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Amores Surdos as Deaf Loves: Translating the contemporary Brazilian theatre of
Grace Passô from Portuguese into English

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Grace Passô from Portuguese into English

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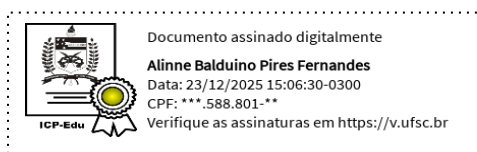
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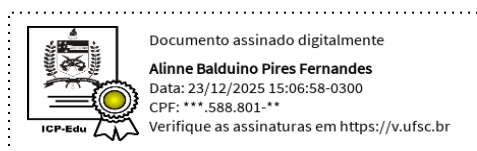
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Coordenação do Programa de Pós-Graduação



Profa. Alinne Balduino Pires Fernandes, Dra.
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Dedico este sonho a Catarina Kasten. Sua ausência me dá forças para seguir em seu nome, por este sonho e por todos os que ainda virão, frutos das sementes que foram plantadas por onde ela passou. Catarina, presente. Hoje e sempre.

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RESUMO

O presente estudo enfoca na tradução de *Amores Surdos* de Grace Passô para o inglês, como *Deaf Loves*, analisando as decisões tomadas durante o processo. Uma vez que a pesquisa acadêmica no campo da tradução envolvendo o teatro brasileiro mostra-se escassa, o estudo e a divulgação de *Amores Surdos* – que retrata dinâmicas familiares, disparidades sociais e a experiência de um personagem brasileiro no exterior – podem contribuir para sua representação no cenário anglófono. O estudo envolveu a “prática guiada pela pesquisa” e “pesquisa guiada pela prática”, conforme delineado por Hazel Smith e Roger Dean (2009), para garantir que *Deaf Loves* mantenha seu sentido cultural e alcance os públicos de língua inglesa, criando assim um “entre-lugar” e assumindo a tensão que isso produz. Esses conceitos são revisitados por meio de teorias da tradução teatral, como o “modelo da ampulheta” proposto por Patrice Pavis para a análise das expressões culturais e artísticas nos textos de partida e de chegada (TP e TC), e as sugestões para análise de fatores intratextuais de Christiane Nord, a fim de realizar mudanças linguísticas em vez de alterações de localização da peça — uma escolha política para enfatizar a cultura de chegada (CC). O método foi baseado no processo de tradução teatral de Alinne Fernandes (2015) e consistiu em duas fases: (1) a pesquisa individual tratando do que seria mantido do TP ou cortado e transformado no TC, considerando se tais escolhas silenciariam, destacariam ou reinterpretariam a cultura de partida (CP), equilibrando estrangeirização e domesticação, e (2) o trabalho colaborativo com profissionais de teatro no Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. Os atores participantes pareceram reconhecer algumas dinâmicas do lar brasileiro retratado, além de demonstrar conexões pessoais com uma das personagens e com as conversas em um contexto familiar. O estilo autoral de Passô também foi reconhecido, com uma percepção explícita do uso das rubricas, da poesia e da repetição, o que levou a uma discussão sobre como esses elementos poderiam ser explorados em possíveis produções. Algumas escolhas tradutórias focadas nas variantes das *Midlands* britânicas também foram percebidas, abrindo espaço para diferentes percepções de realidades marginalizadas no Sul Global por meio da CP e revelando-se benéficas para desafiar a estigmatização em relação à dialetos no Reino Unido por meio do TC. Algumas limitações relacionadas às características musicais da peça não foram plenamente abordadas, sendo necessárias investigações adicionais para alcançar uma compreensão mais abrangente de sua recepção. Apoio-me nas ideias de Aníbal Quijano (1992), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1994) e Antonio Gramsci (1999), que ressoam com a visão de Margherita Laera (2019) sobre a responsabilidade ética que envolve falar *pelo outro*, mas também *com o outro*, tornando o papel dos tradutores – especialmente de culturas minoritárias que atuam como representantes intelectuais e que efetivamente escolhem o que traduzir – fundamental para o posicionamento de amplificar vozes marginalizadas em prol de uma maior equidade no discurso global. Esta pesquisa faz uma contribuição significativa à área ao oferecer tanto reflexões teóricas quanto resultados práticos que respondem a uma lacuna na representação do teatro brasileiro em contextos anglófonos.

Palavras-chave: Teatro Brasileiro; Tradução Teatral; Grace Passô; Patrice Pavis; Christiane Nord; *Midlands* britânicas; Prática Guiada pela Pesquisa; Pesquisa Guiada pela Prática

ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on translating *Amores Surdos* by Grace Passô into English as *Deaf Loves* while analysing the decisions made in the process. Since scholarly research on the field of translation involving Brazilian theatre remains scarce, the study and dissemination of *Amores Surdos* – which portrays family dynamics, social disparities, and the immigrant experience of Brazilians abroad – can contribute to a more significant representation of Brazilian theatre in the English-speaking world. The study employed a research-led and practice-led approach, as outlined by Hazel Smith and Roger Dean (2009), to ensure that *Deaf Loves* resonates with English-speaking audiences while retaining its cultural significance, thereby creating a “space-in-between” and embracing the tension this produces. These concepts are revisited through theories of theatre translation, such as the 'hourglass of cultures' proposed by Patrice Pavis for the analysis of cultural and artistic expressions in the source and target texts (ST and TT), and the suggestions for analysing intratextual factors by Christiane Nord to make linguistic changes rather than changes in plot or localisation of the play – a political choice to emphasise the target culture (TC). The method was based on the theatre translation process outlined by Alinne Fernandes (2015), and consisted of two phases: (1) the individual research addressing what would be maintained from the ST or cut and transformed into the TT, being mindful of whether these choices would silence, highlight or reinterpret the source culture (SC), balancing foreignisation and domestication, and (2) the collaborative fieldwork with theatre practitioners at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. The actors who participated seemed to recognise some dynamics of the Brazilian household portrayed, besides some personal connection to the teenage attitude of one of the characters and the non-linear conversations in a familial context. Passô's authorial style was also recognised and appreciated, with an explicit perception of the use of stage directions, poetry, and repetition, which led to a discussion on how they could be explored in possible productions. Some translation choices focused on the British Midlands variants were also perceived, opening up space for different perceptions of marginalised realities in the Global South through the SC and proving beneficial in challenging the persistent stigmatisation surrounding dialects in the UK through the TT. Some limitations related to the play's musical characteristics were not fully addressed in the workshop, and further investigation is needed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of its reception. I draw on the ideas of Aníbal Quijano (1992), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1994) and Antonio Gramsci (1999), which resonate with the view by Margherita Laera (2019) regarding the ethical responsibility that involves speaking for the other, but also with them, making the role of translators – especially those from minority cultures who act as intellectual leaders and who effectively choose what to translate – pivotal for this positioning to amplify marginalised voices for greater equity in global discourse. Ultimately, this research makes a significant contribution to the field by providing both theoretical insights and practical outputs that address a gap in the representation of Brazilian theatre in English-speaking contexts.

Keywords: Brazilian Theatre; Theatre Translation; Grace Passô; Patrice Pavis, Christiane Nord; British Midlands; Research-led practice; Practice-led Research

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TA	Target Audience
TC	Target Culture
TL	Target Language
TR	Target Reader
TS	Target Spectator
TT	Target Text
SA	Source Audience
SC	Source Culture
SL	Source Language
ST	Source Text

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INTRODUCTION

Through perceiving theatre as a means to encounter other cultural realities, one can also see it as a facilitator of intercultural dialogue. Bearing this in mind, *Amores Surdos* (2012) by Grace Passô is a play that might reveal everyday tensions and practices within the experience of Brazilians in the country (more specifically the countryside state of Minas Gerais) and abroad through the portrayal of fictional characters. In a world marked by increasing global migration and cultural diversity, *Amores Surdos* offers a nuanced portrayal of Brazilian family life, particularly as it is shaped by physical and emotional distance. Through its depiction of a family handling daily tensions while maintaining ties with a son living abroad, the play reflects common experiences in contemporary Brazilian society, such as economic migration, fragmented households, and the use of technology in familial bonds.

This thesis stems from a profound interest in what has been produced on the contemporary Brazilian stage and in the choices a translator can make in rendering such work into English, with the broader aim of contributing to the international visibility of Brazilian theatre. In terms of its methods and theoretical reflections, this piece of research has been particularly influenced by the work of Alinne Fernandes (2012). Fernandes' engagement with the translation of Irish drama for Brazilian stages offers a reverse perspective that inspires this study. Her reflections on translation and dramaturgy have helped shape the structure of this project and informed many of the readings that underpin its theoretical foundation.

Over the course of this research, academic exchanges, practice-based experiences, and discussions within translation studies and English-language literature consistently highlighted a disciplinary gap. While there has been growing attention to the translation of literature into Portuguese, especially from English, discussions about translating Brazilian literary and theatrical works into English remain scarce. This asymmetry is particularly evident in academic settings where English is both the language of instruction and critical inquiry. In my academic experience at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), perhaps the most referential institution in translation studies in Brazil, I have participated in discussions on various aspects of translation. And yet, even in such a prolific and specified nucleus, the academic references of initiatives involving translated Brazilian theatre are scarce. When looking for research on translated Brazilian literature on the main

website of the department for translation at the institution (PGET), one can find publications on Brazilian literature translated to Spanish, such as the first issue of *Revista Machado de Assis* by Andréia Guerini for Fundação Biblioteca Nacional (FBN), and the volume on Gonzalo Aguilar for *Palavra do Tradutor*. Besides that, *Cadernos de Tradução*, the main magazine for research on translation of the country, one can find from Brazilian poetry translated into German to the translated work of Jorge Amado in English. However, studies on dramaturgical pieces are not found. That is because, as Maria de Lourdes Rabetti (2014, p. 2) points out, Brazilian performing arts researchers inserted in international practices have regularly faced difficulties due to the lack of foreign-language versions of Brazilian plays, whether classical or contemporary. Rabetti affirms that this situation reveals a timely and compelling scenario in which several researchers, often responding urgently and seeking the most suitable approach, must adapt to the practical need to produce translations.

Still, Brazilian theatre, with its rich cultural roots and diverse narratives, stands as a significant area of study in the field of translation. Almiro Andrade (2020, p. 24) recalls that the praxis of other translators has informed his findings about theatre translation and devising for performance, citing autoethnographic accounts of practitioners like Augusto Boal, Antônio Araújo and Luis Alberto de Abreu as those that have informed his own practice. Despite not having encountered such models of praxis in my early years of research at university, my interest grew as a student at a post-graduate level, when I could finally realise that creating a connection between Brazilian theatre and international audiences may allow for a deeper understanding and appreciation of its artistic contributions. The complexities of cultural history, artistic expression, and linguistic nuances highlight the challenges a translator might face and the opportunities for scholarly practice that lie in this translation process. Given the bilingual and bicultural competencies developed within English-language literature and translation programmes in Brazil, scholars and practitioners in this field are uniquely positioned to contribute to reversing this flow by actively selecting and translating works from Portuguese into English.

The idea for this project emerged from an urge to approach translation in a counter-hegemonic direction and to do so through a concrete example that could support critical reflection. This exploration aims to provide diverse perspectives on theatre-making rooted in theories of theatre translation by advocating for the

decentralisation of translation practices from the context of a Brazilian translator presenting their own culture in another language, based on Margherita Laera's essential concerns: "How can one actually *speak for*, or *on behalf of*, another [...]?" and "How can we make sure that the theatre becomes a truly inclusive art form, whereas many people as possible feel adequately represented and catered for?" (2019, p. 5). Likewise, Linda Martín Alcoff (1991) asserts that "we should strive to create wherever possible the conditions for dialogue and the practice of speaking *with* and *to* rather than speaking *for* others" (p. 16, my highlights). In translation, this implies not only the ethical responsibility that involves speaking *for* the Other, but also *with* them, in a commitment to create space for their worldviews, languages, and experiences to be heard within and against dominant linguistic economies and universalities.

The translation project aims to merge the familiar with the unfamiliar for the audience, taking into account the complexities of conveying cultural and linguistic nuances between different countries and languages. This strategy is essential because the play deals with the collective and individual experiences of a family rooted in an underdeveloped country, with one family member living abroad in a more developed country. By intertwining recognisable struggles with the more unfamiliar aspects of Brazilian life within my translation project, I strive to evoke both empathy and curiosity from the viewers. This dual approach, which involves making the play both familiar and strange, allows for a more profound connection while encouraging the audience to reflect on the differences and similarities between their own lives and those of the characters.

The final version of the play aims to be produced and/or published, especially in cultural contexts such as the UK and Ireland. In these regions, initiatives like the Out of the Wings project are crucial in promoting South American theatre by facilitating readings, workshops, and performances that showcase new translations (Wings, 2022). The choice of the UK is also connected to its long-standing cosmopolitan environment, which has contributed to the creation of initiatives designed to promote theatre from formerly colonised regions. In this context, the reception of Latin American plays can be informed by the UK's own colonial history and its growing engagement with theatre as part of a broader decolonial effort. Ireland, in turn, was selected due to its specific cultural relationship with Brazil and its post-colonial history, which creates a compelling context for the reception of a play

such as *Amores Surdos*. As Elizabeth Howard (2018, p. 165) argues, amateur drama in post-Independence Ireland reflected efforts to recalibrate community identity after political unrest. These historical dynamics position Ireland as a particularly receptive environment for Brazilian theatre that also grapples with questions of identity, family, and dislocation. Having successfully captivated an engaged audience in Ireland through a recent workshop, I am confident that these areas present exceptional opportunities to expand the play's reach and cultivate meaningful cultural dialogue through theatre.

Ultimately, this project seeks to bridge two cultures by presenting a story that resonates through both shared and distinct elements. The translation aims to present a nuanced portrayal of the social dynamics and variations depicted in the play, negotiating the cultural and linguistic intricacies presented through the source language (SL). In some instances, the text has been adapted to utilise British colloquial expressions and dialect variations, which can enhance engagement and foster a stronger connection with the audience. On the other hand, where it was possible to retain specific cultural references from the source culture (SC) without compromising coherence, those have been preserved, allowing the audience to engage with the play's original essence without excessive explanation. This aims to ensure a nuanced approach that favours both cultural reference and accessibility within the translation. Through this effort, I hope to contribute to a greater appreciation and understanding of contemporary Brazilian theatre within the Irish and British theatrical landscape.

A) TRANSLATION PROJECT, OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main objectives of my dissertation are to translate *Amores Surdos* (2012) in order to contribute to the broadening of interest in contemporary Brazilian drama and offer insights into discussions on translation choices when translating drama from Brazilian Portuguese into English.

The specific objectives of my dissertation are to:

- Examine the playtext of *Amores Surdos* to uncover how its themes, language, and cultural nuances can inform the translation process and engage the target audience (TA);

- Identify solutions to articulate in the target language (TL) the cultural and linguistic intricacies present in the SL, maintaining selected cultural aspects of the SC at the same time as aiming for a relatability of the target culture (TC);
- Discuss and reflect on the translation choices based on the theories and concepts reviewed throughout the research.

The research questions that guided this study are: (1) How can familiar and unfamiliar elements of the source text (ST) of *Amores Surdos* be traced and conveyed in the target text (TT) in *Deaf Loves*? (2) What strategies can be employed to reflect the ST's linguistic variation and cultural specificities in the TT while maintaining relatability for the TC? (3) How can the translation choices be analysed through translation theories, such as Patrice Pavis' "hourglass model" (1992) and Christiane Nord's approach to intratextual factors (2006)?

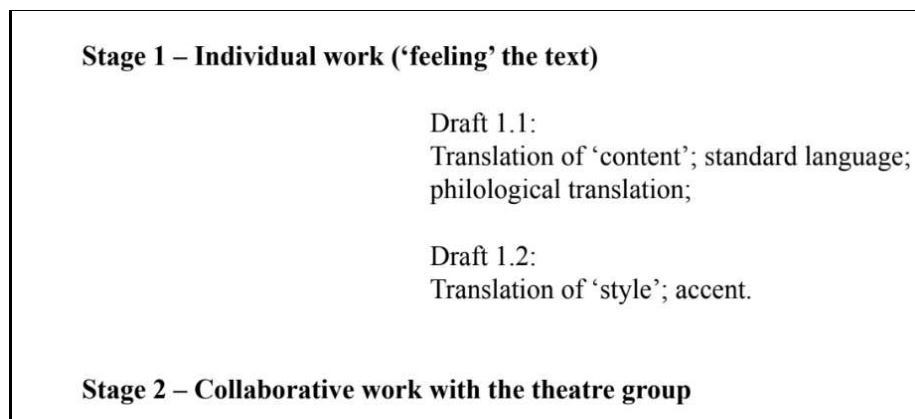
B) METHODS

In order to describe and discuss this research, the best approach found was from an autoethnographic lens. Autoethnography, as Tony Adams, Stacy Holman and Carolyn Ellis (2015) describe, involves "[...] a researcher's personal experience to describe and critique cultural beliefs, practices, and experiences" and "[u]ses deep and careful self-reflection — typically referred to as 'reflexivity' — to name and interrogate the intersections between self and society, the particular and the general, the personal and the political" (pp. 1-2). Since the work of a translator is of such intimate nature that engages a complex interplay of cognitive processes and lived experience, requiring both neurological integration of language functions and the nuanced application of personal and cultural knowledge to achieve fruition, the academic discussions on translation choices frequently rely on an autoethnographic tone, balancing "intellectual and methodological rigor, emotion, and creativity" (*ibidem*).

The central premise of the translation project was to use the TL to articulate the cultural and linguistic intricacies embedded in the ST while maintaining cultural authenticity and relatability for the TC. In order to achieve this, I drew from the practice-led research carried out by Fernandes (2015) in the case of Marina Carr's *By the Bog of Cats...* in Brazil. The stages this research follows are shown on Figure

1 in a selected excerpt from Fernandes' outline of the three proposed stages of the theatre translation process.¹ Her methodology involved three stages, which consisted of an initial "individual work" focusing on capturing content and style, followed by a "collaborative work with the theatre group" that refined the language for the stage, engaging more with the characters' dialects and with a view towards performance. The strength of Fernandes' proposal lies in what Ruth Bohunovsky (2019) describes as a search to deliver a version with dramaturgical potential that could serve as a foundation for various productions, which would leave the field open for future directors. While her process included continued rehearsals in the second stage and a third stage with individual work, my research focused on one table reading of the playtext, which was recorded and provided insightful discussions for me to revisit and refine the earlier drafts I had developed. Building on Fernandes' work, this study presents my final individual analysis for the final version, aiming to provide insights for future translators and theatre practitioners in the field.

Figure 1 – Stages 1 and 2 of the theatre translation process



Source: Fernandes (2015, p. 316).

After investigating the ST's structure and considering the historical context in which the play was produced, it was relevant to think about the language of the drama written to be performed on stage. In the "individual work", the analysis of the playtext of *Amores Surdos* by Grace Passô concerned the assertion by Sylvan Barnet et al (2008) that, when a text is written to be performed, it is necessary to analyse the characters and how they move in the setting, as well as hear their words

¹ The outline proposed by Fernandes (2015) also included arrows that represented the continuous iterative process of revisiting the previous drafts after each stage, which, in this study also occurred, but will be discussed in more detail in Chapter I.

and the tone of their voices when in the theatre, or “perform the play in the theatre of our minds” (p. 947) when reading on our own. This approach highlights the practice of engaging with the text as both a literary composition and a performative script by bridging the gap between the written word and its possible enactment and enhancing its overall impact in a theatrical setting.

The “individual work” was carried out in 2023 in Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil, during the first year of my master’s studies. Although I also refer to this first phase as “individual”, it is essential to note that this stage was marked by constant reflection and negotiation between my impressions and the social and cultural nuances embedded in both the source and target texts, which are essentially collective. Even when working alone, a translator is continuously negotiating meaning, tone, and intention through a web of social, cultural, and linguistic influences present in both the source and target contexts. This reflective negotiation, as I believe, is inherent to my process and any translation or creative task that engages with the world around it. In the first draft, the solutions found for the translation of content were examined in the context of how they are rendered in the TL, ensuring that the translation allows for the expression of the ST’s socio-cultural characteristics while making it accessible and engaging to a new audience. The second draft focused on “style” and issues such as the linguistic variation among social groups (sociolects) in Brazil and the United Kingdom to address the language used in the play and find solutions for these variations in the TT. In this phase, the translation choices favoured the entanglement of high levels of cultural and linguistic characteristics from the SC in the TT.

This approach mirrors Fernandes’ perspective (2015), in which the aim is to “transport spectators to the complex world of the play, and through that to enable them both to look outwards from the heart of their cultural assumptions and to allow this outside world to impact upon and illuminate their own practices and beliefs” (p. 328). In *Amores Surdos*, the stage directions, the degrees of formality in language and the poetic language Passô employs might benefit from a translation that is being read, for its linguistic complexity. Since there were no prospects of having funds for a performance in English in Brazil, nor for a performance of the translated Brazilian play abroad, I could dare to choose a merged perspective in my academic translation. Consequently, the translation decisions in the individual stage oscillated between familiar linguistic choices tailored to resonate with the TA while

incorporating specific vernacular or poetic language from the ST to pave the way for a journey of “transportation” when either read or performed.

Stage 2, or the “collaborative work with the theatre group”, was conducted on the 20th of June 2024 at Mary Immaculate College in Limerick. With the support of my supervisor, Prof. Alinne Fernandes, who connected me with Prof. Deidre Flynn and Prof. David Clare, I had the suitable set of circumstances to conduct a reading of my ongoing translation with the Goose Chase Theatre Company and Weird Gravy Theatre Collective. This event was an invaluable opportunity for collaborative practice, a central component of my study. The feedback provided by the actors during this session played a significant role in shaping both the translated text's final version and the thesis's discussion section. The information collected from this session, including the actors' remarks, the recorded discussion and some post-reading questionnaire answers, and how they impacted my final choices, are discussed in the analysis section of this study.

I use both the recorded material, annotations from the meeting and answers from the questionnaire to inform and justify the final decisions made in the translation process. In analysing the translation choices made throughout this project, I draw on critical theories of theatre translation to explore various aspects, such as style and linguistic variation. Specifically, I revisit them through the lens of Patrice Pavis' “hourglass model” (1992) and Christiane Nord's (2006) discussion on “intratextual factors”, both of which offer valuable insights into how cultural and linguistic elements are conveyed in translation. After presenting and discussing them thoroughly, I integrate the actors' feedback with the theoretical frameworks guiding the translation when discussing their impressions. Given that this project operates at the intersection of translation practice and theatre translation research, the methodology combines both research-led practice and practice-led research. While research-led practice involves using scholarly investigation to inform creative decisions, practice-led research emphasises how creative work itself generates valuable insights. This dual approach ensures that creative decisions are informed not only by theoretical frameworks but also refined through practical application, thereby enhancing the final translation product. A more detailed exploration of these concepts is provided in Chapter I.

C) CONTEXTS

I. Grace Passô: A Driving Force in Brazilian Theatre and Screen Productions Through Acting, Directing, and Writing

While the text and its cultural background in Minas Gerais offer valuable insights into contemporary Brazilian life, a deeper understanding of *Amores Surdos* also requires attention to Grace Passô's trajectory and how she is perceived as a socially situated artist. According to Jéssica Ribas (2023, p. 127), the experiences of Passô's life highlights the trajectory of the author as a collectivised subject, as her work is within the subtext that evokes her existence as a black woman in a racist and patriarchal society. Her creative expression, therefore, is deeply informed by these intersecting lived experiences, which resonate throughout her work. Grace Passô's early life and education laid the foundation for her multifaceted career as a playwright, actor, and director. Born Grace Anne Paes de Souza, Passô was raised in the countryside of the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais in the 1980s and is the youngest of seven siblings (Ribas, 2023, p. 127). After the premature death of her father, they moved to the capital of the state, Belo Horizonte, in search of livelihood opportunities and settled in a suburban neighbourhood (*ibidem*). Ribas reports that Passô had the opportunity to attend theatre classes as a child and then obtained a degree in Literature from Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), the regional public university funded and administered by the federal government. Later, she also trained as an actor at Centro de Formação Artística e Tecnológica (CEFART) of Fundação Clóvis Salgado, performed with the Armatrux group and was part of the early years of the theatre company Clara de Teatro (*ibidem*). This blend of early exposure to theatre and formal education shaped the trajectory of Passô's engagement with the performing arts, allowing for the depth of her authorial work.

The formation of the Espanca! theatre group marked a turning point in Passô's career. It was founded in 2004 when she began conceiving her own plays and authorial writing, as well as collaborative processes with the group members and invited artists (Ribas, 2023, p. 128). The group initially came together to create a fifteen-minute scene from *Por Elise*, which was presented at the Festival de Cenas Curtas. The festival was an essential platform for many emerging theatre groups, allowing artists across Brazil to experiment with formats and gain more visibility. *Por*

Elise, written and directed by Grace Passô, was selected as one of the best scenes along with four others, and in the following year, the fifteen minutes turned into a one-hour show (*ibidem*). As Mariana Arantes (2020, p. 8) details, in 2005, *Por Elise* was well-received by critics, winning the “author” category of the traditional Brazilian award in cultural productions APCA, created by Associação Paulista de Críticos Teatrais, and the “dramaturgy” category in the Shell Awards in the same year.

Por Elise revolves around a homemaker, her connection with her neighbourhood, and her state of mind. The dialogues happen between her and the workers around the neighbourhood; she seeks friendship with the bin collector, and they talk about the stories of people's lives in the area. The play's title comes from the instrumental tune Beethoven's *Für Elise*, played by gas trucks that go around neighbourhoods in Brazil, and how it can be part of the routine soundscape of many Brazilians. According to Ribas (2023, p. 129), one can immediately identify the playwriting's most striking stylistic traits from Passô's early works. *Por Elise* and *Amores Surdos* exemplify the early consolidation of her dramaturgy, marked by poetic construction, symbolic layering, and a refusal of narrative conventions associated with the tradition of nineteenth-century bourgeois dramaturgical standard.

Grace Passô's dramaturgy is marked by poetic strategies that emphasise rhythm, sound, and symbolic resonance, such as sequences of repetition, interjection, and figurative comparison that foreground the poetic function of language. According to Roman Jakobson (1987, p. 71), the poetic function is defined by a focus on the message itself, and argues that “[s]imilarity superimposed on contiguity imparts to poetry its thoroughgoing symbolic, multiplex, polysemantic essence”, such that “anything sequent is a simile” and “[...] any metonymy is slightly metaphoric and any metaphor has a metonymic tint” (*ibidem*, p. 85). Furthermore, he highlights the reiterative and enduring qualities of poetic discourse: “This capacity for reiteration whether immediate or delayed, this reification of a poetic message and its constituents, this conversion of a message into an enduring thing, indeed all this represents an inherent and effective property of poetry” (*ibidem*, p. 86). In this sense, Passô's dramaturgical language operates poetically not because of formal verse, but because it draws attention to its structure, ambiguity, and capacity for layered meaning.

The poetic quality of Passô's language extends from character speech into thematic refrains and stage directions. The latter can also be considered a prominent

characteristic of her writing that does not abide by traditional theatrical forms but refuses narrative conventions. In *Por Elise*, a passage² from the stage directions illustrates this strategy:

*She leaves. The Worker waits. An avocado falls. Suddenly, the Worker drops to the ground and has a heart attack. Heart attack music? I don't know! The Worker feels his heart like a horse! (deep down, he suffers from what he does). His life seized up, and he went into Lyric Arrest.*³

This distinct use of stage directions, which are usually considered straightforward commands aimed at the direction or actors of the play, also plays a crucial role in *Amores Surdos*. They were central to the textual interpretation workshop phase of this research, which is further discussed in Chapter II. The interjection of uncertainty, the simile “[...] his heart like a horse”, and the play on words with “Ataque de Lirismo” (Lyric Arrest) point to an emotional and symbolic register constructed through language itself. Similarly, in *Vaga Carne*, metaphor and interjection in a monologue delivered by the main character, which is a voice that invades beings and inanimate objects, are used in a description that detaches from realism: “Now coffee, coffee, comrades, is rock. When you enter the coffee, it tosses you side to side, as if it expelled you from itself. I recommend it, comrades. It’s not possessive. Coffee gets you moving”.⁴ Here, “coffee is rock” is a direct metaphorical statement that symbolically attributes the energy, intensity, or force associated with rock music to coffee. In addition, the repetition of “coffee”, the direct address to “comrades”, and the animated imagery of the drink as an agent of movement create a self-referential, poetic rhythm.

Finally, in *Amores Surdos*, metaphor becomes a vehicle for emotional expression and intimate communication, especially in moments when direct articulation of inner struggle proves impossible. The lines spoken by Grazielle while reporting the message Júnior sends to Little One through the phone offer an example of how the poetic language is used as a conduit for vulnerability:

² All the translations of excerpts Passô's plays and interviews are my own. The original Portuguese citations are referenced with their respective pages as footnotes

³ “*Ela sai. Funcionário espera. Cai um abacate. Inesperadamente o Funcionário cai no chão e tem um ataque no coração. Música de ataque no coração? Eu não sei! O Funcionário sente seu coração como um cavalo! (no fundo, ele sofre com o que trabalha). Sua vida se enfartou e ele teve um Ataque de Lirismo.*” (Passô, 2012b, p. 15)

⁴ “*Já o café, o café, companheiros, é um rock. Quando você penetra no café, ele fica te jogando de um lado pro outro, como se te expulsasse de si. Eu recomendo, companheiros. Não é possessivo. O café te movimenta.*” (Passô, 2018, p. 16)

Graziele: (*while listening to Júnior, she whispers to Little One*) He's acting weird... he's saying he wants to come back (*listens*) ...that our family's scattered around the corners, like dust in the cracks of the floor that ain't cleared away. (*listens*) He's asking me to tell you to enjoy walking barefoot while you can, like someone walking on sand.⁵

In this exchange, metaphor is the medium through which Júnior can convey his sense of dislocation and longing. His words draw on images of dust in the cracks of the floor, which resonate with philosophical depth: the dust is not just matter, but a symbolic trace that resists erasure. It represents a past and a collective identity that remain ingrained, even when distant or fractured. In this sense, Júnior's emotional condition abroad is refracted through a metaphor: the domestic and familiar dust that paradoxically ties him back to what he has lost: a sense of belonging. Similarly, his recommendation to Little One to enjoy "walking barefoot... like someone walking on sand" suggests both a temporary comfort and a fragile connection to a place that once felt safe and intimate. In these lines, emotional resonance is achieved through the poetic density of the language, which translates personal inquietation into shared images that remain suspended between pain and memory, alienation and home.

These poetic strategies are channelled into performances that break with theatrical illusion while reappropriating its codes to produce layered, self-aware storytelling. Beatriz Alves (2024, p. 50) notes that Passô challenges the extremely formal conventions of a theatrical aesthetic that have long been perpetuated and are tied to a colonial ideal. The prologue of *Por Elise* brings her reflections on how she started questioning these traditions during the writing process of the play:

I looked at the stage and thought: 'And this platform, folks? What's the point of that upper level? What are we supposed to do with it? And those black curtains? What are they covering? What for? And those people, sitting there, watching? Why doesn't anyone shout? Why are they silent? What a cheap formality! And that hole up there, what an old machine, ropes and ropes like a ship from another era. And that applause at the end, what for? It's not for you to clap for anyone; what we have to give is an inner applause, for ourselves! And those people onstage pretending no one is watching?' The bewilderment was so great that the only thing left for me to do was to embrace it all and tell the people sitting there that I knew it was all pretence.⁶

⁵ **"Graziele:** (*enquanto ouve Júnior, narra baixo a Pequeno*) Ele tá estranho... ele tá dizendo que quer voltar (*escuta*) ...que a nossa família está por entre seus cantos, do mesmo jeito que pó nas frestas do chão que não se retira. (*escuta*) Tá pedindo pra te falar pra aproveitar enquanto pode andar descalço, como quem pisa na areia." (Passô, 2012a, p. 47)

⁶ "Olhei pro palco e pensei: 'E esse tablado, gente? Pra que esse nível de cima? O que fazer com isso? E esses panos pretos? Tapando o quê? Pra quê? E essas pessoas, assentadas, olhando? Por que ninguém grita? Por que ficam em silêncio? Que formalidade barata! E esse buraco na parte de cima, que máquina antiga, cordas e cordas de uma nau de um outro tempo. E essas palmas no final, pra quê? Não é pra bater palma pra ninguém, há que se haver uma palma interna, pra si! E essas pessoas em cima do tablado fingindo que ninguém olha?' E o espanto foi tanto que o

Similarly, she has described her first pieces as testimonies of theatrical thoughts from someone who was trying to look at things that had already been established in theatre and trying to think about their function, and how to appropriate those things, and that they were invitations to try and reconstruct certain theatrical codes (1:56:49) (Passô, 2023).⁷

Notably, this approach sets her writing style apart from much of the work previously developed in the country. Elisza Ribeiro and Stephan Baumgärtel (2009, pp. 28–29) observe that, in Brazilian theatrical publications from the 1990s, few texts moved beyond traditional dramatic structures that engage with the representation of life on stage, and that a noticeable subservience to the dramatic text often persisted. In *Por Elise*, however, the structure of the performance subverts the dramatic form: the character ‘Dona’ openly questions her own identity in monologue scenes, addressing both the audience and the other actors (*ibidem*). This blending of reality and fiction also appears in the spatial choices: the action unfolds in an undefined, non-delimited space with no set design, which alternates between respecting the fourth wall and breaking it to create direct interaction with the audience (*ibidem*).

These same strategies are central to *Amores Surdos*. In the opening of the second act, one character, who is allegedly sleepwalking, in a state that makes him transit between the two worlds of “reality” and “fiction”, directly addresses the audience. As shown in the extract below, he shifts from behaving conforming to the theatrical norm, “pretending not to be seen”, in the first act, reading a letter with the family, to breaking the fourth wall in a direct reference to the act of performing:

You are grown-ups, I am grown-up, nobody here is Little... Everyone here knows where they are. Everyone knows that tomorrow, I will repeat the same things that I am saying now. Everyone knows that tomorrow, I will enter this place and say: Good evening. Thank you for coming, but all the stories in the world have already been told...⁸

que me restava era assumir isso tudo, e dizer pras pessoas assentadas que eu sabia de todo aquele fingimento.” (Passô, 2012b, pp. 8-9).

⁷ “Esses textos são testemunhos de pensamentos de teatro de uma pessoa jovem (independente de idade, tá?), de uma pessoa que tava tentando olhar para as coisas que já estavam instauradas no teatro, e tentando pensar a função delas, e tentando pensar como se apropriar dessas coisas [...] são situações que são convites pra tentar reconstruir determinados códigos de teatro [...]”

⁸ “Vocês são grandes, eu sou grande, ninguém aqui é Pequeno... todo mundo aqui sabe onde está. Todos sabem que amanhã eu vou repetir as mesmas coisas que eu estou falando agora. Todos sabem que amanhã eu vou entrar nesse lugar e dizer: Boa noite. Obrigado por terem vindo, mas todas as histórias do mundo já foram contadas...” (Passô, 2012a, p. 18).

This moment reflects Passô's own articulation of her dramaturgical aims: showing that she is aware that this is all "pretence". At the same time, it builds tension and anticipation in the audience, who, from that point on, become aware that the apparent family "play-acting" masks a deeper narrative arc when Joaquim reveals that the story culminates in a tragedy involving a family member's mental health. Such early and deliberate challenges to theatrical norms demonstrate how Passô's work destabilises fixed boundaries between fiction and reality while gesturing toward broader social concerns through dramaturgical form. Passô's first works also give a broader idea of her journey as a socially placed author and give hints on the social parameters in which she was brought up and from where she could have drawn this willingness to appropriate certain theatrical codes. She began to write according to what she wished to interpret and express on stage, perhaps because she did not identify with the narratives or feel represented by the characters in "hegemonic" dramaturgy, as traditional texts fell short of life experiences akin to hers, seemingly failing to accommodate life experiences outside standard models. Ribas (2023, p. 129) points out that her personal history led her to seek alternative means to take control over her existence in the world, shifting from a consumer of ready-made models of tales to a producer of unique artistic compositions. As Alves (2024, p. 50) observes, *Por Elise* is "extremely poetic", and foregrounds themes associated with the human condition (such as fear, violence, faith, love, dreams, and solitude) while staging characters embedded in working-class everyday life, such as the garbage collector, the housewife, or the employee. This selection of figures points to broader concerns with social inequality, suggesting that the play's poetics are entangled with the social parameters that shaped Passô's own trajectory.

