

Let's Talk LGBTQIA+: Strategies and Activities for Teaching Diversity and Inclusion in the Foreign Language Classroom at the College Level

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In this presentation, the author explores strategies and activities that create a welcoming and nurturing environment for LGBTQIA+ foreign language students at the college level in the United States. Indeed, as it is commonly stated, there is a clear lack of visibility, acceptance/tolerance, and inclusion of LGBTQIA+ voices (active and proactive) in foreign language teaching and learning (pedagogical material as well as in-class attitudes and delivery). The reasons for this deficiency are diverse since they cover not only outward discrimination against and/or indifference (passive-aggressive behavior) toward the LGBTQIA+ community and its plight, but they also illustrate the sheer, physical inexistence of quality material that can be used to create, present, and foster a welcoming and all-encompassing classroom environment that addresses the diverse spectrum of the LGBTQIA+ community while its members try to learn a foreign language and (positively) negotiate how to express their very identity in their new language of choice. Moreover, the scant material that is available in the United States as well as in other Western countries where the LGBTQIA+ community by and large is accepted—at least from the legal point of view—hardly represents and covers the subject matter in a satisfactory way. To address this gap, the author will provide some examples in European Portuguese (EP) and Italian (IT), followed by a courtesy translation in English, to illustrate some positive activities and strategies for including LGBTQIA+-related subject matter in the foreign language classroom at the college level. It is his desire that instructors of other foreign languages duplicate in their respective vernaculars the strategies and activities herein presented in order to create a welcoming and safe classroom environment that embraces the LGBTQIA+ community as it goes through the enjoyable journey of learning a new language and culture.

Keywords: diversity, foreign language, (trans-)gender, inclusion, LGBTQIA+ community

Preamble

Our role as foreign language instructors is to introduce college students to the language and culture(s) of their choice. Regardless of its duration—a semester, a year, two years (a minor), three years, or even four years (a major)—learning a foreign language (not only/necessarily at the college level) is a journey that is meant to be productive, a horizon-opener, and, most of all, a pleasurable experience. Learning a foreign language as a young adult or a full-blown adult has its challenges, linguistically as well as culturally. Hence, the role of the instructor

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in the foreign language classroom is pivotal to creating an environment that facilitates learning, retaining, and actively producing in the new language while at the same time empowering, respecting, and welcoming everyone in their endeavors in mastering fluency in their foreign language of choice.

Setting the Scene

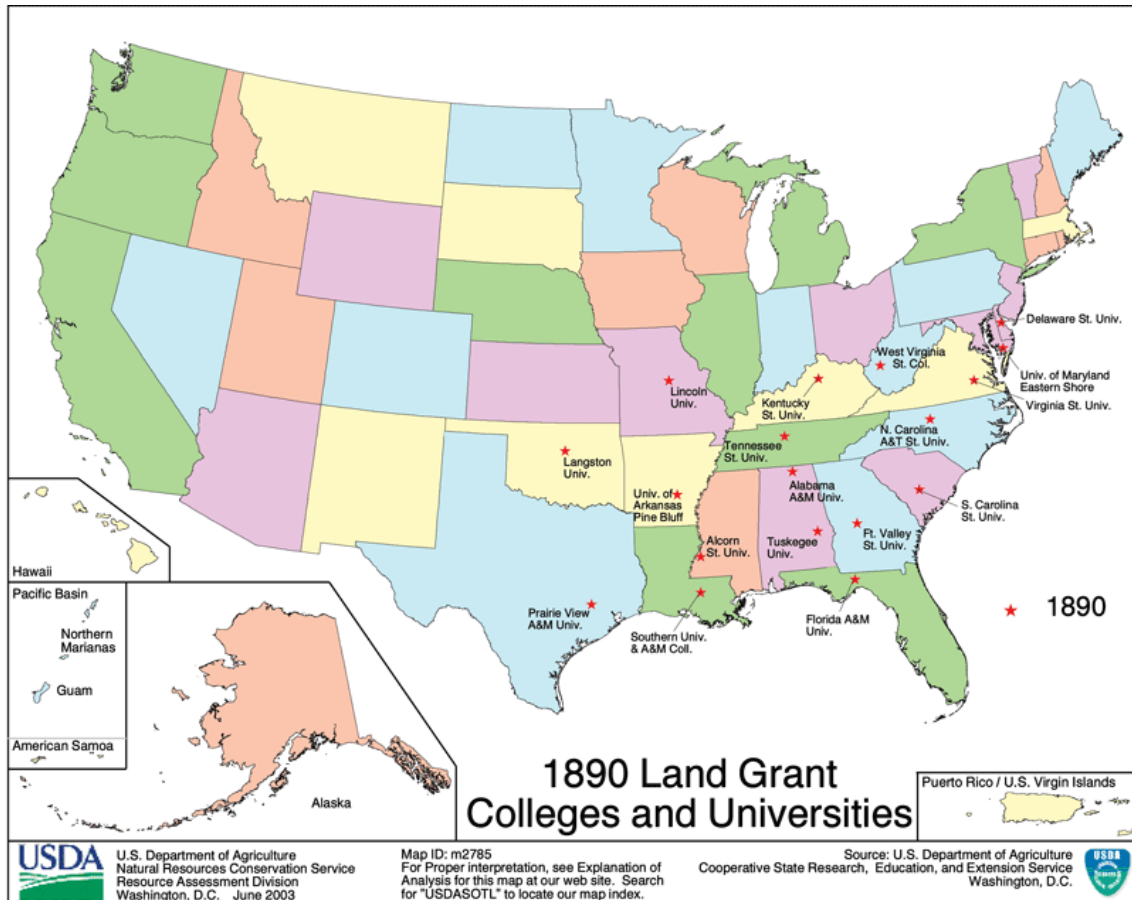


Figure 1. 1890 land grant colleges and universities. US Department of Agriculture (Map ID m2785) (BlackPast, 2014).

