

IN THE “RITIMO” (RHYTHM) OF WRITING: VOWEL EPENTHESIS AND UNCONVENTIONAL SPELLINGS IN A SIXTH-YEAR CLASS IN PONTA GROSSA, PARANA

NO “RITIMO” DA ESCRITA: EPÊNTSE VOCÁLICA E GRAFIAS NÃO CONVENCIONAIS NO
SEXTO ANO DO ENSINO FUNDAMENTAL EM PONTA GROSSA (PR)

EN EL “RITIMO” (‘RITMO’) DE LA ESCRITURA: EPÊNTESIS DE VOCALES Y ORTOGRAFÍAS NO
CONVENCIONALES EN EL SEXTO AÑO DE LA ENSEÑANZA FUNDAMENTAL EN PONTA
GROSSA (PR)

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ABSTRACT: This paper analyzes unconventional spellings related to vowel epenthesis in texts written by sixth-year middle school students in the city of Ponta Grossa, Paraná. Therefore, this study investigates occurrences of the presence and absence of a vowel that violate the orthographic convention of Portuguese, such as *internete* (for *internet*) and *opnião* (for *opinião* ‘opinion’). The

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theoretical framework used in this study was the Heterogeneous Mode of Constitution of Writing (Corrêa, 2004). The corpus consists of 203 texts written by students from two public schools (Mendes, 2013). In total, 33 occurrences were identified, 27 (81.8%) of vowel insertion, e.g. *diginidade* (for 'dignidade', dignity), and 6 (18.2%) of vowel omission, e.g. *cicrets* (for 'chicletes', chewing gum). They show the marks, in writing, of the dialogic circulation of the writer in oral/spoken and literate/written social practices.

KEYWORDS: Orality and literacy. Writing acquisition. Unconventional spellings. Vowel epenthesis.

RESUMO: Este trabalho analisa grafias não convencionais relativas à epêntese vocálica em textos de alunos do sexto ano do Ensino Fundamental de Ponta Grossa, Paraná. Nesta pesquisa, são investigadas, portanto, ocorrências de presença e ausência de vogal que fogem às regras da convenção ortográfica, como, respectivamente, em *internete* (para *internet*) e *opnião* (para *opinião*). Como referencial teórico, segue-se o Modo heterogêneo de constituição da escrita (Corrêa, 2004). O cópús analisado conta com 203 produções textuais de alunos de duas escolas da rede pública (Mendes, 2013). Como resultados gerais, foram levantadas 33 ocorrências, sendo 27 (81,8%) de inserção de vogal, como em *diginidade* (para *dignidade*), e 6 (18,2%) de ausência, como em *cicrets* (para *chicletes*), que evidenciam as marcas, na escrita, da circulação dialógica do escrevente pelas práticas sociais do oral/falado e do letrado/escrito, respectivamente.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Oralidade e letramento. Aquisição da escrita. Grafias não convencionais. Epêntese vocálica.

RESUMEN: Este artículo analiza las ortografías no convencionales relacionadas a la epéntesis vocálica en textos de alumnos del sexto año de la enseñanza fundamental de Ponta Grossa, Paraná. En esta investigación, por lo tanto, se investigan las ocurrencias de presencia y ausencia de vocal que se desvían de las reglas de la convención ortográfica, como, respectivamente, *internete* (por *internet*) y *opnião* (por *opinião* 'opinión'). Como referente teórico se sigue el modo heterogêneo de constitución de la escritura (Corrêa, 2004). El corpus analizado cuenta con 203 producciones textuales de alumnos de dos escuelas públicas (Mendes, 2013). Como resultados generales, se levantaron 33 ocurrencias, 27 (81,8%) de inserción vocálica, como *diginidade* (por *dignidade* 'dignidad'), y 6 (18,2%) de ausencia, como *cicrets* (por *chicletes* 'goma de mascar'), que muestran las marcas, en la escritura, de la circulación dialógica del escritor a través de las prácticas sociales de oral/hablado y letrado/escrito, respectivamente.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Oralidad y letramento. Adquisición de la escritura. Ortografías no convencionales. Epéntesis de vocales.

1 INTRODUCTION

This study¹ aims to analyze spellings that do not follow the Portuguese orthographic convention in texts written by sixth-year students from two public schools in the city of Ponta Grossa, Parana, Brazil. In this paper, we analyzed the occurrences of unconventional spellings related to the phonetic-phonological process of *vowel epenthesis*, as in *ritimo* (for 'ritmo', rhythm) and *saits* (for 'sites', sites).