Passô reflected on her writing during the roundtable that inaugurated and formally opened a theatrical showcase of her work from the Artes Cênicas Department at Universidade Federal de Brasília (UnB). When asked about the process of composing *Por Elise*, she touches on some characteristics of her writing that defy established theatrical conventions, affirming: "I want to make an art... or something, I don't even know if that's the word for that... what is 'art', and all? I want to make something, and I'll tell you humbly, that makes sense to the people who

have affected me and still affect me in life”.⁹ Furthermore, with regards to her early plays, she states that,

These texts are records of that testimony, of a shock: the desire to direct one thing that is relatable to me, to my communities, that carries symbols connected to life... Is it the avocado tree, the child, the dog, the garbage collector? Of course! They're symbols of life! It's the desperate urge, like a child, to philosophise through theatre and desperately, desperately, to appropriate it.¹⁰

Here, she questions the extent to which the well-established theatrical forms would try to represent realities, but not her realities. The event was held in December 2023, almost 20 years after the first time *Por Elise* was staged, in recognition of the Passô's trajectory. Students and professors from the nation's capital's leading university staged performances of some of her plays, such as *Vaga Carne* and *Amores Surdos*, and also created original pieces inspired by her work. We can conclude that Passô's expression of her reality through fantastic realism on stage has reverberated throughout the years, and for nearly two decades her impressions have been shared by theatre practitioners around the country.

In this sense, the convergence between *Por Elise* and *Amores Surdos* is not merely thematic or stylistic, but foundational: both plays articulate a vision of theatre as a space for unsettling inherited structures and centring marginalised subjectivities within poetic and politically resonant forms. Wellington Santos (2021, p. 179-180) proposes that when Grace Passô engages with the minimal units of interpretation that constitute her work and magnifies them through a historical-social discussion, she reveals layers of a powerful poetic practice that emerges from an open becoming that in a certain way, as he concludes, based on Grada Kilomba in *Plantation Memories: Episodes of Everyday Racism*, refuses the logic of bodily containment imposed by systemic silencing, known as the canon. Passô does not present fixed truths or essential identities, but rather offers movement, possibility, and resistance to imposed definitions, especially those enforced by dominant systems, such as the canon, which have historically excluded Black women's voices. *Vaga Carne*, a 2019

⁹ “Eu quero fazer uma arte... um negócio, nem sei esse nome... que que é "arte", eh, quero fazer alguma coisa... aí vou falar humildemente... que faça sentido às pessoas que me afetaram e me afetam na vida.” (2:00:49) (Passô, 2023)

¹⁰ “Esses textos são registros desse testemunho, de um susto: querer dirigir um negócio que tem a ver comigo, com as minhas comunidades, que tem os símbolos que têm a ver com a vida... é o abacateiro, é a criança, é o cachorro, é o lixeiro? claro! São símbolos da vida! É querer desesperadamente como uma criança filosofar com o teatro, e desesperadamente, desesperadamente se apropriar dele.” (1:56:55) (Passô, 2023)

film starring and co-directed by Grace Passô, is one example of these productions. As Edson Costa Júnior (2023, p. 13) explains:

The film, based on a dramaturgical text of the same name written by the artist and staged for the first time in 2016, chooses the identity of Black women as the matrix of a speculative exercise in which the arrangement between corporeality and subjectivity dismantles the ontological fixity reserved for positions of race and gender in Brazilian society. Through the body in the image, literally on a stage, nuanced by audiovisual signifiers, especially sound, the film both hypostasizes and subverts the foundations of signs of oppression.

Vaga Carne is a trailblazing monologue delivered by a voice that invades the body of a black woman from whom the audience only sees a silhouette. In 2016, Passô wrote and performed in the solo piece, which can be considered a turning point in her career. Although all her previous plays have dealt with themes that reflect the everyday experiences of her identity and those of her community, this may have been the playwright's first work to highlight more directly and emphatically the impact of her blackness¹¹ on the theatre stage (Ribas, 2023, p. 63). Santos (2021)¹² argues that, with respect to “a subjectivity that is constantly targeted by the power of silencing given, including through words that are stripped off of certain poetic meanings, thereby becoming, in a way, violent”, it becomes essential to delve into the enunciative strategies employed by Grace Passô to better understand the subversion of the marginalisation processes that affect literary narratives authored by black women. Hence, the ways Passô uses language to establish relationships between the characters, actors, writer and the audience, being aware of how something is said, from what position, and to whom, or the deliberate choices and methods she uses in her writing and staging to produce meaning and position voices destabilises dominant discourse by foregrounding marginalised voices (especially of black women). From this perspective, *Vaga Carne* can be seen as part of a broader

¹¹ In this study, I decided not to capitalise “white” nor “black” (as well as whiteness and blackness) to reflect the lack of fixed definition of these concepts, in concordance with La Marr Jurelle Bruce’s “use of the lowercase to signify the lack of fixity in blackness”, which Corine Tachtiris describes as “translation’s potential to unfix language through linguistic and cultural disjunctures” (2024, p. ix). In the citations, however, the capitalisation of the original authors are kept.

¹² “Em suma, este escrito enceta inquietações sobre as possibilidades da estruturação de uma subjetividade alvejada, constantemente, pelo poder de silenciamento dado, inclusive, por meio da palavra arrancada de determinados sentidos poéticos, tornando-se, de certa maneira, violenta. Nesse sentido, é importante aprofundar-se nas estratégias enunciativas da dramaturga Grace Passô para se abrir mais questionamentos a respeito da subversão em relação aos processos de marginalização de determinadas narrativas literárias de autoria feminina negra, observando-se, dessa forma, uma efetiva contribuição dessas obras para a dramaturgia brasileira ‘negra’.” (p. 181, my translation)

movement that contributes to the formation and visibility of black Brazilian dramaturgy. It embodies a pivotal moment in Passô's trajectory, where the blackness of her writing becomes a more deliberate enunciative stance, or a theatrical and political expression of her social location. Even in spaces of fiction or abstraction, the racialised body and voice are never neutral: her dramaturgy insists on the visibility of blackness not simply as identity but as a social construction constantly reframed through performance, authorship, and language.

Currently, Passô continues to be prolific in her writing, not only for the theatre but also for film and television, besides directing and acting. Her experiences in the entertainment industry and the dissemination of her work, though, are exceptional and, thus, not representative of the reality faced by the majority of black female playwrights. As Ribas (2023, p. 63) reports, she is the black playwright who has published the highest number of play texts to date in Brazil. In an episode of the series *AFRONTA!*, a co-production of the Brazilian channel Futura with Juliana Vicente, Passô relates her actions to the resistance embedded in the bodies that have been colonised:

You can't be black and not have a very strong relationship with memory. Memory has survived; it survives in our bodies. Since it was officially, let's say, told by those who tried to destroy these bodies, there is a lot that has to be [...] deeply rooted. It has to do with this diasporic journey in black communities; I mean, it's such a deep mixture, a mixture of those who try or had to try everything, and from that, produce something else that I don't know the name of, but which is already [...] in another time. This is exactly the opposite of the coloniser's perspective, which is only one, right? That is from those who come to kill and take. It is the perspective of someone who is [...] on the other side. It is from those who received the coloniser, survived him, learned his music, did not let theirs die, fell in love with the coloniser, spat on him, is [...] running after to take care of what happened in the past and at the same time here in the future, knowing that it's [...] all connected. These are polyglot bodies, full of references and more resilient, right? There is no other option.¹³

¹³ "Não tem como você ser negro, você ser negra e não ter uma relação com a memória muito forte. A memória sobreviveu, sobrevive nos nossos corpos. Já que ela foi oficialmente, digamos aí, contada por quem tentou destruir esses corpos então é muita coisa que tem que tá [sic] arraigada. Que tem a ver com esse percurso diaspórico nas comunidades negras, assim, é uma mistura tão profunda, é uma mistura de quem experimenta, ou teve que experimentar tudo, e daí produzir uma outra coisa que eu não sei o nome, mas que tá [sic] em outro tempo já. Que é exatamente o contrário dessa perspectiva do colonizador, que é uma só, né? Que é de quem vem pra matar e pegar. É uma perspectiva de quem tá [sic] do outro lado. É de quem recebeu o colonizador, sobreviveu a ele, aprendeu a música dele, não deixou a sua morrer, se apaixonou pelo colonizador, cuspiu nele, tá [sic] correndo atrás pra cuidar do que aconteceu no passado e ao mesmo tempo aqui no futuro, sabe que tá [sic] tudo junto. São corpos políglotas, assim, cheios de referência e mais resistentes, né? Não há outra opção." (11:29) (Passô, 2017)

In addition to Passô's national publications, her work has been translated into French, Spanish, Mandarin, English, and Polish. Among these is the translation and production of *Für Elise* in 2017, directed by Ramiro Silveira and commissioned by the Embassy of Brazil in London (Strobl, 2023). Besides that, she has been part of the writing team of series such as *Histórias (Im)possíveis* (IMDb, 2024) and *Resistência Negra* (Globoplay, 2024), produced by Globoplay, one of the largest broadcast channels in the country, and she has pursued other projects as an actor or director (Ribas, 2023). Some examples of films she has directed are the adaptation of *Vaga Carne* for the screen in 2019 (Filmes, 2023), *Praça Paris* in 2018 (Amazon, 2023) and *República* in 2020 (Salles, 2023).

The adaptation project of *Amores Surdos* for the screen, entitled *Amores Surdos 1500*, is currently in progress. When answering a question about the play during the roundtable at UnB, Passô reflects on revisiting the themes and characters she first imagined nearly two decades earlier. As seen in Appendix I, she challenges narrow understandings of representativity, stating that what truly matters is not merely being represented, but being able to exist: “politizar é fazer ser possível existir [...]” (Passô, 2023)¹⁴. Translating her work, and particularly translating her voice, can therefore be understood as one step in this broader effort to assert existence across borders. In this light, *Amores Surdos* becomes more than a dramatic text; it becomes a site of cultural affirmation and resistance, and its translation participates in this gesture by making space for the resonance of Passô's artistic voice in new territories. These reflections are echoed in the synopsis of the film, which asserts it will portray “[...] the daily life of a Brazilian family whose struggle for survival prevents them from listening to their own grief and affections” (Paradiso, 2025)¹⁵. This brief synopsis already signals how Passô might rethink some concerns that seem to be the core of her dramatic writing: emotional restraint, silenced pain, and the interplay between absence and presence in family dynamics. Her choice to revisit this play through the cinematic medium reaffirms its thematic resonance and consolidates her artistic trajectory. Within this poetic and political tension, *Amores Surdos* offers a rich example of how Passô's theatre confronts the limits of communication, care, and shared memory.

¹⁴ “To politicise is to make it possible to exist.”

¹⁵ “*Amores surdos 1500* narra o cotidiano de uma família brasileira em que a luta por sobrevivência a impede de escutar seus lutos e seus afetos.”

II. *Amores Surdos*: Historical Background and Trajectory

Amores Surdos, the second of Passô's authorial works to be published, was first staged in 2006. It portrays the routine of a fictional twenty-first-century Brazilian family, mainly through their interactions, coexistence and presence or absence in one another's lives. It is one of three of plays authored by Passô, created in collaboration with theatre groups from Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, from the early 2000s onwards, that deviate from the Brazilian tradition of patriarchal drama, whose major references in the twentieth century are the plays of Nelson Rodrigues and Jorge Andrade (Werneck, 2016, p. 119)¹⁶. As Maria Helena Werneck (*ibidem*) posits, on one hand, in Rodrigues's dramaturgy, families are sites of both institutionalised power and transgression that harbour the destabilising counterforces of desire and the unconscious. On the other hand, in Andrade's, it is historical processes and economic cycles that reshape power dynamics within the family, rendering them anachronistic but still susceptible to reconfiguration, even as they resist the weight of decay (*ibidem*). Such dramaturgical models, grounded in conflict-driven narratives and structured power dynamics, have long shaped representations of the Brazilian family on stage. Passô's writing signals a critical departure from these paradigms, proposing instead a dramaturgy that resists some of these conventional modes.

Amores Surdos challenges traditional forms not only through structure and staging, but also through the subversion of normative representations of the family unit. The abrupt opening monologue delivered by Joaquim sets the tone for a narrative that destabilises theatrical illusion while raising the audience's expectations for the escalation of the story. He tells the audience they are about to see the daily life of a "typical" Brazilian family, and this affirmation may suggest irony, due to the fantastic realism that the climax of the play unveils, and social indicators of regular families in a Brazilian context. Over time, in Brazil, family structures have undergone significant transformations, and it has become increasingly rare to find traditional formations with a male head of household, a spouse, and children (Jusbrasil, 2025). According to research by the Getúlio Vargas Foundation, between 2012 and 2022, the number of households led by single mothers increased by 17.8%, rising from 9.6

¹⁶ "Três dos trabalhos da autora, criados em colaboração com grupos de Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, a partir dos primeiros anos 2000, afastam-se da tradição brasileira do drama patriarcal cujas referências maiores são, no século XX, as obras de Nelson Rodrigues e Jorge Andrade."

million to 11.3 million, and in 2023, out of the 2.5 million births in Brazil, 172.2 thousand were registered without the father's name, marking a 5% increase compared to the previous year (*ibidem*). Thus, in the Brazilian social context, the absence of a father figure is far from unusual, and the silence surrounding that absence becomes a thematic anchor in *Amores Surdos*.

In the prologue of the published version of the play, Passô reflects on her own family context and upbringing as an example of a Brazilian household led by a single mother:

I have a mother and seven siblings. Almost all starting with the letter G. That's why they call me Grace. It's a North-american name. That's right, a Brazilian family, coming from the countryside with the noble cause of the working class: that their children would go to college. My father was black, my mother was from the Northeast, and my siblings and I are black. Yes, my family is a Brazilian family. The one in which the woman is strong, and it's from her womb that the cry emerges and life gets sorted out...¹⁷

This autobiographical framing invites readers to recognise the family on stage not as a distorted version of an ideal, but as a legitimate representation of a lived reality that diverges from the patriarchal and Eurocentric family structures still dominant in theatre. In *Amores Surdos*, the irony and critique of patriarchal structures lie in the fact that she is not even assigned a name, being called “Mom” throughout the play, ignoring her individuality and fixing her identity around motherhood. Akin to Gayle Rubin’s reasoning, “[a] woman is a woman. She only becomes a domestic, a wife, a chattel, a playboy bunny, a prostitute, or a human dictaphone in certain relations. Torn from these relationships, she is no more the helpmate of man than gold in itself is money” (2004, p. 770). The father is given a name in the list of characters even though he never appears on stage. By giving him the name of Gentil, Passô reinforces this pattern, implying he has a personal identity, different from the mother, who is only his accessory as the mother of his children. The family seems to pretend Gentil is among them; still, the mother, as Passô herself described before, “[...] is strong, and it's from her womb that the cry emerges and life gets sorted out” (*ibidem*), and she is the one who looks after everyone by herself. With this, Passô invites reflection on solo motherhood, not only as a personal condition but also as a wider sociopolitical reality in Brazil.

¹⁷ “Tenho uma mãe e sete irmãos. Quase todos começam com a letra G. Por isso chamam-me Grace. É um nome norte-americano. Pois sim, família brasileira, vindo do interior com a causa nobre da classe operária: que os filhos cresçam com uma faculdade. Meu pai era negro, minha mãe, nordestina, eu e os irmãos, negros. Sim, minha família é uma família brasileira. Aquela em que a mulher é forte, e é do ventre que sai o grito e resolve a vida” (Passô, 2012a, p. 8).

The play is set in a household and touches on various topics, such as family issues, social differences, solo motherhood, and the struggles of Brazilian immigrants in foreign countries. The family is portrayed by one of the first productions of the Espanca! group as seen on Figure 2 (starring Grace Passô, first on the left, as the mother with three of her children). On their homepage, the Espanca! group describes their second play as one that “deals with a silent agreement of love called intimacy”.¹⁸ Nevertheless, rather than presenting intimacy as a realised ideal, *Amores Surdos* ironically stages its failure, with each character simultaneously articulating a desire for closeness while enacting behaviours of avoidance, denial, or emotional distance. This interpretative tension was crucial for the translation process, as the emotional tone of the dialogues often oscillates between affection, alienation, and absurdity, demanding particular sensitivity to tone, rhythm, and subtext.

Figure 2 – Production by the Espanca! group, starring Grace Passô



Source: Espanca! (2023)

The mother and the father have five children. Little One is the youngest of the family, and the other members are constantly taking care of him, but what he says is hardly taken into account while the family is living their lives and making an effort to contact Júnior. Even though Junior is living abroad and the audience never sees or hears him, his problems are evident through the phone conversations and a touching monologue delivered in the opening scene by Joaquim. He is a sleepwalker who

¹⁸ “Segunda peça do grupo, trata de um silencioso acordo de amor que se chama intimidade. Por isso, vem dela a força que consolidou o Espanca!.” (Espanca, 2023, my translation)

addresses the audience directly and provides additional information about the drama while he is asleep. The other siblings are Grazielle and Samuel. The former seems oblivious to what happens around her, even though she provides psychological insight into the characters through the lyrics in her sing-alongs, which are incorporated into the dialogues (and in one instance, she is also sleepwalking and aware of what is happening). The latter is an adult who has difficulties in leaving the house and is reminded by his mother and Júnior of his first day at a new job that he seems to avoid.

A blending of the natural and surreal underscores Passô's approach to critiquing societal norms and adds depth to her critique of patriarchal structures. Werneck (2016, p. 119)¹⁹ reflects on how the novelty of Passô's dramaturgical writing lies in her rejection of traditional forms of conflict and her disengagement from both instinctual and historically constituted forces to structure elements of character identity. In *Amores Surdos*, in the seemingly realistic plot, it is repeatedly emphasised that the story is about an "ordinary" family. The play becomes heavy in irony and overt criticism of the role of the mother in patriarchal family dynamics, and surrealistic. A key example is found in the mother's nonchalant conversation with her son living abroad: "Your dad? He's fine, yes! Taking his walks every day. I guess so... I'll call him for you. (*to Little One*) Go inside and call your father; go!"²⁰. The apparent normalcy of the exchange masks the fact that, as the audience learns in the final acts, the father has been absent for nearly five years. This detail apparently goes unnoticed by the mother, who mistakes the noises of a hippo in the house for her husband's continued routine.

This disruption of realism introduces a dramaturgical approach grounded in estrangement and critique, setting the stage for Passô's exploration of power and denial within the family sphere. As seen on Figure 3, the presence of mud gradually covering the characters' bodies through the acts and the absurdity of an animal eating their father without anyone noticing disrupts the realism. Rather than emphasising conventional structures, Passô's dramaturgy, as Werneck (2016, p.

¹⁹ "A novidade da vertente escritural do teatro de Grace Passô está em negar as formas de conflito e em desabilitar as forças pulsionais ou historicamente constituídas como elementos formadores das identidades de personagens."

²⁰ "[...] seu pai? Está bem, sim! Fazendo suas caminhadas todos os dias. Acho que sim... vou chamar ele pra você. (*para Pequeno*) Vá lá dentro chamar seu pai, vai!" (Passô, 2012a, p. 29)

119)²¹ explains, prioritises gestures of disarmament in both narrative and performance, focusing on the dismantling of power structures that emerge within the family microcosm and eventually corrupt it. In *Amores Surdos*, this is seen, for instance, in the adamant decision of the mother to ignore the dirt generated around them by a hippopotamus that had been hidden in their house for years and her attempts to convince her children to do the same. After Joaquim demands Little One to get changed because of his dirty clothes, she repeatedly denies that they are dirty, and her vigorous monologue before the closure of the play after they finally face the animal explain this conscious denial: “THE BIG BEAST WILL STAY HERE, IN THIS HOUSE, INSIDE US. INSIDE US. NOBODY’S GONNA KILL IT. SOME THINGS WERE MADE FOR YOU TO LIVE WITH”²². Her final insistence on keeping the hippopotamus in the house reaffirms the enduring strength of her denial as a survival strategy: a force that kept the family operating as if nothing was wrong, and allowed them to endure and coexist with an unspoken issue that had long been part of their everyday reality.

Figure 3 – Production by the Espanca! group: “The climax of the play portrayed, with the family covered in mud”



Source: Espanca! (2023)

²¹ “O que prepondera, então, são formas dramatúrgicas baseadas no gesto de desarmar, tanto na fábula quanto na cena, dispositivos de poder, que se instalam no microcosmo familiar e acabam por contaminá-lo.”

²² “O GRANDE BICHO VAI CONTINUAR AQUI, NESSA CASA, DENTRO DE NÓS. DENTRO DE NÓS. NINGUÉM VAI MATÁ-LO. TEM COISAS QUE FORAM FEITAS PARA SE VIVER COM ELAS” (Passô, 2012a, p. 63).

There is potential symbolism in the silent hippopotamus living in one of the rooms of the house, or even lying in the middle of the living room with them watching TV, as Little One claims in: “It’s true! He even watches the telly with us every day”²³. That can be interpreted as a marker of unresolved absence, perhaps signifying the death, physical disappearance or emotional negligence of the father. This absence is never fully addressed, yet it is constantly present. Nobody seems to notice the father’s absence (or presence), and the interpretation of him being eaten by a hippopotamus could also suggest the difficulty, or even the refusal, to name grief within the home. Nevertheless, regardless of the reasons behind it, this plotted blindness and manipulation highlight Passô’s subversion of traditional family dynamics by exposing these underlying issues within the household.

Some contrasts regarding collectivism versus subjectivism are observed in the play since the characters portrayed are members of the same family living under the same roof, but in a cohabitation relationship for survival rather than harmonic conviviality. The characters do not reveal their internal struggles to one another. Yet, they express their feelings to the audience through the use of allegories such as the loud music from their neighbours to mask their arguments, the somnambulism of Joaquim and the sing-alongs of Grazielle to express characters’ inner struggles, the animal hidden in the house representing absence, the dirt caused by the animal’s presence suggesting the escalating dilemmas, and the difficulties in long-distance calls with the son who has migrated abroad creating a barrier for his communication. In spite of those subtle expressions of feelings, the characters do not manage to communicate amongst themselves efficiently. Passô does not explore the reasons behind these failures but presents them as inherent to the world she creates, leaving much of the interpretation to the reader. On Figure 4, this is seen in the exploration of Samuel’s subjectivities through performance, showing Little One “on stage” in the foreground, while Samuel is seen “off stage” in the background: suggesting his isolation and suffering in his detachment from home. For the translator, this vagueness presents challenges in conveying the subtleties of tone and intent without over-explaining or imposing a specific interpretation.

²³ “**Pequeno:** É verdade! Ele até assiste televisão com a gente todos os dias” (Passô, 2012a, p. 57).

Figure 4 – Little and Samuel in production by the Espanca! Group



Source: Espanca! (2023)

Despite their internal tensions and lack of direct communication, the family members act collectively when facing external issues, responding to challenges with a kind of unspoken solidarity. This is referred to when the son abroad calls to remind them of their connection, and at the end of the play, when they all face a problem together under their roof. One may suggest that the layering of all these inner and collective struggles are attempts to express intricacies of these family relations, as Passô declares: “The drafts, I started writing them when I was around seventeen, while — I imagine now — I should’ve been wondering about how complex love is”²⁴. On their homepage, the Espanca! group describes their second play as one that “deals with a silent agreement of love called intimacy”.²⁵ The play articulates the notion of intimacy through an ironic lens, portraying it as something the characters long for but continuously fail to live. It refers not to a straightforward or resolved treatment of intimacy, but rather to its persistent presence as a thematic undercurrent throughout the text.

On the theatre group’s website, the history of the productions can be found, along with some comments from critics and some background information on the

²⁴ “Os rascunhos, comecei a escrevê-los com meus poucos 17 anos, enquanto — imagino hoje — deveria estar me indagando sobre como o amor é complexo” (Passô, 2012a, p. 9).

²⁵ “Segunda peça do grupo, trata de um silencioso acordo de amor que se chama intimidade. Por isso, vem dela a força que consolidou o Espanca!” (Espanca, 2023, my translation)

performances and awards, accompanied by photos of some of the performances. By using some of the opening lines of the play, they describe it on the main page as follows:

An ordinary family lives through everyday situations: they have coffee, fight among themselves, someone gets sick... in short, they deal with their everyday problems. The play speaks of man's ability to be asleep, even when awake, because, even when awake, the characters do not hear, do not see, or perceive one another in everyday rituals that lead to alienation and incommunicability. Everything goes as expected until everyone is forced to recognise and deal with the consequences of this love nurtured by everyone daily.²⁶

This is relevant to the translation project because many moments of (mis)communication in the play reflect a broader cultural background that shapes how certain Brazilian families might express or suppress affection, anger, longing, and loss. These emotional undercurrents are not always explicit, but they are deeply rooted in social and linguistic nuances that the TT needs to hold space for.

The productions of the play by Espanca! have been well received by critics, as shown by Sérgio Sálvia Coelho in his article entitled “Grupo Espanca! mantém excelência na segunda peça” (Espanca! Theatre Group Maintains Excellence in Their Second Play), in which he questions the difficulty of labelling *Amores Surdos* by asking, “Comedy? Tragedy? Buffoonery?”²⁷. Marcos Antônio Alexandre affirms that from the group’s extensive repertoire, *Por Elise* and *Amores Surdos* are unique performances that allowed them “to reflect on different interpretative possibilities”²⁸. He also comments on *Amores Surdos*’s distinctive style, saying that through the play, “[t]he universe of magical (extraordinary) realism is configured: detaching oneself from reality through a story that is, at first ‘fantastic’, described in a ‘realistic’ way within a narrative, in this case, within the dramaturgical actions” (Alexandre, 2024, emphasis by the author)²⁹. Furthermore, On the Espanca! webpage, regarding *Amores Surdos*, Antonia Pereira Bezerra states that “it surprises and challenges the

²⁶ “Uma família comum convive em situações corriqueiras: toma café, briga entre si, alguém adocece... enfim, vive seus problemas cotidianos. O espetáculo fala da capacidade do homem de estar dormindo, mesmo quando acordado; porque, mesmo quando acordados, os personagens não se ouvem, não se enxergam, não se percebem, em rituais do cotidiano que conduzem à alienação e à incomunicabilidade. Tudo corre como o esperado, até que todos são obrigados a reconhecer e conviver com as consequências desse amor alimentado por todos, diariamente.” (Espanca, 2023, my translation)

²⁷ “Comédia? Tragédia? Bufonaria?” (Coelho, 2024, my translation).

²⁸ “[...] me permitem refletir sobre distintas possibilidades de leituras” (*ibidem*)

²⁹ “O universo do realismo mágico (maravilhoso) se configura: desprender-se da realidade por meio de uma história, em princípio “fantástica”, descrita de forma “realista” dentro de uma narrativa, neste caso, dentro das ações dramatúrgicas.” (*ibidem*)

audience with its sharp poetry and disconcerting irony”³⁰ and “shouts the unspeakable in a kind of acute, sensitive despair”.³¹ Furthermore, Júlio Groppa asserts that “[...] the play is of a touching beauty”.³²

The play premiered on March 24, 2006, on the Guairão stage in Curitiba, Paraná, at the Festival de Teatro de Curitiba (SECRETARIA DA COMUNICAÇÃO, 2024) and was part of several other theatre festivals in the country. Since then, it has toured 29 Brazilian cities in the states of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Ceará, Pernambuco, Distrito Federal, Minas Gerais, and Rio Grande do Sul (Espanca, 2023). It was translated into Spanish and performed in Chile (Puerto Montt), Colombia (Bogotá and Manizales), and Uruguay (Montevideo), among some of the 213 performances of the play in total, for 34,000 spectators (*ibidem*). Hence, one can conclude that the wide circulation of the play in Latin America and the restaging of the performances suggest that the play has been consistently well received, both nationally and internationally.

³⁰ “[...] surpreende e interpela o espectador com sua poesia cortante e sua ironia desconcertante” (Espanca, 2023, my translation)

³¹ “[...] grita o indizível numa sorte de desespero agudo, sensível. (*ibidem*)

³² “[...] o espetáculo é de uma beleza tocante.” (*ibidem*)

1. CHAPTER ONE – BRAZILIAN THEATRE MEETS TRANSLATION STUDIES, PRACTICE-LED RESEARCH AND RESEARCH-LED PRACTICE IN THE TRANSLATION OF *AMORES SURDOS*

This chapter reviews the theoretical framework underpinning the translated text of *Deaf Loves*. Thus, it focuses on the intersection of Brazilian drama, translation studies, and research-led practice aligned with practice-led research. By engaging with established translation theories, the chapter seeks to contextualise the theoretical framework behind the decisions made during the translation process, which strives to achieve a balance between the familiar and the strange to a target reader (TR) or target spectator (TS).

The discussion begins with the theoretical basis involving power, language and representation that encouraged the enterprise, from examining Antonio Gramsci's concept of Hegemony to Corine Tachtiris' (2024) vindication of the "unbearable Whiteness" in translation studies. Next, various translation approaches relevant to theatre studies that influenced this study are discussed, highlighting how a translator tackles the complexities of meaning, cultural adaptation, and performance. This is followed by a brief overview of the history of Brazilian theatre and its current state in the English-speaking world, addressing the challenges of its underrepresentation and the potential impact of increasing its visibility through translation. Additionally, the chapter introduces Pavis' hourglass model as a framework to understand the intercultural dynamics at play in theatre translation, offering insights into how cultural elements are filtered and transformed from the SC to the TC, and Nord's (2006) guidelines for analysing intratextual factors. Finally, this chapter underscores the importance of practice-led research and research-led practice in theatre translation, emphasising the iterative and collaborative nature of the process. Overall, the chapter sets the stage for a deeper exploration of the theories that influenced the translation process and their implications in the following chapters.

1.1. POWER, LANGUAGE AND REPRESENTATION IN *AMORES SURDOS*

This study aims to reflect on how sociocultural characteristics are reflected in the linguistic choices of both the ST and TT. This analysis considers power relations in translation as multi-layered, incorporating different dimensions of power beyond overt dominance or control. On the subject of power dynamics, Brian Longhurst et al. (2008) assert that societies are structured to preserve the interests of dominant groups, which can marginalise others. This is evident in the broader literary market, where, as Laera (2019, p. 40) notes, English is privileged, often overshadowing minority languages. Thus, for these minority cultures, there is a need for more representation, defined by Stuart Hall (1997) as “using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people” (p. 15). Since “translation wields enormous power in constructing representations of foreign cultures” (Venuti, 1998, p. 67), I propose an analysis of the translation of a contemporary Brazilian play to strengthen the representation of traits from Brazilian theatre, language and culture.

In order to approach this analysis, this study adopts Steven Lukes's (2005, p. 14) nuanced framework of power. Lukes (2005, p. 14) puts forward the perspective on power understood through distinct dimensions: i) the “one-dimensional view”, postulated by scientists such as Robert Dahl, which asserts that power lies in one's ability to compel another person to undertake specific actions (showing a behaviourist character); ii) the “two-dimensional view”, proposed by Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz, in which power extends to the capacity of a group to influence outcomes and dictate the fundamental “rules of the game” to their advantage; and iii) the “three-dimensional view”, which suggests that those in positions of power exert their influence to such an extent that they can minimise individuals' discontent by moulding their beliefs, thoughts, and desires, which leads people to embrace their positions within the established social framework. These traits are taken into account in the translation process of *Amores Surdos* in terms of the family relations portrayed, the issues with language register that are emphasised, and the cultural dominance in a globalised world.

In the dynamics of power within a family, adults have authority over the lives of children and, as such, parents dominate them in a hierarchical structure where the young ones are expected to obey. Regarding upbringing and maturation, Longhurst

et al. (2008) point out that “as children grow to adulthood, the power of other adults over them diminishes” (p. 14). This shift from dependence to independence is a nuanced and gradual process, particularly noticeable in large Brazilian families, where tightly-knit relationships create a complex interplay of influence and expectations. The mother's authority in the play is challenged by her having to share her attention with all the siblings, with no apparent support from her partner. This tension leads to a power-sharing dynamic with the older children, especially when it comes to taking care of Little One.

Finally, socioeconomic factors play a key role in influencing societal power dynamics within families, which can be expressed through art. The issues that are central to *Amores Surdos* reflect the challenges working-class families face, having to endure a routine together for survival in developing countries such as Brazil. Several elements suggest the family's working-class background, such as the father's absence as a sociological marker; the implicit educational disparity between the family and their neighbours; and the implicit expectation that the older siblings should assist in raising the younger ones. Besides that, the adult sibling living abroad, is criticised by his sister, when she questions him in “You wanna come back? You can't do that, Júnior, why “come back”?...”³³, which implies that he left to seek better conditions elsewhere. The dialogues among the family members and the premise of portraying the struggles of a working-class family in the play are embedded in these negotiations of power and must be considered in translation.

Another example of the imbalances in relations and the degree of influence that some may have over others can be seen through language. This is because language is not neutral; it is “a politically and culturally charged medium over which groups wrestle for control” (Longhurst et al., 2008, p. 44). Among the aspects involved in reproducing cultural inequalities are specialised lexicons and forms of speech that characterise specific social groupings but exclude those outside them (*ibidem*). The presence of a next-door family that shows similar problems emphasises this through contrast since they use a more formal language register among themselves, leading to a questioning of these neighbours' social standing due to their lack of politeness in their interactions, even though they sound more

³³ “Como? Voltar? Você não pode fazer isso, Júnior, por que ‘voltar’?” (Passô, 2012a, p. 46)

educated. On that account, one can observe that *Amores Surdos* highlights linguistic differences among social classes, revealing the power dynamics between speakers.

The language in *Amores Surdos* shifts from colloquial and formal to poetic registers to reflect both social context and the authorial style. As an example, most of the dialogue among the family members is marked by an informal vernacular, mainly seen in features such as the shortening of the verb to be (*estar*) to “*tá*”, “*tô*”, or “*tão*”. In contrast, the neighbours’ formal letter and stylised speech using verb conjugations of the pronoun “*tu*” can be considered a marker of formal language in some regions of the country — as mocked by Little One in “Hoje de manhã a menina parecia muito nervosa e gritou assim: “Não estás me ouvindo? Não estás me ouvindo? Por que ninguém me escuta nesse recinto?” (Passô, 2012a, p. 42)³⁴ — and highlight their perceived higher social status. The stage directions, however, have a distinctly poetic and layered voice, introducing philosophical reflections that magnify the narrative beyond imperative commands. This deliberate contrast between everyday speech and heightened poetic language is a hallmark of Passô’s theatrical writing, reinforcing the idea that while the material is socially grounded, the form is aesthetically complex. The interplay of registers in the play characterises the social dynamics at stake and showcases Passô’s ability to portray marginalised realities through an artistic lens. This contrast was taken into account in the translation choices and is further discussed in the analysis chapter.

Another issue related to language involves Júnior, who is abroad and tries to overcome his obstacles in immersing himself in another culture. It is not completely clear why Júnior would be suffering, but the constant statements that he wishes to return to his country and his conversation with Samuel about the social complications he had been facing suggest his feeling of inadequacy in the country he is living. Some hints imply Júnior is in a more developed country and feels diminished or excluded by people from another culture, probably native citizens of the country where he resides, and suffers linguistic discrimination because of his accent when speaking their language. Although the play does not specify where Júnior is, it is possible to infer that he might be in the United States, given the long-standing migratory flow from Minas Gerais to that country. One city of that state in particular,

³⁴ “This morning, the girl seemed really nervous, and she shouted, ‘I fear you’re not hearing me? I fear you’re not hearing me? Why doesn’t anyone listen to me in this household?’”

Governador Valadares, has been a notable departure point since the 1960s, with migratory patterns intensifying over the decades and often involving entire familial networks (Assis; Siqueira, 2009). This historical context adds plausibility to the character's experiences of linguistic and cultural exclusion abroad. In light of the three-dimensional view of power, Júnior's experience in *Amores Surdos* offers a depiction of cultural and social exclusion directly related to the use of language.

Júnior's experience as a migrant in *Amores Surdos* becomes especially relevant when considered through a decolonial lens, particularly in the context of a native speaker of the SL translating the voice of his family into English. Claire Chambers and Ipek Demir (2024, p. 36) assert that decolonial scholars seek to expose the patterns of coloniality, which would be an established 'colonial difference', as mentioned by Walter Mignolo (2007, p. 160), that was created by the Europeans when conquering the Americas. Chambers and Demir (2024, p. 36) argue that the colonisers would distinguish themselves from those they conquered, "categorising people along racialised lines into humans (European) and non-humans (the conquered)", and that "the colonial difference continues to shape our world, affecting the lines along which power and wealth are divided, as well as the types of human knowledge that are valued and the kinds of human lives that matter". Given that translation contributes to diversity since it makes individuals aware of other cultures and languages and expands their possibilities (Cronin, 2003), it is desirable to translate texts originating from cultures which would not be considered as widely spread, as it allows for different perspectives from those of dominant cultures. Besides the fact that most literary translations involve canonical or popular works by authors from more developed countries, when authors from minority cultures³⁵ are translated, it is often translators from these developed countries who speak on their behalf by translating their works. Additionally, in line with Hall's (1997, p. 257) argument, it is crucial to recognise how stereotyping can reduce individuals to essential characteristics, perpetuating exclusion and reinforcing power relations.

