



III Encontro Internacional de Língua Portuguesa e Relações Lusófonas

L U S O C O N F
2021

LIVRO DE ATAS

Proceedings

Editores:

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Instituto Politécnico de Bragança
setembro de 2022

Ficha Técnica

Título

LUSOCONF2021

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Capa

António Meireles e Vitor Gonçalves

Edição

Instituto Politécnico de Bragança

Campus de Santa Apolónia

5300-253 Bragança

Portugal

Data de edição: setembro de 2022

ISBN: 978-972-745-295-8

DOI: 10.34620/lusoconf.2021

Handle: <http://hdl.handle.net/10198/25130>

URL: www.lusoconf.ipb.pt

Email: lusoconf@ipb.pt

Língua materna na aula de Português como língua estrangeira em Goa, Índia

Mother tongue language in the Portuguese foreign language classroom in Goa, India

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Resumo. A inclusão da língua materna (LM) na aquisição de uma Língua Segunda (L2) tem os seus benefícios pedagógicos. A Política Nacional de Educação da Índia (2020) enfoca o poder do multilinguismo indiano e incita a inclusão da língua materna na educação. Noam Chomsky postula que os seres humanos adquirem a linguagem instintivamente, aprendendo uma ou mais línguas se lhes forem expostos. Na aquisição da língua materna (LM), os indivíduos desenvolvem a proficiência da língua num ambiente "naturalístico" e adotam outro além do nativo na aquisição de L2. Os alunos na Índia, culturalmente bilíngues se não multilíngues, aprendem várias línguas da mesma família de línguas e adotam-nas em contextos distintos, enquanto estudam inglês na escola. No panorama da sala de aula de uma Língua Estrangeira (LE), este ambiente multilíngue depende das instruções em inglês. Portanto, embora o método bilíngue de C.J. Dodson de ensino de línguas estrangeiras exija que o professor seja bilíngue tanto no idioma nativo quanto no idioma de destino, às vezes não é prático conseguir esse requisito no contrato de professores com habilitações adequadas. Um estudo realizado com alunos inscritos no nível A1 do Certificado de Proficiência em Português como Língua Estrangeira da Universidade de Goa, indicou que todos possuíam uma língua Índica como língua materna, tendo adquirido o Inglês na escola. Além disso, a maioria dos alunos nunca conheceram uma língua românica, o que atrasou inadvertidamente o processo de aquisição de L2 devido às características específicas da língua portuguesa. Em certos casos, usar o Inglês como língua de instrução indicou não ser tão eficaz, exigindo a inclusão da língua materna dos alunos. Do ponto de vista didático, o ensino da pronúncia obedeceu a uma abordagem multissensorial. Para garantir uma articulação com nenhum ou mínimo sotaque, o pesquisador utilizou o alfabeto indígena da escrita Devanagari para os alunos identificarem os fonemas do português na articulação da língua materna. Reconhecer a presença de um número notável dos empréstimos portugueses na língua nativa dos alunos em vários campos semânticos também acelerou a aquisição do léxico Português nos alunos. A inclusão da LM é uma ferramenta didática menos utilizada, mas significativa no percurso da aquisição de L2. O L1 adquirido pode ter uma força positiva no processo de aquisição de LE, pela oferta de suficientes dados compreensíveis e facilitar a decodificação da comunicação didática.

Palavras-Chave: Língua materna, Português língua estrangeira, Aquisição da segunda língua, Ensino de português em Goa.

Abstract. The inclusion of Mother Tongue language (MTL) in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) has its share of pedagogical benefits. India's National Education Policy (2020) focuses on the power of Indian multilingualism and encourages mother tongue inclusion in education. Noam Chomsky postulates humans are innately programmed to acquire language, learning one or more if exposed to it. In First language (L1) acquisition, individuals develop language proficiency in 'naturalistic' settings and adopt another besides the native one in SLA. Learners in India are culturally bilingual, if not multilingual, learning several languages from the same language family and adopting them in different

contexts, by the time they learn English at school. In the Foreign Language (FL) classroom scenario, this multilingual ambience has to rely on English language instructions. So, although C.J. Dodson's bilingual method of foreign language teaching requires the teacher to be bilingual in both the native and the target language, at times, meeting this requirement in sourcing suitably qualified teachers is not feasible. A study of students registered to the A1 level of Certificate of Proficiency in Portuguese as a Foreign Language at Goa University, indicated all had an Indic language as their mother tongue, having acquired English at school. Moreover, the majority of the students were first-time learners of any Romance language, inadvertently slowing down the L2 acquisition process due to specific Portuguese language characteristics. In certain instances, using English as a language of instruction proved not to be as effective, necessitating the inclusion of the learners' mother tongue. From a didactic perspective, teaching pronunciation adhered to a multisensory approach. To secure articulation with no or minimum accent, the researcher used the Indian alphabet in the Devanagari script to enable students to identify Portuguese phonemes in the articulation of their mother tongue. Acknowledging the presence of a considerable number of Portuguese loan words in learners' native tongue in various semantic fields also hastened the acquisition of the Portuguese lexical inventory in the learners. MTL inclusion is an underutilized yet significant didactic tool in the SLA process. The L1 acquired can have a positive influence on the process of FL acquisition, by offering sufficient comprehensible input, facilitating the decoding of teaching communication.