In this process a vowel is inserted between consonants in sequences of occlusive, bilabial nasal, or voiceless fricative and another consonant, as in *ab[i]soluto* (for 'absoluto', absolute), *am[i]nésia* (for 'amnésia', amnesia) and *aff[i]ta* (for 'afta', mouth ulcers), respectively. The insertion may also occur in combinations of /ʃ/ + consonant, in adaptation of German names such as *Sch[i]midt* (Collischonn, 2006; Cristófaró Silva, 2011).

Collischonn (2006, 40) emphasizes that the epenthesis, as in *op[i]ção* (option), is a characteristic of Brazilian Portuguese (BP) that indicates syllabic properties and, "[...] in writing, it is often observed that this vowel is written" in an unconventional way. Câmara Jr. (2002 [1971], 2007 [1970]) points out that even the standard orthography in Portuguese assimilates English words such as club and snob into *clube* and *snobe*, with the addition, in the examples, of the grapheme <e>. There are also unconventional spellings

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classified as hypercorrection² that are linked to this phenomenon, as *advinhar* (for ‘adivinhar’, to guess) and *obdecer* (for ‘obedecer’, to obey) (Câmara Jr., 2002 [1971]; Collischonn, 2006).

During the literacy process, according to Callou and Leite (1994), the learner recognizes that the alphabets correspond to symbols of the phonic segments of the language, but they struggle when confronted with the hypothesis of the biunivocity alphabet-phoneme. Thus, “[...] an examination of spelling errors at school should be considered a valuable method of investigation for linguists since these errors generally reflect a lack of correspondence between the phonetic and the grapheme systems” (Callou; Leite, 1994, p. 46-47), which justifies this study.

The theoretical framework used in this study was the *Heterogeneous Mode of Constitution of Writing* (Corrêa, 2004). According to this theory, the acquisition of writing is a *process* in which the linguistic marks present in the texts reflect the constitutive heterogeneity of language and, consequently, of writing, through the dialogic circulation of the writer in the oral/spoken and literate/written social practices. According to Corrêa (2004, p. 19): “[...] the dialogue that the writer seeks to establish with the institution places them in an undefined position since they use the code proposed by the institution — a code they had access to, especially at school — but still enunciate in accordance with places they occupy in other social practices”.

Three axes guide the writer’s movement through the imaginary of writing: (i) mode of constitution of writing in its supposed genesis; (ii) appropriation of writing according to the imaginary about the institutionalized written code; and (iii) the relationship between the text and what has already been spoken/written.

In this study, unconventional spellings related to vowel epenthesis were analyzed according to the first two axes, as they deal more directly with the dialogic circulation of the writer in oral/spoken and literate/written social practices.

For this study, we investigated 203 textual productions collected by Mendes (2013), which analyze texts written by sixth-year students from two public schools in Ponta Grossa. Two writing tasks were used to produce the texts: in the first task the students were requested to create an *advertisement* to sell a product; in the second task, the students were requested to write an *opinion essay* about the consumption of soft drinks.

In the 203 textual productions which composed the corpus of this study, we identified and analyzed the occurrences of (i) vowel insertion violating the orthographic convention, such as *obejeto* (for ‘objeto’, object); and (ii) the omission of a vowel also violating the orthographic convention, such as in *notbook* (for notebook). These occurrences show the constitutive heterogeneity of writing resulting from the imaginary the writers create to (their) writing (Corrêa, 2004).

The database in Mendes (2013) has been used to study unconventional spellings related to other phonetic-phonological processes, such as *rhotacism*, *vocalization* and *palatalization* (Carmo; Bugai; Dias, 2020; Bugai; Dias; Carmo, 2021). However, there are no records of studies on unconventional spellings in textual productions of students in Ponta Grossa related to *vowel epenthesis*, which shows the novelty of this research.

This study is part of a larger project focused on the Socio-Historical Description of Brazilian Portuguese Vowels – PROBRAVO (National Council for Scientific and Technological Development – CNPq³), which investigates multidisciplinary realizations of vowels in several varieties of Brazilian Portuguese (BP).

This paper is organized as follows: first, the theoretical background is presented (i) the Heterogeneous Mode of Constitution of Writing (Corrêa, 2004); and (ii) vowel epenthesis. Next, the material and methodological steps used are detailed. The data is then analyzed and followed by the conclusion and references.

² “Ultracorreção”, in the terminology presented by Câmara Jr. (2002 [1971], p. 27).

³ Project coordinated by Prof. Seung-Hwa Lee (UFMG).

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As previously mentioned, this study analyzes unconventional spellings related to the phonetic-phonological process of vowel epenthesis. The theoretical framework used in the data analysis was the Heterogeneous Mode of Constitution of Writing (Corrêa, 2004).

