



# Typology of European Portuguese: Considerations for Developmental Intervention & Research

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## Introduction

- Portuguese is spoken by more than 190 million people across eight countries worldwide including: Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, East Timor, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, and Sao Tome.
- In the United States there are approximately 1,177,112 people of Portuguese ancestry; of which approximately 731,282 individuals 5 years and older maintain the language in the home (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000; 2009).
- In New Jersey, the area in which the study was conducted, there are approximately 72,000 individuals of Portuguese ancestry (U. S. Census Bureau, 2000).
- It is important to conduct studies investigating linguistic markers and milestones for monolingual Portuguese and bilingual Portuguese-English speakers.

## Approach & Purpose

- This study is the first in a series of studies exploring normal language development in bilingual Portuguese-English speaking children reared in United States.
- The purpose of this study is to describe the typology of the European Portuguese language using a framework proposed by Taylor and Leonard (1998).
- The goal of this review is to provide an overview description of the features and characteristics of European Portuguese for bilingual speech-language pathologists.
- Taylor and Leonard (1998) suggest a set of attributes be used to compare languages. These attributes allow for distinctions between languages and should be considered when working with a bilingual child.

**Table 1.** Selected terms from Taylor and Leonard's (1998) framework on the typology of languages with descriptions, and examples in European Portuguese where applicable. Information here can be used to help the bilingual provider make a more informed clinical decision when evaluating language in the bilingual English-Portuguese child.

Term	Description	Example
Morphological Verb Inflections	The process of adding an inflection to a verb; which differ depending on the pronoun preceding the verb. Null subjects are permitted in Portuguese thus the verb inflection is important to convey meaning. (Azevedo, 2005)	The word "receber" (to receive) is inflected based on the pronoun expressed and in the present tense that is demonstrated as follows: "eu recebo" (I receive); "tu recebes" (you receive); "ele recebe" (he receives); "nós recebemos" (we receive); "vós recebeis" (plural you receive); and "eles recebem" (they receive). Inflections for verbs ending in -ir would be similar and some differences would be observed for verbs ending in -ar.
Morphological Inflections for Plurality	Plurality is indicated primarily through the addition of -s at the end of a words that end in vowels. There are few irregular rules related to words ending in the following: -ão, -m, -al, -el, -ol, -ul, -il. (Gomes, n.d.)	"pato" (duck) → "patos"; "balão" (balloon) → "balões" (balloons); "pão" (bread) → "pães" (a lot of bread); "atum" (tuna) → "atuns" (more than one tuna); "laranja" (orange tree field) → "larangais" (orange tree fields); "barril" (barrel) → "barris" (barrels); "projectile" (projectile) → "projecteis" (projectiles); "ovo" (egg) → "ovos" (eggs) Words that do not change from singular to plural: "fé" (faith); "cócegas" (ticklish); "lapis" (pencil or pencils)
Morphological Inflections for Gender	Portuguese language consists of two genders: masculine and feminine. Masculine nouns are preceded by the articles "o, os, um, uns" and feminine nouns are preceded by the articles "a, as, uma, umas". (Azevedo, 2005)	Feminine: "a mulher" (the woman); "a mesa" (the table); and "uma pera" (a pear) Masculine: "o gato" (the cat); and "os lapis" (the pencils)
Inflectional Load	Portuguese has a fusional inflectional morphology; meaning that features such as tense, number, and person are fused into a single word. Verbs in Portuguese are inflected based on tense, pronoun use, and number. (Perini, 2002)	-o expresses present tense, first person, and singular such as in the word "eu tiro" (I take) from the base word, "tirar" (to take). So in one word, with one inflection, an individual can code up to three different concepts.
Word Order	Portuguese word order consists of a word or group of words conjoined by a verb describing the subject (noun). Due to the heavy grammatical morphology of the language, a less rigid word order is observed. (Perini, 2002)	"A menina comeu a maçã" (The girl ate the apple) "Come demais o meu cão" (Eats too much, my dog)
Clitics	Clitics are unstressed pronouns that are phonetically bound to another word (usually verbs). There are two common types: enclitic position (after the verb) and proclitic position (before the verb). The third, less common type is the mesoclitic position (inside the verb). (Azevedo, 2005)	An example of enclitic: "Ela viu-me" (She saw me) An example of proclitic: "Ele me beijou" (He kissed me) An example of mesoclitic: "Entregar-ilho-ei em casa" (I'll give it to you at home)
Subject-Verb Agreement	General rules of agreement exist between subjects and verbs in Portuguese. For example, if the subject is singular, the verb would also be singular whereas if the subject is plural, the verb is also plural. (Gomes, n.d.)	"O cão ladra" (The dog barks); "Os cães ladram" (The dogs bark) "O trigo e o milho são vegetais" (The grain and the corn are vegetables)
Honorifics	Honorifics are grammatical markers of social standing used to differentiate the speaker and the listener. Portuguese is an honorific language unlike English where specific words are used for familiar versus unfamiliar social status.	Familiar would be defined as communicating with a social partner who is at equal status (age, familiarity), which is expressed in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person singular as "tu". Unfamiliar is used when referring to someone of higher social standing, older age, and who is unfamiliar to the speaker; and is expressed in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> person plural as "você".
Syncretism	Syncretism is the pattern of morphological usage expressed by using the same or different morphemes. For example, in English, the copula is expressed as the word 'are' in all but two cases (first and third person singular).	In Portuguese, the copula alters for every pronoun that is used, as in "eu sou" (I am), "tu es" (you are), "ele é" (He is), "nós somos" (we are), vós sois (you plural are), "eles são" (they are), suggesting a lack of syncretism in Portuguese morphology.
Homophony Across Paradigms	The degree to which grammatical inflections are homophones when coding different meanings. For example, in English we code third person singular, plurals, and possessives in the same manner, -s.	In Portuguese, there is less homophony across paradigms because of the three different verb types and how each tense and person has a unique inflection. This would likely make language learning a bit more challenging.
Redundancy	Redundancy may occur when two constructions are necessary to convey a notion. For example, in Portuguese you are able to use double negatives.	"Não sabes nada" (You no know nothing)
Regularity	Regularity is defined as the degree to which there are exceptions to the traditional way of marking distinction of grammar. (Tyson-Ward, 2008)	An example of an irregular verb is "dar" (to give): "eu dou" (I give)      "nós damos" (we give) "tu dás" (you give)      "vós dais" (you plural give) "ele dá" (he gives)      "eles dão" (they give)

## Discussion

- This literature review provides an overview describing key features of European Portuguese for the monolingual and bilingual providers.
- The bilingual speaker can use this information to increase their metalinguistic understanding of the structure of the Portuguese Language and implement that in practice.
- A metalinguistic awareness of language is necessary to provide intervention that accounts for both languages in bilingual Portuguese children reared in the U.S. The bilingual provider can use this information to better differentiate language disorders from language differences.
- Future research directions include:
  - a review of the monolingual Portuguese and bilingual Portuguese-English language development literature;
  - language samples of typically developing bilingual children reared in the U.S.; and
  - studying developmental linguistic markers in bilingual Portuguese-English speaking children reared in the U.S.

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