The Morrill Act, passed on July 2, 1862, “made it possible for states to establish public colleges funded by the development or sale of associated federal land grants.” Even though its negative, or better yet, its devastating side was the expropriation of over 10 million acres “from tribal lands of Natives communities,” this bill “opened opportunities to thousands of farmers and working people previously excluded from higher education” (National Archives, n.d.) regardless of their race.

Indeed, 28 years later, on August 30, 1890, the Second Morrill Act went into effect, whereby it is declared that states cannot discriminate against students because of their race. Yet, racial separation (white vs. colored, sic) was still enforced: “The establishment and maintenance of such colleges separately for white and colored students shall be held to be a compliance with the provisions of this act” (BlackPast, 2014). Despite its “separate but equal” caveat, the 1890 Act opened the doors to the creation of “public historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs).” In other words, the 1890 Act “increase[d] diversity in higher education by funding HBCUs” (Best Colleges, 2021). Seventy years later, the 1964, Civil Rights Act “banned discrimination on the basis of race” (Best Colleges, 2021). More specifically, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act states:

No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. (Government Information, 2015)

The 1964 Civil Rights Act's reach covered academic programs (including teaching and methodology), college admissions, student housing, student services, and financial aid, among the many aspects that eventually improved behaviors toward the non-White male (and eventually/finally, female) "other," namely, all non-White minorities. A year later, the 1965, Higher Education Act (HEA) gave many low- and middle-income students the possibility to attend college and benefit from the federal student aid program. Eight years later, Title IX of the 1972, Education Amendments finally outlawed discrimination based on sex (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). A year later, the 1973 Rehabilitation Act prohibited discrimination against people with disabilities (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.). This meant that colleges and universities in the United States could not "treat students with disabilities differently" (Best Colleges, 2021), lest the former would lose federal funding. Alas, only 17 years later, namely on June 26, 1990, with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), students with disabilities had their rights finally guaranteed when it came to access and accommodations (ADA, n.d.).

Even though the 1862 and 1890 Morrill Acts, the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1965 Higher Education Act, the 1972 Education Amendments, and the 1973 Rehabilitation Act brought significant changes to teaching attitudes and classroom environment, by far Affirmative Action can be seen as the true marker when it comes to leaving a "measurable impact on diversity in higher education" (Best Colleges, 2021). Also, in this case, classroom activities and behavior were particularly attentive to showing inclusion, appreciation of, and respect for minority groups, women, and eventually, gradually, and timidly (as of the last decade of the 20th century) also for members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

The June 27, 2023, Supreme Court decision to put an end to 45 years of Affirmative Action (History.com 2023)¹ admission practices at US colleges and universities does not mean the end of equality, nor does it give *carte blanche* for outright discrimination against minorities and the LGBTQIA+ community. Indeed, now more than ever, US colleges and university must create: "[...] an environment where every student feels valued, supported, and heard. [They have to e]stablish diversity and inclusion initiatives, foster dialogue, and celebrate the richness of different perspectives" (Star, 2023).

On June 28, 2023, two days before the end of Pride Month, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Lorie Smith, a Colorado-based Christian web designer for *303 Creative LLC* who, based on her religious beliefs, does not wish to craft websites celebrating same-sex unions. Most civil rights and anti-discrimination experts believe that this ruling can put many other policies protecting the LGBTQIA+ community at risk, since they might now be vulnerable to (re)interpretation by local, state, and/or federal courts (Vogue & Cole, 2023; Sosin, 2023). Is this ruling going to have an effect on Academia when it comes to LGBTQIA+ people, the way they are treated, and/or perceived in and outside the classroom? Time will tell.

First Steps

"Diversity benefits all students on campus. While colleges have grown more diverse in the past century, they must continue to strive for inclusion, equity, and accessibility". (Best Colleges, 2021)

¹Indeed, the expression "Affirmative Action" dates back to 1961, when the March 6, 1961, Executive Order 1092, "required all federal contractors to take 'affirmative action' [...] to ensure all job applicants and employees were treated equally, regardless of race, creed, color, or national origin."

The implementation of activities, material, and methodologies that reflect an all-inclusive approach when it comes to teaching a foreign language at colleges and universities in the United States is not something new. Indeed, since the mid-60s of the 20th century more and more colleges and universities in the United States began to gradually address diversity issues in the classroom and, consequently, propose a more-inclusive environment.

As a consequence, teaching methodologies and attitudes also changed, at first, in order to comply with the law(s) yet gradually because, as American society was changing, it became more “natural” to treat the “other” with respect, in and outside the classroom. Hence, many activities, based on well-balanced methodologies highlighting respect and appreciation for everyone, were created in order to offer a positive, inclusive, and safe experience for all students.

During the mid-80s of the 20th century, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, for instance was among the first institutions of higher education in the United States to offer workshops on diversity and inclusion and to encourage instructors to use diversity and inclusion activities and language in the classroom: Minorities, women, and, for the first time, topics as gender and gender orientation were being discussed with respect as a way of including everyone (Dreyfus, 1982).² This applied to all academic subjects, including foreign languages.

