



German as an Additional Language with a decolonial focus: a discussion on didactic proposals for the *Zeitgeist* project

Ensino de alemão com foco decolonial: uma discussão sobre propostas didáticas para o projeto *Zeitgeist*

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ABSTRACT: Based on the theory of Interdisciplinary Applied Linguistics, from a decolonial perspective, the main purpose of this work is to present and discuss proposals for activities designed for a teaching material of German as an additional language. This material has been developed within the scope of an inter-institutional project, the *Zeitgeist* project, which aims to discuss and propose a specific German textbook for the academic context. The purpose of this work, therefore, as well as the *Zeitgeist* project, is to reflect and act, in a practical way, on the teaching and research of German as an additional language in a pluricentric perspective, focusing especially on the critical and self-directed academic context in Brazil. The analysis carried out in this work indicates that the didactic activities carried out in the textbook emphasize very relevant issues within contextualized social practices, thus allowing teachers and students to recognize themselves in the material and develop critical and reflective learning of German.

KEYWORDS: Interdisciplinary Applied Linguistics. Decoloniality. Teaching German as an Additional Language. Elaboration of teaching material.

RESUMO: Com base nos pressupostos da linguística aplicada indisciplinar e, a partir de uma perspectiva decolonial, o presente trabalho tem como objetivo principal apresentar e discutir propostas de atividades elaboradas para um material didático de ensino de alemão como língua adicional. Esse material vem sendo desenvolvido no âmbito de um projeto interinstitucional, o projeto *Zeitgeist*, que visa discutir e propor um livro didático de alemão específico para o contexto acadêmico. Nesse sentido, para além da descrição das atividades em si, também serão apresentados o contexto de produção do livro e seus princípios orientadores. A proposta deste trabalho, assim como do projeto *Zeitgeist*, é o de refletir e atuar de maneira prática sobre o ensino e aprendizagem e a pesquisa do alemão como língua adicional em uma perspectiva pluricêntrica, focando especialmente no contexto acadêmico de formação autodirigida de professoras e pesquisadoras de alemão no Brasil. A análise realizada aponta que as atividades enfatizam questões relevantes dentro de práticas sociais contextualizadas permitindo, portanto, que professoras e estudantes se reconheçam no material e possam desenvolver um aprendizado crítico em língua alemã.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Linguística Aplicada Interdisciplinar. Decolonialidade. Ensino de Alemão como Língua Adicional. Elaboração de materiais didáticos.

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1 Introduction

Applied Linguistics (AL) can be considered an interdisciplinary research field focused on solving problems involving the use of language (MOITA LOPES, 2006, p. 23). Therefore, we can say that it collaborates with theoretical and practical knowledge linked to language, bringing perspectives from social minority groups, such as feminist, racial, gender and non-binary studies, among others. Thus, the perspective of Critical AL seeks a greater plurality and inclusion of dissonant voices so that it may be possible to provide a dynamic movement, which is indispensable for the teaching and learning of languages in multiple contexts.

According to the perspectives of interdisciplinary AL (these concepts will be described and discussed in section 3) and Critical Applied Linguistics (CAL), decoloniality represents a displacement of resistance in relation to colonial approaches, that is, those that have an interest in keeping certain "colonised" regions in social, political, historical, cultural, and economic dependence. In the context of teaching additional languages, this colonial perspective can be linked to those who produce and export knowledge through standardised and prescriptive teaching materials, with little room for teachers to make their own didactic-pedagogical decisions.

In several contexts of teaching German as an Additional Language (GAL) in Brazil, we can identify the use of imported teaching materials that convey the standard language of European centres. Due to the absence of linguistic and sociocultural diversity, such a hegemonic teaching model provides an erasure of the German language spoken in other countries and regions, creating an idealised model for language and culture learning. However, these materials also disregard themes and approaches of local social relevance, which can negatively interfere with students' interest and participation in different teaching contexts. Therefore, we notice the lack of inclusion of teachers and students, and their topics of interest, in the discourses

exchanged in the classroom from these cited materials, as an important issue to be debated and faced, especially in the context of teacher training, as is the case in German Language university courses.

In order to promote a decolonial detachment for the teaching and learning of GAL in the Brazilian academic context, a research group was created with researchers from Brazilian universities (USP, UERJ, UFRJ, UNICAMP, UFPR, UFC) with the proposal of elaborating a didactic material that had the local perspective as its central point. The *Zeitgeist* project arose with the intention of developing practices that could promote the deconstruction of patterns traditionally conveyed in imported textbooks, so that German teachers and students could be increasingly involved in the teaching process, thus becoming protagonists of their own learning process. In order to dedicate attention to local problems with conflict solutions involving language, the project was conceived with the theoretical basis of AL from a transgressive perspective, which calls into question objectivity paradigms, since it takes into account the involvement of our researchers and teachers (MOITA LOPES, 2006). Therefore, the activities developed in this project seek to raise emerging linguistic and sociocultural issues, to enable a meaningful learning of the target language.

In this work, we intend to present eight activities taken from two units of the *Zeitgeist*¹ textbook. Through different teaching perspectives focused on local needs, the proposed activities seek to address facets of the world and social issues within different narratives, allowing the classroom to become a space in which students and teachers can position themselves in the target language. Thus, the methodology of this article can be described as qualitative interpretivist (DENZIN; LINCOLN, 2006).

¹ *Zeitgeist* (German term that can be translated as “spirit of time”) is both the name of the research group registered at CNPQ (The National Council for Scientific and Technological Development), which includes researchers from six different Brazilian universities, and the name of the textbook for teaching German as an additional language for the academic context.