Keywords: Mother tongue language, Portuguese as a foreign language, Second language acquisition, Teaching Portuguese in Goa.

1 Introduction

The SIL *Ethnologue*¹ demarcates over 400 languages for the Indian region hailing from three linguistic families: Indo-European; Austro-Asiatic and Tibeto-Burman including minority languages such as Persian, Portuguese or French, English spoken as *lingua franca* and Dravidian. India's 2011 census documents a total of 121 languages and 270 mother tongues.

The 8th schedule to the Constitution of India recognizes twenty-two of these as official languages. Modern Standard Hindi is the official language whereas English, a provisional official sub-language used in commerce and a common language among people with different mother tongues. Individual states adopt a regional language as the official state language.

As it is common that most Indians can speak, read, write and/or understand more than one language or dialect, which can entail the use of different scripts as well, multilingualism is a part of daily Indian life. Indians thus may have, beside their own language, a second Indian language, possibly even a third. In addition, Indians acquire a degree of English through the school system. As language plays an important part in our daily interactions, the cultivation and practices of multilingualism in India creates learners in India who are culturally bilingual, if not multilingual, learning several languages from the same language family and adopting them in different contexts. (Chandras, 2020)

India's National Education Policy (2020) focuses on the power of Indian multilingualism and encourages mother tongue inclusion in education. The idealized Three-Language Formula (TLF)² linguistic model is meant to prepare primary and secondary students to be trilingual should they choose to enter the predominantly English-language higher education system and/or a globalized workforce while also maintaining the rich linguistic heritage of India. The ground reality of implementation of the TLF varies widely across the country today, with many using English books and classroom materials and limited to children. In the Foreign Language (FL) classroom scenario, this multilingual ambience

¹ The SIL *Ethnologue* is an encyclopaedic reference work cataloguing all of the world's 7,111 known living languages, that provides summary data of identified languages.

² A plan for trilingual learning, the Three-Language Formula (TLF) was adopted into India's Education Policy by the Ministry of Education in 1968. It requires schoolchildren to study and to receive content area instruction for twelve years in their mother tongue or the regional (state) language (which for some children will be one and the same); study Hindi or English for ten to twelve years; study a modern Indian language (i.e., any one of the "scheduled" languages) or a foreign language for three to five years."

has to rely on English language instructions. From the literature reviewed, there appears to be a dearth of information as regards the native language as a tool to acquire a foreign language. The strategic combination of the use of mother tongue language (MTL) alphabet and Portuguese Loan words inherited into Konkani act as a catalyst to ease assimilation of Portuguese by first time learners. This paper brings to light the folly in not utilizing the MTL as a classroom resource in Foreign Language teaching-learning.

2 Theoretical framework

Humans, as Noam Chomsky's Innateness theory suggests, are programmed to acquire one language or more if exposed to it. Language acquisition refers to the process whereby an individual learns to understand, speak, interpret signs, sign, read, and/or write a variety of a spoken, signed, or written language.

The process of acquisition of multiple oral language varieties however, occurs in 'naturalistic' settings where individuals develop language proficiency for interpersonal communication unlike in instructed settings. In First language (L1) acquisition, individuals develop language proficiency in 'naturalistic' settings and adopt another besides the native one in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (Els, 1984). While L1 acquirers achieve native speaker competence in one language, L2 users achieve competence in more than one language. In SLA terminologies, L2 may refer to any language added after infancy, where L1 is one background language, irrespective of the number of languages that are actually familiar to the learner. L2 is the language currently being acquired or acquired after L1 or L1s in the case of infant bilingualism and L3 the language currently being acquired. The rate of language learning, that is, the rate at which people learn new sounds, new words, new structures, new rhetorical devices, new pragmatic functions, etc., generally seems to slow down as a function of the time with which they have engaged with a particular variety of language. However, given intact cognitive skills, good audition, and verbal engagement, all of us continue to learn more languages continuing to develop our lexical repertoire (Houwer, 2019).

Cenoz (2013) compares various perspectives of multilingualism as a generic term: Bilingualism refers to two languages but can include more languages (Cook & Bassetti, 2011); Multilingualism is often used to refer to two or more languages (Aronin & Singleton, 2008); a multilingual individual is "anyone who can communicate in more than one language, be it active (through speaking and writing) or passive (through listening and reading)" (Li, 2008).