Indeed, as they learn a foreign language adult learners have to make a conscious choice of how they fit into the mold of the new language and culture(s) that they are learning. In other words, learners are negotiating within themselves the creation of a new persona that has to match their interests, lifestyles, and purpose for functioning with confidence and successfully in this new language and culture(s).

The Role of the Foreign Language Instructor

“Language shapes us and our experience of the world, so being aware of inclusivity in [foreign] language teaching is extremely important.” (Spence, 2021)

By their very nature, languages reflect the culture of the society or societies that speak it. Hence, in order to master a foreign language, learners must do their best to understand, adopt, and ultimately adapt to the mores of its speakers in order to be proficient in the new language. The role of the foreign language instructor is thus crucial in facilitating an understanding of the new adopted culture(s) as well as creating an environment that is conducive to learning while, at the same time, is encouraging, nourishing, and safe in and outside the classroom.

In other words, the lesson plans and the curricula of the foreign language instructor have to recognize the human aspect of learning a foreign language since—given that no language is the same when it comes to expressing the core values and mores of its people—only a positive setting will allow the effective learning of the new language. Additionally, and more importantly, effective learning is per force tied to how learners identify with the language and culture(s) of choice. Any negative feeling during the process of acquisition will hinder the learners’ successful acceptance of and integration into the new language and culture(s).

²As a matter of fact, Wisconsin was the first state to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation in credit (history), education, employment, housing, and public accommodations. On February 25, 1982, Wisconsin Governor (1979-1983) Lee S. Dreyfus (1926-2008) signed the *Chapter 112, 1981 Wisconsin Law*.

Which Pronouns to Use?



Figure 2. Gender inclusivity with intention (Humiston, 2023, p. 18).

The correct use of the pronouns in the foreign language classroom is thus the first step toward creating a positive dialog in the target language, one that will allow learning and proficiency since, in order to progress in their fluency, learners have to “own” the new language and feel it as their own. Hence, it is imperative that “[...] the use of [pronouns] is pivotal to respecting an individual’s identity” (Caliste, 2021).

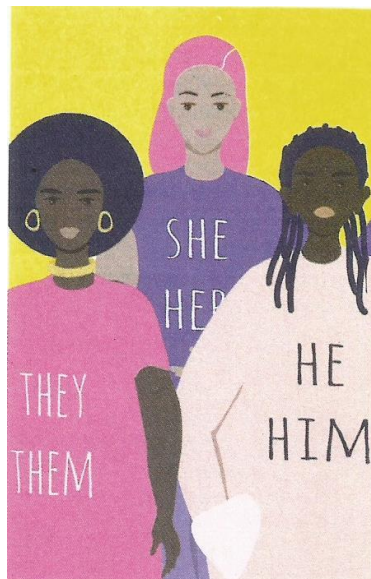


Figure 3. Gender inclusivity with intention (Humiston, 2023, p. 20).

Case in point, Anne Moore, a University College of London LGBTQIA+ Equity Steering Group (LEAG) member and former LEAG co-chair, painstakingly recalls her experience learning foreign languages and the horrors of facing teachers who did not address her sexual orientation and assumed that she was making grammatical mistakes of gender agreement:

I have studied Italian, Mandarin, BSL and Hungarian during my time at UCL and have had a range of positive experiences in the classroom as an openly lesbian woman. My identity has not been an issue for staff or students in the

classroom, although I did find it sometimes necessary to overcome mostly heterosexual examples given to learners when speaking about family members and learning pronouns from textbook resources. Having to correct pronouns, rather than the ones I was taught to use to describe family members, was something which I encountered 20 years ago as an undergrad student learning French in a different institution. I was a terrible French student and the tutor automatically assumed I had used the wrong gender pronoun to speak about a partner. I received a very “red pen heavy” marked up essay and this experience of correcting the tutor in an uncomfortable tutorial has stayed with me to this day! (University College of London, 2021)

With languages where pronouns (i.e., subject and object pronouns) and/or agreement are marked by gender (masculine *vs.* feminine and/or masculine, feminine, and neuter), as in the case of most European languages—e.g., the Romance languages, of which Portuguese and Italian are part—the correct use and choice of the pronoun that matches how someone feels and with which one identifies, is fundamental for the success of the learner of the foreign language. In other words, fluency in a foreign language is tied to how the neophyte learner connects and identifies with it and its culture(s). Hence, the foreign language educator must make sure to listen to and assist the language neophytes in expressing their true identity.

Currently in the Lusophone world, there is no official policy as to the use of gender-free terminology that embraces diversity. Since Portuguese is a Romance language that has masculine and feminine gender markers, it is a challenge to choose an all-inclusive terminology. The following are some of the terms commonly used today. Time will tell which will be used more often and which and when they will be accepted by the Portuguese Language Academy in Brazil and the Portuguese Language Academy in Portugal (currently, Lusophone Africa and Asia rely on the Portuguese Language Academy). The predominantly masculine marker **-o** and the predominantly feminine marker **-a** were replaced by a gender-neutral **-e** (pronounced as a schwa /ə/). The nasal sounds **-ão** (masculine or feminine, /ẽw̃/) and **-ã** (feminine or masculine, /ẽ/) have been changed to **-ane** (neologism, /anə/):