2.1 HETEROGENEOUS MODE OF CONSTITUTION OF WRITING

Proposed by Corrêa (2004), the theory describes the insertion of the writer in oral/spoken and literate/written social practices, considering their dialogical circulation with what has already been spoken/written and heard/read. In this approach, the linguistic marks used by the writer reflect, in their textual production, the heterogeneous mode of constitution of writing.

Corrêa (2004) argues that writing is a *process*, not a *product*, as traditionally conceived by the radical dichotomy between speech and writing. The author highlights the heterogeneity of language itself which in turn affects the notion of standard, especially the standard written language. As such, the author avoids the category of *error* in writing, classifying it as a sign of the heterogeneous mode of constitution of writing. Thus, in this study, spellings that deviate from the orthographic convention were not considered *errors*, but *unconventional spellings*.

The heterogeneous mode of constitution of writing is based on the dialogic circulation of the writer and on what they believe writing is, which is conceived as part of a social *imaginary*. The author points out that: “[...] this imaginary is not, therefore, a representation taken as a distortion of the real (distortion, for example, of what, in fact, writing would be). In fact, the real relationships between social agents and writing materialize linguistically through it, considering the social practices of which writing is a direct or an indirect part” (Corrêa, 2004, p. 9).

Corrêa (2004) proposes three axes that guide the writer's circulation through the imaginary of writing in their textual production: (i) the heterogeneous mode of constitution of writing in its supposed genesis, in which the writer believes in a representation of writing in an attempt to transcribe the oral/spoken; (ii) the appropriation of writing according to the imaginary about the institutionalized written convention, in which the imaginary of the writer is observed from the studies of the orthographic convention that they reproduce in their texts, resulting mainly, but not exclusively, from the education process of institutionalized writing; finally, (iii) the relationship between the writer's text and what has already been spoken/written, in which the dialogue with other texts and with the dialogic circulation of the aforementioned social practices is more directly observed.

The author states that there is no isolated performance of only one axis since they are integrated during the writing practice. Nevertheless, the functioning of each axis can be assessed in relation to the others. This study analyzes non-conventional spellings according to the first two axes proposed by Corrêa (2004): in the first, when relations with the oral/spoken are evidenced in writing; and, in the second, when the regulative nature of writing is observed and, consequently, its relationship with the literate/written.

The unconventional spellings related to vowel epenthesis are analyzed. Next, a detailed presentation of the process is provided.

2.2 VOWEL EPENTHESIS

As mentioned in the introduction, vowel epenthesis is the insertion of a vowel in sequences of certain consonant clusters (Collischonn, 2006; Cristófaros Silva, 2011). In other words, epenthesis is a phonological process of *adding* a vowel between syllables, usually with syllabic regularization (Roberto, 2016)⁴. According to these definitions, the general formalization of the rule of vowel epenthesis in Portuguese is presented as explained by Battisti (2014, p. 79):

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⁴ Another productive *accretion* process in BP is *diphthongization* or *glide* accretion. Although in BP both the back and front glide can be added, as in *nó[j]s* (for ‘nós’, we) and *do[w]ze* (for ‘doze’, twelve), the back semivowel is more recurrent (Roberto, 2016).

Concerning this syllabic regulation, according to Collischonn (2003, 2014), it is possible that a segment is not able to occupy the position of onset or coda in the syllable and is not associated with a syllabic node due to its own characteristics or to its context in relation to other segments. Thus, epenthesis is a phonetic adjustment mechanism in which the syllabic structure does not violate the following Principle of Prosodic Licensing: “[...] all prosodic units at a given level must belong to hierarchically superior prosodic structures. [...] As a consequence, the entire phonological sequence is continuously divided into syllables, i.e. any segment must be associated with a syllable” (Collischonn, 2014, p. 111).

Epenthesis is presented in *O dialeto caipira* (Amaral, 2020 [1920]) as an isolated or accidental modification that occurs in words such as *reculuta* (for ‘recruta’, recruit), *Ingalaterra* (for ‘Inglaterra’, England) and *garampo* (for ‘grampo’, clothespin).

According to Cristófaró Silva (2011), the recurrent epenthetic vowel in BP is [i]. The author also states that epenthetic consonants are rare in Portuguese, occurring mainly in derived words, as in *paulada* (to strike) and *cafezal* (coffee plantation). Câmara Jr. (2007 [1970]) points out that /i/ (in Rio de Janeiro) and /e/ (in Portugal) are the epenthetic vowels used in Portuguese. In words such as *pneu* (tire) and *psicologia* (psychology), the author states that the first consonant forms a new syllable in BP, with /i/ as the syllabic apex and with a relative reduction in its emission (Câmara Jr., 2002 [1971]).