³⁵ I use the term "minority" to refer to a psychological minority in this case, following Gordon Allport's conceptualisation of the term as a social group that is "[m]ildly disparaged and discriminated against", among which are "many immigrants and regional groups, occupations, colored people, and adherents to certain religions" (Allport, 1954, p. 243). Gordon Willard Allport asserts that this "implies that the dominant group has stereotyped ideas about some smaller segment of the population which bears ethnoid characteristics, that to some degree it accords this segment discriminatory treatment [...]" (*ibidem*).

Corine Tachtiris (2024, pp. 4-5) highlights the global hegemony of the English language and the Anglophone publishing market, emphasising how whiteness continues to shape translation both in theory and in practice. Tachtiris asserts that, “Western translation studies largely marginalises translations, translators, translation practices, and translation theory from outside the West, and that this marginalisation must be understood, too, as partly originating from and maintaining white supremacy” (*ibidem*). She acknowledges the “West” as not merely a geographic marker, but a cultural and ideological formation whose values originated in Western Europe and predominate in white-majority societies. Although “Western” is not identical to “white”, it retains a racial dimension, so whiteness remains intertwined with the idea of Western cultural dominance (*ibidem*). Tachtiris (*ibid.*, pp. 16-8) also notes that racialised translators are relegated to the role of “bridge” translators, seen as useful for providing literal renderings of their own languages, while the creative task of shaping the final text is reserved for white, first-language English speakers. This reinforces a bias in which white translators are often perceived as more qualified, even when their connection to the SC is superficial or nonexistent, or even when racialised translators possess complete mastery of English (*ibidem*). This creates a dynamic of white saviourism, where white agents in the publishing industry are praised for promoting diversity, without challenging the power structures that perpetuate inequality in the first place (*ibidem*). In this context, the translation of *Amores Surdos* does not attempt to bypass or soften this dynamic, but to expose it through proximity to the ST.

In light of these provocations, Aníbal Quijano’s reflections offer a compelling foundation for rethinking the translator’s role. He advocates for the destruction of the coloniality of global power through epistemological decolonisation, making way for a new intercultural communication and an exchange of experiences and meanings as the foundation for another rationality (1992, pp. 19-20). This intercultural rationality resists the imposition which Quijano names as “nothing less rational”, referring to “the pretence that the specific worldview of a particular ethnicity be imposed as universal rationality”³⁶. This universal rationality is also criticised by Tachtiris (2024, p. 15), who

³⁶ “Pues nada menos racional, finalmente, que la pretensión de que la específica cosmovisión de una etnia particular sea impuesta como la racionalidad universal, aunque tal etnia se llame Europa Occidental” (*ibidem*, my translation).

discusses the problematics of colourblindness and how white writers are often taken as universal, while writers of colour are not.

Furthermore, the seminal question by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1994), “Can the subaltern speak?” also underpins this dynamic by exposing how dominant discourses silence marginal voices or appropriate them without honest representation. In her critique, Spivak highlights that “some of the most radical criticism coming out of the West today is the result of an interested desire to conserve the subject of the West, or the West as Subject” (*ibid*, p. 66), a position supported by legal privilege and institutional power. Translating *Amores Surdos* into English, then, aims to resist reenacting this epistemic force. Júnior’s story is not that of a Western European or North American subject, and his linguistic presence in English should bear the marks of that marginality. Therefore, this translation aims to reframe English as a tool not of domination but of strategic visibility, disrupting its customary alignment with cultural hegemony and instead creating space for narratives from the Global South.

Consequently, Antonio Gramsci’s notion of Hegemony³⁷ also influences this translation project, since it offers critical insight into how social groups compete for dominance through thought and practice. As Hall (1997, p. 48) explains, hegemony reflects the struggle for ideological consent, where one group seeks to influence and control others. Gramsci emphasises that this process is political and philosophical, representing an intellectual and ethical unity beyond common sense (Hoare; Smith, 1999, p. 642). The concept highlights the intrinsic connection between theory and practice, where political and cultural movements rely on the development of intellectual leaders who organise and guide the masses (*ibidem*). By integrating philosophy with action, Gramsci’s theory highlights the necessity of aligning leadership with the lived experiences of the masses to achieve meaningful societal change. Thus, the understanding of the translational process outlined in this study is grounded in a view that sees translation not only as a product but as a processual, situated act. The process of initiating a translation raises essential questions: What is being translated? Who translates? From where? Why? And under what conditions?

³⁷ Gramsci’s writings were composed in the form of notebooks and letters. These materials have been edited, organised, and translated by various scholars over the years. After consulting several editions, Hoare and Smith’s *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1999) were chosen, due to its reliability and widespread recognition among scholars. When referring to Gramsci’s theory, I use the term “Hegemony” as a proper noun in upper case to highlight the concept.

These concerns shape the meaning and impact of the translation itself, as well as its function within broader cultural and political structures.

Ivete Simionatto (1999, p. 43) notes that Gramsci's Hegemony encompasses not only political leadership but also the securing of consensus through cultural institutions, resulting in both political and cultural subordination. This passive subordination, reinforced through cultural institutions, serves to stabilise the power of dominant groups. However, Simionatto (1999, p. 46) argues for a shift from passive to active consensus, advocating for a more engaged and critical approach to challenging these power structures. Gramsci's ideas resonate with the role of translators, especially those from minority cultures, who act as intellectual leaders and choose what to translate and why, and these works can be positioned as both a philosophical and practical tool, offering a means to amplify marginalised voices for greater equity in global discourse. This way, translators would employ the dynamic relationship between theory and practice, using their craft to bridge cultural divides and contribute to reshaping societal structures. In this context, drawing from Gramsci's suggestion, the refinement of theory would not be an accessory to practice, but it would evolve alongside the practical struggles of the masses, ensuring that the quality of leadership and ideology reflects their actual needs and aspirations (Hoare; Smith, 1999, p. 642). Translation is seen here as an act of intervention. That is, it emerges as a tool for political mediation, capable of participating in the construction of a revolutionary hegemony, one that challenges dominant narratives and opens space for the representation of the historically silenced.

Grace Passô's text is against the grain on multiple fronts, especially when we consider that cultural hegemony, in Gramscian terms, operates not just through political power but through norms of taste, language, and visibility in the cultural field. Linguistically, Passô's use of clipped verbs, everyday expressions, and conversational rhythm locates the characters within a colloquial oral tradition. Philosophically, it presents working-class life not as a stereotype or object of pity but as a site of layered humanity, poetic insight, and existential tension. This aligns with a decolonial and counter-hegemonic epistemology, which, as Quijano (1992) suggests, seeks to validate subaltern forms of knowledge and life experiences. The fact that poetic and complex language is layered onto the lived reality of a precarious family destabilises both the expectation of "kitchen-sink realism" and the assumption that working-class characters can only speak in simple terms, heightening language

without erasure. Socially, *Amores Surdos* places at its centre the struggles of a working-class Brazilian family by addressing care, absence, emotional overwhelm, and societal pressure. The fact that one sibling is living abroad, likely in pursuit of better life conditions, echoes broader global migration patterns rooted in economic inequality and exclusion, situating the characters outside the circuits of privilege.

In Passô's work, she persistently questions what holds meaning within her socio-historical context. As discussed earlier, in *Vaga Carne*, this questioning takes the form of a disembodied voice: a voice searching for a body, expression, and resonance. In this metaphorical act, Passô grants voice to her people, her community, and those who are often silenced or reduced to caricature in dominant cultural narratives. In an interview for *Oficinas Culturais*, Passô refers to this questioning directly, saying:

I've always wanted to see on stage the symbols and everyday elements I've always lived with, that my family have always lived with. [...] There's still this idea of theatre as something very distant from us, as something that happens in marble-filled buildings, and a place that is much more associated with imperial power, much less close to us, to ordinary people. Theatre, to me, is social mobilisation; it's coexisting with people in a space that holds greater potency. So, for me, dusting off this idea of theatre has also always been a goal; to intentionally create a scene where people have a sense of simplicity, no matter how complex it is... a sense of closeness, a sense that, in some way, they could do that too. (23:28)³⁸

It was precisely this sense of closeness and empowerment that I felt as a reader of *Amores Surdos*, which sparked my interest as a translator to attempt it too, broadening this voice in another language. The voice becomes not just a symbol of subjectivity but also of resistance and representation, echoing across her plays as a call for presence within a society that rarely allows black women from working-class lives to speak in their own terms.

³⁸ "Sempre quis ver em cena símbolos, elementos do cotidiano que eu sempre vivi, que as minhas famílias todas sempre viveram. [...] existe ainda uma idéia de um teatro como algo muito distante de nós, como algo que fazem em edifícios cheios de mármore, e um lugar muito mais associado ao poder do império, muito menos próximos a nós, às pessoas comuns. O teatro pra mim é uma mobilização social, é uma convivência num espaço entre pessoas de uma potência muito grande, então pra mim desempoeirar uma certa idéia de teatro também sempre foi um objetivo, criar intencionalmente uma cena onde as pessoas tenham uma sensação de simplicidade, por mais complexa que ela seja, uma sensação de proximidade, uma sensação de que aquilo em certa medida elas também poderiam fazer" (Espanca, 2023, my translation).

1.2. TRANSLATION APPROACHES AND THEATRE

In order to discuss a work of theatre translation, one can propose the contemplation of interlingual communication, which requires reasoning on how different languages convey meaning. Jeremy Munday (2016) explored the concept of equivalence, considering that “although languages may differ in the way they convey meaning and in the surface realisations of that meaning, there is a (more or less) shared way of thinking and experiencing the world” (p. 60). Subsequently, Munday (*ibidem*) discusses the problem of equivalence in meaning amongst words in different languages and the interlinguistic difference between terms and semantics. The issue here is that, as proposed by Fernandes (2016, p. 108), it can be argued that “neither can a translation be a copy nor the same as the originary text because the original does not exist in the culture and language the translator translates into”, which disrupts the goal of equivalence. In order to contain this imbalance, two core translation methods are often discussed in translation studies: domestication, which adapts the text to the TC, and foreignisation, which preserves its foreign elements. According to Lawrence Venuti (1995, p. 20), domestication would consist of “an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author [to the TR]” (*ibidem*). In contrast, foreignisation would be “an ethnodeviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad” (*ibidem*). Considering this, the primary focus of this translation process was centred on a playtext that would simultaneously “bring the author to the TR” and “send the reader abroad”, balancing the concepts of domestication and foreignisation.

Achieving this balance requires exploring strategies, allowing certain foreign elements to challenge the TA while ensuring that the text remains accessible and enriching the intercultural dialogue the translated text aims to inspire. While foreignisation emphasises the translator's effort to ensure *readability* by adhering to familiar linguistic conventions and maintaining clarity of meaning in the TT, domestication disrupts cultural norms in the TL and TC, creating an intentionally alien reading experience (Venuti, 1995, p. 20). Carole-Anne Upton (2000) discusses these issues in the realm of theatre translation. She asserts that being a “complex and composite medium, in which the verbal is but one element within a whole matrix of visual and aural semiotic codes” (p. 7), theatre is not a matter of absolutes but the

wholly domestic or foreign approach would be opposite poles of a single spectrum of sophisticated possibilities. Within this spectrum, theatrical practices can creatively balance contrasts by intertwining “the alien” and “the familiar”, creating a dynamic interplay that allows for both connection and estrangement between cultures. Still concerning this, Upton (2000, p. 51) declares that appealing to audiences may involve decisions related to cultural adaptation in a tension between foreignisation and domestication, which find their way into theatre performances in the form of textual strategies, such as the use of specific dialects or audio-visual signs.

Based on the proposition of Fernandes (2016, p. 109) that the playscript “establishes connections between the domestic and the foreign, and between what is known and what is unknown to the audience members of the receiving culture”, the translator can attempt to bring target and source cultures together to enable a connection in-between. The translation choices aim to seem meaningful and familiar to the TR, at the same time as “a place where a cultural other is manifested” (Fernandes 2015, p. 20). This aligns directly with the discussion by Silviano Santiago (2000) on the “space-in-between” in Latin American discourse:

Between sacrifice and playfulness, between prison and transgression, between submission to the code and aggression, between obedience and rebellion, between assimilation and expression — there, in this apparently empty space, its temple and its place of clandestinity, there is where the anthropophagous ritual of Latin American discourse is created.³⁹

Consequently, in the context of a Latin American translator amplifying the voice of a Latin American playwright embedded in this practice of taking in European forms and creatively reacting to them or even subverting them, the attempt of this translation project is to mirror this use by submitting a Brazilian play to English language norms, but also by transgressing certain meanings. This translation process departs from this concept of meeting halfway, in which the receiving context and the originary text might influence each other and result in something new.

For that reason, this shift from a passive to an active use of a major hegemonic tool that is the English language to express a foreign work aims to question and disrupt the dominant ways of seeing the world embedded in that language. It reflects the historical power dynamics that define what is perceived as

³⁹ “Entre o sacrifício e o jogo, entre a prisão e a transgressão, entre a submissão ao código e a agressão, entre a obediência e a rebelião, entre a assimilação e a expressão - ali, nesse lugar aparentemente vazio, seu templo e seu lugar de clandestinidade, ali, se realiza o ritual antropófago da literatura latinoamericana” (p. 26, my translation).

"alien" or "familiar", categories shaped by longstanding processes of cultural imposition and erasure. By using elements that may seem alien, the translation offers an alternative view of a historical home, adding layers of context and generating a dynamic tension that tests the audience's openness to difference. The act of translating this specific text already situates the project within the "space-in-between", but the goal here is to preserve the sense of the original context while finding familiar forms of expression. These forms are intended to be immediately accessible to the receiving audience, without erasing the traces of difference, thus enabling a more productive and meaningful intercultural exchange. In this sense, it is a counter-movement to the one Santiago (2000, p. 13) points out when reflecting on how the earliest translations and theatre enterprises in Brazil were linked to processes of domination, where theatre functioned as a key instrument of colonial control. The use of theatre and translation in the opposite direction becomes a politically charged and subversive act. It is precisely through this reversal, by occupying the same tools once used for cultural imposition, that this translation project engages the "space-in-between" as a site of resistance and re-signification.

In order to access the TA, a translated play touches on the lines of demarcation of speech and dialogue in different languages. This characteristic is aligned with Upton's discussion on how theatre crosses the tension between "artificiality" and "naturalism", which is related to the "tension in translation studies about the fluency of the translated text" (2000, p. 53). Considering the translated text, the notion of it being "fluent" (or defined as having minimal interferences in expression) has been extensively discussed in translation studies, and in the realm of theatre, this quality is particularly relevant to the concept of performability. As Upton suggests, theatre scholars have widely discussed the issue of performability, or to what extent an adapted text would be more or less "performable" (p. 55). However, the premise of "a performance" itself denotes artificiality, and as Upton draws from Maryse Pelletier (1998), the effect of the words in theatre seems to be of more importance than their exactness. Similarly, contrasts have been noted between the translations for the page and those for the stage. Based on the translation of Shakespeare into Portuguese by Brazilian translators (including Bárbara Heliodora, Anna Amélia Carneiro de Mendonça, and Millôr Fernandes), Cláudia Cruz (2019, p. 257) concludes that there have been disagreements on what would be a "performable" or "literary" translation. Hence, the emphasis has shifted away from

strict performability since anything can be considered performable, focusing instead on the impact of words in theatre.

Besides these factors, another struggle is added: the different relationship a translator has with the TL. Translators translating from a second language into their mother tongue already face a quest to find a desired tone for their translations. As Cruz (2019, p. 269) mentions, Clarice Lispector would exhaustively read her translation of a theatre play by Lilian Hellman aloud to understand the rhythm of the words. In a reverse approach, during my experience as an inexperienced translator of theatre delivering a playtext in a second language, I could read the text aloud, but the lurking fear of not being able to perceive all the intricacies of the TT was constantly present. As Maria Clara Ferrer (2019, p. 116) notes, what unfolds in this relationship with the original work is far more than a linguistic transposition, but a dialogue with a unique mode: that of the author and their creative context, of thinking, conceiving, and making theatre. I relate to this perception since my practice involved a careful engagement with the words on the page and a strong emotional and intellectual connection with the ST, which eventually created an urge to retell its story.

The work of translating from one's "mother tongue into an acquired language" (Andrade, 2020, p. 24) is thorough and intimate. As an example of a translator and scholar who has faced similar challenges in translating and carrying research from the same inverse perspective, the scholar, theatre translator and dramaturge Almiro Andrade conducted his doctoral research on the translation and adaptation of Northeastern Brazilian drama through devising for performance, using Aldri Anunciação's *Namíbia, Não!* as a case study. He described his translation methodology in the individual instance as a "threefold" approach, which consisted of a first *instinctive* step, focused on a free interpretation of his first impressions of the text, followed by a *literal* one, more conscious of the syntax of the message, and finally a *mechanical* translation involving the consultation of dictionaries and thesauruses (Andrade, 2020, p. 24). In the case of *Amores Surdos*, the deliberate choice to inhabit the space-in-between and embrace the tension it entails guided my translation decisions, and the works of translators such as Andrade offered me a sense of confidence in working independently on the text.

The dynamics of work that involves seeing how the text comes alive in a reading by actors and discussing what stands out in the piece is invaluable to even

for a play written and produced in one country, let alone in an intercultural practice. Cruz (2019, p. 268) mentions Pavis' statement that, in order to translate a text for the stage, one must keep in mind the audience's expectations and that we cannot simply translate the text linguistically, but confront and bring into contact heterogeneous cultures and enunciation situations, separated in space and time. Andrade (2020, p. 20) provides examples of research conducted on Shakespeare, Molière, and later Nelson Rodrigues, demonstrating that they developed their plays through close collaboration with actors and theatre troupes, often testing or tailoring their scripts with specific performers in mind, thereby highlighting a participatory and ensemble-based approach to playwriting. He states that the work of a playwright or dramatist "may start individually, through writing for a future performance, or collectively, where the text is built through creative input and rehearsal room workshops; in either case their work still relies on the collective participation of other creative forces" (*ibidem*). His own independent effort is followed by a collaborative work in the rehearsal room, along with actors and the creative team, reaching a final product that is a result of these experimentations during the readings and/or performances (*ibidem*). That is where the collaborative part of this research becomes pivotal: after the "individual" work of my practice, I had the chance to engage in a table read and discussion of the text that, as discussed in the analysis, has highly influenced the final version of the text.

Thus, this process demanded several different moments and phases, from research to translation, in a search to achieve a balance between acquiring technical expertise and the personal feeling of attachment to the text. Drawing from Rabetti (2014, p. 12), I could find the words to describe it as a feeling that finds its starting point in that necessary intimacy demanded of the translator when facing the author's words and hands them the key to enter them with a particular sensitivity, at times turning them inside out in the conviction of reaching their ultimate meaning, and thus believing they are migrating into another language. As a reader of Grace Passô, I perceive a text that is categorically written with the stage in mind, and I felt invited to envision that myself from the playtext. As a researcher of Passô's reflection on her writing, this assurance grew, and the certainty that a translation that favoured the spoken word to mimic the ST would be the main goal of the project. In translating *Amores Surdos*, attention was given to the verbal elements and the emotional, social, and performative effects embedded in the original. Even though this enterprise was

purely academic and no performances or publications were on sight while the text was being translated, and the translator could take all the liberties possible regarding their TA and scope of the translation, there were certain specific characteristics of style in mind to find comfort in a space-in-between. The translation thus aimed to recreate key experiential impacts such as humour or tension, in a way that could resonate with a different audience. This choice was shown to be conclusive in the workshop with the actors, which resulted in a fruitful reading by them, and in the next chapter, I describe what seemed to have resonated and what needed to be polished.

In this research, the most prominent theoretical frameworks guiding the analysis of the translation choices are Pavis' (1992) model for theatre translation theory and Nord's (2006) factors for intratextual analysis. Nord's concept of "intratextual factors" refers to the internal elements of a text that a translator would have to consider during the translation process. She identifies eight key factors: *Subject matter*, *Content*, *Presuppositions*, *Text composition*, *Non-verbal elements*, *Lexic*, *Sentence Structure*, and *Suprasegmental Features*, which are considered in my discussion and analysis of how specific challenges in the translation of *Deaf Loves* were addressed. These factors provide a structural and linguistic lens through which to examine the playtext, complementing the cultural focus that Pavis' model provides.

The challenges (or "problems") a translator faces in the translation process are classified by Nord (2006, p. 167) into four categories: pragmatic, cultural, linguistic, and text-specific. These categories help to identify and address issues ranging from cultural nuances to language-specific structures. Regarding the foundational framework for resolving the translation challenges encountered in this project, Nord's framework offers a linguistic layer of analysis, while Pavis' (1992) theatre translation theory focuses on how cultural elements are justified and adapted in the translation process. While Nord's factors help identify the textual features that shape meaning, Pavis' model enables an exploration of how these features contribute to the playtext's impact in a performative and intercultural context. Both frameworks are discussed in more detail later in this chapter and applied more extensively in the analysis section, where specific translation choices are reviewed through the lenses of style, linguistic variation, and cultural adaptation.

The discussions concerning the translation issues encountered in the writing process of *Deaf Loves* are attentive to the usability of the text for performance and

the possibility of intercommunication between the SC and the TC. These discussions take into account the fact that, even though the correlation between translation and intercultural dialogue has been well-founded, the field has yet to expand. At the time of Pavis' discussions on intercultural theatre, he highlighted that whereas translation problems had gained some recognition towards the end of the twentieth century, the same could not be said of theatre translation (1992, p. 131). In the last few decades, this has been changing. As Bohunovsky (2019, p. 132), and Susan Bassnett and Catalina Iliescu-Gheorghiu (2025) point out, with regard to theory, it is worth noting that theatre translation has experienced a phase of growing prestige and recognition over the past several years, and it has become the subject of numerous studies. As evidence for this, Serón-Ordóñez's detailed and annotated overview of more recent bibliographic production on the topic in *Theatre translation studies: An overview of a burgeoning field* (Part II: From the early 2000s to 2014) can be mentioned (*ibidem*). Even though his outline shows a significant shortage of perspectives from places other than the European ones, and there are no examples of theorists discussing the translation of plays by Latin American authors into English.

On the other hand, Bassnett and Iliescu-Gheorghiu's special issue, "Theatre Translation: Performability and Reception from Intercultural Perspectives", published in *MonTI - Monografias de Traducción e Interpretación* (2025), features contributions about translations into Persian, Romanian, Spanish, Portuguese, Greek, Catalan, Galician, among others, from source languages such as English, German, and Portuguese. The volume reflects rich intercultural exchange through theatre translation across Europe, and this time also from Latin America, and beyond. Nonetheless, the majority of works discussed still rely on the hegemonic flow of translation from English into other languages, and again, there are no examples of scholars discussing the translation of plays written by Latin American authors into English. Even though Pavis' statement reflects the conditions of the time, the field is still under a growing process, and when it comes to the representation of the Latin American perspective in theatre translation, this situation largely persists in the last decades, still facing significant challenges in bridging intercultural and temporal divides.

Pavis (1992) also highlights that theatre as a genre is designed to reach audiences through performance. According to him, the translator would "confront and communicate heterogeneous cultures and situations of enunciation that are

separated in space and time" (p. 131). These factors are connected to what Fernandes (2016) suggests with regard to the perceived position of the theatre translator. She describes them as being "haunted by both the originary text and context as well as by the receiving context" and constantly dealing with an absence of the existence of the originary text in the receiving context (p. 108). This interplay of cultural and contextual elements underscores the theatre translator's complex role as a mediator, bridging disparate temporal and spatial dimensions to recreate the essence of the original work for new audiences.

Similarly, Marvin Carlson (2001) considers the intrinsic connection between the originary and receiving contexts that "haunts" the translator. He affirms that "all theatrical cultures have recognised, in some form or another, this ghostly quality, this sense of coming back in the theatre, and so the relationship between theatre and cultural memory" (p. 2). Although this could be accounted for in relation to cultural artefacts in general, Carlson emphasises the impact of cultural memory specifically in theatre:

Theatre as a simulacrum of the cultural and historical process itself, seeking to depict the full range of human actions within their physical context, has always provided society with the most tangible records of its attempts to understand its own operations. It is the repository of cultural memory, but, like the memory of each individual, it is also subject to continual adjustment and modification as the memory is recalled in new circumstances and contexts. (*ibidem*)

Based on this, the discussion proposed by this translation project involves the translators negotiating with their ghosts (who are a result of these individual and cultural memories) to reach a meeting point for the ST and the TT of a theatre translation. The translator's negotiation with their own "ghosts" is understood here as the personal and cultural memories, linguistic repertoires, and experiences that shape the translation process. In this case, these include my formative relationship with the English language, developed since my adolescence in São Luís, the capital of the state of Maranhão; my lived experience in Ireland, which exposed me to particular social and performative codes; and my ongoing personal and professional interactions with speakers from the Midlands in England, whose regional speech patterns and cultural references inform my ear as a translator. By acknowledging these elements, the project embraces a situated perspective of translation, in which the translator's position is not neutral but constitutive of the final text.

1.3. BRAZILIAN THEATRE AND TRANSLATION: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The first person to write and produce plays in Brazil, when it was under Portuguese rule, was Jesuit José de Anchieta, a foreigner who brought theatrical tools from the colonising centre for religious purposes. Notwithstanding, Sábato Magaldi (2008, p. 13) notes that instead of imposing European standards onto the new land, he quickly adapted to the indigenous spirit, eventually producing plays in Tupi, a native language, such as *Auto da Pregação Universal* and *Dia da Assunção*. Although influenced by European norms, such as the use of the Spanish language as seen in *Na Vila de Vitória* and the references to the Spanish crown to assert religious supremacy, this effort at acculturation avoided rigid foreign rules, thereby creating a unique theatrical form. From the introduction of theatre practices in the territory, Brazilian drama has historically been characterised by collective trends that reflect the nation's broader social and political struggles.

After what is believed to be a hiatus in the two following centuries due to the lack of a relevant number of documented performances, the Independence of Brazil prompted new trends in theatre, as Magaldi (2008) suggests. Fernando Peixoto et al. (1990, p. 6) report that, in the early years, Brazilian playwrights “attempted to discover values of a specific Brazilian nationality”, even though the European influence in drama continued to prevail both in writing and performance. Regarding the theatre produced at the time, Magaldi (2008) notes that the plays “advocated for the fusion of races, Independence, Abolitionism, and the Republic, and they stigmatised the various errors of society. They have always supported the oppressed, combating any form of tyranny”.⁴⁰ Hence, as Magaldi suggests, Brazilian theatre has long been shaped by an interplay between nationalist affirmation and adaptation to European standards — a trend that seems to have permeated theatre practice in the country from its birth to contemporaneity.

The evolution of Brazilian theatre has been closely intertwined with significant cultural and political movements throughout its history. As a result, the development of Brazilian theatre has rarely been disassociated from broad cultural and political movements. Magaldi (2008) argues that “[i]f great theatre was not being realised in

⁴⁰ “Nossas peças do passado advogaram a fusão das raças, a Independência, o Abolicionismo, a República, e estigmatizaram os diversos erros da sociedade. Sempre ampararam os oprimidos, combatendo qualquer forma de tirania” (p. 15, my translation).

the metropolis, how could it be claimed for a colonised country?"⁴¹. The consolidation of drama in Brazil began in the early to mid-nineteenth century with its Romantic Movement in the arts, which emerged during the country's quest for political independence, marking a shift from plays written by foreign playwrights to a focus on national and popular implications on the Brazilian stage, with Gonçalves de Magalhães being a notable reference (*ibidem*). According to Magaldi, José Veríssimo suggested that Brazilian theatre, "[...] a product of Romanticism [...]" (*ibidem*, p. 10), might have declined with the movement itself. Nonetheless, while Brazilian dramatic literature may not rival the best productions of poetry or novels, it has continuously strived to establish itself within the country's cultural landscape.

The collective trend of national and cultural exploration laid the groundwork for theatre practitioners, who continued to reflect and reshape the Brazilian theatrical landscape. Peixoto et al. (1990, p. 61) argue that in the twentieth century, the history of Brazilian theatre was a result of slow maturation and national emancipation. Décio de Almeida Prado reports that the national theatre started to show inquietude in the 1930s, after some years of national and international instability, such as the recent end of the Communist Revolution, the *Revolução de Outubro*, and the crisis of 1929 (2009, pp. 13-14). Moving beyond the comedy of manners that emerged in the 1840s with Martins Pena (Magaldi, 2008, p. 43) and that remained popular until the 1920s, but failed to resonate with the audience amidst the new Revolution (Prado, 2009, pp. 12-14), a new phase of Brazilian theatre was initiated in the 1940s. It was the Modernist phase of theatre in Brazil, which is commonly regarded as characterised by a search for national authenticity, aesthetic innovation, and reflection on Brazilian society.

According to Magaldi (1996, pp. 294-95), for many years, our theatre remained largely indifferent to the aesthetic proposals of Modernism. Differently, in literature, visual arts, and music, the *Semana de Arte Moderna* held in São Paulo in 1922 came to be seen as a turning point, generally acknowledged as the moment when the spirit of contemporaneity entered Brazilian creative expression (*ibidem*). In the 1930s, the gradual incorporation of modernist principles into Brazilian theatre thus involved a critical reworking of imported aesthetic frameworks and an urgent desire to reflect the complexities of Brazilian identity (*ibidem*). One concept that is

⁴¹ "Se não se realizava um grande teatro, na metrópole, como reivindicá-lo para um país colonizado?" (p. 9, my translation)

pivotal for the modernist arts in Brazil and still reverberates in contemporary artistic and academic practice is that of anthropophagy formulated by Oswald de Andrade, which is referred to by Santiago (2000) in the discussions regarding the “space-in-between” in Latin American discourse. Magaldi (1996, p. 294) affirms that the boldest Brazilian stage productions of the following decades can be seen as acts of anthropophagic devouring of foreign models. Regarding this, he concludes that Brazilian theatre may be of interest to international audiences insofar as it reflects national specificity in a context in which the equal exchange of experiences enriches all those involved (*ibidem*).

Although theatre practices expanded in the nineteenth century, they were still marginalised in the early twentieth century. The stages were built in a configuration that would accommodate both cinematic and theatrical performances, allowing for flexible attendance of both arts (Prado, 2009, p. 14). During this time, notable figures such as Oswald de Andrade, Mário de Andrade, Jorge Andrade, Nelson Rodrigues, Ariano Suassuna, Augusto Boal, and Gianfrancesco Guarnieri made significant contributions to Brazilian theatre during its Modernist phase (Prado, 2009, pp. 28-40). As evidenced here, most recognised authors in Brazil are male. Ana Lúcia Vieira de Andrade (2006) addresses this imbalance in her anthology of twentieth-century women playwrights, analysing the works of both prominent and marginalised authors such as Leilah Assunção, Maria Adelaide Amaral and Ísis Baião, alongside more widely recognised names like Consuelo Castro and Hilda Hilst. This acknowledgement of gender disparity highlights the importance of studying the contributions of women in Brazil's theatrical landscape.

Despite the historical marginalisation of female playwrights in Brazil, their contributions have begun to gain recognition, alongside a trend in the twentieth century towards expressing subjectivity. The socio-historical period of the late 1960s in Brazil was marked by the dramatic influence of the dictatorship, and the main themes explored in the plays of the time centred on the pursuit of liberty, individual freedom, and women's rights (Arantes, 2020, p. 33). A few decades later, Passô expressed in her drama a contemporary focus on the *human* as Arantes described, emphasising both individual issues and collective relations among people. *Amores Surdos* can be seen as a reflection of both prevailing collectivist and subjectivist attitudes since it encapsulates the intersection of these tendencies, exemplifying this evolving narrative in the context of contemporary Brazilian theatre written by women.

Furthermore, the play can serve as a testament to how Brazilian women playwrights contribute to a shifting narrative in theatre practices in the country.

This evolving narrative is particularly significant in the context of Brazilian theatre's challenges in reaching broader audiences, both domestically and internationally. Brazilian theatre has faced considerable challenges over time, influenced by global power dynamics and capitalist priorities that often marginalise its contributions. It is frequently dismissed when judged according to European and North American standards, and it thus still needs a distinct identity capable of resonating with other cultures (Magaldi, 2008, p. 09). Magaldi notes that "[t]he norm in the existence of theatre, at least as long as the conditions of contemporary society persist, is commercialism, which is merely disguised by a well-crafted production, an essential factor for its success"⁴². Furthermore, the range of influence of even the most successful productions is limited, with audiences primarily composed of the financially privileged, while "Brazilian playwrights largely criticise the prevalence of foreign works, expressing dissatisfaction with the preference shown by producers and audiences for translated plays and the resulting lack of encouragement for national productions"⁴³. This situation reflects yet a broader issue of cultural marginalisation, where Brazilian theatre is overlooked in favour of more dominant, globally recognised art forms.

Regarding the visibility of Brazilian literature abroad, Severino Albuquerque (2016, p. 13) notes its secondary status within English-speaking academic institutions. Despite the country's rich cultural production, Brazilian literature is infrequently included in course programs and syllabi, even in Latin American studies focusing on theatre and literature. Although English-speaking students of modern languages rarely encounter Brazilian works, Albuquerque argues that engaging with these texts often sparks their interest in the language. Interested in exploring ways to make Brazilian theatre more meaningful to US audiences, Albuquerque adds that even in courses offered entirely in English, some students engage in other classes in Portuguese, and some even pursue a major or double major in the field. This

⁴² "O normal da existência do teatro, pelo menos enquanto subsistirem as condições da sociedade atual, é o comercialismo, que apenas se disfarça numa montagem cuidada, fator indispensável ao seu êxito" (*ibid*, p. 10, my translation).

⁴³ "Praticamente todos os dramaturgos brasileiros condenam a moda alienígena, queixam-se da preferência de empresários e público pelas obras traduzidas, e se ressentem do desestímulo do meio" (*ibid*, pp. 13-14, my translation)

highlights the potential for greater engagement with Brazilian literature, suggesting that increased exposure could inspire further interest in the language and culture.

In an overview of authors translated from Brazilian Portuguese into English and published, Heloisa Barbosa (1994, p.11) found only eighty works in her surveys that cover the period between 1886 and 1994, a total of 108 years. When it comes to theatre translation, she lists *Miss Margarida's Way*, which was published in 1977, nearly a century after the first item on the list (*ibidem*, p. 9). Furthermore, some more recent research by Maria Gomes (2005, p. 59) has further outlined the peripheral position of Brazilian literature and culture in English-speaking countries about twenty years ago. Gomes demonstrates that, in fact, in the two decades studied, the number of publications decreased: 21 published translations between 1995 and 2000 and 16 between 2001 and 2004 (*ibidem*). As Cimara Valim de Melo (2017, pp. 28–29) points out, Brazilian plays remain notably absent from the global translation scene. The author reports that theatre translations have stagnated mainly since the mid-twentieth century, with rare examples such as *Miss Margarida's Way* (a translation of *Apareceu a Margarida* by Roberto Athayde) or *The Rogue's Trial* (*O Auto da Compadecida*, by Ariano Suassuna) standing as isolated cases, and she points out that, remarkably, she could not find publications of plays of one of the most prominent names of Brazilian playwrights: Nelson Rodrigues (*ibidem*). These figures underscore the ongoing peripheral position of Brazilian cultural productions in English-speaking countries, with still few translations being published in recent decades.

Despite the relatively low number of Brazilian works translated into English, there are growing efforts to promote Brazilian culture internationally through new translation initiatives. Krista Brune (2018, p. 12) outlines the growing admiration for Brazilian writers like Machado de Assis and Clarice Lispector, and that, in particular, Lispector's experimental style and philosophical introspection have captivated readers in English since the 1980s, with key translations and academic praise, opening space for wider recognition. For instance, even though translations were only 3% of the literary pieces published in England in 2004 (Gomes, 2005, p. 60), some projects incentivise translated works that are being recognised for promoting Brazilian culture in the United Kingdom. Some examples would be the theatre projects *Out of the Wings*, which has resulted in new translations, readings and performances, a wealth of research, conferences and yearly public events since its foundation in 2008 (Wings, 2022), and the theatre company *Foreign Affairs*, which

works “with academic and cultural partners, playwrights and translators to bring acclaimed international plays to English-speaking audiences” (Affairs, 2025). These initiatives highlight the potential for broader international recognition of Brazilian theatre, and translating *Amores Surdos* into *Deaf Loves* can contribute to this growth. The example of Grace Passô’s work, particularly her innovative narrative strategies, illustrates how Brazilian theatre can engage both local and international audiences. In this sense, the translation and dissemination of Brazilian plays become pivotal for cultural preservation and challenging the norms that marginalise the country’s artistic contributions.