Table 1

Proposed New Gender-Free Pronouns

European Portuguese	English
El (/ˈel/)/Del (/ˈdel/)	They/Them
El (/ˈel/)/Ilu (ˈilu)/Elu (ˈelu)/Ile (/ˈilə/)	They
Ele (/ˈelə/)/Ela (/ˈelɑ/) => Elex (ˈelɛx)	He/She => They
Eles (ˈelɛʃ)/Deles (ˈdelɛʃ)	They/Them
Elu (ˈelu)/Delu (ˈdelu)	They/Them
O meu (/u ˈmew/)/a minha (ɑ ˈmɪnɰɑ) => mi (/ˈmi/) or minhe (/ˈmɪnɰə/) Os meus (uʒ ˈmewʃ/) As minhas (/ɑʒ ˈmɪnɰɔʃ/) => mis (/ˈmiʃ/) or minhes (/ˈmɪnɰɔʃ/)	Possessive pronouns Masculine ending -eu => mi or minhe (mine) Feminine ending -inha => mi or minhe (mine) Masculine ending -eus => mis or minhes (mine, pl.) Feminine ending -inha => mis or minhes (mine, pl.)
-o (/u/) => -e (/ə/) -a (ɑ/) => -e (/ə/)	Removing the predominantly masculine marker -o Removing the predominantly feminine marker -a and replacing them with -e
-ão (/)/-ã (/ẽw̃/) => irmão (/ir ˈmẽw̃/, brother) irmã (/ir ˈmẽ/, sister) irmãne (/ir ˈmẽnə/, sibling)	Nasal ending (masculine or feminine -ão / feminine or masculine -ã) -ane

Source: Prepared by the author.



Figure 4. Onyx assumiu-se recentemente como não-binária (“Recently, Onix came out of the closet and said that she is non-binary” [translated by the author of this article]) (Rosa, 2021).

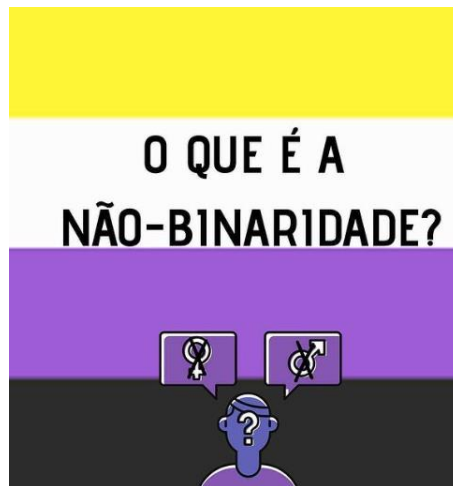


Figure 5. “What is non-binary?” (translated by the author of this article) (Rosa, 2021).



Figure 6. “A non-binary person is a person whose identity or gender expression does not limit itself to the categories of ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine.’ Hence, they do not define themselves as being a man or a woman” (translated by the author of this article) (Rosa, 2021).



Figure 7. I do not march alone (translated by the author of this article) (Instagram, n. d.).

The dilemma of which pronoun to use when self-identifying as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community and/or when addressing someone hailing from the LGBTQIA+ community, including the use of genderless markings, is particularly felt in languages with gender markers, as in the case of Portuguese and Italian.



Figure 8. Immigrants Welcome (translated by the author of this article) (*O Cidadão*, 2024)³.

The image reproduced above was taken at the April 6, 2024, march against fascism whereby more than two hundred people demonstrated in downtown Porto, Portugal, against racism and anti-immigrant sentiments. As we can see from the sign, *Imigrantes Bem-vindes*, or rather, “Immigrants, you are Welcome,” instead of the gender marker *–os* (masculine plural) or *–as* (feminine plural), the protester has opted for using the genderless vowel *–e* with the addition of the marker for the plural *–s*. We are thus witnessing to the birth of the neologism *Bem-vindes* formed on the model *Bem-vindos* (“Welcome” with the masculine plural ending *–os*) and its feminine counterpart *Bem-vindas* (“Welcome” with the feminine plural ending *–as*), whereby *–es* is a newly created, genderless plural form.

Italian, like Portuguese, marks gender with an *–o* (usually masculine) and an *–a* (usually feminine). Unlike European Portuguese and most Italian dialects that include in their phonetic inventory the unstressed, toneless,

³*O Cidadão* (2024). Centenas de pessoas no Porto manifestam-se contra o fascismo e estão solidárias com imigrantes. Retrieved April 6, 2024, from <https://ocidadao.pt/centenas-de-pessoas-no-porto-manifestam-se-contr-o-fascismo-e-estao-solidarias-com-imigrantes>.

and genderless vowel schwa /ə/ (written in European Portuguese and in most Italian dialects with an –e), Modern Standard Italian does not include unstressed and toneless genderless sounds like the schwa /ə/ in its phonetic inventory.

Understandably, this limits the choice of which vowel to use in Italian when compared to European Portuguese (see table above for European Portuguese) when it comes to creating viable neologisms addressing the needs to employ a LGBTQIA+-friendly terminology.

Just like in the Lusophone world, also in the Italian-speaking world⁴ there is much controversy over the use of pronouns and genderless markings when it comes to LGBTQIA+ issues. The table below is a sample of the alternatives proposed and/or at times used in order to address the need to self-identify as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community and/or when addressing someone hailing from the LGBTQIA+ community in the Italian-speaking world. Of particular interest is the use by some people of the schwa /ə/ or, due to the difficulty in reproducing/pronouncing this mute sound, the practice of utilizing the number 3 (pronounced /tre/), and the use of –t' to translate the idea of yourself/you (as a direct or indirect object pronoun), as in the case of: *ti sei divertit'* (you had fun) and *sono andat'* (I went) instead of gendered forms: *ti sei divertito* (m.)/*ti sei divertita* (f.) and *sono andato* (m.)/*sono andata* (f.).

