

Website: Global Language Online Support System (GLOSS) from the Defense Language Institute (DLI), Foreign Language Center - <http://gloss.dliflc.edu>

The Defense Language Institute (DLI) has created an online resource with language lessons on reading and listening in over 24 languages, including Portuguese. The Global Language Online Support System (GLOSS) currently offers 180 lessons in Brazilian Portuguese. It is to my knowledge the biggest online support system on language lessons available in Portuguese nowadays, and perhaps one that is not well known among language instructors and professors, unless if you are part of the military system. Nevertheless, the DLI has promoted its website in conferences, as in the AATSP Conference in Washington D.C. in 2011. The lessons are fully available online for free, or can be ordered in CDs/DVDs at a cost.

The Portuguese lessons at GLOSS are tailored to individual work and are meant to be used as a tool for extra-curricular practice. However, their adaptation to a classroom setting is also a possibility. Each lesson has between 4 and 6 stages, including a pre-listening or pre-reading activity, the main exercises and a wrap-up of the lesson. GLOSS emphasizes the use of authentic material that is level appropriate according to the ACTFL guidelines for the OPI (Oral Proficiency Interview). The breakdown of levels in this website is as follows: level 1 (61 lessons) 1+ (41 lessons); 2 (47 lessons); 2+ (29 lessons); 3 (2 lessons); 3+ and 4 (no lessons). Level 1 corresponds to a survival language skill; level 2 is described as limited working proficiency; level 3 is general professional proficiency; and level 4 is advanced professional proficiency. Almost all lessons are in levels 1 and 2, which would correspond to a first and second year language course in college, and are focused on structural, discourse, lexical, or socio-cultural features of the language.

The toolbar for each lesson contains the following: *glossary* (Portuguese-English, and audio record for each word); *source* (full transcript of audios/videos or full texts with and English translation); *info* (information about the lesson: skill modality, level, topic, completion time, language feature, objective, competence, copyright info, and developer); *resources* (other websites on the topic of the lesson, normally Wikipedia); *tutorial* (in English); and *feedback*. As a particular lesson progresses there are hint tabs (vocabulary translations or tips), check tabs (the final answer for questions), and the teacher's note (grammar explanations, important information, etc.). The listening and reading assignments are also presented in segments and in full, according to the task. Most exercises are comprehension checks (true and false, answering questions by typing the answers, matching items in two columns, multiple choice, etc.).

Overall the lessons are well planned and level appropriate. However, there are a few occasions when a lesson at a certain proficiency level develops a structure of a higher level, but those are isolated cases. There are also comprehension questions in some exercises that are copy and paste from the text, or do not require a textual analysis, but, again, this applies to only some lessons. What distinguishes this website is the authenticity of the material (flyers, news reports, articles, audios, etc.). Another positive point is the audio recording of the readings done by native speakers. The lessons also inform students on the different registers in Brazilian Portuguese through cultural notes and teacher's notes. For example, a lesson on the news points out the different language registers (colloquial and formal) between the reporter and people being interviewed in the streets, highlighting the usage of *tô* and *pra*, instead of *estou* and *para*, among other examples. The frequent cultural comments are also an important aspect of the material.

The downside of GLOSS is that the exercises rely on English translations for most aspects of the lessons. A suggestion would be to find ways of presenting the material with less reliance on English, even though it is tailored to an English speaking audience. The constant Portuguese-English translations and word lists can also be counterproductive, and less effective with a visual learner. The use of more images would facilitate the assimilation of new vocabulary, especially at levels 1 and 1+. Also, since the material is geared towards English speakers, it does not address the potential of other language groups learning Portuguese, as in the case of the increasing number of Spanish speakers in American colleges taking Portuguese classes. Lessons for Spanish speakers would be an asset, particularly at the lower levels. At the moment there are almost no lessons on more advanced levels (3 and 4). I also experienced some difficulties accessing the website which would be down from time to time, and this is a problem for a student or a class that would rely on this online system. It is somewhat understandable since GLOSS is a gigantic program with over 6,000 lessons in several languages, but hopefully it will improve its online reliability.

GLOSS also offers a certificate of completion per lesson, printable through the website in a diploma style from the Defense Language Institute – Foreign Language Center – Presidio of Monterey, California, which could be a motivational factor for some students. Another tool is a diagnostic reading assessment (the listening assessment for Portuguese is under development). The reading assessment is a test based on three reading passages that change according to the test taker's performance and it provides the student with what GLOSS calls a diagnostic profile in the language tested.

Above all, GLOSS is a major step towards the use of online material in support of language classes. In the case of Brazilian Portuguese, GLOSS is helping to fill a gap of

organized and well-developed language lessons online. The fact that the system reflects the OPI proficiency guidelines gives an assurance that at least most of the material is level appropriate and authentic.

Eduardo Viana da Silva

University of California Santa Barbara