We also consider the perspective of decoloniality for the description of the activities presented in this work. The selected activities take into account the teaching and learning of German with a social bias and focus on the needs of teachers and students, considering their local context, and allowing an epistemological shift from a so-called Eurocentrism (FAGUNDES; AMADO, 2020, p. 3).

In the next section, we present a brief overview that points out the paths that led to the primacy of international textbooks in the teaching of GAL in Brazil, covering the different linguistic policies adopted for the teaching of languages in elementary schools. Then, we address the current perspectives of CAL focused on decoloniality. In the third section, we present the principles for the elaboration of a textbook for the teaching of German in the Brazilian academic context and, in the fourth section, the proposed activities of two of the book's units will be described and analysed, whose themes are "identity" and "time." Finally, in the conclusion we present a few final reflections, as well as future perspectives.

2 Teaching German as an additional language in Brazil: a brief overview

The literature that deals with the history of foreign languages in Brazil, including German, is quite extensive and points out, mainly through the different laws and educational reforms that the country went through, the changes in the status and importance of each language, as well as the way they should be taught. The teaching of German in the public schooling context experienced, as other classical or modern languages, different conditions, from its presence in the Colégio Pedro II, the most traditional and oldest high school in Rio de Janeiro, in the year of 1837; the Francisco Campos Reform of 1933, according to which German was compulsory in high schools; to the complete ban of its teaching in Brazil, from the "compulsory nationalisation," implemented by the Vargas government in 1938 (UPHOFF, 2011, p. 18).

Paradoxically, in 1942, a new educational reform, the Capanema Reform, is seen as the one that gives more relevance to foreign language teaching in Brazil (DAY, 2012). Not only due to the larger weekly workload, but also because of the offer of different languages, such as Latin, French, English, and Spanish, to all students, from the old Gymnasium (from the 6th grade to elementary school) to high school (secondary school) (LEFFA, 1999, p. 13). According to Leffa, from a historical perspective, "the 40s and 50s, under the Capanema Reform, were the golden years of foreign languages in Brazil" (LEFFA, 1999, p. 14). During this period, foreign language teaching was dominated by textbooks resembling grammars, whose central axis was translation, with phonetics also becoming part of these textbooks and grammars (MENEZES, 2009). Uphoff, in research that focuses specifically on the teaching materials produced for German as a foreign language, notes "a certain methodological variety existing at that time" (UPHOFF, 2011, p. 19), pointing out aspects of methodologies such as grammar and translation, but also elements of the direct method. It is worth noting that the three manuals cited as examples by the author were produced and edited in Brazil by German teachers: Antonio Klaus, who in 1937 edited the manual "Deutsch für Brasilianer" in Rio de Janeiro, Leonardo Tochtrop, whose manual "Willst du Deutsch sprechen lernen?", was published in 1938 in the city of Porto Alegre, and Egon Schaden, who had his primer "Pequena Grammatica Allemã" published in 1937 by Saraiva publishing house, in São Paulo (UPHOFF, 2011, p. 20). In other words, historically, it is relevant to note the existence of a "pre-internationalization" period of textbooks in Brazil.

In historical terms, major changes began to occur in the 1960s. In Brazil, the Law of Directives and Bases for National Education (LDB) of 1961, which succeeded the Capanema Reform, removed the compulsory nature of language teaching, which became the responsibility of state education councils. In practice, language teaching was reduced to about two-thirds of what it once was (LEFFA, 1999, p. 13). On the other

hand, from the mid-1950s on, the country started to experience a strong internationalisation with measures that facilitated the import of machinery, equipment, and investments (CAPUTO; MELLO, 2009, p. 518). At the same time, the world witnessed a growing expansion of capital, especially from the "USA-European" axis (CANDAU, 2021). It is precisely in this period that private language education started to become widespread. In 1957, the Goethe Institut arrived in Brazil, still under the name Instituto Cultural Brasil Alemanha, starting its activities in Rio de Janeiro, and gaining its own headquarters in 1964.

The 60s and 70s represent a milestone in terms of increased use of international textbooks for language teaching, including German. From 1970 on, there is a growth in the inclusion of German in schools in Brazil, especially through the Central Office for Schools Abroad (Zentralstelle für das Auslandsschulwesen, founded in the city of Bonn in 1960), which starts sending German coordinators and teachers to these schools. There is also a significant influence on the choice of textbooks in these schools:

The support of the German government was also noticeable in the choice of the textbooks that were used in schools. Thus, materials published in Germany such as "Komm bitte" (SCHUH, 1972) and "Vorwärts International" (ARNOLD, 1974) (...) entered the classrooms by means of indications and donations from language education promotion agencies. (UPHOFF, 2011, p. 23)²

Still regarding the relations involving "public teaching context," "private teaching context," "local teaching materials", and "international teaching materials," we notice that, gradually, with the exception of the German immigration regions in Brazil,

² From the original: "O apoio do governo alemão também se fez perceptível na escolha dos livros didáticos que eram empregados nas escolas. Assim, materiais editados na Alemanha como "Komm bitte" (SCHUH, 1972) e "Vorwärts International" (ARNOLD, 1974) (...) entraram nas salas de aula, por meio de indicações e doações dos órgãos de fomento do ensino da língua. (UPHOFF, 2011, p. 23)

the teaching of German remains public only in universities with Language courses with Portuguese-German degree, most of which were implemented through the development of the National Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Languages (Faculdade Nacional de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras), from the 1940s on (ALVES, 1988). Examples include the University of São Paulo and the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and other higher education institutions.