Table 2

Proposed New Gender-Free Pronouns

Italiano	English
Lui => Ze/Zir; Lei => Fae/Faer	They (singular)
L*i	He, She, and/or They
x	He, She, and/or They
u	He, She, and/or They
y	He, She, and/or They
-o / -a => ‘	He, She, and/or They
ə	He, She, and/or They
3	He, She, and/or They
-to / -ta => -t'	Yourself/You (as a direct or indirect object pronoun)
Lui/Loro o Lui/They	He/They
Lei/Essi	She/Them
Lui/Lui	He/His
Lui/Lei	He/Her
Lui/Xe	He/Them
Loro/Xe	They
Loro	They/Them
Elu/Delu	They/Them

Source: Joseph Abraham Levi © 2024.

⁴Italian is the official language of Italy and San Marino. Italian is also one of the four national languages of Switzerland, along with French, German, and Romansh, and it is a regional language of Istria, divided politically among Italy, Croatia, and Slovenia. Italian is also the *de facto* national language of the Vatican City State. Currently, there have been no official statements and/or publications hailing from the Vatican City State commenting on the use of pronouns and genderless markings in Italian.

Maschile: lui\he\him

Femminile: lei\she\her

Neutro: loro\they\them (solitamente scelto da chi non si sente rappresentato dal sistema binario maschio/femmina, ad esempio una persona agender o gender fluid sceglie di sentirsi libero di non identificarsi in un solo genere ben definito).

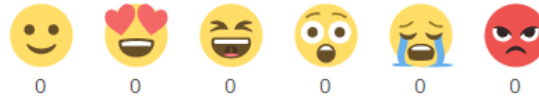


Figure 9. The image reads: “Masculine: he/he/him; Feminine: she/she/her; Neuter: they/they/them (usually chosen by those who do not feel represented in the binary system male/female, for instance, an *agender* or fluid-gender person chooses to feel free to not identify themselves with only a well-defined gender” (translated by the author of this article) (Menon, 2021).

Images of LGBTQIA+ People in European Portuguese and Italian

The presence of or reference to members of the LGBTQIA+ community in college-level teaching material in most foreign languages, including European Portuguese (EP) and Italian (IT), is at best only limited to topics such as family and, at times, also to cultural aspects of the target country/countries, usually at the end of a chapter or when introducing grammatical aspects that require the use of the subjunctive (e. g. , Present, Past, Imperfect, and/or Pluperfect Subjunctive for both Portuguese and Italian; Future Subjunctive and Future Perfect Subjunctive for Portuguese) since opinions and more complex thoughts would generally require the use of the subjunctive in both languages.

How do we address this gap then? First and foremost, we should make a point of introducing members of the LGBTQIA+ communities in all activities of the curriculum, from day one. For instance, we should make sure to include dialogs and images of people from all walks of life (e.g., ethnicities, races, disabilities, sex, gender, and gender identities).



Figure 10. Role-play activity (Joseph Abraham Levi © 2024. All images are copyright free and in the public domain).

For instance, the pictures numbered 1, 10, 16, and 17 in the slide image above place members of the LGBTQIA+ community within a normal classroom activity, in this case, one where learners have to create short dialogs as they practice common expressions that they have learned or are learning during week one of their language acquisition journey. By doing so, the instructor is creating and fostering an environment that welcomes everyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. As we can see from the images above, members of the LGBTQIA+ communities are placed within a regular context, in this case, exchanging pleasantries. Having a member of the LGBTQIA+ community among these images is presented as something normal. Hence, as stated above, it should not be confined or relegated to topics like family and cultural aspects of the target language and culture(s).

Likewise, topics like “introductions/introducing someone/pleasantries,” “daily routine,” “food/restaurant,” “family,” “house,” “clothes and shopping,” “sports and entertainment,” “holidays and cultural events,” “employment,” “health,” “travel,” “weather and climate,” “social media,” “education,” “technology,” “social issues,” “economy,” “geopolitics,” “immigration,” and “human rights,” among others, should always include a wide range of people hailing from all backgrounds. In other words, the message in the foreign language classroom is to present members of the LGBTQIA+ community as an integral part of society, in this case, the societies that identify with European Portuguese (EP) and Italian (IT).

The following slide images herewith reproduced are pleasant and all-inclusive samples of how members of the LGBTQIA+ community are naturally inserted into topics usually included in a foreign language textbook. In other words, the instructor presents members of the LGBTQIA+ community as regular constituents of society, even if in the culture(s) of the target language they might not fully enjoy equality as they are (or should be) in the United States or other countries. Indeed, the purpose here is to make sure that the foreign language neophytes learn and progress linguistically in a welcoming environment.

Week One / Day One: Meeting People / Introducing Yourself

		
EPT: Olá, muito bom dia! IT: Buongiorno!	Olá! Sou o Dr. Makbūl! Salve! Sono il Dr. Makbūl!	Rui, esta é a minha esposa Rita! 1 Renato, questa è la mia compagna Rita! 2
		
EPT: Olá! Sou a Paula! IT: Ciao! Sono Paola!	Xana, este é o meu esposo Vítor! Carla, questo è il mio compagno Vittorio!	É um prazer conhecer-vos! 3 È un piacere conoscervi! 4
1 Hello! Good morning!	Hello! I am Mr. Makbūl!	Rui, this is my spouse, Rita!
2 Good morning!	Hello! I am Mr. Makbūl!	Renato, this is my spouse Rita!
3 Hello! I am Paula! Xana, this is my spouse Vítor!		It is a pleasure meeting you both!
4 Hello! I am Paola! Carla, this is my spouse Vittorio!		It is a pleasure meeting you both!

