



RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE

M.Ed. In TESL Program Language Group Specific Informational Reports

Produced by Graduate Students in the M.Ed. In TESL Program
In the Feinstein School of Education and Human Development

Language Group: Portuguese
Author: Amanda Bento

Program Contact Person: Nancy Cloud (ncloud@ric.edu)

Portuguese



<http://www.sitesatlas.com/Maps/Maps/410.htm>

- Amanda Bento
- TESL 539
- Spring 2009



http://portugal.embassyhomepage.com/portugal_map_lisbon_map_hotel_porto_tourist_map_portugal_road_map_algarve_tourist_map_cascais_holiday_map.htm

History

- It is derived from the Latin spoken by the Roman soldiers and colonists of the Iberian peninsula around 2000 years ago.
- It is one of the world's major languages, ranking as the 6th major language.
- There are two main groups of dialects; those of Brazil and those of the Old World.
- Between Brazilian Portuguese and European Portuguese, there are differences in vocabulary, pronunciation and syntax.
- Although the dialects are very different, their written language is the same. Portuguese speakers from Brazil may not understand Portuguese speakers from Portugal, however they can both understand their written language because it is the same.

Writing System

- Portuguese is written using the Latin alphabet system – minus (K, W, and Y)
- These 3 letters are only used for proper nouns and for non-Portuguese origin words for Example: Darwinismo
- The "acute accent" (*acento agudo*) and "circumflex accent" (*acento circunflexo*) are used primarily to indicate the stressed syllable of a word.
- Á, É, Ó – open sounds
- Â, Ê, Ô – closed sounds
- The tilde is used over the vowels "A" and "O" to indicate two additional "nasalized" vowel sounds, which are a characteristic feature of Portuguese. Example: *mãe* (*mother*)
- [Video of Portuguese](#)

Where It Is Spoken

- Portuguese is the official language of Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and Mozambique. It is also one of the official languages of the special administrative region of Macau (with Chinese) and East Timor, (with Tetum) and Equatorial Guinea (with Spanish and French).

Linguistic Features of English that present the most difficulty

- Phonology
- Grammar/Verb Tense
- Vocabulary

Phonology

- Portuguese contains 9 vowel sounds, all of which can be nasalized. This is fewer than English, and there are fewer consonant clusters. These differences can result in the following pronunciation issues:
 - Inaudibility of unstressed vowels at the end of a word, e.g., *part* (for *party*)
 - Problems with diphthongs such as in *hear/hair*
 - The inclusion of vowel sounds before, between or following consonants, e.g., *estrap* (for *strap*) or *monthes* (for *months*)
 - Nasalization of the final /m/ or /n/, so *ran*, for example, becomes *rang*
 - Failure to discriminate between words such as *pig/big* or *gale/kale*
 - Substitution of *ear* for *hear* or *high* for *I*.

Grammar/Verb Tense

- The Portuguese grammatical system has a lot in common with English. There are similar parts of speech, Portuguese adds an 's' to plural nouns, and has definite and indefinite articles, regular and irregular verbs, active and passive forms, and past, present and future tenses.
- There are some significant differences between the two languages which may lead to mistakes of negative transfer. One example, is questions in Portuguese are conveyed by intonation and not by auxiliaries by changes of word order. When it is transferred to English, it looks like this: “You like me?” or “He came to school yesterday?” The use of the double negative in Portuguese leads to errors such as “I don’t know nothing.”

Grammar

- The word order in Portuguese is more flexible than English and it is common to move a non-subject topic element to the front of a sentence. For example: “Cakes I like!” There are variations between the two languages in placement of adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns.
- Basic Portuguese sentence structure is similar to that of English so learners have no difficulty expressing their ideas.
- English prepositions are also difficult for native Portuguese speakers since Portuguese has fewer and there is no correspondence between the two.
- Personal prepositions are also difficult for native Portuguese speakers since Portuguese has fewer and there is no correspondence between the two. For example: “I told.” (I told him.)