This brief historical overview is illustrative of how teaching of foreign languages in the Brazilian context is, from the beginning, in a certain way associated with a more restricted and elitist public, inserted in a strong "hand of the market", both in terms of courses and private educational institutions, and the large market of international textbook publishers. In a first moment, when public schools were still attended by the "good Brazilian society," term used by the author Carlos da Cunha Junior in his work about the history of Colégio Pedro II (CUNHA JUNIOR, 2008) there was a wide offer of classical and modern languages. From the 1960s on, with the expansion of public educational institutions to a larger and more diverse portion of society, we see the offer of these languages declining, until we reach the current situation where the teaching of English is the only one contemplated in the Common National Curricular Base (BNCC) (BRASIL, 2017).

However, the presence of the German language in bachelor's degree courses at 17 Brazilian public universities, in a recent survey conducted by Voerkel (2017), fosters several relevant debates regarding the teaching and provision of German as a foreign or additional language and the education of teachers. These discussions involve, among other aspects, curricular structures, teaching materials and, at the same time, the initial academic teacher education of German. Besides that, there is also the important debate about the need to broaden the dialogue with society, which can be done, for example, through university extension activities. In this article, we will focus

on the issue of teaching materials, emphasising the academic context, especially Language courses with a Portuguese-German degree.

We understand that the textbook proposal being developed within the scope of the *Zeitgeist* project is situated in a socio-historical perspective that dialogues with the principles of an interdisciplinary applied linguistics. Thus, in the next section, a brief overview of contemporary (PENNYCOOK, 2001), interdisciplinary and transgressive applied linguistics (MOITA LOPES, 2006) will be presented. In addition, we will bring a few studies that are inscribed in the so-called "decolonial turn" (MIGNOLO, 2003), a perspective that is also essential for the project and for the activities that are being elaborated for the *Zeitgeist* book.

3 The critical and decolonial bias of contemporary applied linguistics and the development of teaching materials for additional languages

Historically, Applied Linguistics has for a long time lived in the shadow of theoretical linguistics; however, current research has been trying to move away from this premise, attempting to achieve a hybrid discipline in which dialogue with other areas is essential. Especially in language teaching, AL considers social and psychological aspects of learning, arguing that the knowledge and experience of those involved in language practices are essential for a relevant training process. To account for the complex factors involved in language teaching an interdisciplinary theoretical framework has been advocated, which enables AL to bring to light all that has not been contemplated in predominantly theoretical approaches (AQUINO, 2020, p. 24). Thus, research in additional language teaching started to be built on the problematization of issues of contextualised language use.

Applied Linguistics with an interdisciplinary or transgressive perspective (PENNYCOOK, 2001) is present in studies that try to create intelligibility on social problems where language plays a central role, i.e., with the intent to dialogue with the

current world (MOITA-LOPES, 2006, p. 15). Interdisciplinarity, which is linked to knowledge, theorizations, and practices from different areas of knowledge, enables AL to escape pre-established and decontextualized views, bringing a greater focus on problematizing issues of language use inside or outside the classroom. Since it is impossible to describe language outside its context of use, i.e., in the societies in which it is used, theories of language teaching and learning started to consider social aspects (RAJAGOPALAN, 2006, p. 161).

Pennycook (2006, p. 75) argues that the term "transgression" is meant to define the political and epistemological tools that aim to break through the boundaries of thought. Also, according to Hooks (1994, p. 207), to transgress means to oppose, resist, and cross oppressive barriers. In the context of language teaching, a transgressive approach would be the one that challenges the limits of pedagogy, didactic materials, and knowledge (AQUINO, 2020, p. 28). Thus, to a transgressive approach it is necessary to teach a language considering the effects and values it produces in a given society (URZÊDA-FREITAS, 2012, p. 79), reflecting on the experiences and teaching practices focused on the student and her/his learning context. For Freire (1997, p. 93), knowledge only exists when it expands the power and ways of creating and, consequently, in an active and transgressive reflection on the world. Transgressive teaching promotes, therefore, a new perception of knowledge. To do so, it is not enough just to listen to people, but to challenge them, problematizing the existential situation (FREIRE, 1997, p. 157).

From this new perspective, the current Critical Applied Linguistics (CAL) emerged through concerns regarding ideology, discourse, identity, subjectivity, and power. CAL is committed to the constant search for a greater plurality and inclusion of voices (PENNYCOOK, 2001, p. 10). For language teaching, this approach seeks to provide a dynamic movement in which researchers, teachers, and students need to be challenged to actively position themselves, producing pertinent knowledge within a

socio-historical prism (FAGUNDES; AMADO, 2020, p. 4). It can be said that CAL seeks alternatives to language teaching centred on situations in which language is linked to the maintenance of patterns traditionally repeated by society. CAL seeks, therefore, the possibility of changes in social inequalities (PENNYCOOK, 2007). Another perspective that contributes to the construction of transgressive practices that promote significant changes in different social spheres is one that focuses on the concept of decoloniality.