EPT (European Portuguese) IT (Italian)
All images are copyright free and in the public domain.

		
EPT: A nossa rotina diária IT: La nostra routine giornaliera	No restaurante ao lado Pausa pranzo	A nossa linda família! 1 Questa è la nostra famiglia! 2
		
EPT: Em casa no sofá IT: Domenica pomeriggio a casa	O nosso casamento! Quando abbiamo detto “sì!”	Vamos jogar ténis! 3 Giochiamo a tennis? 4
1 Our daily routine	At the restaurant around the corner	Our beautiful family!
2 Our daily routine	Lunch break	This is our family!
3 At home seated on the sofa	Our wedding day!	Let’s play tennis!
4 Sunday afternoon at home	When we said “yes!”	Should we play tennis?
EPT (European Portuguese) IT (Italian)		
All images are copyright free and in the public domain.		

Figure 11. Classroom activity.

		
EPT: A nossa rotina diária IT: La nostra routine giornaliera	No restaurante ao lado Pausa pranzo	A nossa linda família! 1 Questa è la nostra famiglia! 2
		
EPT: Em casa no sofá IT: Domenica pomeriggio a casa	O nosso casamento! Quando abbiamo detto “sì!”	Vamos jogar ténis! 3 Giochiamo a tennis? 4
1 Our daily routine	At the restaurant around the corner	Our beautiful family!
2 Our daily routine	Lunch break	This is our family!
3 At home seated on the sofa	Our wedding day!	Let’s play tennis!
4 Sunday afternoon at home	When we said “yes!”	Should we play tennis?
EPT (European Portuguese) IT (Italian)		
All images are copyright free and in the public domain.		

Figure 12. Classroom activity.

			
EPT: Boas festas! IT: Buone Feste a tutti!	Feliz Ano Novo! Buon Anno!	Gosto muito de ensinar! Amo insegnare!	O nosso bebé! 1 Il nostro bambino! 2
			
EPT: A nossa viagem de sonho! IT: Che bel tramonto!	A passear pelo parque! Bel tempo e buona compagnia!	As redes sociais e nós I social e noi	O nosso banco 3 La nostra banca 4
1 Happy Holidays!	Happy New Year!	I love teaching!	Our baby boy!
2 Happy Holidays!	Happy New Year!	I love teaching!	Our baby boy!
3 Our dream vacation!	Relaxing at the park!	Social media and us	Our bank
4 What a great sunset!	Nice weather and good company!	Social media and us	Our bank
EPT (European Portuguese) IT (Italian)			
All images are copyright free and in the public domain.			

Figure 13. Classroom activity.

			
EPT: Boas festas! IT: Buone Feste a tutti!	Feliz Ano Novo! Buon Anno!	Gosto muito de ensinar! Amo insegnare!	A nossa bebé! 1 La nostra bambina! 2
			
EPT: A nossa viagem de sonho! IT: Viva la spiaggia!	A descansar no parque! Bel tempo e buona compagnia!	Uma família feliz Una famiglia felice	O nosso banco 3 La nostra banca 4
1 Happy Holidays!	Happy New Year!	I love teaching!	Our baby girl!
2 Happy Holidays!	Happy New Year!	I love teaching!	Our baby girl!
3 Our dream vacation!	Relaxing at the park!	A happy family	Our bank
4 Having fun at the beach!	Nice weather & good company!	Social media and us	Our bank
EPT (European Portuguese) IT (Italian)			
All images are copyright free and in the public domain.			

Figure 14. Classroom activity.

				
EPT: Professora trans com alunos	Realidade virtual	A nossa comunidade	Ser feliz é ... 1	
IT: Professoressa trans con studenti	Realtà virtuale	La nostra comunità	Essere felici è ... 2	
				
EPT: A outra face da (e)migração	O meu esposo é imigrante!	Questões de direitos humanos	3	
IT: L'altro volto dell'(e)migrazione	Il mio compagno è un immigrante!	Diritti umani per tutti	4	
1	Trans teacher with her students	Virtual Reality	Our community	To be happy is ...
2	Trans teacher with her students	Virtual Reality	Our community	To be happy is ...
3	The other face of (e)migration	My spouse is an immigrant!	It's all about human rights!	
4	The other face of (e)migration	My spouse is an immigrant!	Human rights for all!	
EPT (European Portuguese) IT (Italian)				
All images are copyright free and in the public domain.				

Figure 15. Classroom activity.



				
EPT: Professor com alunos	Realidade virtual	A nossa comunidade	Ser feliz é ... 1	
IT: Professore con studenti	Realtà virtuale	La nostra comunità	Essere felici è ... 2	
				
EPT: A outra face da (e)migração	O meu esposo é imigrante!	Questões de direitos humanos	3	
IT: L'altro volto dell'(e)migrazione	Il mio compagno è un immigrante!	Diritti umani per tutti	4	
1	Teacher with his students	Virtual Reality	Our community	To be happy is ...
2	Teacher with his students	Virtual Reality	Our community	To be happy is ...
3	The other face of (e)migration	My spouse is an immigrant!	It's all about human rights!	
4	The other face of (e)migration	My spouse is an immigrant!	Human rights for all!	
EPT (European Portuguese) IT (Italian)				
All images are copyright free and in the public domain.				

Figure 16. Classroom activity.