1.4. THEATRE TRANSLATION AND CULTURAL DIALOGUE: AN HOURGLASS FOR EVERYTHING?

Translating involves re-textualising information that had been originally textualised from one language into another. Nonetheless, which is essential for effective communication; however, the information being expressed is not only represented by codes in language, but also involves cultural meanings associated with them. Nord (2006) emphasises that translation occurs within a communicative situation involving linguistic units, such as in intercultural communication, in which two or more cultures exchange messages and use elements from different codes. In line with this, Snell-Hornby et al. (1995, p. 124) bring the assertion by Vermeer that “translation is an act of culture-specific communication”, concluding that “translating between cultures” denotes interaction and intercultural activity. Furthermore, Annie Brisset (2000, p. 343) agrees that translation is a dual act of communication between two distinct codes, the SL and the TL. This type of communication involves an initiator who chooses to translate the text and a translator, both embedded in a communicative act or interaction (Nord, 2006). Here, it may be productive to see it as a process that constantly questions how much of the SC’s can be seen when a translator is transmitting something familiar, and how much of the TC’s identity can be entangled in a translation to promote affinity with the ST. In this sense, my role as a researcher, initiator and translator from the SC aims to promote intercultural communication and reflect on the TT as an engagement with difference and how this difference can be meaningfully presented through translation.

The term "interculturalism" in theatre studies encompasses a broad spectrum of perspectives that resist a clear-cut definition. Lo and Gilbert (1996, p. 36) observe that *Pavis' The Intercultural Performance Reader* reveals the diverse approaches encapsulated by the concept and the difficulty in defining it. They further argue that "extracultural theatre" (p. 38) inevitably raises questions about the power dynamics between the cultures involved, particularly regarding their economic and political standings, even when such dynamics are overlooked in practice. Pavis (1992, p. 3) asserts that "[i]nstead of looking for further refinement of western performance analysis", the intercultural theatre approach could be adopted, "in the hope that it will produce a new way of understanding theatre practice and will thus contribute to promoting a new methodology of performance analysis". In doing so, one can attempt to preserve the cultural specificity of minority cultures and encourage a dynamic exchange between the source and target cultures, thereby enriching the intercultural experience within the theatrical space.

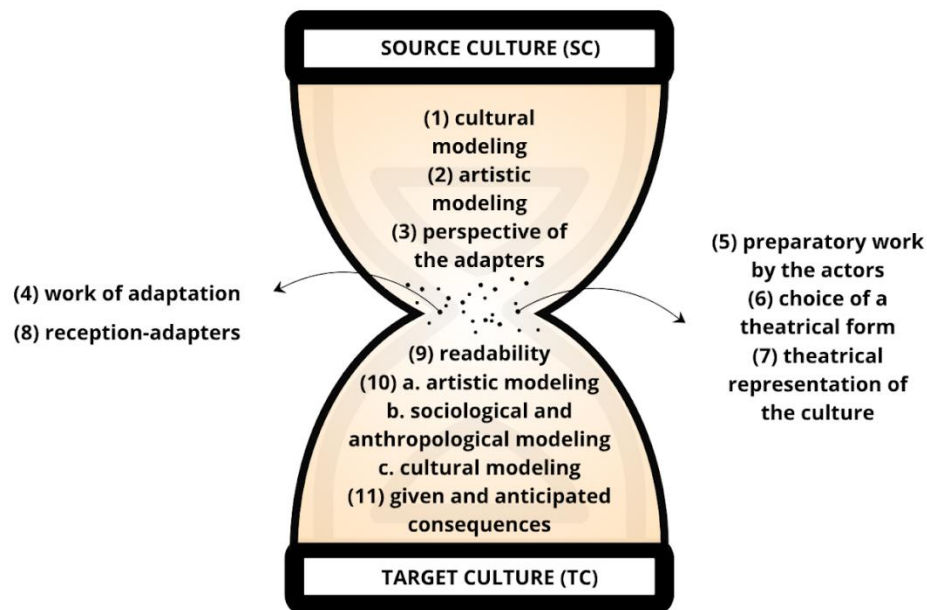
As Simon Shepherd and Mick Wallis (2004) discuss, empathy enables the audience to imaginatively place themselves in another's position, creating a more profound connection that transcends sympathy and encourages this empathetic response, making the audience feel as though they are acting with the characters and generating a shared emotional space. Consequently, this bond could serve as a platform for the TR to engage more deeply with the SC. As discussed before, Fernandes (2012, p. 119) asserts that this engagement may occur within an "in-between" space, intrinsic to any translation process, where cultural exchange becomes fluid, as notions of "here" and "there" are constantly renegotiated. Cultures, therefore, are in a state of transformation, continually shaped and reshaped through their interactions. Within this context, not only does translation reflect cultural values, but it also actively contributes to shaping them. By translating Brazilian drama and its portrayal of interpersonal relationships in the representation of working-class families in a developing country, one might enable access to its aesthetic and cultural richness and invite the TA to reassess their own cultural assumptions through exposure to different worldviews.

Hence, translating Brazilian drama becomes particularly relevant in stimulating the TL audience's interest in Brazilian styles, language, and themes, while also enriching the broader intercultural dialogue that drama enables. Shepherd and Wallis (2004, p. 38) argue that "drama is a key mode for understanding and

maintaining the shared values of a society” and that drama translation plays a pivotal role in mediating the stimulation of this intercultural exchange and the reconsideration of cultural assumptions (p. 205). Regarding the research in this field, Pavis (1992, p. 3) claims that “it would be naive to think that one will solve the problems of theory just by describing the process of production” and that it is not enough to “follow carefully the preparations for the performance, to be among the actors, directors, musicians” – which is not even the reality of most theatre translation scholars. It can be seen that a nuanced approach, which considers the cultural and performative aspects of drama, is key to ensuring that the translated text facilitates effective intercultural exchange.

In these cases, theoretical tools can be of assistance for analysing the complexities of intercultural theatre and facilitating meaningful audience engagement. When advocating for his approach to the study of “intercultural theatre”, Pavis concludes that “[w]e also, and first and foremost, need theoretical tools in order to analyse the operations involved. One has to be able to help a 'genuine' audience understand the meaning of the production (and the production of meaning)” (1992, p. 3). Referring to this, Pavis (1992) suggests the analogy of a theatre practice inserted in the “crossroads of culture”, which implies the multiple possibilities for paths in the journey of intercultural communication in theatre. Upton (2000, p. 59) builds on this idea by referencing Bassnett’s interpretation of Pavis’ crossroads as representing a “plurality of possibilities” and rejection of “any notion of closure”. Upton (*ibidem*) also draws on Houston A. Baker Jr.’s concept of “translation at the crossing”, which evokes notions of “change, motion, transience, process”. Pavis (1992, p. 2) asserts that the “[...] task of grasping the dialectic of exchanges of civilities between cultures” would be adequately described as “interculturalism” and that theatre practice, when confronted with intercultural exchange, “confronts and examines traditions, styles of performance and cultures which would never have encountered one another without this sudden need to fill a vacuum” (*ibidem*). As a result, he suggests a model that also uses an analogy to attempt to visualise interculturalism in theatre by comparing it to an object, as seen in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5 – Assortment of the hourglass of cultures based on Pavis (1992)



Source: author, 2025

The metaphor in Pavis' model utilises the image of a funnel, implying a sense of flow and emphasising the central process of the action. This model is the "hourglass of cultures" (Pavis, 1992, p. 4), and it is based on a funnel-like design, in which the upper bowl is the SC, and the basis is the TC, and it involves the SC passing through a "narrow neck" to reach the TC. This composition depicts how the observer (or, in this case, the translator) decodes the SC using the text represented by the grains that pass through eleven filters (or layers) put in place by the TC. According to Upton (2000), this image "is dynamic and open, and at the same time acknowledges the negotiation processes involved in any transcultural transaction" (p. 60). The metaphor used to suggest these layers of analysis in theatre translation at the crossroads of culture has been widely discussed, as it presents a certain guideline for the study of production while also allowing for a multilayered and unfixed dynamic of meaning negotiation across cultures. Taking that into account, although I have rearranged the filters visually and described them separately for the purpose of clarity, this research departs from the assumption that these categories work in parallel, influencing one another, oftentimes playing significant roles in the same transformations analysed in the ST and TT. Furthermore, in this study, the layers proposed by Pavis are taken into consideration in the analysis and discussion

of theatre translation practice from a non-European perspective in theatre studies, which involves translating a playtext from Brazilian Portuguese into English.

Despite the legitimate concern in changing the hegemonic pattern of focusing on “the subject of the West, or the West as Subject” (Spivak, 1994, p. 66), one cannot help but wonder: could the hourglass of cultures allow for the perspective of the subaltern with careful consideration for accurate representation? What if the subaltern speaks? What if the funnel and mill are given to a representative of the culture being translated on stage? Would the model accommodate this shifted perspective? As we have seen above, Pavis bases his concept of interculturalism on a “dialectic of exchanges of civilities between cultures” (1992, p. 2). Nonetheless, this definition depicts how his model might carry assumptions from the Western perspective that can be scrutinised in order to broaden the use of the hourglass to be closer to encompassing “everything”. These filters or layers do not operate as neutral elements that alter the characteristics of the TT, but they actively participate in the process of selection, shaping not only what is considered acceptable in the TC, but also how that acceptability is framed and legitimised. Furthermore, because the model is based on Western European theatre practice, in this study, they are contemplated from another point of view.

From the perspective of America, as a colonised continent, “civilisation” is an imposed set of rules to follow. As Santiago describes, this has involved “the constant erasure of original traces and the forgetting of its beginnings”, making the phenomenon of duplication the only valid rule of civilisation, in which America becomes “a copy, a simulacrum that increasingly seeks to resemble the original, even though its originality would not be found in imitating that model, but rather in its own origin” (2001, p. 14). This study discusses the structure of the model through the lens of a translator from the SC controlling the filters of the hourglass through which the SC is submitted. Therefore, applying this model and rethinking its perspective not only highlights the intercultural exchange inherent in the translation process but also emphasises the political act of translating theatre from a context closer to postcolonial theatre. As Lo and Gilbert (1996) note, postcolonial theatre refers to “a range of theatre texts and practices that have emerged from cultures subjected to Western imperialism” (p. 35). Within this framework, Pavis’ model with a tendency toward “extracultural” approaches in intercultural theatre can be used to underscore the political nature of the translation choices made, which, when employed explicitly

from a postcolonial perspective, can be a fertile ground for the empowerment of promoters of the SC to lead the way towards representing their communities more meticulously and effectively.

In this study, the “filters” or “layers” are used to analyse the decisions made throughout the evolution of the TT aimed at maximising intercultural dialogue. The analysis of *Amores Surdos* for the translation regarded *cultural and/or artistic modeling* (1-2) to decide which instances are “clearly specific either to an artistic activity or to a codification proper to a subgroup or given culture” (Pavis, 1992, p. 13). In such cases, as suggested by Pavis, “[w]e have thus to determine how we[people] recognise a foreign culture, what indices, stereotypes, *presuppositions* we associate with it, how we construct it from our point of view [...]” (*ibidem*). From both perspectives, there are clear points of modelling that can be seen as specific to an artistic activity or to a given culture. Pavis asserts that the aesthetic and the sociological or anthropological function are interconnected because the artistic form will affect cultural understanding (*ibidem*). There are values, habits, spaces, social norms, customs, and so on that are culturally specific. These first two layers draw attention to recognising these through *how* the ST represents the SC.

Meanwhile, because the model is based on Western European theatre practice, the filters are contemplated from another point of view, and the *perspective of the adapters* (3), *work of adaptation* (4) and *reception-adapters* (8) are the main examples of this shifted view. They take into account the perspective of an initiator and/or translator from Europe, increasing the risk of ethnocentrism (Eurocentrism in this case). Regarding the *perspective of the adapters* (3), the points analysed refer to the subjective choices of the agent or agents adapting the work. In this layer, it is pertinent to ask what these choices may reveal about the adapter’s vision. In the assortment proposed in Figure 5, the first three layers are placed together at the top of the hourglass, since they analyse what the characteristics of the SC are observed in the ST, and who observes them. In this study, since I act both as researcher and adapter, I am able to reflect more directly on my own translation decisions, which were guided by a desire to preserve the textual fragmentation, layered voices, subaltern perspective, and poetic language of the ST.

Layer (4) addresses the *perspective of the adapters and their work of adaptation*. These are also shaped by the adapter’s education, training, and socio-cultural background, and reframe the text according to their interpretative lens, so

layers 3 and 4 are also interconnected. For that reason, the analysis of the *work of adaptation* through the *perspective of the adapters* (3) encourages questions about whether such choices align with dominant artistic or academic canons, and to what extent they may silence, amplify, or reinterpret the cultural and political messages of the play. These dynamics are viewed differently when the adapter is not originally from the SC, as their motivations may be more varied, and the risks for misrepresenting or distorting the cultural specificities embedded in the text become more pronounced.

With respect to *reception-adapters* (8), it considers the figures and strategies that shape the audience's engagement with the translated performance. More specifically, it concerns what Pavis (1992, p. 16) calls the "conducting elements" that assist the receiving culture in making sense of a foreign theatrical work. At this stage, it becomes crucial to ask whether these elements serve to impose a recognisable European structure or whether they allow the logic, rhythm and formal organisation of the ST to come through. As Pavis suggests, *reception-adapters* (8) act as cultural filters that may unconsciously reproduce ethnocentric frameworks (*ibidem*). The challenge, then, is to recognise these mechanisms and employ them in a way that renders cultural difference visible rather than concealed. In the case of *Amores Surdos*, the conducting elements were intended to support comprehension for a non-Brazilian audience, but this very process may risk softening the sociopolitical tensions embedded in the original. For this reason, the approach taken here adapts Pavis' hourglass model critically, framing the analysis from the situated perspective of a Brazilian theatre translator, attentive to the model's Eurocentric foundations and the need to adjust its filters accordingly. In Figure 5, layers 4 to 8 are placed in the epicentre of the hourglass, since in this journey of rearranging grains of culture, they start dealing with more concrete evidence in text, performance or reception that contemplate how and why the "conducting elements" of adaptation might guide the audience's reception of the TT.

Because the hourglass is proposed as a methodology for performance analysis, some of the filters cannot be fully considered in this study, such as *preparatory work by actors* (5), *choice of theatrical form* (6) and *theatrical representation of the culture* (7). That is so because a probable production of the play based on the translated playtext is not envisioned as part of the research. The fifth filter would involve training processes, the physicality of body language, emotional

tuning, and elements such as phonetic adaptation or the use of local gestures to assist the negotiation between the actors' own culture and that of the characters. The sixth filter would address the mode adopted in performance, whether realist, poetic, or hybrid, such as the inclusion or avoidance of narration or the breaking of the fourth wall, which are often strategies in Grace Passô's layered dramaturgy. These choices could reinforce or distort the perception of the SC. Finally, the seventh filter would concern how the SC is represented through performance, whether through a truthful, exaggerated, or stereotyped lens. In *Amores Surdos*, this might involve choosing between portraying a noisy and emotionally charged household or deciding whether to use accents and music that risk exoticisation. While these reflections offer relevant insights, they remain speculative in this study and could be further developed in the context of a future production.

Subsequently, starting with a shifted perspective from the bottom of the hourglass, the filter of *readability* (9) focuses specifically on the audience and the degrees to which they engage with the production of meaning. This layer is "responsible for relativizing the production of meaning and the level of reading that varies from one culture to another" (Pavis, 1992, p. 17). It also helps to explain "how the receiver more or less freely decides at which level (for example, narrative, thematic, formal ideological, sociocultural, etc) to read the cultural facts presented [...]" (*ibid*). Each culture brings distinct interpretive codes to the experience, and what may appear legible, resonant, or symbolic within the SC might be perceived as opaque, fragmented, or overly simplified by TA's. *Readability* is shaped by a variety of choices, from translation or direction to acting, and the audience's expectations and background knowledge. Here, it might be convenient to wonder which layers of meaning may be lost or misread, and whether the adapters facilitate these interpretive layers, or choose to guide the audience toward a dominant reading. In the case of *Deaf Loves*, the non-linear structure, overlapping voices, or cultural references are desired to encourage multiple interpretations, instead of having a particular reading subtly reinforced. The resulting level of *readability* reflects a tension between maintaining the sociopolitical complexity of the SC and rendering the play comprehensible to the TA.

The following layers of Pavis' model — specifically, *artistic modeling* (10A), *sociological and anthropological modeling* (10B), and *cultural modeling* (10C) — are strategically positioned at the base of the hourglass, emphasising the negotiation of

cultural elements within the TT. Pavis (1992) contends that "each level of the hourglass (i.e., each 'layer') must be seen as also determined by the levels of the opposite bowl" (p. 20). These analytical filters offer an inverted perspective, enabling an examination of how the TT accepts or reconstructs and reinterprets the cultural elements present in the ST. When used to discuss the annotations and versions of the translation, these filters provide a structured approach to describe the negotiation of the complexities in the decision-making process of the translation.

Additionally, the last layer of *given and anticipated consequences* (11) considers the adaptor's expectations of what the audience's interpretations of the translated text would be, against the real effects perceived. Pavis (1992, p. 18) notes that it is "[...] difficult to predict how the spectators will organise their reading, whether they will accept or reject the series of filters that have predetermined and selected cultural and especially foreign material", but the adaptor inevitably operates with some degree of anticipation in mind. This filter reflects the adaptor's foresight, shaping the translation based on predictions of how the TA or TR will interpret the cultural material presented. As Pavis asserts, "[o]nce the performance is complete, all the sand rests on the spectator's frail shoulders" and "[e]verything depends on what the spectator has remembered or forgotten" (*ibidem*). One might dive deeper into the study of this filter either through hypothesising the consequences from the adaptor's view or through reception studies, since it involves various analytical tools to collect data from the audience's perception after the play is read or performed. In *Deaf Loves*, we are able to discuss both perspectives since the researcher/adaptor can divulge their own choices, and the workshop phase of the study, with discussions about the reader's perceptions, followed by an online form to access further thoughts from the readers, can be thoroughly analysed. These layers provide a framework for understanding how the artistic and sociocultural components of *Amores Surdos* are reshaped in *Deaf Loves*, highlighting the translation's role in preserving or adapting cultural nuances for an English-speaking audience.

The analyses conducted throughout this section have demonstrated how Pavis' hourglass model provides valuable tools for reflecting on the complexities of theatre translation within intercultural contexts. Yet, the model remains somewhat vague and limited in certain areas, particularly when applied to theatre practices that challenge Western European norms of dramaturgy, staging, or collaborative creation. As Renfang Tang observes, "Pavis' hourglass has, certainly, neither been universally

adored, nor immune to criticism, and other ways of understanding intercultural theatre have challenged its rather instrumentalist model; but it has been of enormous and indisputable value to intercultural theatre studies” (2016, p. 13). Moreover, Jacqueline Lo and Helen Gilbert argue that “it cannot account for alternative and more collaborative forms of intercultural exchange” (2002, pp. 41-2). These reflections do not invalidate the model but point to the need for its further development. Its layers are fruitful when examined critically, and I believe they could be expanded, enriched, and reworked to encompass a wider range of theatrical practices. Perhaps the hourglass could evolve into a more nuanced and open model, an hourglass not only for everything, but also for everyone.

1.5. INTEGRATING CHRISTIANE NORD'S THEORY IN THEATRE TRANSLATION THROUGH PRACTICE-LED RESEARCH AND RESEARCH-LED PRACTICE

In this study, Nord's (2006) approach to intratextual factors, briefly outlined in Table 1 below, provides a detailed linguistic framework for analysing the translation choices made in the TT. While Pavis' “hourglass model” offers a broader cultural perspective, Nord's theory allows a more specific scrutiny of how linguistic elements interact with the translation process. According to Nord (2006), intratextual features are influenced by situational factors and text-type conventions shaped by the sender's communicative intentions. These features are further explained and applied in the analysis section of this study. Each of these factors is further examined in relation to the translation choices made, offering a comprehensive linguistic analysis to complement the cultural framework established by Pavis. Together, these theories form the basis for discussing the translation's success in retaining the original's cultural and linguistic nuances while adapting to the TL.

By examining the interplay between translation theories, such as Christiane Nord's focus on the structural aspects of translation and Pavis' hourglass model, we can better appreciate the role of translation in making Brazilian theatre accessible to international audiences. Nord's theory, similarly to Pavis', is also intertwined and plays various roles simultaneously in the cases analysed here. I use them to explain what the most impactful changes in the work are from my *perspective* and *modeling*. This exploration highlights the intricacies of conveying meaning across languages

and underscores the importance of ensuring that the voices of Brazilian playwrights resonate beyond their native language. Through a closer look at these theories and their application, we can advocate for more comprehensive translation efforts that celebrate and disseminate Brazilian theatrical works.

Table 1 – Definitions of the intertextual factors based on Nord (2006)

Intratextual Factor	Main Trait / Focus
1. <i>Subject matter</i>	What the sender talks about and the text's central themes.
2. <i>Content</i>	References of the text to objects and phenomena in an extralinguistic reality, in either a fictitious or a real world.
3. <i>Presuppositions</i>	Background knowledge that the sender assumes the receiver already has or shares.
4. <i>Text composition</i>	Structure and organisation of the text, including macro (paragraphs, chapters) and micro levels (sentence linking).
5. <i>Non-verbal elements</i>	Layout, illustrations, typography, or gestures that accompany the verbal text.
6. <i>Lexic</i>	Word choice (vocabulary), including register, connotation, figures of speech, and dialects.
7. <i>Sentence Structure</i>	Length and type of sentences (statements, questions, exclamations, ellipses) and the other constructions which replace sentences (infinitives, past and present participles, gerunds), and the distribution of main clauses.
8. <i>Suprasegmental Features</i>	Emphasis, rhythm, and intonation, particularly in performance, or those features of text organisation which overlap the boundaries of any lexical and syntactical segments, sentences, and paragraphs, framing the phonological 'gestalt' or specific 'tone' of the text.

Source: author, 2025

Translating theatrical works requires a nuanced understanding of the ethical and cultural complexities of adapting texts for new audiences. In the edition of *Adapting Translation for the Stage*, Geraldine Brodie and Emma Cole (2017) present the views of scholars, actors, and directors regarding themes and issues encountered when writing, staging, and researching translated works. They present Jean Graham-Jones's exploration of potential critical and cultural shortcomings in this

field, emphasising that, as a scholar and translator of Latin American drama, she posits that “[a]wareness of an ethics and politics of translation should be of special concern to those of us translating from other languages into English” (*ibid*, p. 14). This collective approach, as reflected in Graham-Jones’s emphasis on ethical and political awareness, highlights how collaboration across disciplines can ease the process of addressing cultural and linguistic challenges in theatre translation.

Working with theatre, and more specifically, interlingual theatre is challenging in many aspects, and it is hardly achievable if it is approached as a one-man journey. As examples of this, Brodie and Cole (2017) describe Marta Niccolai’s analysis of Gavin Richards’s translation of *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, a translation that was negatively criticised for prioritising comedy over its political context. Furthermore, they discuss Adam Versényi’s work of examination of his own translation of four Ramón Griffero plays, in which he argues for a form of translation that focuses upon the orality and aurality of the TL and for “the necessity of treating translation from and for contemporary theatre holistically, always as a work-in-progress subject to change through the rehearsal room and the eventual embodiment of the text on stage” (*ibidem*). These diverse perspectives underscore the value of collaborative efforts and research in shaping the initial and final phases of a play’s translation.

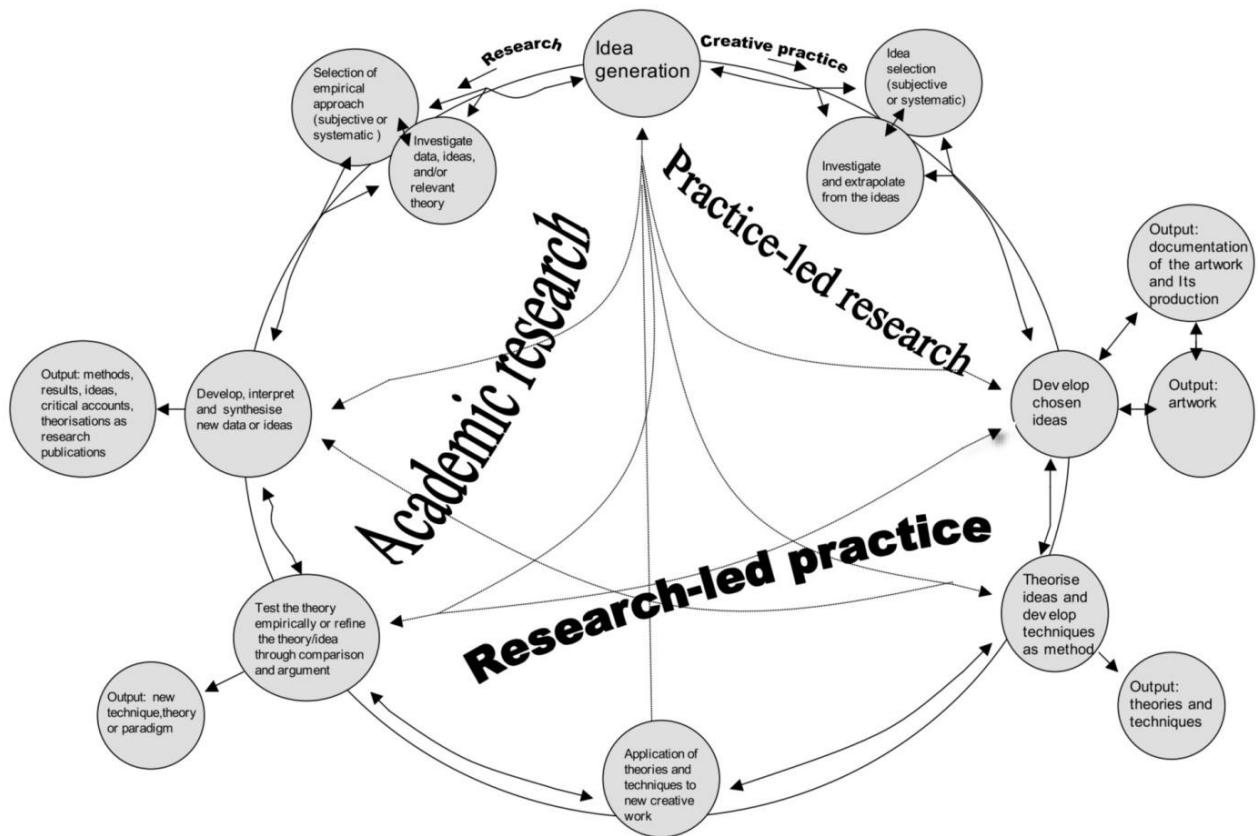
In order to do so, collaborative work can offer valuable insights into the iterative process of theatre translation. Thus, this research is based on the model of the “spider-like” iterative cycle proposed by Smith and Dean (2009). Through the model, they highlight that creative practice aligned with research can stimulate innovative approaches, viewing them not as distinct processes but as interconnected elements in an iterative cyclic model”, which can be seen in Figure 6. The concept of “iteration” is considered as “fundamental to both creative and research processes” (p. 19), and according to the authors,

[t]o iterate a process is to repeat it several times (though probably with some variation) before proceeding, setting up a cycle: start–end–start. The creator must choose between the alternative results created by the iteration, focusing on some and leaving others behind (temporarily or permanently) (Smith; Dean, 2009, p. 19).

They argue for a broader understanding, suggesting that practice generates art and requires surrounding theorisation and documentation to fulfil research purposes. All things considered, the “iterative cyclic web is a guiding principle in applying innovative approaches to theatre translation. This research passed through all the points of the

cycle from the decision of the text to be translated until the final review of theory and the final product of the TT, constantly revisiting the idea selections, development and theorisation of these ideas, followed by the application of theory and testing it against the new data or ideas.

Figure 6 – The “iterative cyclic web of practice-led research and research-led practice”, a model of creative arts and research processes.



Source: Smith and Dean (2009, p. 20)

Smith and Dean (2009) also explore the two intertwined concepts of practice-led research and research-led practice in translation. Practice-led research emphasises that the creative work itself generates research outputs, while research-led practice highlights how scholarly investigation informs the creation of artistic work. The terms, often used interchangeably, reflect the dynamic relationship between theory and practice, where both creative production and reflection on that production lead to specialised insights (*ibidem*). Through these concepts, this project embraces both the artistic and analytical facets of translation, ensuring that the creative process is informed by research and that the research itself generates meaningful creative outcomes.

This approach to theatre translation resonates with what Brodie and Cole (2017) name “[m]odernist narratives of translation in performance”, which would employ “theatre to dissect theatre, querying the forms and structures operating in naturalist theatre to recreate realism for the stage” (p. 14). They further exemplify this through the work of acclaimed playwright Tanya Ronder, who explores “the responsibilities faced by a translator and writer, and the degree of freedoms they may assume, as she charts the trajectory from the source text to the performance” (*ibidem*). The playwright's process of negotiating literal translations, directorial vision, and actors' interpretations to craft a performance text is a significant example of the expansion of practical and theoretical models of collaborative dramaturgy and translation, since she shows assurance in being designated as an adapter of her works rather than simply a translator, especially for the ones she does not speak the SL. In my approach, I draw from Pavis' (1992) notion of the translator as a dramaturge, and converging the “different jobs” Ronder calls the “interlingual translation and theatrical adaptation” that could be done by one person (Brodie and Cole 2017, p. 204).

Pivotal for the decision of whether to maintain strategies or change approaches was the collaborative work with the actors. Bearing in mind what Andrade (2020, p. 29) notes, “[t]he collaborative process exposes one directly to ‘otherness’, to the gaze of another towards their own work”. This direct exposition to representatives of a probable TA was enlightening and liberating. As expected, this experience gave me different points of view in my translation that I had not noticed before and helped me tackle specific problems faced in the individual stage of the translation process, offering alternatives for solutions. Also, this encounter revealed strengths in my own translation that I had not previously envisioned, such as the author's style being apparent, which made me acknowledge my own accomplishments. This is further detailed in the next chapter. There, I discuss more specifically which cases I decided to preserve and which TL structures and TC references I deemed interesting to bring to the TT.

2. CHAPTER TWO – A DISCUSSION ON THE TRANSLATION OF *AMORES SURDOS*: CRAFTING DEAF LOVES THROUGH CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC CHOICES

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the translation process of the English version of *Amores Surdos*, *Deaf Loves*. It examines the translation challenges and solutions encountered, offering a structured analysis of key aspects that guided its process. These elements are evaluated through the theoretical perspectives of Patrice Pavis and Christiane Nord, whose frameworks are employed throughout the chapter to inform and contextualise the analysis. The discussion begins with a discussion on cultural and *artistic modeling*, followed by an exploration of register selection and the adaptation of sociolects for the TT. This strategy aims to enhance the relatability of the characters for the TA while respecting the tone and subtleties of Passô's text. Formal and colloquial registers are analysed in light of poetic expression, linguistic variations, and humour in *Amores Surdos*.

Subsequently, the chapter addresses communication challenges by examining potential misunderstandings and ambiguities in the text. This highlights how the translation bridges gaps between the source and target cultures while preserving the integrity of Passô's narrative voice. Finally, the chapter reflects on the role of practice-led research, mainly through feedback gathered from actors during workshop sessions. These practical insights highlight the iterative nature of theatre translation, where textual choices are tested and refined to suit probable publications or performance contexts.

Overall, the chapter illustrates how the translation of *Amores Surdos* into *Deaf Loves* was shaped by combining theoretical frameworks with practical experimentation. It presents how the poetic language and humour of the ST and the cultural sensibilities of an English-speaking audience were tailored to interplay dynamically. This discussion explores the specific strategies employed and highlights the broader implications of translating contemporary Brazilian theatre for new audiences.

2.1. CULTURAL MODELING THROUGH THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE ADAPTER AND THE WORK OF ADAPTATION: SITUATING AMORES SURDOS

As previously described, the inner and social struggles of Brazilian residents and their families are central to *Amores Surdos*. In order to discuss how the linguistic choices were used to simplify, reshape, or mediate the ST's cultural *content* to make it digestible for the TA, the intratextual factors by Nord (2006) were used. The first intratextual factor seen here is the *subject matter*, which refers to what a text is about (*ibid.*, p. 93). Nord explains that "[i]sotopic features are semes shared by various lexical items in a text, thus interconnecting the lexical items and forming a kind of a chain or line of isotopies throughout the text", and that they "may indicate the *subject matter(s)* of the text", or its "central theme" (*ibidem*). In the opening of the second act, Joaquim speaks to the audience openly regarding what the story is about and anticipates some of the family's struggles.

Besides that, Nord (2006, p. 94) describes that the *subject matter* might be embedded in a particular cultural context or not, either showing a universal context, one bound to the SC, or even a utopian one. In this regard, Pavis' insights prove particularly relevant when translating for the stage and the *mise en scène*, since "(1) in theatre, the translation reaches the audience by way of the actors' bodies; (2) we cannot simply translate a linguistic text into another; rather we confront and communicate heterogeneous cultures and situations of enunciation that are separated in space and time" (1992, p. 131). This perspective highlights the complexity of theatre translation as a practice that extends beyond linguistic relocations. It involves managing cultural disparities and accounting for the probable embodied nature of performance. It adopts an approach that seeks to preserve the poetic and linguistic intricacies of Passô's text while stimulating a dialogue between heterogeneous cultural realities during the translation process. Thus, the aim of contributing to the dissemination of Brazilian dramaturgy to this TC's context required a process of cultural mediation.

In translating *Amores Surdos* into *Deaf Loves*, cultural mediation was approached through what Pavis' (1992) hourglass model proposes as *cultural modeling* (1) and *artistic modeling* (2). These filters establish a crucial framework for understanding the symbolic and artistic codes present within a society, thereby ensuring that the socio-cultural identity of the ST is conveyed in the TT. Through

cultural modeling (1), or “grasping the symbolic functioning of a society” (Pavis, 1992, p. 131), Pavis refers to the underlying frameworks that shape cultural identity and societal norms from the SC that can be recognised in the ST of a play. This is particularly relevant in contexts like Brazil, where “national culture can only with difficulty integrate and reflect the sum of particular or minority codifications” (Pavis, 1992, p. 131). These codifications are central to understanding the cultural disparities of Brazilian society represented in the play. For instance, the language registers in *Amores Surdos* serve as markers of education, class, and cultural access, subtly reflecting the socio-economic realities of Brazilians in the country and abroad.

The decisions related to *cultural modeling* (1) regarded what choices were made in order to reveal traces from the SC. From my reading of the hourglass, this layer involves first identifying the specificities of the TC in order to decide how to express it. According to my translation project, instances in which these nuances are suggested were intentionally retained to enhance the SC’s expression. One sociocultural specificity observed was the reference to single motherhood and the use of tough love that a female head of the family has to make in order to deal with the negotiation of power within the household, as seen in the examples of the discussions among the children and their mother when deciding how to care for Little One, and in Little One’s questioning of his mother’s way of treating the eldest son, asking her: “Why d’you treat Joaquim kindly when he’s asleep?”⁴⁴, suggesting that she usually treats him roughly in normal circumstances. The stage directions in Passô’s style at times, one could say, plays the role of an omniscient narrator, who knows the inner thoughts and feelings of the characters. In *Amores Surdos*, they also describe Joaquim’s opinion on the dynamics of his household, as seen in: “*He always helps his mom scrub clean the dishes in the washing-up bowl, then pop them away, but he thinks that his dad could do that too, that his dad is an absent man*”⁴⁵, implying this dysfunctional household with a father that was expected to be present, but that in reality they are aware of his absence. This is expressed through language in the way that the mother speaks to her offspring, and these moments of direct maternal language were preserved for this expression.