Some authors such as Fanon (1979), Quijano (2000), Walsh, (2009), among others, see decoloniality as the search for a break with the colonial power structures that strongly mark societies despite the political territory 'decolonization'. Tavares and Gomes (2018) point out that coloniality has survived 'decolonization' through different factors such as its striking presence in peoples' imaginary, in the ways power and micro powers are exercised, in subjective and intersubjective relations, in social representations, and in ontological and epistemological dimensions. Its epistemological dimension is due to the complete negation and erasure of knowledge that did not come from Europe; the ontological dimension refers to the negation of the human condition of colonised peoples. In the words of Tavares and Gomes (2018, p. 48):

Epistemological subalternation corresponds to an ontological subalternity, in the sense that if different cultural knowledges and memories are reduced to mere ethno knowledges, primitive knowledges, without epistemological legitimacy, the peoples who possess them are also, considered primitive or savages, after all, as non-existent. (TAVARES; GOMES, 2018, p. 48)³

³ From the original: “À subalternização epistemológica corresponde uma subalternidade ontológica, no sentido em que, se os saberes e memórias culturais diferentes são reduzidos a meros etnosaberes, saberes primitivos, sem legitimidade epistemológica, os povos que os possuem são, também, subalternizados, considerados primitivos ou selvagens, afinal, como não-existent (TAVARES; GOMES, 2018, p. 48)”.

Regarding the core of our study, language as a social practice and the teaching materials widely used to teach German, Puh (2020, p. 212) argues that the predominance of the textbook as the main element in guiding the teaching process imposes a Eurocentered epistemology. In this logic, teachers and students, seen as mere "users" of these textbooks, would not have "the rigour of highly complex knowledge that can only be attained in European Universities" (PUH, 2020, p. 212), hence their subordinate position in relation to the international textbook. Also in this sphere, a decolonial turn arises, a movement that has been taking shape and volume, considering recent publications in the area of German as an additional language in Brazil (SAMPAIO; PUH, 2020; GRILLI, 2020).

Recognizing the increasing need to help language learners reflect on the power relations that exist in the intercultural encounter provided in language teaching, as well as to consider the aspects involved in the individual learning process, the *Zeitgeist* group was organised with the aim of developing a local German teaching material. The material seeks to value and take into account students' and teachers' prior knowledge as one of the most important factors in the task of learning; thus, activities that aim at language learning directly linked to the social conditions within their usage are developed, in our case, the Brazilian university environment. We consider, in this project, that pedagogical practices should be based on the aspirations of teachers and learners, focusing on thematic axes and approaches that take into account the local and academic context and its specific demands linked to the construction of knowledge necessary for learning the target language.

In this study we intend to present a few concrete activities from the *Zeitgeist* textbook, which aims to be politically and socially relevant in order to intervene in language problems and be applicable in practical situations in the local context. The activities described idealise an active engagement of students in their learning process,

fostering a space for active participation. Moreover, the textbook as a whole seeks to provide activities that support teachers in the teaching process, however, without prescribing a stagnant progression. In other words, the themes and activities in the textbook can be adapted to allow for a practice that further reflects the different teaching and learning environments of GAL.

4 Teaching material for German as an additional language and the *Zeitgeist* project

The German language textbooks adopted in Brazil are mostly produced by German publishers for the international market, i.e., without taking into account the particularities of the local context of teaching and learning GAL. Consequently, the materials often do not adequately match the specific interests and needs of Brazilian teachers and students (UPHOFF, 2018; GONDAR; FERREIRA, 2019). This fact can lead to frustration and learning difficulties. In view of this setting, the research group "*Zeitgeist: German Language in University Contexts*" was formed in 2019, registered in the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), which brings together researchers from different Brazilian Higher Education Institutions (UERJ, UNICAMP, USP, UFC, UFPR, UFRJ) with the main objectives including:

1. To investigate the processes of production, circulation and reception of - materials for teaching German as additional language in Brazil;
2. To elaborate a didactic material for the teaching of German as additional language in academic contexts;
3. To reflect on the education of German as additional language teachers in Brazil, focusing on the relations between language policies and teaching materials in the teacher practices.

This project presents, therefore, a decolonial perspective of German language

teaching and learning, since it proposes the elaboration of a didactic material that emphasises the construction of interdisciplinary and transgressive knowledge focused on the sociocultural context. Our proposal, unlike the materials from large German publishers, is aimed at local knowledge, in the sense that it integrates the perspective of the target audience as heterogeneous subjects, involved in the construction of history and discursive practices. Within the elaboration of a teaching material with a decolonial agenda, we consider it essential that different voices collaborate in the construction of knowledge, thus avoiding teaching of GAL in a social vacuum.

In German teaching at Brazilian universities, it is equally relevant to consider the different needs of this target audience, which are not necessarily restricted to the pragmatics of everyday communicative situations. Therefore, the work with more complex texts, based on a greater diversity of textual genres and the possibility of including other aspects, such as literature and aesthetics, has been an important distinction of the *Zeitgeist* project. The lexical-grammatical progression in the book is conceived according to two axes that, although connected by thematic content, are relatively independent. We can define these axes as two distinct focuses: students' oral and written production; reception, focused on the comprehension of oral and written texts. Thus, it is assumed that the students' initial contact with more complex and diversified texts can facilitate and anticipate, for example, the work with literary texts and a more critical and discursive perspective. In the reception section, the emphasis is, therefore, based on elements such as reading strategies and a more flexible grammatical progression.