Secondly, we should introduce authentic material in the foreign language of interest (e.g., articles from newspapers, magazines, on-line articles and editorials, on-line posts, blogs, and/or social media posts, among others) since, by doing so, we are allowing members of the LGBTQIA+ community to talk about their own

experience. Hence, by doing so, we reduce the risk of stereotyping, misunderstanding, and/or tokenizing members of the LGBTQIA+ who, once again, have to be seen as an integral part of society. This would work for intermediate learners at the Level 2 of the ILR (Levi, 2020, p. 277)⁵ proficiency scale as well higher Levels 3, 4, and 5 of the ILR proficiency scale, though, in the latter cases the language and its contents are significantly and increasingly more complex lexically, structurally, and theoretically (Rosa, 2021).

The table below compares language proficiency according to the CEFR, ILR, and ACTFL scales:

CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, used in Europe);

ILR (Interagency Language Roundtable scale, used in the USA);

ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, used in the USA).

Table 3

Language Proficiency According to the CEFR, ILR, and ACTFL Scales

CEFR	ILR	ACTFL
A1	0/0+	NL/NM/NH
A2	1	IL/IM
B1	1+	IH
B2	2/2+	AL/AM/AH
C1	3/3+	S
C2	4/4+	D
N/A	5	N/A

Source: Joseph Abraham Levi © 2024.

As for the lower Levels, 0+, 1, and 1+ of the ILR proficiency scale, simple words and, gradually, full-fledged sentences would suffice in order to introduce the topic and the members of the LGBTQIA+ community, thus showing that they are active members of society. For instance, the images reproduced below invite learners to describe people (who they are, where they are, what they are doing, etc.). Once again, descriptions would range from a very simple explanation to a more sophisticated narrative, depending on the learners' levels. The following are examples in European Portuguese (EP) and Italian (IT), followed by a courtesy translation in English, of how to visually frame the images in order to trigger a multitude of possible descriptions, from a few words to a few short but complete sentences in the target language of choice, in this case European Portuguese and Italian.

⁵Proficiency is a foreign language measured in different ways. Most schools, institutions, and businesses use the ILR scale to determine the proficiency in a given language, including English, for hiring purposes and for renewing the license for using their language skills in their current positions. Other language scales commonly used are the ACTFL language scale (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) <<http://www.actfl.org>> and the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) <http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1_en.asp>. ILR stands for Interagency Language Roundtable and it is “an unfunded Federal interagency organization established for the coordination and sharing of information about language-related activities at the Federal level.” Those involved with the ILR are a “[...] loosely coordinated network of Federal, academic and NGO language specialists and managers who share a common goal of improving the nation’s capacity to learn, teach, and effectively use foreign languages in the national interests” <<http://www.govtilr.org/IRL%20History.htm>>. The ILR committee has thus created a language scale divided into 10 levels—namely, 0+, 1, 1+, 2, 2+, 3, 3+, 4, 4+, and 5—whereby individuals can be tested as to their listening, speaking, reading, and writing, proficiency in a foreign language from “No Proficiency” (0+) to “Functionally Native Proficiency” (5). Hence, the scale totals 10 possible grades. 0+ equals to no proficiency at all, whereas 5 is equal to speaking the language at the level “functionally equivalent to a HAWENS” (Highly Articulate Well Educated Native Speaker) <<http://www.govtilr.org/Skills/IRL%20Scale%20History.htm>>.

Vamos descrever estas pessoas!



Figure 17. Classroom activity: “Let’s describe these people” [EP].

Descriviamo queste persone!



Figure 18. Classroom activity: “Let’s describe these people” [IT].



Figure 19. Classroom activity: “Let’s describe these people.”

The topic of one’s “daily routine” in the foreign language classroom, for instance, could also be a great opportunity to insert members of the LGBTQIA+ community in the second language (L2) acquisition activities proposed by the instructor. Once again, this will reinforce respect for and recognition of the presence of the LGBTQIA+ members in our society.

The following are examples in European Portuguese (EP) and Italian (IT), followed by a courtesy translation in English, of a possible way of introducing and placing LGBTQIA+ people in a natural environment. Using as a springboard the images herein contained, first, learners are asked to talk about the daily activities of the people and situations they see; then, they will be asked to talk about their own daily activities. As we can see, particular care has been taken to include people from all walks of life (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, marital status, and disability), including members of the LGBTQIA+ community.



Figure 20 Classroom activity: "Our Daily Routine" [EP].



Figure 21. Classroom activity: "Our Daily Routine" [IT].



Figure 22. Classroom activity: “Our Daily Routine.”

Among the many popular PowerPoint fill-in classroom games available on-line, “Who Wants to Be a Champion” and “Jeopardy” are perhaps the most suitable for either blending into the questions members of the LGBTQIA+ community or to dedicate a column on LGBTQIA+-related matters, especially if the game is done during Pride Month (June) or during Transgender Awareness Month (November). The following are examples in European Portuguese (EP) and Italian (IT), followed by a courtesy translation in English, of possible ways of introducing and placing LGBTQIA+ people in a natural environment.



Chi vuol essere un campione / una campionessa?



Oro **Argento** **Bronzo** **Rosa**

Chi vincerà più medaglie?

Prof. Dr. Joseph Abraham Levi 雷祖善博士
George Washington University / University of Macau

Who wants to be a champion?























Gold **Silver** **Bronze** **Rose**

















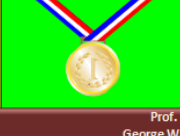

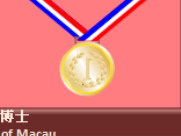

Who will win more medals?

Prof. Dr. Joseph Abraham Levi 雷祖善博士
George Washington University / University of Macau

















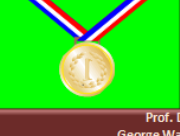

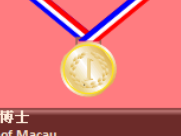

Figure 23. Classroom activity: “Who wants to be a champion?/Who will win more medals?”