⁴⁴ “**Pequeno:** (*para Mãe*) Por que quando Joaquim está dormindo a senhora trata ele com carinho? (Passô, 2012a, p. 32)

⁴⁵ “[...] *Sempre ajuda Mãe a retirar as louças da mesa, mas pensa que seu pai poderia fazer isso também, que seu pai é um homem ausente.*” (Passô, 2012a, p. 20)

Some other hints about cultural background are related to what was described earlier through the conversations between the siblings about where Júnior is living, which implies that the family lives in an underdeveloped country. Through lines such as in, “**Samuel:** It’s always six hours ahead there. / **Little One:** Is that why they’re more advanced?”⁴⁶ and “**Graziele:** (*on the phone*) So good to hear from you! Good... I got the headphones, can’t take them off my ears... thank you. Yeah, the sound’s great, can’t find ones like those to buy here!”⁴⁷. The references to Grazielle’s receiving the headphones depict the trend of Brazilians travelling to more economically profitable nations to purchase cutting-edge technological products for themselves, friends, and/or family at a lower cost without paying the importation taxes that resellers charge. This can be analysed through Nord’s intratextual factor of *presuppositions*, which would “comprise all the information that the sender expects (presupposes) to be part of the receiver’s horizon” (2006, p. 106). This consumer trend might or might not be familiar to the TC, and regardless of whether it would be recognisable, the decision to maintain these references in the TT was aimed at resonating with them.

The problems faced by people originating from developing nations and how they influence their interpersonal relationships can also be inferred from the text. As mentioned earlier, the fact that all the siblings live in the same household with their mother, even the ones who appear to be grown adults, is noteworthy. The stage directions describe the feeling of the head of the family regarding their situation of a family inserted in a socio-economic environment that suggests instability: “*The mother feels that, perhaps, over the last few years of their lives, she and her family have just been going through the motions, doing anything not to go hungry; they lived just because they had to. For that reason alone*”⁴⁸. Additionally, the fact that Samuel struggles to leave home and focus on his career underscores the economic challenges that force families to remain under one roof longer than socially expected. This reveals the background of the characters in a large low-income family struggling

⁴⁶ “**Samuel:** (*para Pequeno*) Eles estão sempre seis horas a mais que a gente aqui.” (Passô, 2012a, p. 28)

⁴⁷ “**Grazielle:** (*ao telefone*) Que bom falar com você! Tudo... recebi o headphone, não tiro ele do ouv... obrigada viu, o som dele é ótimo, aqui a gente não acha desse para comprar não!” (Passô, 2012a, p. 46)

⁴⁸ “*Mãe sente que, talvez, nos últimos anos de sua vida, ela e sua família vinham agindo apenas porque em pouco tempo sentiriam fome; viveram porque sim. Só isso.*” (Passô, 2012a, p. 62)

economically and facing those challenges together. For that reason, these social references were carefully maintained in the TT.

This could also be associated with the tight-knit relations among family members in Brazil. The intense feeling stems from a collective upbringing, commonly having diverse family members such as grandparents, parents, daughters, aunts, uncles and cousins sharing living spaces and familial responsibilities. This is expressed through the heavily dramatic line described by the author herself in the stage directions as “blackmail”, where the mother says: “We look after you here at home, but out there, no one will... no one's gonna rush to get your inhaler for you to help you out. No one. No one's gonna help you out there...”⁴⁹. In the TL and TC, this may seem quite strong and unlikely for a mother to say to children. Still, this reference was maintained because in Brazilian culture, this is so recurrent that later on, Grazielle repeats the same speech to Little One, emphasising its common use and the repetition of the cycle of older generations warning the future ones on the same matter.

It is also suggestive that the family lives in a tropical environment, since in a call, Grazielle says: “Really? And it's true it snows there? Does it? Ice blocks fall from the sky? Must be nice, right... huh, how?”⁵⁰. Additionally, the mother refers to a tropical fruit that her son has been missing from their homeland in:

Mother: What? Pequi fruit? (*to the others*) He's asking if it's Pequi fruit season here now.

Samuel: It is!

Mother: Yeah, it's Pequi season now. (*to the others*) He's dying for some (*to Júnior*)... but by the time it gets to where you are, you won't feel like it anymore, my son...”⁵¹

I decided not to adapt these conversations or change them to something more relatable to the TA or TR to maintain the *cultural modeling* (1) and localise the family in a developing country around the equator or the global south, which is the case of Brazil. If my translation project prioritised the forenigisation of the ST, I would have made different choices, such as refer to presents that would be more stereotypical of other countries, or characteristic of less developed nations, or changing the tropical

⁴⁹ “Nós aqui em casa cuidamos de você, mas lá fora, não... lá fora ninguém vai sair correndo para ir pegar seu respirador, pra te acudir, não. Lá fora ninguém vai te ajudar...” (Passô, 2012a, p. 32)

⁵⁰ “É? E é verdade que aí neva? Neva? Cai bloco de gelo do céu? Deve ser bonito, né... hã, como?” (Passô, 2012a, p. 46)

⁵¹ “**Mãe:** (*ao telefone*) O quê? Pequi? (*para os outros*) Tá querendo saber se aqui tá na época de pequi. Samuel: Tá sim! Mãe: Tá na época. (*para os outros*) Tá morrendo de desejo de comer (*para Júnior*) ...mas até chegar aí, já passou sua vontade, meu filho...” (Passô, 2012a, p. 28)

fruits to northern hemisphere foods. The intention behind these choices is to create a space-in-between: a family that is not from a privileged nation but speaks a variant of a hegemonic language. This way, the presence of the *other* is retained, and cultural situations and customs from the SC that can be seen as relatable to the TA or TR are more likely to foster a genuinely empathetic involvement of the audience.

The choices discussed above also reveal the *perspective of the adapters* (3), which in this case was an agent from the SC and not from a “high culture”, subverting the standard flux of “power of decision” mentioned by Pavis (1992, p. 14). In a counter-hegemonic manner, through the translation of a contemporary piece of work by a subaltern culture, this goes against what Pavis criticised regarding the postmodern utilisation of classics that would not attempt “to give the audience cultural baggage or political arms, but to manipulate codes and to relativize every message, especially political messages” (*ibidem*). I believe the main reasons behind my selection of the play to be translated have been revealed, and my perspective, as explained before, was committed to preserving textual fragmentation, and layered voices from the ST.

These are some examples of why one’s perspective as an adapter towards their *work of adaptation* (4) cannot be neutral or purely artistic but ideologically and culturally charged, and there is usually reasoning behind the reasons why these adaptations are made. Throughout this analysis, textual evidence from the piece being adapted is discussed to provide an explanation for the reasons behind these choices. When discussing more specific or subjective choices in this analysis, I intend to elucidate further my vision as the adapter. For a thorough scrutiny of what parts of the *work of adaptation* (4) were kept or cut and transformed and whether these choices silence, highlight or reinterpret the ST’s political or cultural messages, Nord’s (2006) intratextual factors were used to provide a clear framework and discuss how cultural and linguistic choices are mediated in the translation, ensuring both stylistic and socio-cultural resonance.

2.2. ADAPTING REGISTER, DIALECT AND ONOMASTICS

The first matters that can be pointed out in this deliberation are the linguistic matters related to the contrast in register expressed between the families and the choices of sociolects to be used in the TT, clarifying that contrast for the TA. These

can be present through compositional forms, and such choices inevitably result in deliberate remodellings that serve as representations for the dominant culture or as subtle interventions in that culture. Lastly, it is pivotal to discuss what the reader of the playtext encounters first: the list of characters, which concerns the global naming conventions related to onomastics, the interdisciplinary field that studies proper names and naming practices explicitly. These are discussed in relation to the attempt to achieve a balance between changing some character names for the cultural familiarity of the TA and preserving otherness through maintaining the other ST's character names. My goal was to keep these references recognisable for the TA and allow for the visualisation of the other in some instances, while also modifying some references to the TC.

2.1.1. The Neighbours' Letter as a Marker of Register

The first example discussed through this lens is the stylistic device that involves both ideological and aesthetic functions in the introduction of the play, which situates the family in a specific social context and reflects socio-cultural resonance in the SC. Regarding its *text composition*, *Amores Surdos* is organised into seven acts, with the structure of the first one standing out as it takes the form of a letter, of which the “translator should observe the target-cultural convention for the text type in question” (Nord, 2006, p. 114). For instance, the salutation of the letter with “Saudações” transmits respect and formality, being adequate for correspondence with institutions, companies or in professional contexts in which the sender does not know the name of the addressee. In this case, “Greetings” is a valid option in English. This letter, sent by the next-door neighbours, poses a challenge to the translation since it employs an overly formal and elaborate register in Brazilian Portuguese reminiscent of professional correspondence rather than a simple note of apology between neighbours. Its overly formal register contrast sharply with its primary purpose of a practical message of apology for the inconvenience they are causing, and this dissonance is further underscored in the stage directions, which require the family to struggle with understanding the letter as it is passed from hand to hand.

This opening scene establishes a clear dynamic of educational disparity between the two families; while one is portrayed as more formally educated, the other, the supposed working-class family at the centre of the play, has trouble with

the letter's verbosity, hinting at broader social inequalities. The family's confusion with the wording of the letter highlights the linguistic gap often found between social classes, where certain registers become markers of privilege and education. An intratextual factor that can be discussed here focuses on the informational meaning conveyed within the text and its cultural context. Nord's (2006) concept of *content* refers to "the reference of the text to objects and phenomena in an extralinguistic reality [...] expressed mainly by the semantic information contained in the lexical and grammatical structures (e.g., words and phrases, sentence patterns, tense, mood, etc.) used in the text" (p. 90). As a reference to this educational disparity, a line delivered by Grazielle asserts: "Do you know why we can't understand anything in their letter? People say they're all lah-di-dah. They say they're a family of academics. They're all college-educated and have even got bookshelves In. The. Kitchen, and they all speak posh, like!"⁵². Hence, this subtly frames the socio-economic realities of the family through the use of language, setting the tone for the rest of the play.

Table 2 – Adjustments in formal language from the neighbours' letter in the TT.

Source Text	First Version	Target Text
Devido a vossas reclamações, vimos através desta esclarecer os motivos das discussões em tom alto em nosso recinto.	Due to your expressions of dissatisfaction, we hereby clarify the reasons for the high-sounding discussions in our residence.	In light of your concerns, we are compelled to clarify the reasons behind the heated discussions within our premises.
Vós sabeis. Sabeis porque sois também, assim como nós, dessa linhagem ancestral no ritual da convivência.	You are all well aware. You are acquainted because you are, similarly to us, from this ancestral bloodline in the ritual of cohabitation.	You are all well aware, as I am sure you are well acquainted, because you are, too, the same as us, part of this ancient lineage in the ritual of coexistence.
E tendes ciência, portanto, que não se passa imune dessas quatro paredes que nos circundam.	Minding this, you should recognise that one does not obviate these four walls that surround us all.	And you are aware, therefore, that one does not escape immune from these four walls that surround us all.

Source: author, 2025

⁵² "Grazielle: Sabe por que não dá pra entender nada daquela carta deles? É porque diz que eles são muito eruditos. Diz que são uma família de acadêmicos, são todos formados na faculdade, na casa tem estante de livro até na co-zi-nha e todos eles falam em segunda pessoa!" (Passô, 2012a, p. 42)

In relation to this, the analysis of *the artistic modeling* (2) was applied, since it allows us to “perceive artistic codifications in particular” (Pavis, 1992, p. 131), in order to maintain Passô’s writing style in the TT. The first *artistic modeling* (2) to be identified here is Passo’s natural poetic language, but in this case, it is amplified through rhetorical pomposity to mirror this family’s willingness to “prove” their morality and social standards by implying their level of education through the use of language. The translation choices in this case aimed to preserve both the author’s poetic style through the use of metaphors and alliteration and the socio-cultural reference of the exaggerated formality in the letter while maintaining the text’s *readability* and artistic appeal to the TA. One example, as seen in Table 2, is the metaphorical use of “four walls”, which is not meant to be taken literally but instead represents oppression in the form of confinement or a condition shared by both families. Joaquim even repeats a reference to this line in the letter amidst the climax of the play, when they face the hippopotamus, quoting the sentence word by word without any context in conversation, but as a philosophical corroboration of this mutual feeling.

This is also an example of a significant trait of Passô’s writing, which is the textual fragmentation created by the references to things that have been said previously, which the siblings constantly do, drawing attention to keeping these lines repeated, as in the ST. Likewise, metaphors are used, such as the one seen in Table 3: “You are... this single blood pit, the teardrop of the same salt, spit of the same poison, table from the same tree”⁵³. The phrases are not meant literally (the people addressed are not actually a pit of blood, a teardrop, spit, or a table); these images are instead used to express shared origins, emotions, and conditions.

In order to reshape the *work of adaptation* (4), an initial approach focused on conveying the formality of the letter’s structure to reflect its stiff, almost bureaucratic tone. For instance, as seen in Table 2, an earlier translation read: “Due to your expressions of dissatisfaction, we hereby clarify the reasons for the high-sounding discussions in our residence”. While accurate, this version felt rigid and failed to capture Grace Passô’s poetic language and a rhythm that resonates more naturally with the audience. The main issue that arose was maintaining the formality utilised, such as using the outdated third-person plural pronoun “Vós” in Portuguese while connecting with the TA. Since in English, there are no specific conjugations of verbs

⁵³ “Sois também esse poço de único sangue, lágrima do mesmosal, cuspe do mesmo veneno, mesa da mesma árvore” (Passô, 2012a, p. 17)

which reflect formality, a softer but equally formal phrasing was established: “In light of your concerns, we are compelled to clarify the reasons behind the heated discussions within our premises” (*ibidem*). Table 2 presents further examples of how the formal language in the letter was adjusted to achieve a balance between structure and poetics for *artistic modeling* (1) and the receptiveness of the TA.

Table 3 – Adjustments in formal register to preserve *Artistic Modeling* (1), humour and cultural resonance in the TT.

Source Text	Target Text
Sabeis, pois sois como nós. Sois também esse poço de único sangue, lágrima do mesmo sal, cuspe do mesmo veneno, mesa da mesma árvore	You are acquainted because we are alike. So are you, this single blood pit, the teardrop of the same salt, spit of the same poison, table from the same tree.
Pequeno: Hoje de manhã a menina parecia muito nervosa e gritou assim: "Não estás me ouvindo? Não estás me ouvindo? Por que ninguém me escuta nesse recinto?"	Little One: This morning, the girl seemed really nervous, and she shouted, "I fear you're not hearing me? I fear you're not hearing me? Why doesn't anyone listen to me in this household?"
Mãe: (<i>brava, para Samuel</i>) Se forem eles, diz que eu quero "lhes" conjugar umas palavras.	Mother: (<i>angry, to Samuel</i>) If it's the neighbours, tell them I've got some "vocabulary" of my own up my sleeve.

Source: author, 2025

These decisions reveal the layer concerning *reception-adapters* (8), or figures and strategies that shape the audience's reaction. Another intratextual factor discussed here that was used to discuss the changes in the *work of adaptation* (4) is the *lexic* (p. 111), which focuses on word choice (vocabulary), including register, connotation, figures of speech, and dialects. The translation of *Amores Surdos* required careful attention to the interplay between conjugation and vocabulary, particularly in instances where Portuguese pronouns and verb forms carry cultural and stylistic weight. Thus, these elements were intended to help clarify the cultural context of the play without distorting it. The use of formal vocabulary in English to replace verb conjugations that are perceived as an erudite use of language in Portuguese allows for the logic of the Brazilian structure to come through, as shown in Table 3.

These choices aimed to maintain the poetic nuance and humour implied in the ST, ensuring cultural and stylistic resonance for the TA. In the line “Se forem eles, diz que eu quero ‘lhes’ conjugar umas palavras” (Passô, 2012a, p. 25), a literal translation, “conjugate some words”, would not make sense in English. Besides that, in a threatening tone, the formal object pronoun “lhes” creates a contrast that generates humour. To solve these issues, the elected option was: “If it's the neighbours, tell them I've got some 'vocabulary' of my own up my sleeve”. This applies *reception-adapters* (8) to achieve the artistic codifications of the TT by the adapter through the use of *lexic*, and *artistic modeling* (10A). On the other side of the hourglass, *artistic modeling*, as I see it, deals with the artistic choices employed by the adapter and the liberties they take for a specific purpose. In this case, besides preserving the playfulness while shifting the focus from grammar to *lexic*, I have decided to keep the humour in the sentence “tell them I've got some ‘vocabulary’ of my own up my sleeve” to sound more appealing to the TA.

The letter received by the family is the first marker of contrast in register between the neighbours, and the working-class family portrayed refers to its wording throughout the play. For instance, when Little One repeats the line that a member of the other family used (Table 3): “Não estás me ouvindo? Não estás me ouvindo? Por que ninguém me escuta nesse recinto?” (Passô, 2012a, p. 42), the use of the conjugation of the verb “estás” (you are) using the pronoun “tu” reflects a complex linguistic choice of Brazilian Portuguese speakers, which depends on regional variants, or in this case, the use of an almost literary register. To capture this tone in English, the expression “I fear you're not hearing me?” was chosen, retaining a sense of urgency and heightened emotion through formal language, paired with the word “household” to echo the formal and somewhat exaggerated tone of “recinto”.

Another relevant intratextual factor here is the *sentence structure*, which Nord (2006, p. 130) refers to as how the text is organised, including the length and type of the sentences (statements, questions, exclamations, ellipses), other constructions (infinitives, past and present participles, gerunds), the distribution of main clauses, subordinate clauses and inclusions (paratactical vs. hypotactical *sentence structures*), and the connection of sentences by connectives, such as conjunctions, temporal adverbs, substitutions, among some examples. The repetition of the question “Não estás me ouvindo? Não estás me ouvindo?” emphasises the girl's desperation and escalating emotional state and is another important aspect of

Passô's writing recognised in the *artistic modeling* (1). In the letter, the sentences shift between long, complex sentences (with multiple clauses and digressions) and short, emphatic statements. The sentence types are mostly declarative sentences (statements), establishing tone and argument, with no questions or exclamations, which reinforces the letter's controlled and reflective tone, and these traits were kept in the TT. Besides that, the translation "I fear you're not hearing me?" uses a rhetorical question to maintain the rhythm and socio-cultural aspect of the ST through the *artistic modeling* (10A).

Similarly, in order to retain an elevated, poetic tone, in the line "You are acquainted because we are alike. So are you, this single blood pit [...]", the formal *sentence structures* of "You are acquainted" and "So are you" replace the conjugation of the verb "saber" (to know) in the second person plural "Vós" that is overly formal and outdated in Portuguese. Additionally, there is yet another poetic trait here that required careful transformation was Passô's use of alliteration and rhythmic repetition throughout the letter. Described by Katie Wales as "the repetition of the initial consonant in two or more words" (2011, p. 14), the alliteration used in "Vós sabeis. Sabeis porque sois também [...]" is characterised by the repetition of the "s" sound. To mirror this, the version "You are all well aware. You are acquainted because you are, similarly to us [...]" with the repetition of the "w" sound was first considered. Albeit its structure being similar to that of the ST, starting with a short sentence, it would not give space for a second alliteration. For another alliteration and repetition to be added for a flow that would be more similar to the ST, the redundancy in "You are all well aware, as I am sure you are well acquainted, because you are, too, the same as us [...]" was purposefully used to create rhythm and poetic resonance.

2.1.2. Sociolects in Translation: Retaining Sociocultural Indications and Cultural Nuance in *Deaf Loves*

The juxtaposition of the neighbours' formal language against the working-class family's colloquial speech is not arbitrary; it conveys specific socio-cultural codifications from the ST that have to be accounted for in the translation. This resonates with Walt Wolfram and Natalie Schilling's assertion regarding the use or absence of linguistic conventions that "can have severe implications for how people

are perceived within and across social groups” (2015, p. 93). These implications are also observed in the interactions of a playtext or a performance with the audience.

This dynamic between linguistic form and social perception calls for deliberate choices in the translation process. In translating the play, it was essential to consider how the original language signals social belonging and cultural identity and how these markers could be recreated in English without erasing their impact. In this respect, I drew on Pavis’ filters of *social/anthropological modeling* (10B) and *cultural modeling* (10C), which I understand as the sociological and cultural frameworks through which the translated text is interpreted. While 10B refers more specifically to how social realities, class structures, power dynamics, family roles, gender norms, and daily interactions are understood in the TC, 10C extends to broader systems of cultural perception and symbolic association, such as shared symbols, traditions, historical memory, ideologies, and values.

In order to adapt these cultural and artistic dynamics for a British audience, the choice of an equivalent contrast of formal and colloquial registers in English became a critical point of negotiation. With differences found across various regions, as Arthur Hughes and Peter Trudgill (1979) remark, there is not “a succession of distinct accents [in the country], but a continuum, a gradual changing” (p. 6). Taking this into account, the definition of language variation by Beverly Collins, Inger Mees and Paul Carley (2019) becomes relevant:

We can make two further distinctions in language variation: namely, between regional variation, which involves differences between one place and another, and social variation, which reflects differences between one social group and another. This can cover matters such as gender, ethnicity, religion, age and, very significantly, social class (Collins; Mees; Carley, 2019, p. 45).

The variations analysed in this investigation are based on dialect distinctions, which Hughes and Trudgill describe as “varieties distinguished from each other by differences of grammar and vocabulary” (p. 8). Alene Moyer (2013, p. 10) affirms that dialects are “patterned language behaviour within distinct regions, social classes, ethnic groups, [or] even age groups”, and according to Wolfram and Schilling, they would be “any variety of language that is shared by a group of speakers” (2015, p. 2). The dialectal variants selected serve as a form of cultural mediation, preserving the symbolic tension between registers while ensuring accessibility and resonance within the TC.

The dialectal variation in the context of British English is particularly diverse. Alan Cruttenden (2008) described the RP (Received Pronunciation) as an “implicitly accepted social standard of pronunciation”, which became a marker of position in society (p. 77). Cruttenden explains that “its dissemination as a class pronunciation throughout the country caused it to be recognised as characteristic not so much of a region as of a social stratum” (p. 76). Hughes and Trudgill (1979, p. 7) describe a study conducted in the south of Wales by Giles et al. in 1975, in which a university lecturer gave the same talk to two distinct groups of schoolchildren, with the only difference in both lectures being his accent. The lecturer addressed one group in RP and the other with a Birmingham accent, and the students who were addressed with the one considered with less prestige, when evaluating the lecturer, gave a significantly lower rating on intelligence when compared to the other group.

Daniel Doyle (2019) shows that this trend has not changed considerably over the years. He asserts that “there have been multiple investigations highlighting society’s negative perception of West Midlands accents in comparison to other standard and non-standard regional varieties” (*ibid*, 2019, p. 137). Doyle also mentions that mainstream media have declared the “Birmingham accent” to be the “UK’s ugliest accent”, quoting an article written by Helena Horton in 2014 for the popular entertainment newspaper Mirror.co.uk.⁵⁴ These regional specificities can carry strong social connotations, reflecting cultural identity, class distinctions, and historical legacies, making listeners in the UK highly attuned to dialectal differences, and judgments or assumptions are often made based on perceived linguistic traits.

These nuances also reflect social hierarchies that shape cultural productions and their reception. Considering this, the choice of dialect in translating *Amores Surdos* into *Deaf Loves* can be further justified through Pavis’ (1992, p. 13) filter of *perspective of the adapters* (3) and *perspective of the adapters and their work of adaptation* (4). Pavis describes this perspective as rooted in relativism, or “the rejection of any centralising and committed reading, the levelling of codes, the undoing of discursive hierarchies, the rejection of a separation between ‘high’ culture and mass culture [...]”, with “high” culture being responsible for the concentration of knowledge, education, and methodological codes that certain subgroups use to deepen analysis and exercise power (Pavis, 1992, p. 14). However, this relativist

⁵⁴ See (<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/ampp3d/what-uks-ugliest-accent-4789870>). Last access on 9 Sep. 2025)

lens does not fully align with the perspective of a translator working from a minority cultural position. Here, the decision to use dialect in the translation was not an act of rejecting hierarchies indiscriminately but rather a deliberate and political choice, reclaiming agency and power in the translation process.

I positioned myself not as an adapter of a “classic” bound by dominant cultural expectations but as an agent advocating for voices often marginalised in translation. This perspective challenges the traditional hierarchy in which “high” culture dictates formality, structure, and authority, while “lower” cultural expressions, such as regional dialects or non-standard speech, are undervalued or excluded. Instead of “levelling” codes, the nuances of language and culture inherent to the ST were foregrounded, being translated in a way that would maintain cultural specificity while ensuring accessibility for the TA. This approach is deeply connected to my own position as a Brazilian woman, a speaker of the language in its multiple registers, and someone shaped by the very cultural, political, and linguistic dynamics explored in the play. This proximity allows me to make informed decisions about which elements of language, tone, and cultural nuance are chosen to be highlighted or adapted to resist erasure and foster meaningful exchange. In this sense, the *perspective of the adapters* (3) in *Deaf Loves* is tied to empowerment and visibility. Rather than neutralising or erasing cultural distinctions, the approach chosen amplifies them, treating the act of translation as a form of cultural and artistic resistance.

Having created meaningful ties with the Midlands region of the UK and Northern Ireland throughout my academic and personal life, I decided to adopt a Midlands variant for the TT, since it positioned me to recognise its potential as an effective counterpart to the play’s portrayal of socio-economic contrasts. The West Midlands is located in the middle of the UK, caught within the long-standing distinctions and tensions between North and South. Esther Asprey (2015) describes the region as encompassing “the conurbation of Birmingham, Coventry and the Black Country” (p. 394). While I had no concrete prospects for staging the translation in either context, I found more initiatives of theatre groups working with South American translated theatre in the UK, and through the works of Urszula Clark, Esther Asprey and Daniel Doyle, I found a rich foundation to support this choice, along with countless transcriptions of language use and expressions that could be borrowed in the TT. These scholars’ works have also helped establish the Midlands variants as a downgraded working-class register, making them the most resonant and socially

appropriate to reflect the status of the Brazilian family portrayed in *Amores Surdos*. It is a voice that can open up space for different perceptions of marginalised realities in the Global South, helping non-Brazilian audiences approach the play not through stereotypes but with more curiosity or empathy.

This translational approach may also prove beneficial in challenging the persistent stigmatisation surrounding the Midlands dialects. Asprey (2025, p. 4) asserts that in the UK, working-class status is actively correlated with the use of the Black Country dialect, while middle-class speakers from the region often possess passive knowledge of the dialect but avoid using it. She highlights that “the dialects of the West Midlands continue to be flagged in the academic literature as stigmatised” (*ibidem*). In this context, promoting them in translated theatre could contribute to reversing this perception. As an example, Asprey (*ibid.*, p. 10) reports that the Birmingham and Black Country areas have experienced a significant boost in tourism and cultural interest following the success of the BBC series *Peaky Blinders*, which revolves around illegal bookmakers in Edwardian Birmingham. Asprey also reports that individuals who purchased or intended to purchase *Peaky Blinders* DVDs had a higher conative image of the city, viewing it as more attractive (*ibidem*). This correlation offers insight into the potential influence of artistic productions on public attitudes towards a region, including its language and culture. In this light, the use of the Midlands dialects in the translation of *Amores Surdos*, instead of RP or other more prestigious English varieties, can be understood as a counter-hegemonic act that not only supports the visibility of the SC but may also help destabilise entrenched linguistic hierarchies within the TC. This exchange of social positioning between languages further reinforces the idea that theatre translation is not only a textual practice but a sociocultural intervention.

Moreover, the Black Country dialect, a subset of the West Midlands variety, carries significant socio-cultural weight. As Asprey notes, the “Black Country’s ethnic makeup is also not exclusively White British” (2015, p. 398). The region’s history is marked by Irish diaspora migration, post-independence workers from former British colonies, and more recent immigrant communities from India and Pakistan, which adds layers of diversity and working-class identity to its sociolect (*ibidem*). These historical and linguistic elements parallel the realities of the family portrayed in Grace Passô’s play: a family grappling with economic challenges and social constraints. Placing the family’s speech in the Midlands context was applied to amplify the

working-class voice and reflect the play's broader commentary on class, identity, and marginalisation within Brazilian society, reinterpreted for an English-speaking audience. Rather than choosing a highly localised form like Black Country or Brummie specifically in the *artistic modeling* (10A), I chose to work with a blend of Midlands features to create a general impression of this social positioning. This aligns with the play's own language, which, although clearly marked as a colloquial vernacular, does not correspond to one single regional variety of Portuguese. This translational approach aims to create a less prestigious but contextually resonant voice for the characters, one that preserves and repositions their social dynamics within a recognisable framework for British audiences.

Table 4 illustrates specific translation choices that are based on the *reception-adapters* (8) through *artistic* (10A), *sociological and anthropological* (10B), and *cultural modeling* (10C). They reflect informal traits in the TT, specifically those associated with Black Country and Birmingham English, while maintaining the stylistic nuances of the ST. The table demonstrates how the translation choices aim to reflect key features of this sociolect that were used in the TT to achieve vernacular authenticity. These linguistic patterns align with research by Asprey (2015 and 2007), which highlights the prominence of vernacular features in regional varieties of English, particularly in the Black Country.

An example of a translation choice that reflects informal dialect traits associated explicitly with Black Country and Birmingham English is the discourse particle "like". In Grazielle's monologue, the use of "like" in phrases such as "they all speak posh, like!" draws on Asprey's findings (2015, p. 142) regarding its function as both a filler and an emphasis marker in casual speech. The placement of "like" at the end of the sentence softens the tone and mirrors the natural rhythm of Black Country English. This use adds an informal and conversational quality to the dialogue, aligning with the regional vernacular and reinforcing the character's voice, which is the most informal one in the family. For general traits of the chosen dialect, Asprey's (2007) transcripts of interviews with informants were surveyed and carefully selected to identify prominent features. A recurrent interplay of Nord's intratextual factors of *lexis* and *sentence structure* emerges through the use of "alright". For instance, Joaquim's sarcastic line, "Alright, his clothes ain't dirty", "alright" reflects a key characteristic of Birmingham and Black Country English. Asprey (2015, p. 235) highlights that "alright" is commonly used in these regional dialects to introduce or

respond to statements, often carrying specific tones or attitudes, such as agreement, irony, or dismissal, in a way that “just sounds so Black Country”, as one informant has noted. In the case of Joaquim's line, “alright” functions sarcastically, aligning with the *content* embedded in the dynamics of power in the family, in which he challenges the mother's avoidance of acknowledging the mud around the house. This lexical choice, combined with the contraction “ain't”, reinforces the regional and informal tone of Joaquim's speech, creating a more localised and natural dialogue.

Table 4 – Translation choices reflecting west midlands dialect traits while preserving the stylistic nuances of the ST.

Source Text	First Version	Target Text
Graziele: Sabe por que não dá pra entender nada daquela carta deles? É porque diz que eles são muito eruditos. Diz que são uma família de acadêmicos, são todos formados na faculdade, na casa tem estante de livro até na co-zi-nha e todos eles falam em segunda pessoa!	Graziele: You know why we can't understand anythin' in their letter? It's 'cause they say they're very erudite. Say they're a family of academics, they're all college-educated, got bookshelves even in the kitchen, an' they all speak in the second person!	Graziele: Do you know why we can't understand anything in their letter? People say they're all lah-di-dah. They say they're a family of academics. They're all college-educated and have even got bookshelves In. The. Kitchen, and they all speak posh, like!
Mãe: Não é para tirar não, Pequeno, sua roupa não está suja. Graziele: Mãe... Joaquim: (<i>irônico</i>) Tudo bem, a roupa dele não está suja.	Mom: No, it's not for you to take it off, Pequeno, your clothes aren't dirty. Graziele: Mom... Joaquim: (<i>ironically</i>) Alright, his clothes aren't dirty.	Mother: Don't take them off, Little One; your clothes ain't dirty. Graziele: Mom... Joaquim: (<i>sarcastic</i>) Alright, his clothes ain't dirty.
Mãe: Você não fale nada, senão piora seu chiado.	Mother: You say nothing, or else it'll make your wheezing worse.	Mother: You don't say nothin', or else it'll make your wheezing worse.

Source: author, 2025

The use of negative particles and double negatives is another key feature of *sentence structure* in the translation since they reflect the negated verb forms typical of Black Country English. For instance, Asprey (2015, p. 141) cites examples such as, “I don't want no trouble”, which highlight how negation patterns in this dialect differ from standard English norms. The use of a double negative that is common in

informal English reflects the performative and colloquial nature of the mother's warning, aligning with Nord's (2006) concept of the intratextual factor of *suprasegmental features*. These include emphasis, rhythm, and intonation, particularly in performance, or "those features of text organization which overlap the boundaries of any lexical and syntactical segments, sentences, and paragraphs, framing the phonological 'gestalt' or specific 'tone' of the text" (pp. 131-2). The translation: "**Mother:** You don't say nothin', or else it'll make your wheezing worse", uses the double negative to add emphasis and rhythm, effectively mirroring the urgency and oral tone of the ST. The choice captures the mother's performative voice, maintaining the heightened emotional rhythm while embedding the sociolect traits of the target dialect. These incorporations mirror oral immediacy and rhythm of the ST and preserve its colloquial tone while rooting it firmly in the TL's regional identity, maintaining cultural and linguistic references within the TT's context.

2.1.3. Character Names: Striking a Balance Between Cultural Familiarity and Preserving Otherness in Translation

The choice of character names in *Amores Surdos* posed important questions regarding the balance between cultural preservation and accessibility for the TA, as it is among the first things the reader encounters. My initial intention was to maintain the *cultural modeling* (1) of the ST by keeping the original Brazilian names, which I considered integral to its cultural specificity. I carefully evaluated whether these names would be understandable or disruptive to English-speaking audiences, and following a workshop with actors, where no significant pronunciation or comprehension issues were raised, the decision was to retain them. However, some adjustments were necessary under the layer of *work of adaptation* (4), particularly in the case of the characters with no designated names, such as the mother, the father and "Pequeno". For instance, the latter required a shift guided by the *reception-adapters* (8) layer, as I opted for a parallel nickname more commonly used for small children in English, functioning as a conducting element to ensure smoother reception. This selective modification sought to retain the emotional register of the ST while easing cultural accessibility, highlighting the negotiation between preserving otherness and fostering connection within the translation process.

The choice of character names was one of the first significant decisions made, and the choice of placing these characters in a space-in-between from the first pages of the play, even before they say any word, sets the tone of the TT. The father, who appears only in the character list and never on stage to emphasise his absence in the family, is addressed by the relatives as “Pai”, being “Dad”, a natural match in English. In addressing the mother, a pivotal character whose name is not explicitly mentioned in the play, language has been chosen to cultivate a sense of intimacy and connection with the audience. As Urszula Clark and Esther Asprey (2013, p. 38) point out, in the West Midlands, the standard spelling and pronunciation is “mom” [mom] for the supralocal standard “mum” in most of the country. For this reason, “mom” was selected to reflect its common usage in the chosen regional variation of British English. In moments conveying heightened emotional proximity, particularly from the youngest sibling, “Mummy” was used.

The choice of the youngest sibling’s name, Pequeno, posed a unique challenge through the choice of *lexic*. In Portuguese, “pequeno” means “small” and functions as a nickname and a descriptive adjective for young children, a usage that does not transfer into English. The initial idea, based on my *perspective of the adapter* (3), was to retain “Pequeno” in the TT to preserve its cultural nuance, but this would risk obscuring its *content*, and the *subject matter* implied power dynamics within the family. Instead, “Little One” was chosen since it maintains the affectionate tone and hierarchical nuance of the ST. Furthermore, a line delivered by Joaquim further justified this choice: “You are grown-ups, I am grown-up, nobody here is Little... Everyone here knows where they are”⁵⁵. In the ST, the capitalisation of “Pequeno” allows for a double meaning, both as the character’s name and as the adjective “small”, so “Little One” successfully conveys this ambiguity in English, ensuring the line’s layered significance remains intact. Additionally, the siblings’ nickname for Pequeno, “Pê”, required careful adaptation. To preserve its informal and affectionate tone in English, “Lil” was selected as a natural, colloquial equivalent that mirrors the playful informality of the ST.

On the other hand, the original proper names were retained to emphasise that this family is not rooted in the TC. The father’s name is listed as “Gentil”, which has the same meaning as an adjective in Portuguese and English but is not used as

⁵⁵ “Vocês são grandes, eu sou grande, ninguém aqui é Pequeno... todo mundo aqui sabe onde está.” (Passô, 2012a, p. 18)

a first name in the UK. While Samuel and Júnior are recognisably familiar in English-speaking contexts, names such as Joaquim and Graziele are more distinctly foreign yet still understandable to the audience. These decisions highlight the duality of familiarity and otherness that is intended to be achieved within the SC, which involves *cultural modeling* (10C). This reworking of the text reveals an ideological position, even under the guise of neutrality. In these cases of reshaping the ST into something more linear or conventional, I aimed at preserving Passô's use of polyphonic voices. The choice of renaming Pequeno to a more neutral and familiar form did not seem to add extra meaning to the character and plot, which suggests a balance in the semantic commitment with cultural adaptation. Overall, the translation choices regarding character names aim to retain the essence of Passô's work while ensuring its resonance in the TC's context.

