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
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Language Group Specific Informational Report: Portuguese

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Portuguese is a “Romance Language” derived from Latin

Portuguese originated in Portugal

Portuguese is spoken in other areas of the world including: Brazil and countries in Africa. It was spread to these areas in the 15th and 16th centuries as Portugal began to build a colonial and commercial empire.

It is currently ranked as the world’s 6th major language
How did Portuguese get all the way to Brazil?

- An explorer named Pedro Alvares Cabral arrived in Brazil on April 22, 1500, and is credited with discovering Brazil!
- When Cabral arrived, indigenous people already living there spoke a language called, “Tupi-Guarani.”
- The Portuguese that Brazilians speak is a mixture of European Portuguese, words from Tupi-Guarani, and words from some African languages, due to the influence African slaves had on Brazil.
Difficulties facing Portuguese ELLs
Phonology (2 Major Issues)

- There are 9 vowel sounds (6 diphthongs) and 19 consonant sounds in the Portuguese language...this is fewer than English, with fewer consonant clusters as well.
- Brazilian Portuguese is a syllable-timed language, whereas English and European Portuguese are stress-timed.

So what problems could this create???
It could lead to these pronunciation issues (only a few) .....  

- Problems with dipthongs such as in hear/hair
- Adding vowel sounds where they don’t belong such as “monthes” for months
- Difficulty distinguishing between certain word pairs such as “rich/reach, pack/puck, or head/had”
- Difficulty hearing unstressed vowels at the end of words such as “party” The Portuguese might say “part.”
Some problems with grammar (Only some)

- The Portuguese use a **double negative**, which is not allowed in English. Ex) She doesn’t have nothing
- Difficulty choosing the correct **tense** to use: ex) “She is knowing (She knows)
- **Word order:** the Portuguese language is a little less strict when it comes to word order, so this may present a small problem. However, the basic sentence structure of Portuguese is very similar to that of English so it does not present a huge problem.
Grammar problems continued...

- **Personal pronouns**, esp. direct object pronouns are **omitted** in Portuguese. Ex) “I invited” ( “I invited her”)

- **English prepositions** (ex. At, but, for): Portuguese has much fewer prepositions with no simple correspondence between those that do not exist and their English equivalents.

- There is **only one possessive pronoun** for his/her in Portuguese which agrees with the item being “possessed.” This can lead to, “He’s playing basketball with her brother” instead of “He’s playing with his brother.”
What may help Portuguese English Language Learners??
Vocabulary
(Many words in English and Portuguese resemble each other, here is an example of only some!)

**English versus Portuguese**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Portuguese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>experiment</td>
<td>experimento</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>president</td>
<td>presidente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>economy</td>
<td>economia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decision</td>
<td>decisao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>computer</td>
<td>computadora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>liberty</td>
<td>liberdade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>banana</td>
<td>banana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Portuguese alphabet has 23 letters, plus 11 letters with diacritics (markings that may change the sound value of a letter) It lacks the English K, W, and Y.

The Portuguese and English languages (like all Latin languages) use mainly the same alphabet.

Punctuation is also very similar to English, so writing therefore is not usually a huge problem for Portuguese English language learners.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CW9nbh7VwU8
### Portuguese Communication Etiquette

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similar to English</th>
<th>Different from English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Initial greeting is reserved, with a handshake and direct eye contact. Once</td>
<td>- With personal greetings, women kiss each other on both cheeks, starting with the right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>there is a personal relationship, greetings become more personal ex) hug, kiss</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Formally address someone with “senhor,” or senhora.” In English we use “mr., or</td>
<td>- Anyone with a University degree is called “doutour, or doutoura” which means “doctor.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mrs.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use a formal address until invited to do otherwise</td>
<td>- Portuguese do not discuss business in social situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- In Brazil, flicking fingertips underneath chin indicates you do not know the answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>to something. (We all know what it means in English)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Book

Internet Sites


Images


Video

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