Collischonn (2006) points out that vowel epenthesis in Portuguese may occur not only in medial position, as in *rapto* → *rap[i]to*, but also in initial context, as in *spa* → *[i]spa*, and in final context, as in *club* → *club[i]* (Collischonn, 2006)⁵.

According to Collischonn (2006, p. 41): “[...] in Latin, any consonant could appear in syllable-final position (except f), but archaic Portuguese and the other Romance languages have a strong tendency to reduce or even eliminate closed syllables using a variety of historical processes, such as the simplification of geminates and consonant clusters, consonants vocalization and deletion”.

As a result, the syllables could have voiced consonants or /s/ in the coda. According to the author, Portuguese went through a late borrowing process of receiving obstruents in syllabic coda in its lexicon. Nevertheless, this syllable with a filled coda - CVC - tends to be resyllabified in BP as a sequence with no coda-filling (CV.CV). Therefore, “vowel epenthesis can be understood as a strategy to repair a malformed syllabic structure in Portuguese, creating a new syllabic nucleus, to which the consonant is attached as onset” (Collischonn, 2006, p. 42). Consequently, epenthesis is considered a reinforcing process that undoes heterosyllabic consonant clusters and coda segments that do not exist in BP (Seara; Nunes; Lazzarotto-Volcão, 2015).

In her studies on vowel epenthesis in southern BP using the corpus of the Project of Linguistic Variation in the Southern Region of Brazil – VARSUL, Collischonn (2000, 2003) demonstrates the variable nature of the phenomenon, which occurs with substantially divergent relative weights - for example, 0.26 for Blumenau, and 0.78 for Porto Alegre, cities located in the state of Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul, respectively - in different levels of education up to high school. Regarding the independent *linguistic* variables, Collischonn (2000) highlights that the end of a word, such as in *VARIG*, is a favorable context for the phenomenon, with almost categorical indices. In general, the author states that word stress is a determinant for the application of epenthesis, which is favored when the “lost consonant” (Collischonn, 2000, p. 295): (i) is in a pretonic context, as in *objeto* (object); (ii) precedes a fricative consonant, as in *advogado* (lawyer), or a nasal consonant, as in *mogno* (mahogany); and (iii) is a fricative, as in *afra* (mouth ulcer), or an alveolar plosive, as in *ritmo* (rhythm).

Regarding *extralinguistic* variables, for the three capitals of southern Brazil (Porto Alegre, Florianópolis, and Curitiba), Collischonn (2003) identifies higher levels of *education* as an inhibitor for the process due to the awareness of the written language. She explains that “[...] this is not a case of school prescription in action, but rather the fact that the written form has a direct impact on the oral competence of the speaker who uses the writing” (Collischonn, 2003, p. 291). According to the author, especially in Porto Alegre and Curitiba, the epenthesis would have a post-lexical nature, because it is gradient, phonetically conditioned, and suffers interference from the speed of speech and does not interact with lexical rules. However, in the countryside of southern Brazil, more specifically in the cities of Panambi, Blumenau, and Flores da Cunha, the author states that epenthesis is a lexical or transitional rule

⁵ The final context process is also called *paragoge*, “a phonological phenomenon in which one or more segments are added to the end of a word”, as in *ante[s]* (Cristófaró Silva, 2011, p. 171).

between the lexical and post-lexical components. In these bilingual communities, the speaker perceives epenthesis as a categorical rule, not gradient.

Since variation in epenthesis is conditioned by extralinguistic variables such as *education* and *location*, this research of unconventional spellings related to the process focuses on texts produced by students belonging to the same school year and linguistic variety: a sixth-year class of a middle school located in the city of Ponta Grossa. The material and methodological procedures used in the study are described below.

3 MATERIAL AND METHODS

The corpus of the research was composed of 203 texts from Mendes (2013), in which she analyzed opinion essays written by sixth-year students (aged between eleven and twelve) from two public schools located in the city of Ponta Grossa, Parana, in southern Brazil.

The textual productions were written after a sequence of activities about the *discursive genre advertisement*. The topic of the writing was *consumption* and the writing task followed the guidelines of the State Secretary of Education of Parana (SEED/PR). Two writing tasks were proposed. In the first task (Mendes, 2013), the students were asked to write an advertisement to increase the sale of a certain product (suggested products: toy, *Chips*-type snack, make-up product, headache medicine, sports product). In the second task, the students were presented three advertisements of soft drinks (*Coca-Cola*, *Guaraná Antarctica* and *Schincariol*). The texts were taken from the internet. Then, the students were asked to write an opinion essay on the topic "Can drinking soda make a child happy?" ("Tomar refrigerante pode fazer uma criança feliz?") (Mendes, 2013, p. 81-82).