The view that the first language should be avoided in the classroom by teachers and students was brushed aside in methods that actively create links between L1 and L2, such as the New Concurrent Method, Community Language Learning, and Dodson's Bilingual Method. Factors that condition L2's influence on L3 are: typological similarity; influence from L2 is favoured if L2 is typologically close to L3, especially if L1 is more distant; proficiency (L2 influence is favoured if the learner has a high level of competence in second acquisition (A2) if the A2 has been acquired and used in realistic situations.); recency (an L2 is activated more easily if the speaker has used it recently and maintained easy access to it); L2 status (there appears to be a general tendency to activate an earlier secondary language in L3 performance rather than L1 (Hammarberg, 2001).

3 The Foreign Language (FL) classroom scenario in south-western India - Goa

English is a language used as a *lingua franca* in multilingual contexts between non-native speakers. So, although Dodson's bilingual method of foreign language (FL) teaching requires the teacher to be bilingual in both the native and the target language, at times, meeting this requirement in sourcing suitably qualified teachers is not feasible (Littlewood, 1984). The prior knowledge of English, if not other foreign language(s), helps develop a better understanding of L2 language. For instance, the grammatical and phonetic skills acquired while learning English language as FL1 act as a practical 'referential point' in learning FL2 (Rai, 2017).

4 Methodology

4.1 The sample population

Sixteen adult students and professionals in the 25-50 age group with nearly equal female:male ratio enrolled for the Beginner level - A1 certificate of Proficiency in Portuguese (100 hours) under the common European Framework for Language Teaching- Learning held in online synchronous mode. All learners had an Indic language as their mother tongue. The group represented English language users with basic schooling in a mother tongue language, the majority having never learnt another romance language.

4.2 Pedagogy of teaching pronunciation

The multi-sensory and multi-cognitive approach (MMA) replaced the exclusively auditory traditional listen-repeat method (Odisho, 2018) to secure efficient pronunciation with no or with minimum accent, priority to overcome phonological accent first and then phonetic accent (Odisho, 2017). Most Audio-Lingual approach (ALM) L2 methodologies classified as communicative approaches to second language acquisition, all emphasise the meaningful use of a second language for the purposes of true communication in the classroom; the presence of a maximally high amount of Krashen's comprehensible input; the creation of a classroom environment that produces a maximally low affective filter. However, none of these communicatively based teaching methodologies made any genuine effort to deal with the teaching of pronunciation in the second language classroom.

Krashen commented that speaking emerges on its own after the student has been exposed to comprehensible input and after a sufficient amount of acquisition has taken place.

Existing literature suggests that adult foreign language learners may produce speech sounds in a foreign language according to the sometimes inappropriate phonetic norms of their native language, and also that they are able to detect foreign accent in the speech of others. Hammond opines that because phonetic and phonological research indicates that adult second language learners are capable of both perceiving and articulating subtle segmental and non-segmental phonetic differences that are known to distinguish native and target language sound systems, and because of the existence of universal phonological principles that underlie the acquisition of second language sound systems, it should be possible to teach second language pronunciation (Eckman et al., 2014). Traditionally teaching pronunciation in Second Language (L2) and Foreign Language (FL) learning situations has involved the listen-repeat method as if speech is a mechanical skill and the exclusive function of the auditory sense. The successive acquisition of a new language requires learners to restructure their phonetic settings in addition to acquiring a new phonological system. Phonologically regulated structural phenomena such as the voicing of inter vocalic /s/ belong to the phonological coding, while phonetic setting characteristic are taken care of in the articulator.

Specific traits unique to the Portuguese language pose an obstacle in the teaching-learning process of Portuguese: accents; diacritic symbols (c-cedilla; tilde); stressed and unstressed vowels; digraphs (nh; lh; ch; rr) and diphthongs in the Phonological system. Learners generally find it difficult to master Portuguese nasal vowel sounds especially the common use of diphthongs, absent in the learners' native tongues (Eberhard, 2015).

Introduction of the Indian alphabet in the Devanagari script not only enabled students to identify Portuguese phonemes in the articulation of their mother tongue but also seamless transition from the mother tongue to Portuguese phonemes like in the case of c-आ-स-अ = casa [kazə]

Table 1: Articulation of Portuguese vowels with corresponding Devanagri alphabet

Portuguese Alphabet	IPA symbol	Devanagri alphabet
a	[ɐ] [a]	अ आ
e	[i] [e] [ɛ] [ə]	इ ए ऐ अ
i	[i]	इ
o	[o] [ɔ] [u]	ओ ऑ उ
u	[u] [w]	उ औ

Note: IPA= International Phonetic Alphabet
Source: Author

Table 2: Articulation of Portuguese consonants with corresponding Devanagri alphabet