Pretérito Perfeito e/ ou Imperfeito?	Complementos Diretos, Indiretos e formas combinadas	Nacionalidades, Etnias, Línguas	Singular => Plural	Cultura Lusófona
				
				
				
				

Prof. Dr. Joseph Abraham Levi 雷祖善博士
George Washington University / University of Macau

Passato Prossimo o Imperfetto?	Complementi Diretti, Indiretti e forme combinate	Nazionalità, Etnie, Lingue	Singolare => Plurale	Il mondo di lingua italiana
				
				
				
				

Prof. Dr. Joseph Abraham Levi 雷祖睿博士
George Washington University / University of Macau

Simple Past or Imperfect?	Direct Object Pronouns, Indirect Object Pronouns, Combined Forms	Nationalities, Ethnicities, Languages	Singular => Plural	The Lusophone/ Italian-speaking World
				
				
				
				

Prof. Dr. Joseph Abraham Levi 雷祖睿博士
George Washington University / University of Macau

Figure 24. Classroom activity: "Who wants to be a champion?/Who will win more medals?"



The image displays three identical classroom activity cards stacked vertically. Each card has an orange background and features a small icon of a bronze medal with a ribbon at the top left. The text on each card is as follows:

- Card 1 (top):** "Medalha de Bronze" (in blue), "Qual é a nacionalidade de Elliot Page?" (in black), a portrait of Elliot Page, and a green arrow pointing left.
- Card 2 (middle):** "Medaglia di Bronzo" (in blue), "Qual è la nazionalità di Elliot Page?" (in black), a portrait of Elliot Page, and a green arrow pointing left.
- Card 3 (bottom):** "Bronze Medal" (in blue), "What is Elliot Page's Nationality?" (in black), a portrait of Elliot Page, and a green arrow pointing left.

Figure 25. Classroom activity: “Who wants to be a champion?/Who will win more medals? Bronze Medal.”



Figure 26. Classroom activity: “Who wants to be a champion?/Who will win more medals? Bronze Medal.”

**Jeopardy:
Desportos**

Água	Terra	Animais e Humanos	Rodas	DESPORTISTAS LGBTQIA+
Q €100	Q €100	Q €100	Q €100	Q €100
Q €200	Q €200	Q €200	Q €200	Q €200
Q €300	Q €300	Q €300	Q €300	Q €300
Q €400	Q €400	Q €400	Q €400	Q €400
Q €500	Q €500	Q €500	Q €500	Q €500

Jeopardy Final

**Jeopardy:
Sport**

Acqua	Terra	Animali ed esseri umani	Ruote	ATLETI LGBTQIA+
D €100	D €100	D €100	D €100	D €100
D €200	D €200	D €200	D €200	D €200
D €300	D €300	D €300	D €300	D €300
D €400	D €400	D €400	D €400	D €400
D €500	D €500	D €500	D €500	D €500

Jeopardy Finale

**Jeopardy:
Sport**

Water	Land	Animals and Human Beings	Wheels	LGBTQIA+ ATHLETES
Q €100	Q €100	Q €100	Q €100	Q €100
Q €200	Q €200	Q €200	Q €200	Q €200
Q €300	Q €300	Q €300	Q €300	Q €300
Q €400	Q €400	Q €400	Q €400	Q €400
Q €500	Q €500	Q €500	Q €500	Q €500

Final Jeopardy

Figure 27. Classroom Activity: “Jeopardy.”

€ 100 Pergunta Desportistas
LGBTQIA+ n.º 1

A Megan Repinoe é uma campeã
desta modalidade



€ 100 Domanda Atleti
LGBTQIA+ n.º 1

Megan Repinoe è una fuoriclasse di
questo sport



€ 100 Question for
LGBTQIA+ Athletes

Megan Repinoe is a champion
of this sport



Figure 28. Classroom Activity: “Jeopardy: LGBTQIA+ Athletes.”



Figure 29. Classroom Activity: "Jeopardy: LGBTQIA+ Athletes."

Conclusions

Using as a springboard James Baldwin and Margaret Mead's 1971, seven-and-a-half-hour conversation *Rap on Race*, acclaimed Cameroonian literary critic and president of the Modern Language Association Frieda Ekotto, analyzes the "distrust" and "fear" of some white people when it comes to the Black community. Indeed, Ekotto's reading of *Rap on Race* also applies to other minority groups in the United States since this "fear" is a direct result of "lack of knowledge about" the "other," e.g., other ethnic and racial groups as well as the LGBTQIA+ community.

What the dominant culture has done, according to Baldwin, is rationalizing fear in order to mistreat and, eventually, discriminate against the “other.” Hence, the “other” has “been and still remain[s] the target of this irrational fear.” In other words, fear of the “other” “graduated into [...] abuse.” Alas, this “fear was unequivocally rationalized to maintain the abuse, discrimination, and mistreatment.” Finally, since this “distrust remains an issue, the psychological damage to and discrimination against” the “other” continues (Ekotto, 2023, p. 2).

Classroom attitudes and activities when it comes to presenting, accepting, and eventually including members of the LGBTQIA+ community are therefore crucial for creating and fostering a welcoming environment for anyone as they embark on what otherwise could be a daunting and humiliating experience as they learn a foreign language. By including the LGBTQIA+ “other” into the language curriculum foreign language instructors are thus ascertaining that diversity and inclusion are indeed championed at all times, from day one to the last day of class.

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