The production section, on the other hand, presupposes a slower progression based on the inputs presented in the book and the activities and exercises designed for this purpose. For reasons of the article's scope and space limitation, in this paper we

will describe activities only from the production perspective.⁴

One of the guiding principles for the *Zeitgeist* project is, essentially, the content orientation (*Inhaltsorientierung*). From this perspective, in order for students to achieve new knowledge, the content to be taught must take priority over the form of the new language (GROSSENBACHER et al., 2012). Thus, the learning objectives for each lesson were defined through major themes, i.e., **Place, Identity, Time, Values,** and **Knowledge**. Furthermore, the activities in the book have the goal to promote autonomy both in terms of the students' learning process and the teachers' performance, allowing a greater participation in decisions and adaptations of the progression with the material. For the selection of the texts, preference was given to authenticity, whose themes allowed a reflective and discursive approach that could be comprehensive and relevant to the local context. As a project with a focus on plurilingualism, the book features instructions, explanations, and question titles in both German and Portuguese.

We are currently in the piloting phase⁵ and promotion of the material and, in this sense, this article intends to present, through activities developed for the book *Zeitgeist*, a few concrete proposals for German language teaching in a local context with critical perspectives. In the next section we will discuss activities present in two units of A1.1 level, which focuses on tasks aimed at developing students' oral and written production.

⁴ Because it is a research group, the *Zeitgeist* textbook project has served as context for different studies and research that have been published in different media such as academic journals and books (cf. OLIVEIRA; LEDEL, 2021; AQUINO; CHERCHIGLIA, 2021).

⁵ Through piloting, the *Zeitgeist* project researchers will generate data to analyse and evaluate different aspects of the material such as its design, the wording of the activities, among other elements, on the part of the teachers who will use it and on the part of the students.

5 The activities

As can be seen in the following table (Table 1), the first book of the *Zeitgeist* project collection, referring to level A1.1, is structured in five units, with an initial unit (Unit 0) for the general presentation of the material proposal and the linguistic awareness of students. The first unit presents the theme “Place,” in which the presence of the German language in Brazil and in the world is discussed, thus avoiding a Eurocentric panorama focused on German-speaking European countries. In the second unit we approach identity issues from an individual perspective, covering narratives referring to personal and professional information.

The third addresses the topic of time construct, critically debating the perception of time in our society, for example, the different perspectives linked to the notion of “free time.” In addition to the students' daily lives, we address activities that involve oral and written expressions regarding preferences and tastes. In the fourth unit, we deal with the topic of values, within the sub-theme “Family,” which thematizes the different family constellations. Finally, the fifth unit presents the different areas and understandings on the topic of “Knowledge.”

Table 1 - Themes of units 0 to 5 of book A1.1.

Unit	Theme	Sub-themes (A1.1)
0	Language awareness <i>Sprachliche Sensibilisierung</i>	Mobilizing language skills <i>Mobilisierung sprachlicher Vorkenntnisse</i>
1	Place <i>Ort</i>	German in Brazil and in the world <i>Deutsch in Brasilien und auf der Welt</i>
2	Identity <i>Identität</i>	Personalities, studies/profession <i>Personalien, Studium/Beruf</i>
3	Time <i>Zeit</i>	“Free Time” Concept in Critical Perspective <i>Konzept Freizeit in kritischer Perspektive</i>

4	Values <i>Werte</i>	Family <i>Familie</i>
5	Knowledge <i>Wissen</i>	Areas and forms of knowledge <i>Wissensbereiche, -formen, "Wissensdurst"</i>

Source: own authorship.

For this work we selected the activities from two units, Identity (Identität), and Time (Zeit). We seek to bring to this study activities with an emphasis on language teaching in a perspective that considers situated social practice, that is, teachers and students from Brazilian universities. These two units (2 and 3) have a total of fifteen activities divided into two sections (A and B). In this article, eight activities will be presented and discussed (four from each unit).

In these units, as in the whole book, our objective was to propose activities with varied themes and social relevance, aiming to help teachers and students to practice the language in different situations (in the examples presented, aspects that involve the notions of identity and time). The *Zeitgeist* project advocates matters and approaches that dialogue with social practices inside and outside the classroom, considering a diversity of interests and needs, through the exchange of ideas and knowledge, including the students' reflections and perceptions, which promotes motivation and their active participation in the learning process.

Below are examples of activities from unit 2 (Identity) and 3 (Time), in which we deal with production in German (oral and written) through discussions on everyday topics, with texts and questions that encourage students' participation. With these activities, we sought to go beyond the structural sphere of language, including students in discursive interactions, so that they could take positions, develop perceptions, and establish relationships.

5.1 Identity (*Identität*)

To avoid the approach commonly adopted in traditional textbooks (TB), i.e., with a more restricted perspective to identity such as "name," "age," "origin," we opted for an approach that allowed us to incorporate other definitions of identity such as family, or musical and literary tastes. This was achieved through questions "Who am I?" and "Who are you? Which of these words stay true to your identity?" (Image 1). Nevertheless, considering the need to rethink the ways of learning German, we deem it essential that the use of language is centred on practical situations and problems, in which the students have something to say. Thus, they have a greater engagement in communicative acts, which contribute to the construction of meanings in a more relevant way.

At the opening of each unit of the book, we try to introduce the themes and contents through an image that provokes discussions and arouses curiosity. In this unit, we chose to represent the issue of identity through a photo of a face composed of several other faces (Image 1). Surrounding this image are a few keywords, such as: "study," "name," "origin," "literature," "music," "internship," among others. Students are invited to choose three of these words that best represent their identity. This first activity, therefore, allows familiarisation with new lexical items and awareness of a new perspective on how to approach the theme of identity.

Image 1 - Different representations of identity.
Teil I: Wer bin ich?