Common Mistakes

- A common mistake for most learners of English is word order. When translating from Portuguese to English the word order is very different. When describing something in Portuguese, the noun comes first and then the adjective. Whereas in English, it is the opposite. This can be confusing for English language learners. For example: The beautiful dress when translated directly from Portuguese would be the dress beautiful.
- Another common mistakes is tense choice. Portuguese has simple past, present perfect, and past perfect tense forms. Like English, Portuguese uses the present perfect for recent actions involving the present. However, native Portuguese speakers struggle with choosing the correct tense to talk about the future or to choose between the present perfect simple and the present perfect continuous. This is difficult for both beginning English language learners and also advanced English language learners. For example, some mistakes are: “It’s ages since I have played tennis.” Another is: “I must to go now.”

Vocabulary

- English and Portuguese both share Latin roots, which can help facilitate the acquisition of a strong academic vocabulary. However, there are some differences in the actual meaning when translated from Portuguese to English, which can be confusing to native Portuguese speakers when learning English.
- Some examples are:
 - Abuse (abusar = use frequently)
 - Educated (educado = well-mannered)
 - Disgust (desgaste = worn-out)
 - Familiar (familiar = decent, respectable)
 - Intend (entender = to understand)
 - Real (real = royal; sure; that exists)
 - Vulgar (vulgar = ordinary)

Vocabulary

- The verb *ficar* is very widely used in Portuguese. It can mean *to stay*, but it can also refer to a change of state of a person; *to become, to grow, to turn, to remain*. For example: He stayed furious because he waited so long. (instead of he became furious).
- Portuguese has the same word for *why* and *because*. Therefore it could translate like this: He didn't come why he felt tired.
- *Be careful* and *take care* use the same verb stem and the equivalent of the preposition *with* or *of* in Portuguese: *Take care of him* or *Be careful with him* (for Beware of him.)
- There are some confusions which arise for native Portuguese speakers because there is one Portuguese word for two or more words in English. For example: rob – steal, lend – borrow, speak – talk, look – see, etc.

Communication Style

- Individual greetings are reserved, yet polite.
- When a person is greeted, a handshake is accompanied by direct eye contact and the appropriate greeting for the time of day.
- Once a personal relationship has developed, greetings become more personal: men may greet each other with a hug and a handshake and women kiss each other twice on the cheek starting with the right.
- The proper form of address is using the title 'senhor' and 'senhora' with the surname.
- Anyone with a university degree is referred to with the 'senhor' or 'senhora' title, plus 'doutour' or 'doutoura' ('doctor') with or without their surname.
- Wait until invited before moving to a first-name basis.
- Use the formal rather than the informal case until your Portuguese friend suggests otherwise.

Bibliography

Book

Swan, M., & Smith, B. (2001). *Learner English: A teacher's guide to interference and other problems. Second edition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Internet Sites

Portuguese language. (January 2011). In Wikipedia. Retrieved from :
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portuguese_language

Shoebottom, P. (2012). The differences between English and Portuguese. Retrieved from:
<http://esl.fis.edu/grammar/langdiff/portuguese.htm>

Maps

Embassyhomepages.com. (2011). Portugal map and geography of Portugal, [Map]. *Welcome to Portugal*. Retrieved from:
http://portugal.embassyhomepage.com/portugal_map_lisbon_map_hotel_porto_tourist_map_portugal_road_map_algarve_tourist_map_cascais_holiday_map.htm

World Sites Atlas. (2008). Political map of Brazil, [Map]. Retrieved from:
<http://www.sitesatlas.com/Maps/Maps/410.htm>

M.Ed. in TESL Program
Nancy Cloud, Director
Educational Studies Department
Rhode Island College, HBS 206 #5
600 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
Providence, RI 02908
Phone (401) 456-8789
Fax (401) 456-8284
ncloud@ric.edu

The M.Ed. in TESL Program at Rhode Island College
is Nationally Recognized by TESOL and NCATE



REACH
INSPIRE
CONNECT