2.3. ADDRESSING COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES: SOLUTIONS IN *DEAF LOVES* FOR FLAWED INTERACTIONS IN *AMORES SURDOS*

Several moments in *Amores Surdos* highlight direct or tangible difficulties in communication, from broader themes of misunderstanding to issues with self-expression. These challenges arise from characters who struggle to understand or be understood, whether due to language use, cognitive limitations, emotional suppression or physical distance. The family portrayed struggles with communication, from daily misunderstandings to metaphorical silences, such as misunderstandings in daily conversations, failed attempts to reach Júnior by phone, and the unspoken emotional distance in both families and surrounding the absence of the prominent family's patriarch. Intertwined with humour, poetic language, and linguistic variety, these layered communication challenges create a rich interplay of meanings, but they also present intricate translation challenges that require careful solutions.

2.3.1. Interpersonal Issues Through Emotional and Physical Distance Causing the Breakdown of Communication

Perhaps the most recurring cultural reference in the play is the characterisation of the living spaces of both households as being filled with noise. This is referred to in the very title of the play itself, *Amores Surdos* (*Deaf Loves*),

which seems to allude to the social challenges faced by the neighbours, where the family's loud arguments and habit of playing music at high volumes become a point of contention. The families are situated in a residential complex typical of urban areas in Brazil, where several families reside in condominiums, which might involve the *presupposition* of the audience to recognise the environment. This is suggested by the proximity they have to one another, allowing them to clearly hear the family's conversations, music, and arguments, as well as direct references to the building manager, who is a resident employed to deal with all issues involving the apartments and their common areas. These living conditions exacerbate the issues involving characteristics shown that could be considered *cultural modeling* (1) in relation to the tolerance to noise: in both households, there are reports of yelling, shouting and loud music, revealing how they shape intimacy in Brazilian familial culture.

In their letter of apology, the next-door family clarifies that their loudness is not due to an inability to hear but rather a way of expressing themselves, which would be more pleasant to listen to than their sonorous arguing. Both families display customs of listening to blasting music and using high tones of voice in communication. As seen in the example of the latter in Table 5, it is implied that Graziele is listening to her headphones at such high volumes that she cannot hear anything happening around her. The collective "Shush" followed by Samuel's request for her to lower her voice also imply that the music in her headphones was loud enough for her not to have control of her voice tone. These requests for silence are prevalent throughout the play, which suggests that family members speak in a lowered voice. In the stage directions, there are even commands for the actors to yell, such as when the mother is talking to Junior on the phone. Here, there is also an indication of *cultural modeling* (1) since it could be argued that speaking with a higher voice is a cultural custom in Brazil. This required attentive choices for the demands in Portuguese "Fala baixo!" and "Fala alto!", which are standard imperatives without many other similar options, and in the play, are used repeatedly. In English, on the other hand, there are more formal alternatives (e.g. "Could you speak a little more quietly?", "Would you mind lowering your voice a bit?" or "Could you speak at a higher volume?"), mild options (as in "Please, be quiet.", "Please be silent." or "Speak loudly, please.") and more direct options (e.g. "Lower your voice", "Keep it down, please." or "Speak up"), being the latter ones the chosen alternative which aligns with the vernacular chosen for the TT.

Table 5 – *Cultural Modeling* (1) through language related to the tolerance to noise.

Source Text	Target Text
Graziele: (<i>para a família</i>) O que tá acontecendo, hein? Todos: Chhhh! Samuel: Fala baixo!	Graziele: (<i>to the family</i>) What's the fuss, huh? All: Shush! Samuel: Lower your voice!
Mãe: (<i>grita</i>) Júnior? Eu tô te ouvindo baixo, fala mais alto!	Mother: (<i>yelling</i>) Júnior? I can't hear you very well, speak up!
Mãe: Da próxima vez que eles vierem com cartinhas, eles vão ver. Eles estão achando que isso resolve alguma coisa. Olha que horror! Meu Deus, ele vai matar a mulher!	Mother: Next time they come bringing letters around, they'll see. They think that's gonna solve anything. Good heavens! My God. He's gonna kill her!

Source: author, 2025

By implementing *reception-adapters* (8) through choices of *artistic modeling* (10A), the translation choices prioritised the TL's variety by using a more diverse choice of *lexic*, reducing the repetition of Passô's *artistic modeling* (1), but not interfering with *content*. Other instances of flawed interpersonal communication are related to Grazielle's detachment, which is subtly reinforced through her late responses and self-absorbed attitude. Grazielle's action of wearing headphones reinforces her detachment visually, and her late responses, along with her informal and distracted tone, are adapted to reflect teenage speech and behaviour. Her informal and often intrusive way of speaking was the most stylised in terms of *lexic*, *sentence structure* and *suprasegmental features* through the sociolectal markers being explored.

Additionally, as shown in Table 6, music serves as another element that reflects the characters' inner experiences. Grazielle's detachment is occasionally contrasted by her "coincidental" sing-alongs during emotionally charged moments of the play, in which the lyrics function as direct expressions of the characters' emotional states. These songs are not rhymed; rather, they consist of lyrical descriptions of affective responses to each scene. This posed a particular challenge for the translation, as I was unable to locate *reception-adapter* (8) strategies that would enhance musicality without compromising the *artistic modelling* (1) and *content* of the original. I, therefore, opted for a textual translation, leaving decisions concerning musicality open for a potential performance.

Table 6 – Graziele's sing-alongs and their narrative function.

Source Text	Target Text
Samuel: Mãe... Graziele: (<i>canta a música que ouve</i>) "Mother..." Mãe: Oi... Graziele: "Hei..." Samuel: Eu queria conversar com a senhora agora. Mãe: Fala. Graziele: "Diz..." Samuel: Mas acho que agora não dá, né... é melhor eu ir porque tá ficando tarde.	Samuel: Mom... Graziele: (<i>singing along to her song</i>) "Mother..." Mother: Hi... Graziele: "Hey..." Samuel: I wanted to talk to you now. Mother: Go ahead. Graziele: "Say it..." Samuel: But I guess it's not the right time now, huh... I better go 'cause it's getting late.
Graziele: (<i>canta a música que ouve</i>) "O tempo vai passando, passando./ A história vai nos empurrando/ O caçula construindo seu navio/ Que para os grandes já não passa de papel..."	Graziele: (<i>singing along to her song</i>) "Time keeps ticking. History keeps raging on. The youngest is building his ship. But for the older ones, it is nothing but paper..."

Source: author, 2025

Another instance of emotional suppression in the play is represented through the characters' sleepwalking. In these moments, Joaquim and Graziele reveal their inner thoughts without consciously filtering their feelings, allowing the audience to access a more vulnerable layer of their personalities. Interestingly, both characters adopt a slightly more formal tone while sleepwalking, which requires careful attention in translation to *suprasegmental features* and *sentence structure*, highlighting a shift in posture and emotional exposure. For instance, when Little One asks the mother if he is awake, she calls him carefully, and his answer, described by the stage directions for the actor, in a way that is "very different from when sleepwalking", using the informal expression "What's up?", followed by his mother's confirmation "He is", certifying that he is awake for his way of acting and speaking. *Amores Surdos* reflects deeply relatable aspects of contemporary Brazilian society, which includes the mediation of intimacy through technology and language, which are elements that can be familiar to the TC in the *cultural* and *sociological/anthropological modeling* (10B and C), with regards to how they shape the way feelings are expressed, shared, or withheld.

2.3.2. Misheard and Misunderstood: The Literal Gaps in Dialogue

The *content* of sleepwalking is also related to misunderstandings, which posed challenges to the translation, such as the first use of the term seen in Table 7. The choice of words to describe “sleepwalking” carries significant implications due to how this condition is named in different languages. In Portuguese, the term “sonâmbulo” corresponds to “somnambulist” in English; however, while the Portuguese term is commonly used in everyday speech, its English equivalent is far more formal, typically reserved for medical or technical contexts.

Table 7 – Addressing *Lexic* in Little One’s speech.

Source Text	Target Text
Mãe: (<i>sussura</i>) Ele tá dormindo. Pequeno: O quê? Samuel: O Joaquim é sonâmbulo! Pequeno: Aonde? Mãe: O seu irmão é so-nâm-bu-lo. Ele faz as coisas enquanto dorme.	Mother: (<i>whispers</i>) He's sleeping. Little One: What? Samuel: Joaquim is sleepwalking! Little One: Where? Mother: Your brother is a som-nam-bu-list. He does things while he's out like a light.
Samuel: Eles estão sempre seis horas a mais que nós. Pequeno: É por isso que eles são mais desenvolvidos?	Samuel: It's always six hours ahead there. Little One: Is that why they're more advanced?
Samuel: É que a pessoa faz o que tem vontade, entende? O que a alma dela pede, ela faz. Pequeno: De onde? Mãe: O que a alma pede. Sem se preocupar se é certo ou se não é certo. É só o que ele deseja e pronto. Ele faz as coisas sem responsabilidade. Pequeno: (<i>concluindo</i>) O que ele quer... Mãe: É, o que ele deseja.	Samuel: 'Cause people do what they want, see? Whatever their soul fancies, they do it. Little One: Who's Saul? Mother: What the soul asks for. Without worrying if it's right or not. It's just what he desires, and that's it. He does things with no responsibility. Little One: (<i>concluding</i>) What he wants... Mother: Yes, what he desires.

Source: author, 2025

This contrast posed a challenge in translation in terms of *lexic*, as a recurring joke in the ST relies on the word being familiar to adults but difficult for the child to grasp. Little One, after hearing his mother’s explanation of Joaquim’s condition, mispronounces the word several times, even after being repeatedly corrected. He refers to the condition directly, saying, “Que bonito é ser ‘sonântulo!’” (“How beautiful

it is to be ‘sonântulo!’”) where the invented term “sonântulo” plays on the word with humour. The use of a stylised version of the more ordinary word in English, such as “sleepywalking”, would sustain the child's confusion in understanding his brother's condition while mispronouncing the word, thereby preserving this playful neologism. For the final version after the *artistic modeling* (10A), I decided to keep the use of this version once by Little One to reaffirm the *content* to the TA, since it is the first time the family addresses Joaquim's condition, to ensure the TA is aware they are referring to it, and to keep the humour of the following line “Where?” to imply Little One does not understand his brother's condition and misunderstood the meaning of the word. In the ST, there is no direct correlation of the word “sonâmbulo” with the act of walking somewhere, but in the TT, this joke would have this added label of meaning at the same time as it introduces the term “somnambulist” in context.

However, since it is implied that the word impresses Little One, in order to maintain the humour and the impression that the term is too complex for a child to pronounce correctly, I decided to use the coinage “somantulist”. This choice mirrors the original wordplay, as “somantulist” closely resembles “somnambulist” while incorporating a slight distortion, just as in the ST. The creation of “somantulist” was intended to replicate the humour and presuppose that the audience will recognise the playful wordplay as part of the child's speech. Additionally, both the “correct” word and the stylisation were introduced after the first use of the colloquial expression in context, in an adjustment of *the work of adaptation* (4) in a more overt way in the TT compared to the ST, to explain its meaning to the TA.

Another example of a literal interpretation by the child is in “It's always six hours ahead there”, where he merges fragments of information he has likely overheard about the country where Júnior is, with an incomplete understanding of time zones. At some point, he may have heard that this place is “more developed” and unconsciously linked this idea to something measurable, such as time. After hearing: “They are always six hours more than us”, he takes the concept literally instead of fully understanding what it means, so I chose the *lexic* use of “ahead” for the TT, which might mean developed in an economic or social sense. Since no one corrects this conclusion in the scene, it leaves room for another interpretation: this unchallenged remark subtly echoes broader perceptions about progress and modernity, allowing the misunderstanding to carry a double significance.

Though seemingly simple, the key elements of miscommunication, family dynamics, and teenage detachment reflect more profound interpersonal struggles and require careful attention in translation to preserve meaning and nuance. As seen in Table 7, Little One expresses another instance of confusion that seems to stem from the word “alma” (soul) when Samuel and Mom say that a person does “what the soul asks” when they are sleepwalking, referring to deep desires or inner impulses. Little One asks them, “De onde?” (“From where?”), suggesting that he interprets “alma” as a physical place, person or object from which something emerges rather than as a metaphor for one’s emotions or will. He expects a concrete answer, possibly imagining that the “soul” is something tangible or that desires originate from a specific, locatable source. To maintain a similar scenario in which he would understand something literally, I chose Saul, a common first name in English-speaking countries. The most significant transformation is “De onde?” turning into “Who’s Saul?” through *reception-adapters* (8), introducing a more specific and literal misinterpretation based on phonetics rather than a more open misunderstanding, shifting the nature of Little One’s confusion in behalf of the *artistic modeling* (10A).

In these cases, the translation required more creative adaptations in the *suprasegmental features*, particularly in handling Little One’s misunderstandings and preserving the tone of a playful language. As seen in Table 8 he uses “Cube” in the ST, a mispronunciation of the irregular verb “caber” (to fit) in the first person in the past (“coube”). Since this required the *presupposition* of the audience being aware of Portuguese morphology and verb conjugation, it was transformed into “was nuff woom” in the TT, shifting the mistake to a phonetic distortion in the *sentence structure*. The translation preserves the essential ideas and *content*, but some transformations occur, particularly in Little One’s misinterpretations.

Similarly, in Grazielle’s pun “Isso é um trem? Isso é uma tentativa, isso sim” using a mix of “trem” (train) and “tentativa” (attempt) is mirrored in “Is that meant to be a train? That’s an attraimpt”, maintaining the sarcastic *content* and wordplay, but adapting it to English phonetics. However, Little One does not understand the joke, nor the word she invented, saying, “O que é ‘temtrativa’?” (“What’s a ‘temtrativa’?”), which raised the need for preserving the original’s phonetic confusion. Through *artistic modeling* (10A), the error pattern was shifted, similarly to “was nuff woom”, to express a sense of childish speech through the difficulty of children pronouncing the R, aligning with English phonetics.

Table 8 – Misunderstanding and mispronunciation in childish speech

Source Text	Target Text
Pequeno: (<i>construindo outra coisa</i>) Sonhei que eu tava molhado e aí a mãe foi lá e me colocou para secar num escorredor de secar prato. Graziele: E você coube? Pequeno: Cube. Por quê?	Little One: (<i>building something else</i>) I dreamt that I was wet and then Mom came and put me to dry on a dish rack. Graziele: And was there room enough for you? Little One: Yeah, was nuff woom. Why?
Graziele: Isso é um trem? Isso é uma tentativa, isso sim. Pequeno: O que é "temtrativa"?	Graziele: Is that meant to be a train? Good attraimpt. Little One: What's an "Atwemt"?

Source: author, 2025

There are other contributions to a layered exploration of communication breakdowns, such as the recurring trouble of reaching Júnior by phone. The faulty phone calls reflect contemporary digital communication struggles, and the repetition and miscommunication throughout the call, with “Como? O quê?” became “How’s that again? What?” to recreate the ST’s pace. In the *cultural modeling* (1), it can be assumed that, through the *presupposition* of the ST, the source audience (SA) is familiar with the phone call disruptions and online communication issues such as the ones seen in Table 9, which the TA would relate to in a reciprocal way since these can be considered universal trends in modern life moulded by virtual interactions.

For instance, the repeated questioning (“What? No... say that again!”) aligns with how English speakers express confusion in real-life faulty calls, being a *cultural* and *sociological/anthropological modeling* (10B/C) analogous to the ST, as seen in Table 9. The rhythm and fragmentation of speech in these communications are maintained, mirroring the *sentence structure* and *suprasegmental features* of the ST. However, in, “What. Time. Is. It. Over. There?”, this frustration and effort in the communication breakdown was more emphasised with a shift from the focus on *lexic* in the ST, which reads, “que ho-ras são aí?”, suggesting the pronunciation of the syllables of “horas” (time) separately to ensure clarity. In the TT, the full marks suggest a breakdown of the entire sentence since the breakdown of syllables in English is less common, and the word “time” has only one syllable, impeding the same approach in the SL. Ultimately, the translation attempts to capture the humour, frustration, and disconnection of the original, ensuring coherence and maintaining its natural rhythm and flow.

Table 9 – Translating disrupted communication on phone calls

Source Text	Target Text
Samuel: É Júnior? Mãe: Você tá me ouvindo? Tá me escutando? Samuel: É ele? Mãe: Júnior! Pequeno: É ele. Mãe: (<i>ligação distante</i>) Eu tô te ouvindo baixo, fala mais alto! Graziele: (<i>chegando</i>) Quem é? Mãe: Recebemos, recebemos sim!... (sobre <i>Graziele</i>) Ela recebeu, não tira ele do ouvido!... Que horas são? Graziele: (<i>para alguém</i>) É o Júnior? Mãe: Não! Tô dizendo: que ho-ras são aí?	Samuel: Is it Júnior? Mother: Can you hear me? You listening? Samuel: Is it him? Mother: Júnior! Little One: It's him. Mother: (<i>distant call</i>) I can't hear you very well, speak up! Graziele: (<i>arriving</i>) Who is it? Mother: We got it, we got it!... (<i>about Graziele</i>) She's got them, she won't take them off her ears!... What time is it there? Graziele: (<i>to someone</i>) Is it Júnior? Mother: No... I'm asking: "What. Time. Is. It. Over. There?"

Source: author, 2025

2.4. REFINING THE TRANSLATION: PRACTICE-LED RESEARCH INSIGHTS AFTER ACTOR FEEDBACK

The third and final part of this chapter presents reflections on the practical phase of the research, which involved a table read and open discussion of the translated version of *Amores Surdos* with a group of theatre professionals. These collaborative encounters offered a unique opportunity to test how the translation functioned in a performance context, revealing not only how certain choices resonated with the actors but also how new meanings emerged through their engagement with the text. This stage of the project is grounded in the principles of practice-led research, where theoretical concerns intersect with the unpredictability of live reception and performance.

The workshop took place in one of the rooms of Mary Immaculate College, provided by Prof. Deidre Flynn, between the seminars for the American Conference for Irish Studies (ACIS) in 2024. It brought together a group of theatre makers from Goose Chase Theatre and Weird Gravy, who have collaborated in previous productions, such as *The Man of Destiny* by George Bernard Shaw at the Lime Theatre at Mary Immaculate College, and who also develop authorial works, including the sketches presented in the annual Halloween production, *Stage Frights*.

Most of the group were alumni from the university, now working professionally in theatre. The connection was made through Prof. David Clare, who had known them during their time as students, and introduced them to me via e-mail.

After completing the first version of the translation, I sent the document to the participants beforehand. On the day of the workshop, since there has been a significant influx of Brazilian immigrants to Ireland over the last few decades, I found a Brazilian store in Limerick that sells regional products, along with a snack bar featuring common Brazilian foods as a gesture of gratitude, since they voluntarily participated in this work. While we ate and discussed aspects of Brazilian cuisine and culture, I projected information on the room's computer screen, ranging from the curious shape of the Guaraná fruit to introductory pictures of Grace Passô and early performances of *Amores Surdos*. I explained some points of the translation project, such as the characters' register and profile and what I expected from the reading. Since the group consisted of Irish actors, I clarified the type of audience envisioned for the translation project. Although they were native speakers of the Irish vernacular of English, they showed confidence in working with a British audience in mind. There was no previous distribution of characters, and on the day of the meeting, they spontaneously assigned roles to themselves. I verbally asked for their permission to record both the reading and the subsequent discussion, to which they kindly agreed. The actors had pre-read the text, and during the table read, they were encouraged to annotate their copies, highlighting any areas of concern or interest for discussion afterwards.

Following the dramatic reading, we engaged in a discussion where the actors shared their general impressions of the play, including how the representation of a foreign culture affected their perception and empathy towards the story. They also suggested what they thought would be more colloquial or “natural-sounding” alternatives in British English for certain passages and highlighted moments where cultural or linguistic elements felt unclear or out of place. One week after the meeting, I sent the participants an online form allowing them to anonymously provide additional thoughts or reflections on the text at their own pace. To preserve the actors' identities when reporting the discussion, they are named after the initial letter of the character they played (and N for the actor who read the stage directions and the letter), and my contribution or questions are labelled as “Me”.

It was a rewarding experience to watch the actors read the lines I had arranged to resemble this text, into which I was so immersed. Hearing the words come to life, seeing meaning emerge through their voices and expressions, and realising that the text stood on its own and conveyed what I meant it to convey was a powerful moment. The text held, and through it, it was possible to see the delicate tapestry of Passô's artistic expression along with Brazilian cultural references. During the discussion, some small moments of connection unfolded: those instances when we carry an idea within us and strive to pass it on in another language, searching for a word to capture it, and then, a given foreign word is used in the context of your communication, which makes someone's face light up in that *aha* moment. That sense of mutual understanding is magical, and in writing down this work, receiving feedback, listening to how they interpreted the words, and hearing references that aligned so clearly with how I perceived the ST were a series of moving *aha* moments for me.

The following three subsections focus on different aspects of this process. The first discusses how the actors responded to Passô's stylistic and poetic traits as they appeared in the translated playtext. The second addresses the broader cultural and aesthetic resonance of the work, including questions of *readability*, empathy, and intercultural perception. Finally, the third subsection examines the final language refinements and lexical decisions based on the feedback received. Together, these reflections shed light on the translator's position as both analyst and adapter, revealing how the interplay of theory, text, and performance shaped the final version of *Deaf Loves*.

2.4.1. Brazilian Theatre discussed by Irish Actors: Recognising Grace Passô's style and envisioning probable approaches in performance

What I could see coming through in the workshop after reading the TT was an explicit perception of Grace Passô's authorial style. For instance, in the opening commentary of the discussion by L, the actor demonstrates awareness of the distinction between translation matters and the author's work, which we would later refer to in our discussions:

There's the text, and there's the translation. The text is crazy, [LAUGHTER], but I really like it. It's insane, but I really like it. [...] I love how it feels like a play of kind of two halves. What is insane, though, in the second half is what it... It does. It kind of builds. It builds on the first half while also intentionally catching you off guard.

They show that they were able to notice the contrast of the seemingly straightforward story presented by the first acts of a “normal” family simply living their everyday lives, being taken over by the surrealistic event of a wild animal living in their home, representing the psychological symbolisms of the characters. Regarding how the play builds the narrative by adding almost imperceptible clues about the following events and, at some point, surprises the audience, they describe:

L: What's crazy to me, looking at the plot, is... I read this twice before I came in here, and the first time, I'm like, man, that hippo really comes out of nowhere. And then the second time, I'm like, man, that hippo was really heavily foreshadowed. It's like, obviously, there was going to be a hippo! [LAUGHTER]

N: Graziele at one point literally says, there's a big animal in this house, and I haven't noticed it.

L: For some reason, everyone's covered in mud.

Me: Yeah, it's little by little, actually.

L: Exactly, yeah. And the first time, it's like, well, that's an interesting thing. I'm sure that'll be relevant later. But then going back, it's like, oh my gosh.

These perceptions confirm the *artistic modeling* (2) by Passô in the ST was conveyed in the TT. Besides the overall construction of the plot, other main characteristics of Passô's writing were pointed out, such as in “**M:** It's very poetic. It's very like having those echoes running through it and repeating in cycles and coming back. Yeah. A lot of mirroring. Yeah. It's very, very poetic”. In the Google form entitled “Extra Thoughts and Comments on *Deaf Loves*” sent to the group via e-mail one week after the reading for them to have an anonymous space to introduce any further ideas regarding what we discussed, I asked if they had found the poetic expressions translated relatable and easy to follow, or whether they felt strange. One answer read, “I thought the poetry was quite well written and worked well”, and when asked for suggestions regarding the translation, concerning language choices that stood out to them, either positively or negatively, there were no answers besides one

participant who stated that “No, other than small things we spoke about on the night, it felt quite smooth”.

As seen above, the actors noted the poetic style of the author, and one cited the use of repetition as an example of its poetry. This can be seen in various instances, such as in the second act when Joaquim is anticipating the plot, directly addressing the audience and repeating sentences such as “Good evening. Thank you for coming, but all the stories in the world have already been told...”⁵⁶, raising a questioning to the theatre conventions in relation to its contrast with real life, and in the mother’s final lines “SOME THINGS WERE MADE FOR YOU TO LIVE WITH!”⁵⁷, which imply reasoning behind her plotted obliviation of what the presence of the animal meant. Besides the poetic perception, this type of repetition is also a tool for concealing the layers in the narrative that unfold gradually until the climax. Other participants further mentioned these different uses of repetition:

N: That's the thing where, like, uh, they're not just interrupting for the sake of interrupting, they're interrupting in very specific repetitive ways.

Me: Their repetition is another thing.

N: It sure is. Grazielle is always behind. [...]

J: But it's infuriating listening to Grazielle being a whole half-page behind the dialogue. [LAUGHTER] But then also, as a teenager who was constantly living in my headphones, I was the exact same. So it's like... I like how there's like, realism there to use repetition as like, a writing tool as well, but they have a reason for it. As opposed to someone like Beckett, for example, who would just repeat words constantly because he wanted to. [LAUGHTER] [...] Incredibly oversimplified, but you know what I mean.

Interestingly, here, the actor compares Passô’s use of repetition to Samuel Beckett’s style. The poetic structure, fragmented dialogue and symbolic imagery of Passô’s style resembled Beckett to him in rhythm and tone (*suprasegmental features*), but with what he would interpret as a different use of meaning for this application. Indeed, Rubin Rabinovitz (1990) asserts, referring to Beckett’s trilogy of novels, that his style might initially seem “rambling or chaotic” for its repetitiousness, and that “[o]stensibly, the repetition is part of an approach which involves (as Beckett’s narrator puts it) saying ‘any old thing, to pass the time’” (p. 31).

⁵⁶ “Boa noite. Obrigado por terem vindo, mas todas as histórias do mundo já foram contadas...” (Passô, 2012a, p. 18)

⁵⁷ “TEM COISAS QUE FORAM FEITAS PARA SE VIVER COM ELAS.” (*ibid*, p. 63)

Furthermore, Cynthia Schnebly (1993) explains that repetition “creates both harmony and disharmony” and that in the latter situation, “[w]hat the spectator/reader remembers from this dialogue is not the rapport building nature of repetition but repetition that creates more distance between interlocutors in conversation, that feigns conversational involvement but actually brings anxiety” (*ibidem*). This suggests that Passô’s subtle use of repetition in specific situations seems more harmonic to this reader than the more emphatic repetition in Beckett’s works, opening more space for involvement.

Passô’s use of repetition in *Amores Surdos* could be explained through Nord’s intratextual factors of *content*, *presuppositions* and *lexic*. Firstly, the linking device of recurrence (i.e. repetition of elements or patterns) and paraphrase (i.e. expressing the same *content* in a different form) can be used to analyse the *content* of a text (Nord, 2006, p. 100). By linking ideas and creating a connection between different parts of the text, the use of repetition, such as that of Joaquim and the mother mentioned before, helps to emphasise a point in the story. Similarly, the fact that the younger members of the family repeat what the older ones say and expose the relations of power between them, the requests to “speak up” on the phone due to broken digital communication, the orders to “keep it down” when the house becomes noisy and impede communication, and the increasing mention to Little One’s inhaler that creates a sense of urgency and lead to the climax are examples that create a sense of rhythm, or establish a thematic link between different sections of the text. Finally, redundancy with the aim to assist comprehension in the face of some level of obscurity, irrelevance, or complex thought depends on how much background knowledge the sender expects the receiver to have (Nord, 2006, p. 109). This relates to the *presuppositions* that “can also be determined by culture-specific conventions regarding the *readability* of a text” (*ibidem*), which can be exemplified by the insistence by Grazielle to mention the headphones that she got from Junior as a present from a more developed industry in another country.

Moreover, as J asserts above, this repetition gives a perception of reality to the narrative, setting an ambience for the play to the extent that they empathise with the story at the level of picturing, in the character’s experience, their own teenage lives. The artistic form then affects the cultural understanding of the family dynamics in the noisy environments, being interpreted as embedded in a specific socio-cultural logic of the *work of adaptation* (4), which allowed them to compare the SC to the TC

and its *cultural* and *sociological/anthropological modeling* (10B and C). Among these elements that help clarify the cultural context of the play is the use of technology, and one could argue that the modern world has allowed for this collective experience, which is expressed in this scene, bringing the TC and SC together. They seem to grasp the *cultural modeling* (1) of the SC and the Brazilian experiences in buzzing households:

N: I think the kind of bits where, like, there's multiple kinds of, like, threads happening at once, when, like, done on stage, with, like, a bit of rehearsal, it'll have, like, a bit more pace to them. It'll make you create more of that chaotic feeling that kind of leads into all the other stuff, the climax, so... Yeah, that's one thing that I... I think that's one thing that we just couldn't capture.

L: Exactly, it's not going to be captured on a first reading, but that really flows and builds that, like, tension in your head as you watch it, which you can't do when it's kind of...

N: You can feel the tension headache in the mother. [LAUGHTER]

J: It was the same with, can you give me a... Can I get a blessing? "Hmmm... Leave!" [LAUGHTER]

Hence, the *reception-adapters* (8) do not seem to have simplified complex elements of Brazilian culture for an international or non-Brazilian audience. Instead, the conducting elements appear to be self-aware and, rather than imposing an ethnocentric European model, they allow the Brazilian structure and logic to come through and be perceived by the audience through their own lenses. They refer to Passô's distinguished use of the stage directions, which has a voice of its own, being named by us as "the narrator", about which S states, "Yeah, I couldn't imagine any of this without the narration, because I think the narrator adds so much to it", and what, according to them, invites the audience to experience subjectivity and isolation:

J: Something that I thought was really interesting, actually, is when [N] was reading, like, when the phone kept ringing, or the doorbell kept going, I actually thought that the narrator reading that adds a lot more to it than an actual sound effect would, and even you had something towards the end where it went from the doorbell rings to just being the doorbell, and I think that kind of... You don't get that with the sound effect, whereas with [N] reading it, the change from the doorbell rings to the doorbell adds that urgency that you can get through the spoken or that you can't get from a sound effect.

N: Just, hm... rose from the counterpoint, like, depending on the doorbell sound, you can get it to be quite straight and quite invasive and just, like... Yeah, yeah. And, like, again, it kind of adds to that kind of... Again, that's the whole tension headache of the whole play. [someone mimics the noise of a high-pitched bell] [LAUGHTER]

J: Fair, yeah. I just think that also adding the voice, another voice...

N: It does make it a little bit... Even more Brechtian. Yeah, yeah.

L: You're going for real, real... Not isolation, but we're talking about alienation. If you're really going for that, then that's definitely another layer you can add on to it.

An example of this view through their lenses is that, besides the reference to the Irish playwright Samuel Beckett, there have also been comparisons of her style to Bertolt Brecht, as seen above. Alves (2024, p. 59) affirms that we can infer that this break with the dramatic-illusionist logic in Passô's work stems from the influence of Brecht's theatre and that the playwright herself reflects on this influence:

My contact with Brecht, from the very beginning, removed me from a certain alien territory in which I felt myself as a theatre artist, and it was truly defining, first, because of the possibility of reading about an artist who attempted to put thought into action in the work [...]⁵⁸

Passô's writing is frequently affiliated with Brechtian theatre, therefore bringing similar political implications and discursive markers, according to Rafael Coutinho (2018, p. 34). Harold Bloom describes that "Brecht's coinage *Verfremdungseffekt* (effect of alienation, de-familiarisation, or estrangement) figures most prominently in his theater and is the device to destroy illusions" (2002, p. 13). This effect is achieved through strategies of interruption, distancing, and deconstruction, often using songs, slogans, signs, and narrators (*ibidem*). Bloom explains that Brecht was interested in activating the audience, emotional detachment, techniques that provoke curiosity, and rough language to stimulate dialectics of thought (*ibidem*). This de-familiarisation in the narrative and thought-centred text is evident in Passô's writing, and she further cites him as a fundamental reference in her practice:

⁵⁸ "Meu contato com Brecht, desde o início, me tirou de um certo terreno alienígena em que me sentia como artista de teatro, e foi muito determinante. Primeiro, pela possibilidade de ler sobre um artista que tentou colocar o pensamento em ação na obra [...]" (Passô In Diegues et al., 2019, p. 114 apud Alves, 2024, p. 59, my translation).

Brecht was always what sparked in me the desire to reflect on theatre, to reflect on the social dimension of theatre, and above all, to reflect on a radically distanced mode of acting throughout life. That was what drenched my life from the start. My relationship with Brecht's works and his thinking.⁵⁹

The solutions suggested by the actors for this *suprasegmental feature* of the text to be explored in performance involve the use of sound effects (SFX) on stage. From Nord's intratextual factors, they classify as *non-verbal elements*, or "[s]igns taken from other, non-linguistic, codes, which are used to supplement, illustrate, disambiguate, or intensify the message of the text" (2006, p. 118). In theatre, the *non-verbal elements* are primarily expressed through performance and *mise-en-scène*, thus falling beyond the scope of this study. However, as a suggestion for a probable production, we can discuss Tim Crook's argument that "[s]ound design in theatre is physical, dynamic and three-dimensional" (2012, p. 159) and that the sound designer would have to research everything within the script and fathom all the aspects involving its production, from the director and writers' possible creative aspirations or

thoughts on what the sound could achieve by way of dramatic purpose, incubate ideas for a while, make a clear selection of sound archive and already produced materials that are appropriate for the production, implement the plan [...] and evaluate with the production team through rehearsal and sometimes adjustment during the performance run (Crook, 2012, p. 159).

The actors mention how having a recorded voice or a narrator would be imperative for a probable production of the play. As an example of this tool on stage, they discuss whether having the SFX of a phone ringing or a voice reading in the closing scene would be more impactful in performance. They suggest that the stage directions in the form of a narrator, using audibility, would add a deeper layer to the narrative and more meaning when compared to having SFX of a phone ringing without a voice. I have suggested in Table 10 a script for performance in which both audibility and the SFX suggested by the actors could be used in combination for a layered result for a probable future *artistic modeling* (10A) in a production.

⁵⁹ "Brecht sempre foi o que me disparou a vontade de pensar sobre o teatro, de pensar sobre a dimensão social do teatro e, sobretudo, de pensar uma atuação radicalmente distanciada ao longo da vida. Isso foi o que molhou minha vida o tempo inteiro. Minha relação com as obras de Brecht, com o pensamento dele." (Passô In Diegues et al., 2019, p. 114 apud Alves, 2024, pp. 59-60).

Table 10 – Adaptation of auditory elements through sound design

Source Text	Script with SFX	Script with SFX and narrator
<i>The phone rings.</i>		Narrator: The phone rings.
<i>Little One turns to the audience.</i>	SFX: Phone ringing	SFX: Phone ringing
Little One: Please, you can now turn on your mobiles. Someone might be calling for you. And that is very important.	<i>Little One turns to the audience.</i> Little One: Please, you can now turn on your mobiles. Someone might be calling for you. And that is very important.	<i>Little One turns to the audience.</i> Little One: Please, you can now turn on your mobiles. Someone might be calling for you. And that is very important.
<i>The house phone rings.</i>	SFX: Phone ringing	Narrator: The house phone rings.
<i>The phone rings.</i>	SFX: Phone ringing	SFX: Phone ringing
<i>The phone rings.</i>	SFX: Phone ringing	Narrator: The phone rings. SFX: Phone ringing Narrator: The phone rings. SFX: Phone ringing

Source: author, 2025

2.4.2. Artistic and Cultural Interest in *Deaf Loves*: Readability in the Table Read with the Actors and *Given and anticipated consequences*.

The group's deeper engagement with the text may have contributed to their interest in Passô's work and in the possibilities of staging the play. There was visible curiosity about a probable narrator and its role in the original productions, as mentioned before, also seen in questions in the discussion like "L: And what's it like in the original stage productions? So, yeah... How is that handled?". One participant asked me to share any media on the the original stagings in Portuguese despite the language barrier, revealing both an aesthetic and cultural interest. The exchange below demonstrates their openness to grasp visual and theatrical elements beyond language:

N: That would be brilliant.

J: Oh, it's... It's in Portuguese.

N: But see the staging more so than anything. [...]

S: To be fair, [N], you kind of have the subtitles in your hand.

N: Yes, I do. [...]

Me: Oh, that is true.

N: Yes. What's the Portuguese for hippo?

Me: Hipopótamo.

M: You'll get that. [LAUGHTER]

This interaction also led to curiosity about the Portuguese language itself, prompting spontaneous vocabulary questions. Their engagement continued in further discussions related to translation problems previously explored during the project. For example, in reference to the challenge of translating the term for “sleepwalking”, one participant asked, “If you don't have, like, sleepwalking as your verb, how would you have the verb?”, expressing their growing familiarity with and investment in the SL. Another humorously suggested “semantulising”, referring to the coined “somantulist” in the TT and showing creative interaction with the linguistic possibilities of the TL. The experience suggests that the reading session prompted cultural empathy and active participation of the TA with the TT.