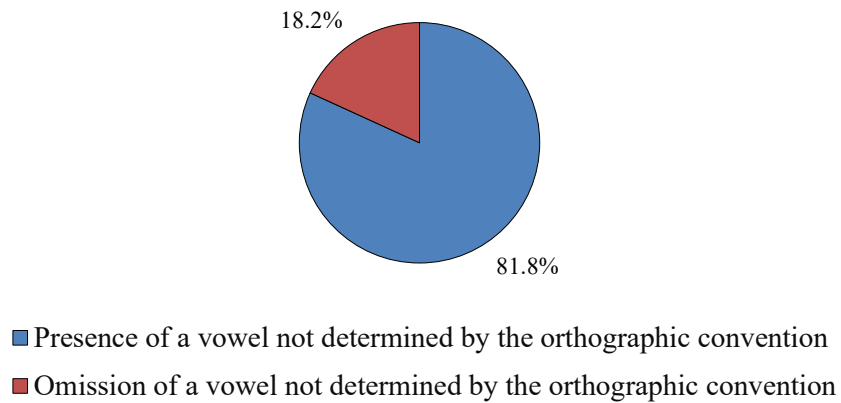
In these textual productions, the insertions of a *vowel* that violates the orthographic convention, as in *quiti* (for *kit*), were identified. Also, the *omissions* of a vowel violating the orthographic convention, such as in *Sprit* (for *Sprite*) were identified.

Occurrences of vowels in a vowel cluster that violate the orthographic convention were disregarded. Regarding the insertion of vowels, we identified: *mais* (for 'mas', but), *nois* (for 'nós', we), *pessouas* (for 'pessoas', people) and *voceis* (for 'vocês', you). The omission of vowels was observed in words such as *mas* (for 'mais', more), *dexa* (for 'deixa', leave it), *jornas* (for 'jornais', newspapers) and *pos* (for 'pois', because). Diphthongization and monophthongization, two phonetic-phonological processes related to this data which have their own specificities, were disregarded to not compromise the viability of this study.

4 DATA ANALYSIS

We found 33 occurrences of unconventional spellings related to vowel epenthesis of the graphemes <e> or <i> (tables 1 and 2). Thus, the recurrent epenthetic vowel in BP is [i] (Cristófaros Silva, 2011) and, in the underlying representation, /e/ or /i/, depending on the linguistic variety (Câmara Jr., 2007 [1970]).

Among the 33 occurrences: there are (i) 27 insertions of a vowel in a context violating the orthographic convention, as in *ritimo* (for 'ritmo', rhythm); (ii) 6 vowel omissions, violating the written orthographic convention, as in *opnião* (for 'opinião', opinion). Graph 1 illustrates the general occurrences:



Graph 1: General occurrences

Source: authors

As mentioned, the majority (81.8%) of the occurrences correspond to the *insertion* of a vowel violating the orthographic convention. These 27 occurrences are shown in Table 1 below:

Occurrence	Unconventional Spelling	Orthographic Convention	Text
	<i>diginidade</i>	<i>dignidade</i>	14
	<i>interneti</i>	<i>internet</i>	46
	<i>interneti</i>	<i>internet</i>	46
	<i>ritimo</i>	<i>ritmo</i>	54
	<i>quit</i>	<i>kit</i>	54
	<i>quite</i>	<i>kit</i>	54
	<i>quit</i>	<i>kit</i>	54
	<i>quiti</i>	<i>kit</i>	54
	<i>ritimo</i>	<i>ritmo</i>	54
	<i>ritimas</i>	<i>ritmo</i>	54
	<i>ritimo</i>	<i>ritmo</i>	54
	<i>Chipse</i>	<i>chips</i>	86
	<i>quiti</i>	<i>kit</i>	98
	<i>pinque</i>	<i>pink</i>	103
	<i>esquin</i>	<i>Schin</i>	108
	<i>interneti</i>	<i>internet</i>	144

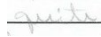
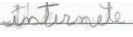
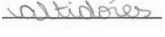
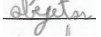
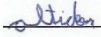
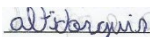
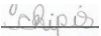
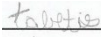
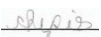
	<i>quiti</i>	<i>kit</i>	157
	<i>internete</i>	<i>internet</i>	166
	<i>altidóres</i> (2 vowels)	<i>outdoors</i>	181
	<i>obejetos</i>	<i>objetos</i>	183
	<i>altidor</i>	<i>outdoor</i>	185
	<i>altidorguis</i> (2 vowels)	<i>outdoors</i>	191
	<i>chipis</i>	<i>chips</i>	192
	<i>tabetis</i>	<i>tablets</i>	192
	<i>chipis</i>	<i>chips</i>	192