Portuguese Alphabet	IPA symbol	Devanagri alphabet
b	[b]	ब
c	[k] [s]	क स
d	[d]	द
f	[f]	फ
g	[g] [ʒ]	ग ज
j	[ʒ]	ज
k	[k]	क
l	[l]	ल
m	[m]	म
n	[n]	न
p	[p]	प
q	[k]	क
r	[r]	र
s	[s] [z]	स ज़
t	[t]	त
v	[v]	व
x	[s] [ʃ] [ks] [z]	स श क्स् ज़
z	[z]	ज़

Note: IPA= International Phonetic Alphabet
Source: Author

Table 3: Articulation of major Portuguese digraphs with corresponding Devanagri alphabet

Digraphs	IPA symbol	Devanagri alphabet
nh	[ɲ]	ञ
lh	[ʎ]	ल्य
ch	[ʃ]	श

Note: IPA= International Phonetic Alphabet

Source: Author

4.3 Portuguese loan-words in Konkani

Goa's language Konkani typologically is a Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) language, though a verb is not always compulsory in a sentence; neither the object nor the subject, for the inflection of a verb/ sentence contains all the information needed about number, gender and person. All the vowels in it are voiced; aspiration in it is very light... (Gomes, 1999)

After the Portuguese conquered Goa, post 1510, the European Christian Missionaries began to learn and study a language referred to as *Língua Concana*, *Língua Bramana*, *Língua Bramana Canarim*, *Língua vulgar de Terra* and *Língua Concanim*. The knowledge of the vernacular Konkani became extremely important to the Franciscan Friars in Bardez and Jesuits in Salcete to propagate the Christian faith. The missionaries eventually lost their initial enthusiasm to learn the local language to write in it, using Portuguese terms freely instead. Priests set up a printing press adopting the Roman script for Konkani which facilitated borrowing from Portuguese into Konkani (Lima, 2014).

The impact was such that as many as 1681 Portuguese words came to be used in Konkani as reported by Dalgado (Dalgado & Soares, 1988). Terminology from other domains too crept into the common man's language.

Nouns that name new items introduced by the superstrate constitute the largest chunk of the borrowed words in terms of grammatical categories 87% in the case of Konkani.

Table 4. Parts of Speech of Portuguese Loan words in Konkani

Category	Number	Percent
Nouns	1458	86.73
Verbs	126	7.50
Adjectives	86	5.12
Interjections	6	0.36
Adverbs	4	0.23
Prepositions	1	0.06
Total	1681	100

Source: Wheritt (1989)

Portuguese loan words when adopted into the Konkani phonetic system, reveal an attempt at reproduction of the Portuguese word within the patterns of Konkani. Phonological changes include universal tendencies of language change.

The most salient phonological Portuguese loanword changes (Wheritt, 1989):

1. Loss of final unstressed vowels: vigar < vigário vicar,
2. Loss of unstressed medial vowels: okl < óculos glasses
3. Simplification of compound words: agbent < água-benta' holywater
4. Alternation of consonants: j < z,s; z,s < j: zanel < janela' window
5. Insertion of a vowel in a cluster: khuris < cruz' cross
6. Simplification of diphthongs: ladin < ladainha' litany
7. An initial vowel when a syllable by itself is sometimes dropped in polysyllabic words: vanjel < evangelho' evangel
8. An initial unstressed syllable beginning with a consonant is occasionally dropped: Siplin < disciplina discipline; zaphi < desafio' wager.

For native Konkani speakers, the fact that 1681 words were loans from Portuguese is astonishing as these were perceived to be etymologically Konkani words. The majority of the loan words being nouns revealing minimal linguistic transformation, facilitates vocabulary memorization in the Portuguese language learners.

5 Conclusion

Treating the mother tongue language (MTL) or first language acquisition (L1) as a classroom resource opens up several ways to use it (Cook, 2001). The anti-L1 attitude was clearly a mainstream element in twentieth century language teaching methodology where the teacher did not speak the language of the students and where the students often spoke several L1s. The first language can be a useful element in creating authentic L2 users rather than something to be shunned at all costs.

Use of learners mother tongue or L1 to teach pronunciation takes care of certain problematic vowels and consonants causing phonological accent that directly result in semantic confusion in words. Phonetic accent may not result in semantic confusion directly, but it may generate noise or uncertainty that may interfere with proper conveyance of meaning.

Adults take time to enhance their L1 filter or subconscious to Perceive Recognise and Produce alien sounds instantaneously. Hence teaching of pronunciation should not be directed exclusively to the 'ear' and the 'mouth'; rather, to the brain to listen to the sounds (auditory), see the sounds (visual) and sense the sounds (tactile).

Getting acquainted with the 1,681 Portuguese loan words in Konkani facilitated learning of the Portuguese vocabulary in addition to an added appreciation of the linguistic heritage.

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