- 1. Wer sind Sie? Wer bist du? Schauen Sie sich einige Stichworte an und wählen Sie die drei für Sie:**
(Quem é você? Observe as palavras-chave e escolha as três que melhor te representam)



Source: *Zeitgeist* Book (under development).

The second activity (Image 2), in addition to continuing the work with vocabulary, presents new linguistic content, such as the possessive article in the first person singular and the gender declension in the case of the nominative (meine Familie). Thus, we tried to offer initial input so that the students could answer the questions and get to learn, even if indirectly, some grammatical aspects of the language. In this unit, we do not work specifically with personal pronouns, but here, and throughout the book, we try not to limit linguistic uses to the specific contents of the lesson, which makes the linguistic approach more fluid.

In addition to developing these linguistics inputs, the activity seeks to explore other aspects related to identity. Thus, the question "What represents your identity?" can be associated with elements such as "my country," "my family," "my ideals,"⁶ or even another element not present in the material, but which the students want to add. Thus, these students can express what they understand and experience within the theme, from their different contexts.

Image 2 - Written production about identity.

2. Was repräsentiert Ihre Identität?

(O que representa a sua identidade?)

Mein Name (der Name)

Mein Land (das Land)

Meine Familie (die Familie)

Meine Ideale (das Ideal; die Ideale)

Source: *Zeitgeist* Book (under development).

Part B begins with a semi-authentic biographical text by the Portuguese writer and artist Grada Kilomba. In addition to identity, the text has a vocabulary of "study" and "work." Based on the text's inputs, a series of oral and written production

⁶ From the original material: "Was repräsentiert Ihre Identität?", "Mein Land", "Meine Familie", "Meine Ideale".

activities were elaborated, such as the creation and presentation of short biographies, discussions on the topics of profession, art, among others. In the third task (image 4) we present open questions that could raise discussions about identity and profession (What is the author's name? Where does she come from? Where does she live? What is Grada Kilomba's profession? What themes does she work with?),⁷ as she is a Portuguese artist, author and psychologist who lives in Berlin and writes her books in German, Portuguese, and English.

Image 3 - Bibliographic text of Grada Kilomba.

2. Lesen Sie den Text über die Autorin Grada Kilomba.

(Leia o texto sobre a autora Grada Kilomba.)



Grada Kilomba ist eine interdisziplinäre Künstlerin und Autorin, sie kommt aus Portugal und wohnt seit 2009 in Berlin, Deutschland. Grada ist auch Psychologin und Theoretikerin. Sie arbeitet mit den Themen Erinnerung, Trauma, Rassismus und Dekolonisierung von Wissen. „Wer kann sprechen?“ ist eine konstante Frage in Kilombas Werk. Ihr Buch *Plantation Memories* ist sehr bekannt in Deutschland und in Brasilien.

Source: *Zeitgeist* Book (under development).

⁷ From the original text: “Wie heißt die Autorin? Woher kommt sie? Wo wohnt sie? Was ist Grada Kilomba von Beruf? Mit welchen Themen arbeitet sie?”.

Image 4 - Production activity on the bibliographic text.

3. Beantworten Sie einige Fragen zum Text.

(Responda algumas perguntas sobre o texto.)

- a. Was für Informationen findet man im Text? Kreisen Sie ein.

Im Text sind Informationen über...

<i>Herkunft</i>	<i>Wohnort</i>	<i>Telefonnummer</i>	<i>Alter</i>
<i>Adresse</i>	<i>Beruf</i>	<i>Hobbys</i>	<i>Ort</i>
	<i>Datum</i>	<i>Name</i>	

- b. Wie heißt die Autorin? Woher kommt sie? Wo wohnt sie? Was ist Grada Kilomba von Beruf? Mit welchen Themen arbeitet sie?

- c. Identifizieren und markieren Sie die Berufe im Text. Kennen Sie andere Berufe? Sammeln Sie im Kurs.

Source: *Zeitgeist* Book (under development).

The activities of Unit 2 aimed to present themes and questions that could, in addition to developing language skills, enable an individual positioning in an additional language. According to Fagundes and Amado (2020, p. 11) in learning a language it is important to be able to recognize an enunciative bond to the language. Therefore, the activities proposed in this unit allow the encounter with the subjectivity of each individual, making the target language, although in a very elementary way and, sometimes, with the help of the mother tongue, be used to express experiences, desires, and individual concerns.

5.2 Time (*Zeit*)

Through the initial question "What is free time for you?" (Was ist Freizeit für Sie?), we sought to highlight our initial objective of reflecting on the emotional and social aspects of the themes "time" and "leisure." In the first activity (Image 5) of part A of this unit, we represent emotions (such as happiness, frustration, anger) and activities that relate to "time" or "free time" (such as sleeping, studying, shopping) through emojis. The symbolic relationship with emojis, something that refers to the

students' daily context, allows for an affective dimension to be achieved in relation to the theme, seeking to make students engage in expressing themselves regarding their realities and experiences in the target language.

Therefore, we intend to distance ourselves from a more limited perspective, commonly conveyed in traditional TBs, that every person has free time and engages in interesting activities, such as travelling, playing a musical instrument, skiing, surfing. Clearly, many of these listed activities do not speak to the reality of Brazilian students, which can cause some discomfort and lack of motivation regarding the topic. In this sense, we aim to openly question the different ways in which we can relate to the notion of time, whether in terms of work, study, or free time.