Table 1: Insertion of a vowel not determined by the orthographic convention

Source: Authors. Based on Mendes (2013)

The Table shows the insertion of a grapheme <e>, as in *internete* (for *internet*), or <i>, as in *diginidade* (for ‘*dignidade*’, dignity). There are also unconventional spellings – 2 occurrences of *chipis* and 1 of *Chipse* – for the word *Chips*, written⁶ according to the orthographic convention in the writing task given to the students.

The constitutive heterogeneity of writing, based on the first axis proposed by Corrêa (2004), can be seen in Table 1 through the dialogic circulation of the writer in the oral/spoken, social practices, where “[...] the writer demonstrates a type of representation of the genesis of writing in which the graphic material is considered an accurate instrument for recording the sound memory of the spoken word” (Corrêa, 2004, p. 48).

In these cases, the writer identifies the pronunciation of [e] or [i] in each word, as a result of the phonetic-phonological process of vowel epenthesis and inserts this vowel using the graphemes <e> or <i>, respectively, demonstrating their dialogic circulation in oral/spoken social practices as a result of what they have heard and spoken.

It should be noted that there may be cases of *hypercorrection* when considering *vowel raising*, a variable phonetic-phonological phenomenon in which the upper mid front vowel /e/ is pronounced as the high front vowel [i] (as well as its counterpart, the upper mid back vowel /o/, pronounced as [u]), as in *m[i]nina* (for ‘*menina*’, girl) and *s[i]ntido* (for ‘*sentido*’, meaning). In hypercorrection, the writer’s spelling may be presented as <e> in contexts where the orthographic convention determines <i>, as in *denheiro* (for ‘*dinheiro*’, money) and *entestino* (for ‘*intestino*’, intestine). Considering that this variable phenomenon is beyond the scope of the present study and requires an in-depth study of the phonetic-phonological realization of pretonic and – word-medial and word-final – posttonic mid vowels in the Ponta Grossa variety, this topic will be the object for future research.

In 26 of the 27 occurrences presented in Table 1, the insertion of the vowel represents the resyllabification of the word through epenthesis, which relocates a “lost consonant” (Collischonn, 2000, p. 295) to the onset of the following syllable, as in *rit.mo - ri.ti.mo* (‘*rhythm*’), or to the coda of the previous syllable, as in *squin - es.quin* (a Brazilian’s soft drink brand). The majority of these 26

⁶ The statement contains the following text: “Let’s suppose you should create an advertisement to sell *Chips* snacks. What ideas would you use in your ad to make the product sell well?” (Mendes, 2013).

consonants – 18 (69.2%) – correspond to alveolar⁷ plosives: *internet* (for internet) (4 occurrences), *ritimo* (for ‘ritmo’, rhythm) (4 occurrences), *quiti* (for kit) (6 occurrences), *altidor/altidóres/altidorguis* (for ‘outdoor’, billboard)/and *tabletis* (for tablet). As previously mentioned, in her study on vowel epenthesis in the southern BP, Collischonn (2000) points out that these consonants, along with fricatives, facilitate the application of the process. Plosive consonants, in general, cannot occupy the syllabic coda position in Portuguese, requiring vowel epenthesis and, consequently, resyllabification, in which the consonant fills the onset of the subsequent syllable.

Among the 27 occurrences, the only instance in which a “lost” consonant is maintained is *Chip.se*, which, despite the insertion of the vowel and the creation of a new syllable, maintains the grapheme <p> in the syllabic coda. When the data is investigated in the context of the occurrence (Figure 1), there is evidence of the writer’s doubt about the spelling of the word, due to erasure marks and a stronger stroke in writing this word when compared to others.



Figure 1: Occurrence of *Chipse*
Source: Mendes (2013, writing n. 86)

Regarding the contexts, Table 1 shows vowels inserted in the following positions:

- (i) Word-initial pretonic, as in *esquin* (for squin), with 1 occurrence;
- (ii) Word-medial pretonic, as in *diginidade* (for ‘dignidade’, dignity), 5 occurrences;
- (iii) Word-medial posttonic, as in *ritimo* (for ‘ritmo’, rhythm), 4 occurrences; and
- (iv) Word-final posttonic, as in *internet* (for internet), 17 occurrences.