They also demonstrated a shared sense of cultural experience with the SC. Besides J's personal connection to Grazielle's teenage attitude and the use of headphones, which he found particularly relatable, there was a notable moment of recognition when I brought up the overlapping conversations and general sense of disorder that permeates the family's interactions. I expressed that, from my *perspective of the adapter* (3), this chaos felt very characteristic of a Brazilian household, where multiple voices speak over one another, stories interrupt stories, and parallel conversations unfold in the same space. I was curious whether this dynamic came across to them as strange or foreign. Their responses, however, reflected a sense of familiarity:

J: It did really remind me of, specifically my mother's side of the family, like all of my mom's brothers and sisters, it reminded me of spending time with them. [LAUGHTER] But I did like that, yeah.

G: Yeah, even just my own family at dinner today, like the way that... Grazielle just comes in half a page later with something that was already said, at least three times at dinner today. [...]

G: It's a conversation that needs to happen. It's realistic. That was actually how the conversation would flow.

Their recognition of this “chaos” as a marker of realistic and familiar interaction shows how the *readability* (9) of these scenes was achieved. According to Pavis (1992), *readability* “presupposes an epistemological concern to possess the cultural means of knowing the other, and which aspects of the other”, and he also affirms that “[c]ultural transfer most often takes place due to a change in the level of *readability*, which profoundly modifies the reception of the work across cultures” (p. 17). Their remarks indicate this cultural transfer, and also echo Joaquim’s opening reflection in the play, suggesting that what they tell “is just another story of a family”, just like theirs. This connection to the *subject matter*, *content* and *suprasegmental features*, reinforced by emotional recognition, illustrates how the *cultural* and *artistic modeling* of the ST and SC (1 and 2) retained its strength in the translated version and could resonate across linguistic and cultural borders, encompassing the *artistic*, *cultural* and *sociological/anthropological modeling* of the TT and TC (10A, B and C).

However, the post-reading questionnaire showed a further insight on one of the actors’ perceptions of the translated playtext that was not shared in the workshop. In the final section for general comments, where they were invited to share any open thoughts or questions about the play or the playwright, one of the actors remarked: “I remember finding the play a bit hard to connect to when first reading it but becoming very invested at the reading. But I think this might be more about me than the play, as it is a regular occurrence. The words really come to life in performance”. This response reveals that, despite the group consisting of former literature and theatre students and current professional actors, it still took a second interaction with the text for a sense of connection to emerge. During the discussion, when speaking about the possibility of watching the video of the performance in Portuguese, they recalled an earlier experience with a completely foreign play:

L: I remember that really excellent short play that we watched that we didn't understand a word of. We went to a French festival, and it was all in Italian. Because it was part of a two-parter. We went to see the other one, and there was just this Italian play, and it's one of the best things I've ever seen, and I have no idea what happened to it. [LAUGHTER]

N: It was the kind of thing where the blocking was so good that you almost felt like you knew what was...

L: You felt what was happening, like, but you didn't know what was happening. [LAUGHTER]

The response to the form mentioned above and this exchange align with Pavis' understanding of *readability* (9), which accounts for the ways meaning is not fixed but rather relativised according to the level at which the receiver chooses to engage with the work. As he elucidates, "the theory of levels of *readability* explains how the receiver more or less freely decides at which level (for example, narrative, thematic, formal, ideological, sociocultural, etc.) to read the cultural facts presented by the *mise en scène*" (1992, p. 16). In the recalled Italian play, the actors could rely entirely on the *mise en scène* to build their understanding. In the case of *Deaf Loves*, however, their initial experiences were mediated only through the written text, either read alone or aloud in a group. The absence of *mise en scène* in these encounters highlights how *readability* (and the other filters or layers proposed by Pavis) is not exclusively determined by performance. This is especially relevant in contexts where audiences engage with playtexts in translation or through table reads, suggesting that overemphasising *mise en scène* as the primary mediator of cultural facts may not account for the full spectrum of theatrical reception.

Moments of confusion related to the cultural portrayal of the play also emerged during the workshop. One participant asked, "Would you foresee this, if this was being performed in London, would it be, maybe, actors with a Brazilian, like maybe a Brazilian background?", and another participant wondered where the family would be from in the adaptation, questioning whether they were perhaps foreigners living in the United Kingdom. These questions reveal an ambiguity in the cultural positioning of the characters, which I intentionally maintained. My aim was to enhance cultural references from both the source and target cultures, allowing the play to evoke a dual resonance. The actors' interpretations, which leaned towards a more generalised portrayal of working-class British English rather than identifying a more specific sociolect, further highlighted this ambiguity. These are different but interconnected aspects of what might be described as a mixed cultural identification. The result is a layered response: while some elements remain recognisably foreign, such as the mention of *pequi* or the unfamiliarity with snow, other experiences, like a teenager's detachment or the absence of a father figure, might remain familiar. This duality contributes to the impression that "it could be your family", even when it clearly belongs to another culture. I will return to these nuances in the following section, where I briefly discuss a few of the actors' textual suggestions and the resulting translation adjustments.

The playtext appears to be largely accessible to the new audience, as their engagement and comprehension of the TC occurred through different layers, including narrative, aesthetic, and cultural levels. I attempted to analyse how these levels were interpreted and through which lenses they became intelligible. In the process of adaptation, I made use of *reception adapters* (8) to construct a bridge between cultures without flattening the original complexity, opting for a variety of Midlands dialects that offered a recognisable nuance while becoming neither overly informal nor generic. However, as articulated by Pavis, it “becomes difficult to follow these transformations of memory, to predict how the spectators will organise their reading, whether they will accept or reject the series of filters that have predetermined and selected cultural and especially foreign material” (1992, p. 18). Therefore, the extent to which certain dimensions of meaning may have been overlooked or remain underrepresented is still unclear, particularly because only one reading has taken place, and the responses to the form were limited.

Further practice-based research, through additional collaborative readings or staged performances, may allow for a deeper investigation into which parts of the *work of adaptation* (4) become more “readable” to international audiences, and for what reasons: whether *readability* (9) is enhanced by strategies such as simplification and paratexts or made more complex through preserved ambiguity or culturally embedded expressions. Although the choice of preserving the overlapping and layered dialogue appears to have helped establish emotional resonance and empathy, it remains necessary to consider which interpretive layers might be lost or misread, whether the translation steers the audience towards a more guided interpretation, and how these interpretive cues are negotiated in reception. Since, as Pavis notes, “[o]nce the performance is complete, all the sand rests on the spectator’s frail shoulders” and “[e]verything depends on what the spectator has remembered and forgotten” (Pavis, 1992, p. 20). Which is also related to the last layer of the hourglass: *Given and Anticipated Consequences* (11).

Along with the discussions on translation choices in this analysis, as the adaptor, I have expressed my expectations regarding the audience's interpretations of the translated text. I was somewhat insecure with regard to the transposition of Grace Passô's poetry in language, and whether it would sound stiff, overly metaphorical or not relatable to the TA. However, there was a general understanding of the poetry and what seemed to be an appreciation of Passô's style. Another

preoccupation during the translation process was the musical characteristics of some of Grazielle's lines, which was not thoroughly discussed in the workshop, but could be noted as perceivable in the reading by the actor, who seemed uneasy with singing the lines, and the comment in the post-reading form that suggested working with other songs besides the ones presented, as discussed in the next topic of this section.

Something that was not anticipated but became clear in the discussions was the recognition of Passô's techniques of estrangement through Little One and the careful thought of Passô's use of stage directions, being even a focus point for envisioning possibilities on stage to express this textual characteristic. Although these confirmations were possible, further investigations into other perceptions are necessary for a more comprehensive discussion. Besides that, some challenges along the way, such as the limited time for discussions, were a notable example. As it was my first experience conducting a table read, I felt uneasy using more time in the after-reading discussion. As they were volunteers, I was conscious of not having a time-consuming session. However, they were insightful and shared extremely detailed comments. That could be another reason why I did not have many answers in the post-reading, since these are busy professionals who shared their time voluntarily and could not have answered further questionnaires on what they had already discussed in person with me.

2.4.3. Final Adjustments: *Cultural modeling* and Refining Language Based on the Actors' Feedback

The final discussions and decisions that led to the current version of the TT were based on a series of variables related to *lexic*. The choice of words depended on *presuppositions*, *non-verbal elements*, *sentence structure*, and *suprasegmental features*. The first point I drew attention to was the use of the term "somnambulist". When I explained that in Portuguese we use the medical term to describe the condition, there was a collective reaction of surprise, with expressions such as "Oh", "Okay", and "Oh God", followed by the question, "So is somnambulist an English word? [...] I've never heard it before". This prompted me to ask whether it would work for an audience, to which they responded:

S: I was actually thinking it could work, because if it's a thing that they've just learned...

M: Yeah. **G:** Yeah, if it's being diagnosed.

L: Yeah, that's right. In a medical context, you definitely could.

N: To your point, even when you say it [*pointing to M*], you break up the word like you're unfamiliar with it.

G: You're just getting used to it, kind of, yeah.

M: Yeah. It makes that estrangement... And that's what you want.

S: Yeah, as well, yeah, yeah. I think it works way better to keep that word in, because it does add a newness to it, and it's also still clear, because they literally say, oh, he's a sleepwalker, and then they basically explain what somnambulist is.

They show a positive reception of the choice and mention how, through *non-verbal elements*, performance strategies can guide the audience's interpretation. Furthermore, they affirm: "**L:** It's also just a really fun word", and suggest that, if it was not selected for the text, "[...] you'd lose the fantastic joke of little ones saying it wrong every time. [...] Which is so funny". The deliberate choice of using "sleepwalking" followed by "somnambulist" to solve the problem with the *presupposition* that the audience knows the word was perceived by the actors, who point out that in the context of the play, these adjustments are efficient to express the *content*. Besides that, a positive surprise was the use of "sleepywalking" being so popular, even though it was present in the text only once:

J: I also love sleepywalking [...]

L: Yeah, it's wonderful.

N: It's adorable.

G: Especially for a kid, yeah

L: As an approximation. That's perfect. That's exactly what a kid would do.

J: It would be also very funny having an adult playing a child say that. Sleepywalking.

The choice was made for *artistic modeling* (10A) and for adjusting the sequence seen in Table 11, which appeared to be confusing if translated word-for-word. Even though the verbs "dormindo" and "chorando" rhyme but do not sound completely similar in the SL, but are still used in the ST for Grazielle's confusion, being "sleeping" and "crying" a more evident choice for the TL, I decided to use the rhyme with "sleeping" and "sneaking" for comic effect due to their similarity. Likewise, there is no connection in meaning between "O Joaquim é 'sonântulo'" (Joaquim is sonântulo) and Grazielle's follow-up question "Aonde?" (Where to?), but for the TT, it seemed to

be an opportunity to use “sleepywalking”, which was one of the options to substitute “sonântulo” at first, and ensure another apparent reference to the meaning of “somnambulist”, while making sense with the follow-up question “Where?”, since it gives the impression that he is said to be walking somewhere. These choices might suggest that the *reception adapters* (8) used, even from the *perspective* (3) of an adapter from the SC, might be closer to what Pavis (1992, p. 14) describes as relativist, since I chose to erase the probable layered meaning behind the word “chorando” (crying) and the complete alienation of Graziele’s answers, which could highlight her detached character for the benefit of humour and flow in the SL.

Table 11 – Clarifying “somnambulism” through childlike language

Source Text	Target Text
Pequeno: <i>(para a irmã)</i> Ele tá dormindo! Graziele: <i>(com o headphone não se ouve direito)</i> “Chorando”? Pequeno: O Joaquim é “sonântulo”. Graziele: Aonde? Pequeno: <i>(crianças repetem o que ouvem com propriedade)</i> O seu irmão é so-nân-tu-lo. Ele faz as coisas enquanto dorme.	Little One: <i>(to his sister)</i> He's sleeping! Graziele: <i>(with the headphones on, not hearing properly)</i> “Sneaking”? Little One: Joaquim is sleepywalking. Graziele: Where? Little One: <i>(confidently repeating what he's heard)</i> Your brother is a so-man-tu-list. He does things while he's out like a light.
Pequeno: Porque você faz as coisas dormindo, não faz? Você é “sonântulo”, não é? Vai até a cozinha... bebe água... às vezes vê TV...	Little One: 'Cause you do things asleep, don't you? You're a “somantulist”, ain't ya? You go to the kitchen... drink water... sometimes watch telly...

Source: author, 2025

Another discussion involving *lexic* was related to the line: “**Samuel:** Bença, mãe?” (Passô, 2012a, p. 44), in which the word “bença” carries significant cultural weight in Brazilian Portuguese, reflecting traditional expressions of familial respect and reverence. The choice of “Can I have your blessing, Mom?” preserves the *cultural modeling* (1) and significance of “bença” to the TA, but when asked whether it would be a valid statement in English, they said:

L: Wish me luck, would be the...

Collectively: Yeah, yeah.

L: Or say a prayer for me would be an Irish thing [...]

N: Wish me luck is generic.

G: If you were a religious family, though, you might.

L: Yeah, you might,

S: ... But I don't think you'd say "say a blessing for me", I think you'd say "bless me".

Me: Bless me?.

S: Yeah.

M: I think when you, the way it is at the moment, it would be more, if you were a religious family, with non-English roots, if there were maybe an immigrant family coming, it kind of feels like it's, if you wanted to be stretching to connect to a different culture as well, to bring that in, I think it's a nice way of doing that, but it just depends on what you want. So I think it creates that sense of having a different culture, a different cultural background. Maybe a different country.

The actors' responses to this cultural reference gave me a wider background on similar contexts in both Irish and British cultures related to family habits and religion. It was striking to see this specific nuance of the impression of a family that would be situated "in-between" being brought up by one of the participants, as this connection was exactly what I hoped to convey. What had initially seemed to me a possible source of linguistic or cultural misalignment was, in fact, perceived with clarity and depth. This moment transformed what was previously an insecurity regarding the common use of *sentence structure* and *lexic* in the TL into a sense of confidence, as the exchange confirmed that the intended message was not only preserved but also resonated in a way I had expected.

Wolfram and Schilling's discussion of grammatical mismatches between vernacular dialects and the written word highlights the fluid relationship between spoken and written forms, particularly in performative contexts. In British informal written choices, as evidenced in Asprey's transcripts (2015, p. 235), examples like 'cause', 'innit', 'dunno', 'gonna', 'd'you', 'c'mere', 'gotta', 'see', and 'ya' illustrate how spoken vernacular infiltrates writing to reflect authentic speech patterns. Such constructions contribute to shaping character portrayals in theatrical contexts by embedding informal and oral qualities into the text. This alignment of language and performance enriches portrayals by bridging the gap between vernacular utterances and written form. Judging when and how to use certain language forms is "just as important for communication as the literal understanding of structures and words"

(Wolfram and Schilling, 2015, p. 93). On that account, the audience can draw conclusions from a wide range of information from the performance solely through these means of expression, and a reader is able to draw the same conclusions from written texts.

As seen above, the participants demonstrated awareness of the TA envisioned for the TT. They compare their use of language to the one that would resonate better with the probable final audience of the play, which can be seen in L's assertion: "[...] that's the issue we're dealing with then is Irish colloquialisms versus British colloquialisms", prompting me to ask to the group whether they could perceive the stylisation of the text in British English. One participant answered: "Yeah, like even like, the use of 'innit'", which led to a discussion regarding the use of colloquialisms in different British dialects. After G pointed out: "I could be wrong now, but it just might be the way that my brain is with TV and stuff. But to me, 'innit' is very English, but 'ain't' would be American", the actors shared their impressions on what would be the most suitable written contraction of spoken vernacular of the negative particle. This is counter-argued by L:

I think if you're looking for like a kind of urban London, 'ain't' might work its way in... And "innit". But that's, yeah, like I was talking to [N] about this before, like the kind of treatment of class in this. [...] It's such a delicate thing because to be working class, which they are, when you map that over to England, can mean a hundred different things. And it's a case of trying to, trying to find the voice that catches all of those.

These reflections reveal how the participants hold distinct perceptions of British English variants, yet they consistently recognised the presence of a working-class vernacular throughout the translation, which aligned with my intended *artistic, cultural and sociological/anthropological modeling* (10A, B and C). Hence, the "voice that catches all of those" would be an approximation of England's Midlands variants, as discussed before.

Heike Pichler (2021, p. 723) presents research showing that since the 1970s, the tag question "innit" has been widely used by working-class youth from diverse ethnic backgrounds in London, gaining status as a local vernacular. The tag question is now broadly used in the capital and other regions, and research by Asprey (2007) and Doyle (2019) presents transcripts of Black Country and West Midlands speakers

making use of it as well, even if in less recurrency when compared to the use of “ain’t”. During the table read, participants discussed potential alternatives to “innit”, such as the discourse marker “yeah”:

L: Tiny thing, this isn't a suggestion as much as it is like a, an alternative, just depending on how, you know, if you're redrafting or anything like that, but I'm just trying to put myself in the space of like, English accents that we're kind of talking about, and one replacement for, “innit”, depending on, depending on what direction you take it, I don't see that being an issue with “innit”, but it's: “yeah”, if you think about Ricky Gervais, think about the Ricky Gervais style of speaking, where instead of “innit”, it's: “You know that time when I did something, yeah?”

G: Yeah, it's kinda like “like”

L: Exactly, but it's kind of, it's kind of in that space of “innit”, so just, again, that's not me saying, deal with “innit”, that's me saying, if you are looking at it later, that might be an alternative.

S: Although I do, I will say, though, in terms of like, dialogue, “innit”, it rolls way better with any given sentence than “yeah”.

For the final version of the translation, I decided to retain the few instances of “innit” already present in the table-read version, while maintaining the predominance of “ain’t” and incorporating additional regional negative forms observed by Asprey (2017). The negative contractions used in speech such as “dain’t” (for “didn’t”) and “daintcha” (for didn’t you) were added, and the “yeah” as a discourse marker suggested by the actors in order to enhance the British and West Midlands/Black Country character of the sociolect represented in the TT were further replicated. These choices emphasise the *artistic*, *cultural* and *sociological/anthropological modeling* (10A, B and C), which was acknowledge in:

N: And it's not like, and it's not like that. Joaquim isn't like well-spoken or well-read. Like, because when he's sleepwalking, like he's very poetic.

G: Yeah.

N: And maybe that's the distinction you want to draw, that like he's almost performing as like, with kind of the working class accent, when he's actually like lived experience is the sleeping one. Maybe that's what you want to play with, but I'm not, I wasn't fully sure. Yeah.

Me: [...] the thing of the class is, mainly the contrast of the letter in the beginning and the whole talk of the class la-di-da thing... My... what I tried to do was to pick a Midlands accent from the UK. Like something from the middle of the country.

S: They would say it “In the Midlands UK”...

In the exchange above, they also mention how class identity and language stylisation come across through Joaquim's speech in the translated play. N notes that Joaquim is portrayed as well-spoken and poetic when sleepwalking, which contrasts with his more casual, working-class tone when awake, and that perhaps this contrast is deliberate. This comment reflects on how Passô's use of language that I tried to mimic may signal different layers of identity, particularly in relation to class. N interprets the poetic sleepwalking as possibly more authentic or expressive, while the waking speech may be seen as performative or shaped by social expectations, and that is precisely what I perceived and tried to display. Overall, this exchange shows how performative language, regional dialects, and class identity were salient to the actors during the reading, and how the translation's handling of those elements prompted insightful engagement.

Still regarding the language use of the characters, L points out: "Little One's dialogue, like.. How... I know it's a child, being performed by an adult, but where is the dialogue supposed to land, in terms of how mature it is? Is it supposed to be consistent, or is it not supposed to be consistent?". He noticed that there were one or two words where he remembered thinking that it did not feel like it would be a word a child would use, and he wondered whether that would be intentional. To which I answered that I was attempting to seem as childish as possible, prompting J's notion:

Can I just offer a Devil's advocate for that, though? It's because, since it's... Since it's clearly an adult playing a child, I think it adds to like the Brechtian element. To have, like... It'll take the audience away, when he suddenly... The child speaks in perfect, adult English, and it'll remind them: "Oh I'm, I'm in a play", and I think, for what this show is, that's kind of a good thing.

This remark was one particularly striking discovery. At first, my focus was simply on capturing a childlike tone in English while remaining consistent with Passô's *artistic modeling* (1). It was only later, after the workshop, that I came across Passô's reflections, in which she describes the child as a deliberate strategy of estrangement, and as a fictional tool meant to provoke the audience into questioning theatrical conventions:

That child is a strategy to estrange the theatre, to say: 'What is this?', 'Why are these people there?' To say: 'I can see the audience'. But they're fictional strategies to question those initial agreements, the theatrical codes we learn in school, in our earliest experiences. [...]⁶⁰

Throughout the discussion, the actors expressed appreciation for several of the playful formulations used for Little One, highlighting examples such as “nuff woom” and “atwent” as particularly effective in capturing a childlike voice while maintaining clarity. These responses affirmed the creative choices made through *reception-adapters* (8) and *artistic modeling* (10A), which aimed to preserve the *suprasegmental features* of the ST. On the other hand, the group also engaged critically with more ambiguous constructions, such as “You know that when I had my arm in a cast?”, based on the ST’s ungrammatical “Sabe naquele ‘quando’ que eu botei gesso no braço?”. They collectively reflected on alternative idiomatic formulations in English that would preserve the intended confusion and register, including “You know the time when...”, “Do you remember back when?” and “You know the when, when I...”, being aware that they were “dealing with the child's voice, and it's child's voice and it's not a child's voice, it's a bit mixed that way like, intentionally”, as L explained. Drawing on this input, the line was revised to: “You know *that* ‘when’ when I had my arm in a cast, yeah?”, incorporating the group’s suggestion of doubling the “when” to simulate the semantic overlap of time and causality, while reinforcing a dialectical marker. This example illustrates how direct feedback from the performers enhanced the alignment between intention and effect, reinforcing the translation’s *readability* (9).

In addition to the adjustments prompted by *readability* and actor feedback mentioned above, I also allowed myself certain creative licenses in instances, in order to include references that I personally associate with British and, more specifically, Midlands cultural symbols. These decisions intended to reinforce the imagined social and geographical setting of the TA. For example, the line “But where's all that dirt coming from, Joaquim?” was adapted to “But where's all that dirt on the carpet coming from, Joaquim?”, adding the image of the carpet in British households. Likewise, “He always helps his mom put the dishes away [...]” became

⁶⁰ “Essa criança é uma estratégia pra estranhar o teatro, para falar: ‘Que que é isso?’, ‘Por que que eles estão ali?’. Para dizer: ‘Tô vendo o público’. Mas são estratégias ficcionais para pensar os acordos iniciais, os códigos do teatro que a gente aprende nas escolas, nas primeiras experiências. Então, é quase uma criança filosofando. Eu tenho essa sensação, que esses textos são registros desse testemunho, de um susto...” (Passô, 2023) (1:59:30)

“He always helps his mom scrub clean the dishes in the washing-up bowl then pop them away”, incorporating the plastic bowl often found in UK kitchen sinks. One isolated case concerning *lexic* and *sentence structure* involved the phrase “It has such a complex build, and it remains so quiet... It’s so complex and still”, which was noted in the discussion for its lack of resonance in describing an animal. The original Portuguese line reads “É uma estrutura tão complexa e muda... é tão complexo e estático”, and was remodelled to “It’s built like a bull that forgot how to fight... It’s so magnificent, and yet so quiet”. This version preserves the poetic tone central to Passô’s *artistic modeling* (1) while introducing a reference to the bull, a cultural and historical symbol of Birmingham linked to its iconic Bull Ring, which dates back to the 16th century (Birmingham, 2025).

Finally, the feedback regarding *lexic* and *sentence structure* offered insights that contributed to refining the translation in light of *readability* (9) and stylistic nuance. Participants pointed out instances where register seemed misaligned with context, such as the overly formal “Are you feeling more relieved?”, which was reconsidered in favour of alternatives like “Are you breathing easier?” or the final choice “You okay?”, aligning better with the register and emotional tone of the scene. As for the musical elements, although no objections were raised by them in the discussion, on the online form, one participant reflected on the possibility of adapting song references. In response to the post-reading questionnaire question: “Did you find any particular use of this technique odd, or do you have any suggestions for sentences or approaches that could be improved?”, one answer read “No, I don’t think this was strange. I wonder in translation if you could play with choosing different songs also, though this may seem like taking too many liberties”, noting the tension between creative freedom and cultural authenticity. As described in a discussion before, the lines by Grazielle that are sung would need further scrutiny with regard to the *non-verbal elements* that they involve. This could be accounted for in a probable production in which the layers of *preparatory work by actors* (5), *choice of theatrical form* (6) and *theatrical representation of the culture* (7) can be further explored. These discussions collectively reinforced the delicate negotiation between preserving cultural identity and enhancing audience accessibility, guiding final artistic, lexical and syntactic choices toward a more coherent and culturally textured version of *Deaf Loves*.

FINAL REMARKS

Grace Passô's dramaturgy, which confronts traditional dramatic structures and sociological frameworks through drama, is a distinguished choice for challenging hegemonic practices. Its structure of magical realism that confronts theatrical conventions, its deep poetic quality with hints of irony, and the thematic refrains that challenge social norms offer plentiful ground for artistic creation. In *Amores Surdos*, these traditions are broken from the start, with a formal letter being read by a working-class family and the plot-revealing line of Joaquim that breaks the fourth wall and directly addresses the audience. Through this non-linear plot, rhythmic repetition and textual fragmentation, the play builds to a climax that explores the delicate intricacies of human relationships and their impact on individuals.

This study aimed to bridge a gap in the translation and research of Brazilian theatre into English, offering insights into discussions on translation choices from this perspective. More specifically, having a translator positioned within the SC and committed to its aesthetic and political complexity was a way to resist the asymmetry of voices often present in translation. The final version of the play ideally aimed to be produced and published, especially in cultural contexts such as England and Ireland, due to personal and academic connections with both countries and the shown interest in translated theatre of initiatives located in these regions. Having decided on the TA as theatre enthusiasts in the UK, the text was adapted to British colloquial expressions in the Midlands dialect variations, while retaining specific cultural references from the SC. This nuanced approach aims to ensure both cultural accessibility and regard for the SC within the translation.

This was accomplished through practice-led research grounded in the methodology proposed by Fernandes (2015), whose work on Marina Carr's *By the Bog of Cats...* in Brazil inspired the structure of this project. Like Fernandes, I adopted an approach that moved from individual translation work to collaborative practice with theatre practitioners. In this case, Stage 2 involved a reading held in 2024 at Mary Immaculate College, with the participation of Goose Chase Theatre Company and Weird Gravy Theatre Collective. Thus, the objectives were further informed by a table read of the translated text with an audience composed of alumni from Mary Immaculate College and theatre professionals. This collaborative moment

provided essential insights into how cultural and linguistic choices would resonate with performers and, by extension, with audiences, which helped shape an understanding of audience reception and interpretative possibilities. The feedback gathered during this stage directly informed the revisions of the translated text and enriched the reflections presented in this thesis. Through this process, the study advocated for the representation of Brazilian theatre and culture in English-language academic and artistic contexts, highlighting the importance of translations produced by agents from the SC as a means of broadening intercultural dialogues in theatre translation.

The translation choices were analysed through Patrice Pavis' "hourglass model" (1992) and Christiane Nord's approach to intratextual factors (1991). The elements that could be considered familiar and unfamiliar for the TA were traced through *cultural modeling* (1), such as single motherhood, the dynamics of a household in an underdeveloped country (which leads to tight-knit relations), and the references to a tropical environment. Having the *perspective of the adapters* (3) from an agent that is not from a "high culture" subverts the standard flux of "power of decision", and being from the country where the text is written at the same time as having had experience in English-speaking countries allowed me to identify the cultural aspects in the text that would not seem natural in the TC so as to preserve them intentionally. My perspective was committed to protecting textual fragmentation and layered voices from the ST. The unfamiliar elements were conveyed by keeping these references, sometimes explaining them further, and sometimes just letting them be and making the TA aware that they were seeing "the other" in performance. The intention behind these choices was to create a "space-in-between", embracing the tension of a family that is not from a privileged nation but speaks a variant of a hegemonic language. This way, I aimed to retain the presence of the *other* and original cultural situations and customs from the SC so that they could be seen as relatable to the TA or TR, and more likely to foster a genuinely empathetic involvement of the audience with the ST and SC.

During the individual phase of the research, I made a thorough scrutiny of what parts of the *work of adaptation* (4) would be kept or cut and transformed, being mindful of whether these choices would silence, highlight or reinterpret the ST's political or cultural messages. In this aspect, the collaborative phase of the study was pivotal for envisioning what would be the *given and anticipated consequences* (11) of

a probable *readability* (9) of a TA. The actors seemed to have recognised the “chaos” in the dynamics of the Brazilian household portrayed and the references to noise (yelling, shouting and loud music), besides some personal connection to Grazielle’s teenage attitude and the non-linear conversations in familial context, which seemed to have resonated in the *artistic* (10A), *sociological/anthropological* (10B), and *cultural modeling* (10C). Further feedback on *readability* (9) was the unexpected *artistic modeling* (2) by Passô being recognised and appreciated in the discussion, and an explicit perception of her authorial style through poetry and repetition could be noticed. The actors even pictured probable productions of the play and how the Brechtian aspects, as described by them, could be explored in performance involving the use of sound effects on stage. Finally, the *reception adapters* (8) took into account the *subject matter* of working family struggles and the *text composition* of *Amores Surdos*, which is organised into seven acts, with the structure of the first standing out as it takes the form of an overly formal letter, and the list of characters, which expresses cultural specificity through the original Brazilian names. Some *reception-adapters* (8), such as “Mum”, “Dad”, and “Little One”, were made for a deeper connection with the TA.

The strategies employed to reflect the ST’s linguistic variation and cultural specificities in the TT while maintaining relatability for the TC involved dialect choices, spoken language style and humour. To describe these, I applied Nord’s (2006) “intratextual factors”, as I preferred to make linguistic changes rather than numerous changes in plot or localisation of the play, a political choice to emphasise the TC. Some choices, such as “sleepwalking” and “sleepywalking” followed by “somnambulist” and “somantulist” (to solve the problem with the *presupposition* that the audience knows the word to describe the condition) was perceived by the actors. They reiterated that in the context of the play, these adjustments were efficient to express the *content* and *artistic modeling*, which shows a particular positive reception. Other translation choices involving *presuppositions* were references to life in living environments such as condominiums, comments on the purchase of cutting-edge technological products overseas, and the awareness of Portuguese morphology and verb conjugation, where “cube” was transformed into “was nuff woom” in the TT, shifting the linguistic mistake to a childlike phonetic distortion in the *sentence structure*, making it more relatable in English. Some other strategies related to *sentence structure* and *suprasegmental features* were the almost bureaucratic

tone and formal register employed in the letter, besides the erudite vernacular of the neighbours, such as in the repetition of the question “Não estás me ouvindo?” translated as “I fear you're not hearing me?”, by replacing the conjugation of the verbs with overly formal structures in the TL.

Strategies involving *lexic* were numerous, such as in “Bença, mãe?” (Passô, 2012a, p. 44), in which the word “bença” carries significant cultural weight in Brazilian Portuguese, reflecting traditional expressions of familial respect and reverence. The choice of “Can I have your blessing, Mom?” preserves *the cultural modeling* (1), as well as the uses of “like”, “innit”, “alright”, “ain’t”, “dain’t” (for “didn’t”), “daintcha” (for “didn’t you”) and “yeah” applied *artistic* (10A), *sociological/anthropological* (10B), and *cultural modeling* (10C) to mirror the oral immediacy and the rhythm of the ST and preserve its colloquial tone while rooting it firmly in the TL’s regional identity, maintaining cultural and linguistic references within the TT’s context. This voice can open up space for different perceptions of marginalised realities in the Global South, helping non-Brazilian audiences approach the play not through stereotypes but with greater curiosity and empathy, as well as proving beneficial in challenging the persistent stigmatisation surrounding Midlands dialects.

This research contributes to the fields of theatre translation and translation studies by offering both theoretical insights and practical outputs that address a gap in the representation of Brazilian theatre in English-speaking contexts. Through the translation of *Amores Surdos*, this study produced not only the translated play *Deaf Loves*, but also a body of reflections, including a workshop with Irish theatre practitioners, which generated material for future publications and possibly future informed theatrical productions. The research advances the discussion of the translator’s position through the integration of Lukes’s (2005) dimensions of power and Gramsci’s (1999) concept of Hegemony, highlighting how translation mediates and negotiates cultural hierarchies and how voices from the margins, such as those in Passô’s work, may resist hegemonic linguistic expectations in the TL. Furthermore, by embracing Spivak’s (1994) and Quijano’s (1992) reflections on subalternity and decoloniality, this project not only aligns with but also expands on debates about representation in translation, offering a practical example of how these theories intersect with artistic practice.

By addressing a clear gap in research on the translation of Latin American theatre into English, this study contributes to diversifying the field and brings attention

to underrepresented voices. It confirms the relevance of Pavis' (1992) hourglass model and Nord's (2006) intratextual factors as valuable frameworks for understanding the complexities of intercultural theatre translation, while also exposing their limitations when applied to contexts outside Western European norms. In this sense, this project challenges existing assumptions in theatre translation studies by situating itself within the "space-in-between" (Santiago, 2000; Fernandes, 2015), demonstrating how the translator's positionality, shaped by cultural, linguistic, and personal histories, can serve as a site of productive negotiation between source and target cultures. This approach offers both academic and practical applications by modelling how practice-led research can contribute to the expansion of theoretical frameworks while delivering concrete, textual and performative outcomes.

Throughout the discussions on the translation choices presented in this analysis, I have expressed my expectations regarding how the TA would interpret the translated text. Although I felt some insecurity about whether Passô's poetic language would sound stiff or overly metaphorical, the group showed understanding and appreciation of her style. Another concern during the process involved the musical characteristics of Grazielle's lines, which were not thoroughly addressed in the workshop but were noted through the actor's unease when singing and the suggestion of working with other songs in the post-reading form. An unexpected but valuable point raised in the discussions was the recognition of Passô's techniques of estrangement through Little One and the awareness of her careful use of stage directions through a "narrator", which became a focus for imagining possibilities of expression on stage. However, further investigation is necessary for a more comprehensive understanding of reception, especially given the limited time available for discussions and the fact that it was my first time conducting a table read. I was mindful of the participants' voluntary contributions and did not want to prolong the session in person unnecessarily, but they showed exceptional engagement in the discussion, which might explain the limited engagement with the post-reading questionnaire.

Due to the nature of this study and the absence of a performance, some aspects of Pavis' hourglass, such as preparatory work by actors (5), choice of theatrical form (6), and theatrical representation of the culture (7), could not be fully considered. *Non-verbal elements* were touched upon only in participants' reflections on potential staging solutions, rather than through practice itself. Regarding the

songs, I could not locate reception-adaptor strategies that would maintain the musicality without affecting the original modelling and *content*, so I opted for textual translation, leaving decisions on musicality open for potential performances. As noted by one participant, choosing other songs could enhance this element, but such decisions would be more suitable for future productions. Further practice-based research through collaborative readings or performances may allow for a deeper understanding of how *readability* (9) is shaped by these elements and how the TA frames the play through its layers of meaning. Overall, this study was an enriching perspective on the fruitful ground for the academic and artistic input that the analysis of translated Brazilian Theatre can initiate.

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APPENDIX I – RESPOSTA DE GRACE PASSÔ À PERGUNTA RELACIONADA AO PERSONAGEM QUE VIVE FORA DO PAÍS E SEU PROVÁVEL PAPEL EM RELAÇÃO AO CONFRONTO DA HEGEMONIA EM *AMORES SURDOS*.

