *alive!* brings, culture with capital “C” or culture with lowercase “c” (MOTTA-ROTH, 2006a, based on HOLLIDAY, 1999), three aspects were considered: representation of social actors, the topics addressed in the textbook according to the Threshold Level and the genres explored, as done by Gray (2010). The three categories of analysis presented results that indicate that the textbook *alive!* focuses more on local, “real” world, situations and, therefore, on language usage in social practices that are relevant to young students of public schools. So, culture is represented more emphatically as attached to social situations (lowercase “c”) rather than to national stereotypes (capital “C”).

Finally, the results show that the necessity pointed out by PNLD documents (contextual analysis) for the collections of language textbooks to approach culture with lowercase “c” (MOTTA-ROTH, 2006a, based on HOLLIDAY, 1999) seems to be fulfilled by the textbook *alive!* (textual analysis), as it presents situational contexts close to what seems to be the reality of students in public schools. In comparison with the results obtained by Gray (2010), the textbook *alive!* has a more contemporary representation of culture, but still has aspects to be improved, such as an equal representation of gender and ethnicity.

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