Thus, there are unconventional spellings related to epenthesis in initial, medial, and final unstressed contexts, as described by Collischonn (2006) on the occurrences of the process at a phonetic-phonological level.

Among the 33 total occurrences, 6 (18.2%) *omitted* a vowel, violating the orthographic convention, as shown in Table 2:

Occurrence	Unconventional Spelling	Orthographic Convention	Text
	<i>Sprit</i>	<i>Sprite</i>	28
	<i>opnião</i>	<i>opinião</i>	42
	<i>notbook</i>	<i>notebook</i>	137
	<i>saits</i>	<i>sites</i>	149
	<i>sprait</i>	<i>Sprite</i>	170
	<i>cicrets</i>	<i>chicletes</i>	185

Table 2: Absence of a vowel determined by the orthographic convention⁸

Source: Authors, based on Mendes (2013)

⁷ The other eight occurrences are: three velar plosives (*diginidade*, *pinque* and *altidórguis*) (for ‘dignidade’, pink, ‘outdoor’, respectively, dignity, pink, billboard), three bilabial plosives (*objetos* and *chips*, two occurrences) (for ‘objeto’, object and chips, respectively), one rhotic (*altidóres*, for ‘outdoor’) and one alveolar fricative (*esquin*, for ‘squin’).

⁸ The hyphens used in the spellings of *opinion* and *notebook* show the syllabic division that occurred at the end of the line.

Hypercorrection is identified in relation to epenthesis, as pointed out by Câmara Jr. (2002 [1971]) and Collischonn (2006). Regarding the three axes proposed by Corrêa (2004), the second axis relates to the imaginary of the institutionalized written norms. This demonstrates the student's objective of "elevating themselves to the normalized institutional discourses" (Corrêa, 2004, p. 13), which is represented by the school as an institution, considering that the textual production was written during class.

Therefore, through the dialogic circulation of the literate/written social practices, the writer (i) presumes the existence of words such as '*pneu*' (for *tire*), *pneumonia*, *déficit* and *internet*, spelled according to the orthographic convention with "silent" consonants, despite the fact that their phonetic realizations are followed by an upper mid front vowel or high front vowel in their linguistic variety; (ii) formulates a hypercorrection rule from which they spell *opnião* (for 'opinião', opinion) and *Sprit/sprait*, *notbook*, *saits* e *cicrets* (for, respectively, *Sprite*, *notebook*, *sites* and '*chicletes*', gum).

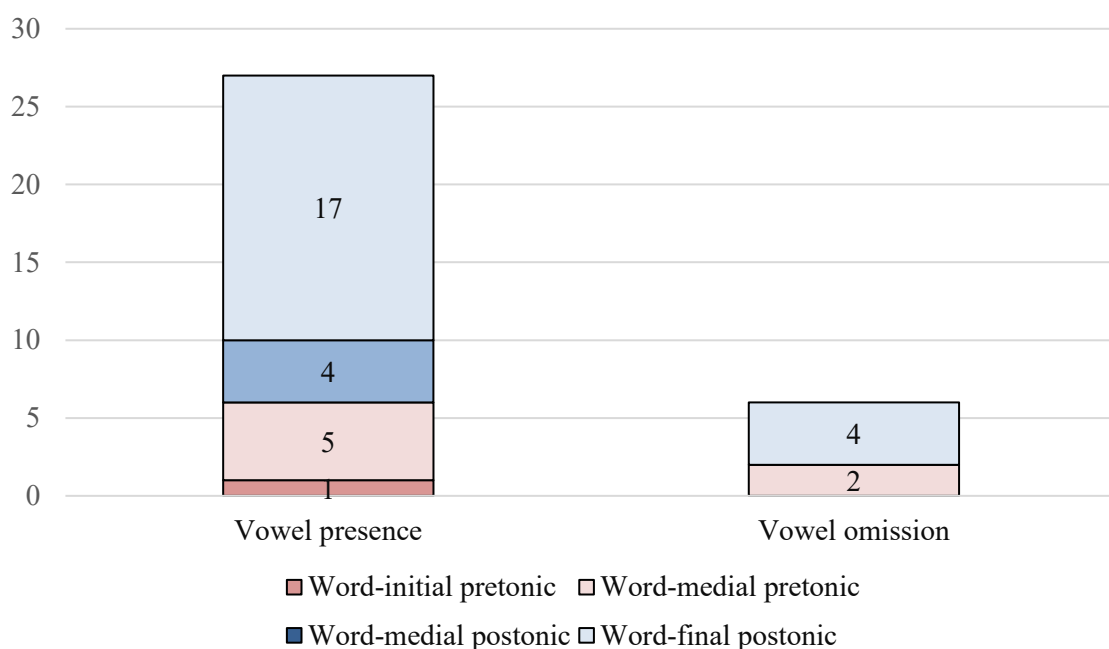
Among these 6 occurrences, 5 vowel omissions (*Sprit/sprait*, *notbook*, *saits* and *cicret*) interact with a "lost consonant" (Collischonn, 2000, p. 295) alveolar plosive and one (*opnião*) with a bilabial plosive. Consonant sequences beginning with plosives, as well as bilabial nasals and voiceless fricatives, correspond to prototypical contexts of vowel epenthesis (Collischonn, 2006; Cristóvão Silva, 2011). According to Collischonn (2000), the presence of an alveolar plosive facilitates the process of epenthesis in the varieties of the capitals of southern Brazil.