No *Amores Surdos* tem um personagem que vive fora do país, talvez seja isso que ela tá falando, né? Eh... eu acho que ali não tem... Hum, acho que ali não falo nada que toca mais explicitamente nesse assunto, acho que não. Poderia falar e, inclusive, isso tem a ver com o... então, aconteceu esse movimento incrível que é... eu reescrevi o *Amores Surdos*. Reescrevi. É outra história, mas é aquela história também. E ao reescrever pra linguagem específica que eu tô fazendo de cinema, eu também revisitei a minha vida desde 2005, 2004, quando escrevi isso pela primeira vez. Revisitei questões da minha identidade de lá para cá. Existe toda uma militância negra na minha vida que antes eu não sabia como lidar. E aí, olha o que aconteceu: ao visitar, eu me revisei também, né? Então, essa família agora é uma família... no filme é uma família negra. Que ali na peça de teatro tá ali, mas ali a peça era também uma manifestação do grupo de... do grupo de teatro para o qual eu tava vivendo junto, minha comunidade. E aqui, então, eu tive a possibilidade de visitar uma história e pensar o que é dar cor para ela explicitamente. Mais explicitamente. Ali já tinha, mas mais explicitamente. Isso muda tudo. Absolutamente tudo. Inclusive, sobre esse personagem. O que que é essa mina, essa irmã ali, filha do *Amores Surdos*, que mora fora do país e fala só sobre saudade... Quer dizer... claro que aí pra mim agora outros nomes já nasceram. Pra mim isso tem a ver com tudo. Com... inclusive os caminhos pretos pulverizados pelo mundo, das nossas histórias atlânticas. Isso tem a ver com o que é ser negra no Brasil, o que é ser negra ali em determinados espaços da Europa, da África, ou de qualquer outro lugar. Entende? Assim... muda tudo, assim. Então esse movimento, que é um movimento muito nítido no Brasil hoje... no mundo, desculpa... que é de... isso que determinados nichos sociais, como por exemplo as pessoas pretas, as sociedades pretas por exemplo, ou as sociedades pobres, ou povos indígenas, ou determinados mulherios... enfim, esse movimento de que reticula completamente um pensamento social também está acontecendo na minha vida em relação a esse projeto. Porque é sobre isso, né? É dizer... pensar uma arte sobre uma ótica preta, por exemplo. Teriam vários exemplos possíveis. Não é um detalhe. Não é um detalhe. E nem é 50%. É outra coisa. É outra coisa. Por isso que se fala, né, em subjetividade, se fala nessas palavras, não sei o quê... é outra coisa, né? Tanto tempo de uma arte muito... de uma elite financeira, elite financeirizada... né? Assim, de um lugar muito europeizado. Tanto tempo cobrando sobre o que seria politizar a arte, tudo, e pá... politizar é fazer ser possível existir. Não é sobre representatividade. É sobre existir. Hoje eu já tava... eu estava falando no Festival de Brasília. Não é... é sobre representatividade também. Isso é muito importante, tudo isso é muito importante. Mas ah... mas tem algo maior que a representatividade, que é existir. Poder existir. E poder existir não é se adaptar a... ou contribuir. Não. É estar no cerne... na... na semente, na estrutura. Eu nem sei como eu cheguei aqui, mas fui indo. [risos]

(Passô, 2023) (2:37:56)

APPENDIX II – AMORES SURDOS AS DEAF LOVES: A TRANSLATION OF CONTEMPORARY BRAZILIAN THEATRE INTO ENGLISH

DEAF LOVES

A family house with two hallways. One entrance door where you can see who comes and who goes. Another one leads to the back of the house. It is noticeable that the area where the scenes happen is only one part of the residence. There is another area where, presumably, the rest of the house is located.

the family:

THE MOTHER;

GENTIL, THE DAD;

THE CHILDREN:

JOAQUIM, SAMUEL, JÚNIOR, GRAZIELE,

AND LITTLE ONE (THE YOUNGEST IN THE FAMILY).

I.“... we are in the same situation!”

The family reads a letter that was sent by the next-door neighbours. The letter passes from hand to hand, and everyone finds it difficult to understand the words.

Greetings,

In light of your concerns, we are compelled to clarify the reasons behind the heated discussions within our premises. We would like you to know that if we raise our voices amongst ourselves, it is not to hear each other better, but rather it is an expression of “love”. We prefer this to sharing the gravid silence of one's routine. You understand how our routine confines our senses, shapes our souls into their very habit, and consequently, how life within these four walls is neither sweet, mild, nor smooth. We take advantage of this opportunity to say that if we, on occasion, play our music loudly, it is because we believe in, over listening to our lamenting discussions, the need to hear the tenderness of our music.

You are all well aware, as I am sure you are well acquainted, because you are, too, the same as us, part of this ancient lineage in the ritual of coexistence. We are in the same situation.

You are acquainted because we are alike. So are you, this single blood pit, the teardrop of the same salt, spit of the same poison, table from the same tree. And you are aware, therefore, that one does not escape immune from these four walls that surround us all.

We conclude here, certain of your understanding.

II. "... that what matters is not the others applauding but our connection."

Joaquim is sleepwalking and speaks to the audience.

Joaquim: Good evening. Thank you for coming. I apologise for starting like this, crashing into your dreams, but why all the suspense? All the stories in the world have already been told. This is only another story of an ordinary family that has breakfast, in which there are fights, in which someone falls ill, that's to say, one that has everyday problems. In the beginning, this phone will ring because my brother, who lives far away, misses us very much. Then we will stay here, living with our peculiar habits, until the phone rings again at the end, and we will answer it and hear the news that my brother has committed suicide. This is our story.

You are grown-ups, I am a grown-up, nobody here is Little... Everyone here knows where they are. Everyone knows that tomorrow, I will repeat the same things that I am saying now. Everyone knows that tomorrow, I will enter this place and say:

Good evening. Thank you for coming, but all the stories in the world have already been told... This is just another story of a family just like yours. In the beginning, the phone will ring because my brother misses us very much, then we'll do some everyday family things until the phone rings again in the end, and we will answer it and hear the news that my brother has committed suicide. This is our story.

That's it: all the stories in the world have already been told... You know, at some point, a cell phone will ring over there (*pointing to the audience space*), and some people will think: "Wow, how rude to leave the phone on in here!" Then the owner will either turn off their phone to be faithful to the manners their family taught them or will, without guilt, answer it, speaking softly: "Hi, I'm in another reality! I'll call you back later!" Some of us will think: "Did I turn off my phone?" And we will continue our story, our ordinary days... For some, this story will pass quickly; for others, it may take a long time, their entire lives.

In the end, there will be applause. My family will open the doors of this place so that you can continue with your lives, continue watering your plants, and continue taking care of your pets...

Joaquim glances through the audience.

Joaquim: My grandparents said they would be here today...

I'm sure that in the end, during the applause, they will stand up, fix their gaze on me, look at my clothes to see if I'm alright, making sure to show that they are here, present, that they are a part of me, that what matters is not the others applauding but 'our connection', that they want to see me do well despite everything, despite any door that hasn't been opened for me.

We'll play some music so that you can leave here with a pleasant feeling. We have the habit of playing music here to endure the routine, fill in the silence competently, and help express our feelings. With music, everything is easier.

The mother, Samuel, and Little One observe Joaquim, the eldest son, who always wakes up in the morning wondering if he did or said something wrong the night before. Joaquim is not a fearful man. He's just a bit apathetic and a bit adrift in life: Joaquim and his stagnant life. He always helps his mom scrub clean the dishes in the washing-up bowl, then pop them away, but he thinks that his dad could do that too, that his dad is an absent man. And also, whenever he argues with his mother, he glances around to see if his dad is about to defend him.

Joaquim: That's how it is. All the stories in the world have already been told. There's nothing left to be invented; the illusion is less innocent...

Little One: Joaquim...

Mother and Samuel: Shush!

Samuel: (*whispers*) Keep it down!

Little One: ?

Mother: (*whispers*) He's sleeping.

Little One: What?

Samuel: Joaquim is sleepwalking!

Little One: Where?

Mother: Your brother is a som-nam-bu-list. He does things while he's out like a light.

Little One: What things?

Mother: He heads to the kitchen... drinks water... sometimes watches the telly... checks out the drawers... washes his hands... brushes his teeth... answers questions if we ask him...

Little One: While sleeping, like?

Mother: Yes. And you can't wake him up when he's in that state.

Little One: Why not?

Samuel: 'Cause it's bad for him, Little One.

Little One: Does it scare him?

Mother: It does. We have to keep an eye on him so he doesn't do nothing dangerous, alright?

Joaquim turns to the audience.

Mother: Because when someone is a somnambulist, they do things... unconsciously. Without thinking.

Little One: ?

Joaquim touches his willy. The mother doesn't see.

Samuel: 'Cause people do what they want, see? Like, whatever their soul fancies, they do it.

Little One: Who's Saul?

Mother: What the soul asks for. Without worrying if it's right or not. It's just what he desires, and that's it. He does things with no responsibility.

Little One: (*concluding*) What he wants...

Mother: Yes, what he desires.

Little One: So he, over there, is sleeping?

Mother: Yes...

Little One giggles at what Joaquim's up to. He's just a kid.

Mother and Samuel: (*warning*) Little One!

The mother approaches Joaquim. You've got to look out for sleepwalkers.

Mother: Joaquim, let's get you back to bed, love. Alright?

Little One: How beautiful it is to be a "somantulist"!

Samuel: You reckon it's beautiful?

Little One: How beautiful it is to be a "somantulist"!

Mother: Shush! Keep it down!

Graziele enters, noticing the commotion in the house. She's got her headphones on. As a teenager, she should be experiencing her body detach from childhood, leaving it behind through music, like someone running away to join the circus. Graziele's in that phase in which life's like a music video to her.

Graziele: *(to the family)* What's the fuss, huh?

All: Shush!

Samuel: Lower your voice!

Little One: *(to his sister)* He's sleeping!

Graziele: *(with the headphones on, not hearing properly)* "Sneaking"?

Little One: Joaquim is "sleepywalking".

Graziele: Where?

Little One: *(confidently repeating what he's heard)* Your brother is a so-man-tu-list. He does things while he's out like a light.

Graziele: What things?

Joaquim whispers something in his mother's ear.

Samuel: *(mumbling)* Grazi, he's sleepwalking again, like.

Little One: *(protectively)* Everything alright there, Mom?

The mother listens to Joaquim.

Little One: What's he saying?

Mother: *(tenderly, quietly)* Nothing, dear...

Little One: *(referring to the audience)* What about all those things he was saying to them?

Mother: *(while listening to Joaquim)* Nonsense! He's not in this reality... He's in another reality... He's talking nonsense... He's saying: "Don't forget to turn off your phones. And, once again, sorry for crashing into your dreams, but you can't fool me... everyone here knows where they are..."

The house phone rings. Samuel rushes to answer it.

Samuel: Hello.

Mother: (*angry, to Samuel*) If it's the neighbours, tell them I've got some "vocabulary" of my own up my sleeve, like.

Samuel: (*difficult to hear*) Hello!

Mother: (*to Grazielle, about Joaquim*) Go, take him to bed...

Samuel: Hello!

Grazielle obeys.

Mother: (*to Grazielle*) ... and don't forget to turn off the light before closing the door.

III. "We are all well"

Samuel: (*still on the phone*) Alright. Who's this?

The mother takes the phone from Samuel's hands.

Mother: Hello!

Silence

Mother: (*yelling*) Júnior? I can't hear you very well, speak up!

Samuel: Is it Júnior?

Mother: Can you hear me? You listening?

Samuel: Is it him?

Mother: Júnior!

Little One: It's him.

Mother: (*distant call*) I can't hear you very well, speak up!

Graziele: (*arriving*) Who is it?

Mother: We got it, we got it!... (*about Grazielle*) She's got them, she won't take them off her ears!... What time is it there?

Graziele: (*to someone*) Is it Júnior?

Mother: No... I'm asking: "What. Time. Is. It. Over. There?"

Little One: (*to Samuel*) Ain't it the same time there as it is here?

Samuel: No... it's a different time over there.

Little One: (*to Samuel*) How come?

Samuel: It's 'cause of the distance. They're miles away, so the time's different.

Mother: How's that again? What? Here? It's hot here. They say it's gonna rain, but it's still warm... Freezing?... Blimey! *(to the others)* He says it's freezing there, proper nippy...

Graziele: Tell him I've got the headphones!

Samuel: *(to Little One)* They're always six hours ahead of us.

Mother: Eh? What? No... say that again!

Graziele: *(to the mother)* Tell him I've got the headphones!

Samuel: *(to Little One)* Get it?

Little One doesn't get it.

Samuel: It's always six hours ahead there.

Little One: Is that why they're more advanced?

Mother: *(on the phone)* What? Pequi fruit? *(to the others)* He's asking if it's Pequi fruit season here now.

Samuel: It is!

Mother: Yeah, it's Pequi season now. *(to the others)* He's dying for some *(to Junior)*... but by the time it gets to where you are, you won't feel like it anymore, my son...

Samuel: *(to the mother)* Does he want us to send him Pequi fruit? I can sort that out...

Graziele: *(to Samuel)* Samuel, does he know I got them?

Mother: ...and they're huge this year, like the meaty ones, you know? Alright... we'll send you a load of Pequi fruit... hopefully, it'll get there in one piece... but I think it will, won't it?

Samuel: If your headphones showed up, then Pequi will, too...

Mother: *(to the others)*... you guys! Please! It's hard to hear! *(on the phone)* Say that again, Júnior! Is Little One wearing shoes yet? No,

not yet, the same way... he's still enjoying his bare feet. Samuel? He's here... getting ready to leave... your dad? He's fine, yes! Taking his walks every day. I guess so... I'll call him for you. *(to Little One)* Go inside and call your father; go!

She hands the phone to Samuel.

Samuel: *(on the phone)* Júnior! No, it's Samuel... really? But are they treating you all right there? Don't let them mistreat you, huh? Don't let them look down on you for that.

Graziele: *(to herself)* Wow! This tune's a banger!

Samuel: *(doesn't understand what his brother says)* What?

Graziele: *(singing along to the song)* "Where..."

Samuel: Yes...

Graziele: "No..."

Samuel: *(responsively)* No... I mean, yes! Of course. No, nothing... it's your accent, like... *(Júnior is already forgetting the meaning of words from his country)* AC-CENT, way of speaking...

Graziele: "He's nervous, he's restless..."

Samuel: Dad? He's fine, yes... takes his walks every day... So, they told you it's my first day today? Yeah! Cheers! Yeah... you get me though, right...? everything's proper new...

Mother: Stop moaning to your brother, Samuel, come on... it's time for you to go. Go on, off you go...

She takes the phone back. Little One falls to the ground, having an asthma attack.

Mother: *(on the phone)* Júnior, we're all well! We're all well! We're all well!

The call cuts off.

Graziele: *(to the mother)* Did we get cut off?

Mother: He'll ring again.

Sees Little One on the floor.

Mother: What happened? Is he wheezing? Oh, dear, Little One! Let me see... come. Sweetie... breathe properly so I can see. Do you want water? (*to the siblings*) Go on and get the inhaler from his room.

They obey.

Mother: How are you feeling, Little One?

He wheezes.

Mother: Sit here.

He wheezes.

Mother: Breathe... don't stop breathing, my son. This will pass... it's because of this weather. Breathe... oh my love, take in the air slowly, slowly... that's it. Don't hold it in; release it slowly... like that...

He wheezes.

Mother: Don't worry, I'm here. Breathe!

Silence.

Mother: I'm here for you, you know...

He breathes a bit easier.

Mother: I bet you dain't take your medicine today, my angel.

Silence.

Mother: Put your head here. Is it warm? Let me warm you up... like this. Are you breathing easier? You okay?

Little One breathes easier still.

Little One: ...

Mother: ...

Joaquim enters wearing one shoe.

Little One: (*softly*) Mummy, is he awake?

Mother: (*carefully*) Joaquim!

Joaquim: (*very different from when sleepwalking*) What's up?

Mother: He is.

Joaquim: Anyone seen my shoe?

Mother: (*pointing to inside the house*) Junior called.

Joaquim: I'll talk to him next week.

Joaquim leaves.

Little One: (*to the mother*) Why d'you treat Joaquim kindly when he's asleep?

Mother: I have to enrol you in the swimming classes.

Little One: I don't want to go swimming.

Mother: But it's good for your bronchi to help improve those sick lungs of yours. You can't grow up with this illness. We look after you here at home, but out there, no one will... no one's gonna rush to get your inhaler for you to help you out. No one. No one's gonna help you out there... (*a little blackmail*)
The loud girl from upstairs also goes swimming; maybe she'll be your classmate...

Little One: Really? Does she also walk barefoot?

The mother chuckles.

Little One: Mummy...

Mother: Yes...

Little One: You know *that* "when" when I had my arm in a cast, yeah?

Mother: Of course.

Little One: It's just that...

Mother: ...

Little One: Forget it...

Samuel and Graziele return.

Samuel: (*with Little One's favourite building toy*) I couldn't find the inhaler, but I brought his little castle.

Mother: Samuel, it's late. I won't repeat it! Today's your first day, and you're already dawdling; why don't you just go, like?

Samuel: I'm already going.

The mother watches over Little One.

Samuel: Mom...

Graziele: (*singing along to her song*) "Mother..."

Mother: Hi...

Graziele: "Hey..."

Samuel: I wanted to talk to you now.

Mother: Go ahead.

Graziele: "Say it..."

Samuel: But I guess it's not the right time now, huh... I better go 'cause it's getting late.

Joaquim: *(from inside the house)* Mom, the coffee!

Mother: *(realises Samuel is scared)* You're strong. You're strong, Samuel.

She gives him a kiss and leaves.

Graziele: "She gives him a kiss and goes away..."

Samuel remains unresponsive. He's a family member without a knack for handling life situations. Dealing with the "other" isn't easy for him, and so "expressing himself" isn't easy either. For him, born ten months into pregnancy and with the help of forceps, the journey out of the womb was tough.

Graziele: *(continuing to sing the song)* "The man standing still thinks of himself/ Thinks of himself/ Thinks of himself/ He dreams of joining the swirl/ Being someone else in the world/ But he can't get away from himself/ Can't get away from himself."

IV. "I fear you're not hearing me?"

There is music playing in the house. Little One is building a piano with his toy blocks. He pretends to play what he hears until the music stops, and Little One gets annoyed.

Graziele: *(singing along to her song)* "Time keeps ticking. History keeps raging on. The youngest is building his ship. But for the older ones, it is nothing but paper..."

Little One: Was it you who turned it off?

Graziele: "...ticking, ticking..."

Little One: Was it you who turned it off?

Graziele: "...and I don't even notice the giant animal among us..."

Little One: *(mumbling)* Psst! Did you turn it off?

Graziele: What?

Little One: The music!

Graziele: Listen, ain't it time for your inhaler?

He dismantles the piano.

Graziele: Did you dream about anything today, lil'?

Little One: *(building something else)* I dreamt that I was wet and then Mom came and put me to dry on a dish rack.

Graziele: And was there room enough for you?

Little One: Yeah, was nuff woom. Why?

Graziele: Don't tell no one I told you, but Mom said she's gonna make you go to swimming classes.

Little One: I don't want to go swimming.

Graziele: But it's good for your bronchi, to help your breathing. We look after you here at home, but out there, no one's gonna rush like crazy to get your inhaler to help you out. No way. You understand? You'll have to fend for yourself!

Little One: I know. Look at the train!

Graziele: Is that meant to be a train? That's an attraimpt!

Little One: What's an "Atwemt"?

Graziele: *(about what she hears)* Ah, that's it! Oh, my... Waiting for the song we want is like waiting for a train...

He builds another toy.

Graziele: And this, what is it?

Little One: It's me.

Graziele: You? *(takes a piece of the toy)* And what's this then?

Little One: It's my lung.

Graziele: What d'you mean, your lung? That small?

Little One: 'Cause my lung's too small.

Graziele: Is it?

Little One: It's the lung that makes us breathe, innit?

Graziele: The lungs.

Little One: So, I ain't breathing right 'cause my lung's too small.

Graziele: What you on about! You and your lung stories! Come on, make the piano again; it looked nice.

Little One: But the music's stopped!

Graziele: But you should make it 'cause it's gonna continue.

Little One: How d'you know?

Graziele: Because! That's our way of doing things, innit? Come on, make it quick! Or the music's gonna start and your piano won't be ready!

Little One: Alright then.

The family enters the stage. Little One quickly builds the piano again. He spreads the keys all over the stage.

Graziele: But that big?

Little One: It's a grand piano.
Joaquim, Samuel, and the mother appear.

Mother: (*noticing Little One's solemnity*) What is it? What's going on? Oh! They're piano keys!

The music starts playing. Little One plays his piano.

Joaquim: (*to Samuel*) Ain't it your time to go?

Samuel: Yeah, I'm going. (*to Mom*) Do you want me to bring the Pequis?

Mother: Yes, please, Samuel! Can you bring them?

Samuel: Sure thing, Mom. Can I have your blessing, Mom?

Mother: God bless you, my son.

Samuel: Bye, Joaquim.

Joaquim: Bye, Samuel.

Samuel: Bye, Grazi.

Graziele: Oh, Samuel, since you're going out, you could pick up the Pequi, yeah?

Samuel: Bye, Lil.

Joaquim: (*concerned*) Giddy up, Samuel, stop dawdling!

Samuel heads out for his first day.

Mother: The building manager called to say they've decided to allow dogs in the flats now.

Joaquim: The building manager? Did you take the chance to complain about the noise from the neighbours?

Mother: Of course, I ain't afraid, am I!? I complained, like, and he said he'd sent five letters to their flat already.

Little One: I love the neighbour.

Joaquim: So now anyone can have a dog in their flat? We could have one...

Little One: I can't...

Mother: Little One can't breathe well. He's already got a problem, let alone with dog fur nearby...

Joaquim: Go on and breathe so I can see, Little One. (*Little One doesn't breathe*) Come on, breathe... I've told you what you gotta do to improve that: pinch your nose like this, count to five, then unpinch and breathe out. Then do it again, counting to six... keep increasing, little by little.

Graziele: They're saying they're allowing dogs in the flats now...

Joaquim: If you do that, over time, Little One, you'll increase your breathing capacity.

Mother: (*to Little One*) It ain't like that at all. Your problem is with the medicine and taking care of yourself. Don't worry about it. It'll pass. It's just a matter of time.

Graziele: Dunno why we ain't got a little doggie...

Little One: I can't!

Graziele: Mom, is it true my name was gonna be Andressa? Dad said I was gonna be called Andressa, 'cause it was the name of a nurse you knew or something like that...

The neighbours start arguing.

Joaquim: Oh, come on! Can you hear them?

Mother: There's no use complaining, you see?

Joaquim: When the heck are these neighbours gonna stop fighting for the love of God? What's the use? Them lot are all college-educated, but they shout and scream at each other; absolutely no manners at all!

Graziele: What's up? Are they arguing again?

Joaquim: Soon, they'll start playing that blasted music. Just so we can't hear them arguing!

Graziele: You know why we can't understand nothing in their letter, yeah? People say they're all lah-di-dah. They say they're a family of academics. They're all college-educated and have even got bookshelves in the kitchen, and they all speak posh, like!

Mother: Next time they come bringing letters around, they'll see. They think that's gonna solve anything. Good heavens! My God. He's gonna kill her!

Little One: This morning, the girl seemed really nervous, and she shouted, "I fear you're not hearing me? I fear you're not hearing me? Why doesn't anyone listen to me in this household?"

Joaquim: Little One, what's all that dirt you've got on ya, eh?

Graziele: Mom, you got the chance to complain to the building manager, right?

Mother: *(to Little One)* No. No means no! You just changed your shirt!

Graziele: Did you, Mom?

Joaquim: Let's go, Little One; change your clothes.

Mother: *(to Little One)* I'm telling you not to change, you just did...

Graziele: Mom...

Mother: Don't take them off, Little One; your clothes ain't dirty.

Graziele: Mom...

Joaquim: *(sarcastically)* Alright, his clothes ain't dirty.

Mother: *(to Little One)* Some people just talk, talk, talk and don't do nothing. Why don't you change his clothes yourself when they're really dirty like this?

The mother and Joaquim argue and shout.

Little One: *(kids repeat what they hear)* "I fear you're not hearing me? I fear you're not hearing me? Why doesn't anyone listen to me in this household?"

Samuel rings the doorbell.

Little One: Grazi, the door!

Graziele: *(opening the door)* Samuel?

Samuel: I forgot.

Little One: Forgot what?

Samuel: Forgot my hanky.

Nothing happens.

Mother: And you ain't gonna get it?

He goes in to get his hanky. And again, gets ready to leave.

Samuel: Can you give me your blessing, Mom?

Mother: God bless you, Samuel.

Samuel: Alright, bye, Grazi, bye, Joaquim, bye, Little One.

Little One: Bye.

Samuel leaves.

V. "Like dust in the cracks of the floor that ain't cleared away"

Little One: Graziele...

Graziele: ...

Little One: Graziele!

Graziele: What is it?

Little One: You know *that* "when" when I broke my arm, yeah?

Graziele: I think I remember, yeah. Why?

Little One: It's... Nothin'.

Graziele: (*to Little One*) Why are you always doing this?
Always asking and then saying: "Nothing."

Little One: Sorry.

Graziele: (*to the audience*) I feel like talking to you guys. Fancy a chat?

Little One: Oh, God!

Graziele: (*to the audience*) My name's Graziele, and I'm sleepwalking. Yeah, that's right, I'm sleepwalking. Here's what's gonna follow: at some point, someone's gonna ring the doorbell of this house. I'll answer it, and it'll be the pizza delivery guy who got the wrong flat.

The phone rings.

Graziele: ...he's gonna look at me, fall in love, and then say we should run away together. We'll prefer not to get married, but we'll be happy.

The phone rings.

Little One: Grazi, the phone!

Graziele: (*answering*) Hello! Júnior?

Little One: Again?

Graziele: (*on the phone*) So good to hear from you! Good... I got the headphones, can't take them off my ears... thank you. Yeah, the sound's great, can't find ones like those to buy here! Really? And it's true it snows there? Does it? Like, ice blocks fall from the sky? Must be nice, right... huh, how? Oh, Júnior, I miss you, tell me if you're alright!... what? If your room's the same? Yeah! It is... your stuff's still the same. Why are you sounding like that? Sorry? You wanna come back? You can't do that, Júnior, why "come back"?... what? You feel cold? Hello!

Little One: What's he saying?

Graziele: (*while listening to Júnior, she whispers to Little One*) He's acting weird... he's saying he wants to come back (*listens*) ...that our family's scattered around the corners, like dust in the cracks of the floor that ain't cleared away. (*listens*) He's asking me to tell you to enjoy walking barefoot while you can, like someone walking on sand.

The phone cuts off. Grazielle goes back to listening to her headphones. Time goes by. And with it, ordinary days.

Graziele: "Time keeps ticking, ticking, ticking, ticking..."

VI. "Daaaaad!"

Joaquim's got Little One's shoes in his hands.

Little One: Joaquim!

Joaquim: Hi!

Little One: You awake?

Joaquim: What d'you mean, Little One, like?

Little One: 'Cause you do things asleep, don't you? You're a "somantulist", ain't ya? You go to the kitchen... drink water... sometimes watch telly...

Joaquim: Somnambulist, it's called.

Little One: ...

Joaquim: Yeah. Mom told you?

Little One: Yeah.

Joaquim: Of course she did! She shouldn't have. Bet you're gonna be scared of me now.

Little One: No, I'm not scared.

Joaquim: C'mere! Let's get your shoes on.

Little One: But I like going barefoot!

Joaquim: But someday you gotta learn to use these, Little One.

Little One: Why do I gotta learn?

Joaquim: Well, 'cause that's our way of doing things. You gotta learn.

He puts Little One's shoes on.

Little One: Joaquim!

Joaquim: Hi.

Little One: Nothing. When you're asleep, I'll chat with you.

Joaquim: About your glasses?

Little One: Nah.

Joaquim: About what, then?

Little One: Nothing.

Joaquim: I know what it is.

Little One: What?

Joaquim: You've got a crush on the neighbour.

Little One: Which one?

Joaquim: The one from the lah-di-dah family that shouts. The youngest.

Little One: Me?

Joaquim: You talk about her loads.

The phone rings.

Little One: Yeah...

The phone rings.

Joaquim: See how I noticed.

He answers the phone. Little One spots mud stains on Joaquim's clothes. He starts wheezing.

Joaquim: Hello. Junior? How're ya? Glad I reached ya. What? Your skates? I reckon so, yeah; reckon they're still here... That's true, it was really good, yeah... but what's with your voice? Junior! You crying? Easy, what's up? What happened? Did something happen? Junior!

The call drops. Little One collapses, having an asthma attack.

Joaquim: What's up, Little One? Where's your inhaler?

Mother: What's wrong? *(to Joaquim)* What did you do to him? Bet you made the boy put his shoes on. Think you can talk to him any old way you like. Useless man! That's why you're like this!

Joaquim: Oh, shut up! You ain't even seen what happened.

Mother: Oh my God, Little One, you're wheezing!

Graziele: Where's your inhaler?

Mother: Go and get the boy's inhaler, like, quickly.

Joaquim obeys.

Graziele: Breathe, Lil!

Mother: Bet you ain't taking your meds on time.

Graziele: Breathe, Lil! You gotta help too! Breathe!

Samuel rings the doorbell. Joaquim returns from inside the house. His clothes are stained with mud.

Joaquim: Couldn't find it.

Graziele: I think I know where it is.

Graziele goes to fetch it.

Little One: I can't breathe!

Joaquim: Breathe, Little One! Breathe!

Mother: Should we call the doctor?

Little One: (*unable to speak*) Don't want a doctor!

Mother: Shut up!

Joaquim: Can't even breathe right and still yapping! Shut up!

Graziele returns; her clothes are covered in mud.

Graziele: Not there!

Mother: What d'you mean "not there"??

Graziele: Not there, I'm telling ya.

Mother: Can't be!

Mother goes in search of it.

Graziele: Mom gets mad at me, but it ain't my fault, geez.

Joaquim: (*to Little One*) You don't remember where the inhaler might be, do you?

Graziele: Calm down, Lil, it'll pass soon, just be patient!

Joaquim: It won't pass that quick if it keeps going on like this.

Graziele: Stop it, Joaquim!

Joaquim:(*to Little One*) Breathe, Little One, breathe!

Samuel rings the doorbell.

The mother returns completely covered in mud.

Mother: Couldn't even get in. It's too messy in there! It's all dirty!

Everyone's alarmed. Joaquim threatens to go inside the house.

Mother: NO! Don't you dare go in there.

Graziele: What's that?

Mother: I don't know. There's something weird in there...

Joaquim: I wanna see what it is!

The doorbell rings.

Graziele: I'll go check too!

Little One: Don't go!

Mother: You don't say nothin', or else it'll make your wheezing worse.

Little One: Don't go, Graziele, don't go.

Joaquim: Daintcha you hear our mom, Little One, you ain't well, duh!?

Graziele: It must be the leaky tap!

Graziele decides to go in.

Mother: But where's all that dirt on the carpet coming from, Joaquim?

The doorbell.

Joaquim: I think we gotta get Little One out of here!

Mother: Oh God!

The doorbell.

Little One: *(suddenly)* PLEASE, YOU DON'T NEED TO TAKE ME AWAY FROM HERE!

Mother: Calm down, Little One, calm down!

Little One: Leave me be...

Mother: Calm down, Little One, calm down!

Little One: There's a hippo in this house!

Samuel: Hey guys! Open the door for me!

Joaquim: Do you want water, Little One?

...

Graziele: Go on, Joaquim, get some water...

...

Little One: Before, I used to put him in my little pool.

A family covered in mud.

Little One: But then he grew bigger, so I ended up putting him in Junior's bedroom.

Mother: In Junior's room?

Graziele: Little One...

...

Graziele: How long ago was this?

Little One: ...

Joaquim: (*nervous*) She asked how long!

Graziele: Easy, Joaquim!

Little One: I don't know, ages ago.

The doorbell.

Mother: What d'you mean "ages ago"?

Joaquim: How long ago, Little One?

Little One: Um...

Joaquim: How long ago, Little One?

Little One: You know *that* "when" when I got the cast off my arm, remember, yeah?

Joaquim: But that was yonks ago.

Graziele: But why dain't you say sooner? Why dain't you tell me, Little One?

Little One: I tried to tell... I tried...

Little One: It was a Sunday when I thought I'd pop into the zoo. I saw on the telly that hippos have massive lungs, so I thought... I could learn to breathe like them. Then I thought, maybe if I could grab a lil' hippo for myself, I could learn to breathe properly. He's got massive lungs!

Graziele: Lungs?

...

Little One: Actually, at first, he got really sick, but then I saw on the program that hippos like swamps and still water, and I got worried, I thought he wouldn't adapt to our habitat, that he'd die, but then he settled in well staying in Junior's room...

Joaquim: Settled in well?

Little One: Yeah!

The family can't believe it.

Little One: It's true! He even watches the telly with us every day.

Joaquim: "One does not escape immune from these four walls that surround us all."

Mother: I'll pop over there.

Little One: No, don't! He might be grumpy!

...

Little One: He ain't never made such a mess.

Graziele: A hippo!

Little One: At first, he was little. When I brought him here, he was just a baby!

The doorbell rings.

Graziele: How much does he weigh?

Little One: His weight?

Joaquim: YES, THE WEIGHT, COME ON!

Little One: I don't know! I just know it's a lot.

Mother: How can you not know?

Joaquim: It must weigh a ton! A beast that size!

Mother: This can't be true.

Joaquim: Daintcha you see the mess, Mother?

Mother: And you, daintcha see a "hippo" in your brother's room?

Joaquim: I dain't see it. And neither did our dad. Graziele dain't see it. You dain't see it, mother.

Graziele comes in, she seems to approach the beast. Everyone, anxious, watches her attentively.

Mother: What a belly; what a belly!

Graziele: It's built like a bull that forgot how to fight... It's so magnificent, and yet so quiet.

Everyone: ...

Graziele: He's really on edge. He's a dangerous beast.

Joaquim: Dad!

Mother: For God's sake, your dad can't know about this.

Joaquim: Dad!

Graziele: I reckon Dad shouldn't know either.

Joaquim: But he needs to know!

Mother: He'll have a fit, Joaquim!

The doorbell rings.

Graziele: A fit!

Joaquim: DAAAAAAAAD!

Little One collapses on the floor and has a crying fit.

Mother: Little One, my son!

Graziele: Little One!

Joaquim: Little One!

Little One: He swallowed our dad!

Joaquim: What did you say?

Little One: He swallowed Dad!

Graziele: Who?

Little One: The hippo!

Joaquim: THAT'S ENOUGH, LITTLE ONE! ENOUGH! ENOUGH!

Mother: How long ago did this happen?

Little One: Right when William arrived.

Graziele: William? Who's William?

Little One: The hippo.

Mother: But how long ago, precisely?

Little One: About five years ago.

Silence.

The mother beats Little One.

Samuel: (*ringing the doorbell*) DAAAAAAD!

...

Joaquim goes towards the door to open it.

Mother: Not now, Joaquim, I need a minute to sort myself out. Samuel, give us a minute; we're gonna open this door for you to come in. We're gonna open this door!

Joaquim: I've got a gun.

Graziele: (*who didn't know*) You've got a gun?

Joaquim: We've got to kill this beast.

Little One bursts into tears.

Joaquim: And you can stop that.

Little One: I LOVE WILLIAM! I LOVE WILLIAM! I LOVE WILLIAM!

Graziele: It might be dangerous. It's a dangerous beast, you might not manage it, and he might want to swallow you too.

Little One is in tears.

Joaquim: Someone needs to kill him and it has to be quick.

Mother: NO.

Graziele: He'll destroy this building!

Samuel: DAAAAAD!

Graziele: We're also in the same situation! *(directed towards the audience)*

Joaquim: IF WE DON'T KILL IT, IT'LL SWALLOW ANOTHER ONE OF US!

Graziele: OUR DAD WAS AN HONEST MAN!

Joaquim: I'LL KILL IT!

Joaquim rushes to kill it. The mother feels that, perhaps, over the last few years of their lives, she and her family have just been going through the motions, doing anything not to go hungry; they lived just because they had to. For that reason alone.

Mother: *(dignified, surprisingly strong)* NOBODY'S GONNA KILL IT.
...

Mother: NOBODY'S GONNA KILL IT. THAT'S OUR REALITY. THERE ARE THINGS YOU DON'T KILL! SOME THINGS WERE MADE FOR YOU TO LIVE WITH. THAT'S OUR REALITY. YOU DON'T REMOVE THE BACKBONE BECAUSE OF THE BACK PAIN. THE BIG BEAST WILL STAY HERE, IN THIS HOUSE, INSIDE US. INSIDE US. NOBODY'S GONNA KILL IT. SOME THINGS WERE MADE FOR YOU TO LIVE WITH. SOME THINGS WERE MADE FOR YOU TO LIVE WITH. SOME THINGS WERE MADE FOR YOU TO LIVE WITH. SOME THINGS WERE MADE FOR YOU TO LIVE WITH!

VII. "...and that is very important"

Family is what is in the corners, in our fissures, like the dust that accumulates in the lower corners of the room, so hard to remove. It's between fingers, armpits, between the legs, in the corner of the eye, under the tongue, and between the teeth. It's a saucer. Because it's to the saucer, isn't it? It's to the saucer that the cup always returns to rest.

The phone rings. Little One turns to the audience.

Little One: Please, you can now turn on your mobiles. Someone might be calling for you. And that is very important.

The house phone rings.

The phone rings.

The phone rings.