The most important learning goals of this unit are: understanding, speaking, and writing information about routine, free time and likes/preferences. In addition, we present a model of sentence structure with adverbs from which students can express how often they have free time (Image 5). Thus, we have as input the sentence: "I rarely have free time on the weekend." This initial structure can be modified and adapted by the teachers, including other adverbs and days of the week, as well as changes to the position of the elements of the sentence, for example: "I never have free time." Or, "I have free time on the weekend."⁸

⁸ "Am Wochenende habe ich selten Freizeit", "Ich habe selten Freizeit am Wochenende". "Ich habe niemals Freizeit.", "Ich habe am Wochenende Freizeit."

Image 5 - Activity about free time with Emojis.

Was ist Freizeit für Sie?

1. Schauen Sie die Emoji an und versuchen Sie, diese Frage zu beantworten: Was ist Freizeit für Sie?

(Escolha um emoji para responder à pergunta: o que é tempo livre para você?)



Ich habe oft/ selten/ nie/ am Wochenende Freizeit.

Source: *Zeitgeist* Book (under development).

In the next activity (Image 6), we introduce the task of writing a short, eleven-word poem called *Elfchen*, with the aim of expanding their vocabulary repertoire, as well as practising the sentence structure initiated in the oral discussion of the previous activity. This activity allows students to use their own words to express themselves creatively through a simple poem. The text, as well as the discussion in the first activity, can be started in Portuguese, so that the students feel more comfortable and then, little by little, can use the structural basis of German to form their poem in this language.

Image 6 - Activity of writing a poem (Elfchen).

b) Kennen Sie das Elfchen? 11 Wörter – ein Gedicht.

(Você conhece das Elfchen? 11 palavras - um poema)

Ein „Elfchen“ ist ein Gedicht aus 11 Wörtern. Das erste Wort gibt das Thema, das letzte Wort gibt ein Fazit und die Mitte ist frei. Hier ist ein Beispiel zum Thema Zeit:

*Zeit
zu spät
die Uhr tickt
das Leben geht weiter
pausenlos
(unbekannter Autor)*

Source: *Zeitgeist* Book (under development).

In the B part of the unit, we begin to explore different contents on the topic of routines. We present the text of a student at the University of São Paulo (USP), Gabriela (Image 7), who reports her daily routine. The text presents an authentic picture and information from the perspective of a real person, which is quite different from the use of image bank models (a very common practice in TBs). Our objective with authentic texts of this type, including images of the participants, is to consider the multiple socio-cultural realities of Brazil, consistent with our focus on a local perspective. To integrate the task with the text, we present a detailed timeline (Image 8) with routine schedules and activities of a university student, as input for the development of an individual timeline. For this activity, first a brief oral interaction with the colleague was reflected on, and then the written practice could be exercised.

Image 7 - Report of the daily routine of a USP student.

c) **Lesen Sie Gabrielas Bericht über ihren Tagesablauf**
(Leia o relato da Gabriela sobre seu dia a dia)



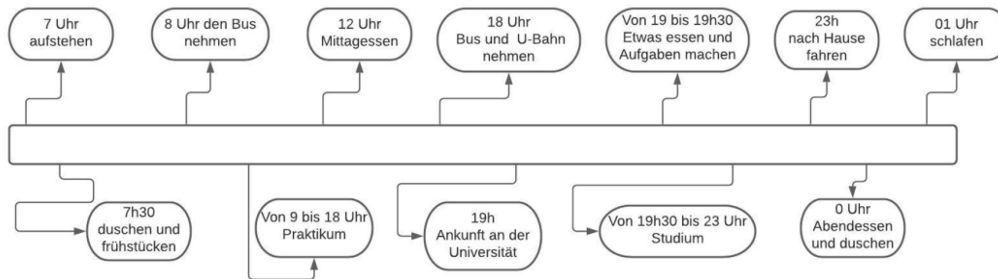
Mein Name ist Gabriela Sarmiento Badain, ich bin 23 Jahre alt und studiere Germanistik an der USP. Jeden Wochentag stehe ich um 5:00 Uhr auf, dann dusche ich und frühstücke. Um 6:00 Uhr fahre ich mit der U-Bahn und mit dem Bus zur Uni. Ich brauche fast 2 Stunden. Deshalb habe ich immer ein Buch und meinen Kopfhörer dabei. In der U-Bahn lese ich und im Bus höre ich Musik. Um 12:00 Uhr esse ich mit meinen Freunden zu Mittag, wir reden und essen viel. Dann fahre ich zur Arbeit. Ich arbeite in einer Sprachschule und bin Deutschlehrerin von Beruf. Bei der Arbeit bleibe ich bis 17:00 Uhr und danach fahre ich nach Hause zurück. In der U-Bahn lese ich nochmal, aber jetzt einen Text für die Uni, und zu Hause esse ich um 20:00 Uhr mit meiner Mutter zu Abend. Nach dem Abendessen lerne ich ein bisschen mehr und gegen 23 Uhr

Source: *Zeitgeist* Book (under development).

Image 8 - Daily routine timeline.

2. Wie ist Ihr Alltag/ Ihre Routine?

Dies ist der Tagesablauf von einem Studenten/ einer Studentin. (Esta é a rotina diária de um estudante / uma estudante)



**Nun sprechen Sie mit Ihrem Kommilitonen, Ihrer Kommilitonin:
Wie ist Ihr Tagesablauf?**

(Converse com seu colega / com a sua colega: Qual é a sua rotina diária?)

Source: *Zeitgeist* Book (under development).