Regarding the context of the vowels whose writing was not considered in this study, the following positions were observed:

- (i) Word-medial pretonic, as in *opnião* (for 'opinião', opinion), 2 occurrences;
- (ii) Word-final posttonic, as in *Sprit* (for *Sprite*), 4 occurrences.

Similar to the cases of the *presence* of a vowel in a context that violates the orthographic convention, the *omission* of a vowel also occurs in unstressed contexts.

Due to the lower occurrences of hypercorrected spellings, the data regarding vowel omission often appears in positions with a high frequency of unconventional vowel presence, namely: final posttonic and medial pretonic, in descending order, as shown in Graph 2:



Graph 2: Occurrences of vowel presence and omission in relation to position within the word

Source: Authors

Despite discussing the epenthesis in written data and considering only spellings that *do not* follow the orthographic convention, the results shown in Graph 2 support Collischonn's (2000) assertion that epenthesis is especially facilitated at the ending of words and in pretonic position, in which the stress is a determining factor for the process.

5 CONCLUSION

This paper analyzed unconventional spellings related to the phonetic-phonological process of vowel epenthesis, as in *ritimo* (for 'ritmo', rhythm) and *saits* (for sites), which occurs through the insertion of a vowel between consonants in sequences of an occlusive, bilabial nasal or voiceless fricative and another consonant. We analyzed 203 texts produced by sixth-year students of two urban public schools in Ponta Grossa, Parana.

Occurrences in which there was a graphic insertion or omission of a vowel violating the orthographic convention were recorded, resulting in 33 unconventional spellings. In 27 occurrences there were vowel insertions, corresponding to 81.8% of the data, and 6 were omissions of a vowel, representing 18.2% of the data.

Regarding vowel insertion, we observed the addition of the graphemes <e>, as in *internete* (for internet), or <i>, as in *diginidade* (for 'dignidade', dignity). In 26 of the 27 occurrences, the word is resyllabified when the vowel is added, relocating the consonant to the onset position of the next syllable, as in *rit.mo - ri.ti.mo*, or to the coda of the previous syllable, as in *squin - es.quin*. This result corresponds to the first axis proposed by Corrêa (2004), since the writer considers the graphic material as an instrument for recording the sound memory of the spoken word, identifies the epenthesis of [e] or [i] in each word and, and, when writing, inserts this vowel using the graphemes <e> or <i>.

Hypercorrection was also identified in the omission of a vowel in epenthesis, as in *saits* (for sites). Therefore, it can be implied that the writer assumes the existence of other words spelled according to the orthographic convention, such as *pneu* (for tire), *déficit* and *internet*, and creates a hypercorrection rule, omitting the vowel after 'silent' consonants in words with similar contexts. Among the three axes proposed by Corrêa (2004) in the Heterogeneous Mode of Constitution of Writing, the second axis is related to the imaginary about the institutionalized written norms, represented by the institution school. In addition, it was observed that both the *presence* and the *omission* of a vowel not prescribed by the orthographic convention occur in unstressed contexts.

The results show the non-dichotomous nature of speech and writing and the dialogic circulation of the writer in oral/spoken and literate/written social practices, as proposed by Corrêa (2004). Therefore, these findings on unconventional spellings are similar to those on the phonetic-phonological process of epenthesis obtained by Collischonn (2000, 2006).

Finally, this study fills the gap about unconventional spellings related to vowel epenthesis by sixth-year students in the city of Ponta Grossa. These results may (i) contribute to future research on the acquisition of writing (of vowels), related to the PROBRAVO Project, as well as (ii) encourage pre-service teachers to reflect on the treatment given to unconventional spellings in the school context, considering the dialogical circulation of the writer oral/spoken and literate/written in social practices, which permeate the complexity of categorical and variable phonetic-phonological processes, such as vowel epenthesis.

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