In addition to presenting the linguistic aspects regarding days of the week, we also have the initial introduction of more complex expressions such as those with Trennbare Verben (*aufstehen*) or with prepositions (*nach Hause gehen*). Even though they are not in-depth in the lesson, these examples can be relevant both for expanding the students' lexicogrammatical repertoire, as well as for possibilities of adaptations by the teachers (AQUINO; CHERCHIGLIA, 2021, p. 447). Furthermore, the activities also allow for relevant socio-cultural discussions, as the students link individual experiences, in which they can use and recognize the language in situations that are familiar to them. Such recognition and interaction with the context can facilitate a more active participation.

The activities presented in this section were developed with the aim of inviting students to reflect upon their knowledge, experiences and feelings. Through relevant topics, the activities move away from the focus on language structure, as it invites the student to reflect on her linguistic production. According to Kumaravadivelu (2012, p. 28), languages are better understood when the focus is not only on formal properties,

but when the learner's attention is focused on what to say and do with the language. Therefore, we present tasks that bring cultural and subjective issues, thus seeking the involvement and reconstruction of individual knowledge. Regarding free time with the question "What is free time for you" and the emojis, the students are invited to retrieve personal and affective events to express themselves in German. In traditional TBs, the topic of hobbies is usually dealt with by exercises and closed activities (with no space for the free expression of ideas), such as filling in lists, combining images and their corresponding forms in the target language, exercises of fill-in-the-blank, among others.

In this article, as well as in the *Zeitgeist* project, we consider it essential to create opportunities for discussion on local knowledge, in order to promote a shift in hegemonic power and, consequently, an appreciation of the perspective of learners and teachers, a practice that can influence directly in the teaching and learning process. Such activities and discussions seek to present situations with which Brazilian students in academic contexts deal in their own language. In this way, the didactic material proposed within the scope of the *Zeitgeist* project is far from traditional didactic materials, in which the focus of the tasks recurrently falls on themes and aspects that rarely dialogue with the experiences and realities of our students, with questions and situations that are, as a rule, distant from the social practices of Brazilian contexts, erasing from the teaching of German the sociocultural, political and historical dimensions in which they are involved.

6 Final considerations

The main goal of this article was to present and describe activities in the textbook that have been developed within the scope of the *Zeitgeist* project. First, we presented a brief discussion about our alignment with the theories and practices of Critical Applied Linguistics (MOITA LOPES, 2006; PENNYCOOK, 2001), as well as a

description of the principles that guide the development of the activities in the book. A summary of the historical context of teaching GAL in Brazil was also outlined, as well as the circumstances that led to the dominance of the international publishing market, with regard to materials and methodologies. This proved to be a fundamental debate in our work, focused on the context of academic and Brazilian education, given the little (or inexistent) commitment of the international TBs in meeting the specificities, demands and interests of local and diverse contexts.

Still in relation to the teaching of GAL in the academic context, that is, with a focus on the qualification of future teachers and researchers, it is important that this is highlighted as a space for discussion on diverse cultural, political, and social matters, with the objective that they can be resignified. Therefore, in the academic context, a teaching material for additional language must have as a fundamental premise a perspective that questions imported models and methodologies. The *Zeitgeist* project, therefore, represents the critical bias that the academic context presupposes for the elaboration of a local teaching material.

In this work we also present a brief overview of policies for language teaching in Brazil, seeking to investigate the paths that led us to this project. We saw that issues of politics and economics formed a framework of hegemony of language schools and international teaching materials, whose access is restricted to those who have resources. On the other hand, we have Brazilian public universities training German teachers and, increasingly initiatives such as the CELs in the state of São Paulo and the intercultural public schools in Rio de Janeiro, in which GAL has been offered in the context of public education. Thus, the discussion on the decolonial perspective in the teaching and learning process of German is presented as an essential aspect to guide a proposal with a view of contemplating local knowledge and practices experienced by teachers and students in their specific contexts. The activities of two units of the *Zeitgeist* book presented in this article have, therefore, an epistemological bias that

questions the silencing of local perspectives, providing an opportunity for an emancipation movement of those involved in the teaching and learning process of the German language, who are seen as producers of knowledge and expertise.

The analysis developed from the examples of proposed activities showed that the orientation towards the local context is one of its most striking elements. The search for alternative perspectives to the “mainstream,” such as the inclusion of different aspects of the themes “personal presentation” and “free time,” commonly approached from simple personal questions, without much space for problematization, represents an important facet of the book. Thus, in addition to information such as “name/age” and “hobbies,” students are invited to include other elements related to their identities in their linguistic productions.

Thus, we can argue that the emphasis on a decolonial perspective proposed in this article represents an essential aspect of the *Zeitgeist* project. In other words, we observe that the simple response to commands such as “introduce yourself,” say whether or not you have children or if you have “free time,” is empty of meaning if it cannot add other elements to it. The *Zeitgeist* material is, therefore, according to the analysis of the activities of the units on “identity” and “time,” an invitation to discuss the diversity of elements that can define different expressions of individuality and identity as well as an invitation to think about how we have, or don’t have, free time, or not, in contemporary societies.

We remind you that the book in which the activities analyzed here is composed of five units. In addition, it is also important to remember that in the proposal of the book, a differentiated emphasis is given to oral and written production and reception, with grammatical progression. Future work may therefore focus on these and other aspects of the material in more detail. Considering the increasingly poignant debate on the need for a “decolonial turn” (MIGNOLO, 2003) and on the importance of teachers and students taking their places as protagonists in the teaching and learning

of additional languages, it is extremely important and urgent that the authorial component, with an emphasis on the local context, can be present in language classrooms.

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