

‘Tri biri!’: The colonies, Europe and migration in Britain and Portugal over the last thirty or so years – and a possible response from education professionals

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Resumo

Este artigo está focado em como a imigração na Grã-Bretanha e em Portugal tem vindo a mudar aproximadamente nos últimos trinta anos. Mostra a maneira como a imigração tem seguido um caminho semelhante nos dois países, com Portugal a seguir os moldes estabelecidos anteriormente na Grã-Bretanha. Demonstra como a imigração das ex-colónias foi substituída pela imigração vinda da Europa desde a adesão à União Europeia e descreve alguns dos efeitos sentidos nas escolas como resultado da diversidade linguística. Conclui descrevendo uma das formas como os responsáveis pela educação podem responder a tal diversidade para benefício de todos.

Palavras-chave:

Migração, Europa, colonialismo, diversidade linguística, escolas, respostas educacionais.

Abstract

This article focuses on the way in which immigration in Britain and Portugal has changed over the past thirty years or so. It notes the way in which immigration in each country has followed a similar path, with Portugal following the patterns established earlier in Britain. It points out how immigration from the former colonies has been eclipsed by immigration from Europe since joining the European Union and describes some of the effects on schools of the resulting linguistic diversity. It concludes by describing one way in which education professionals can respond to such diversity for the good of all.

Key concepts:

Migration, Europe, colonialisation, linguistic diversity, schools, educational responses.

Introduction

When I started to write this article, I was having some work done on my house in the Algarve. At more or less the same time, my sister was having some work done in a flat in London. At different times, the different crews working on my house contained Bulgarians (hence the first part of the title of the article: ‘Tri biri!’ – ‘three beers’ in Bulgarian!), Romanians, a Ukrainian and a migrant from Guiné Bissau. There were, of course, Portuguese workers, too, but the number of migrant workers stuck out. The crew working on the London flat had no ‘indigenous’ British workers and was made up of Latvians, Lithuanians, Poles and West Indians. In both cases, the majority were ‘new’ European migrants, brought to each country because of the freedom of movement of labour, which is a corner stone of the European Union. Ironically, this is now under threat, at least in Britain, as the other event taking place at the time of writing is Brexit and its unknown consequences. Suffice it to say, though, that almost all of these were the kind of ‘economic migrants’ criti-

cized by the right-wing press and right-wing parties across much of (in particular, northern) Europe, but ‘guilty’ only of taking the same steps that previous (and, indeed, present) generations of British and Portuguese migrants have taken to find a better standard of living for themselves and their families..

1. The background to migration in Portugal

Portugal first, then. When I first started coming to Portugal in the 1980s, the country I discovered had a reputation as one of Europe’s most mono-cultural and monolingual countries. As Skuttnab-Kangas (1990:6) noted, Portugal was claimed to be one of the five European countries ‘*which can reasonably be called monolingual*’. The others were Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino: all much smaller countries. It had earlier been noted in a collection also edited by Skuttnab-Kangas (Huovinen, in Skuttnab-Kangas, 1981: 71) that Portugal was also a country ‘*without autochthonous, indigenous minorities*’ and, at around the same time, by Katzner, that ‘*Portuguese is spoken almost universally*’ (1986: 353). It remains true that indig-

enous ‘minorities’ (like the Scots, Irish or Welsh in the UK) are thin on the ground. Perhaps the only obvious minorities here in Portugal which might qualify are the Mirandese and the Romanies (the Ciganos) - quite different types of minority (if only in terms of size: there are estimated to be between 40.000 and 100.000 Romanies [romaninet.com] and up to 10.000 speakers of Mirandese [omniglot.com]). The two are treated by the state in quite a different way, too. Mirandese was legally granted co-official status with Portuguese in 1999, whereas the Ciganos, who have been resident in Portugal since the second half of the 15th century (Serrão, 2006), often seem to be demonized.

2. Linguistic diversity in Portugal

So, what about Portugal’s supposed ‘monolingualism’? What first interested me in the area of cultural and linguistic diversity in Portugal was a visit I made with a good friend and coincidentally co-editor of this collection, Luís Souta, to a school in Seixal;: Escola Nº 5 de Amora, otherwise known as ‘Quinta da Princesa’, where by the late 1990s around 60% of the school’s population were of African-Portuguese descent, mainly of Cabo-Verdean origin. As we noted in relation to the awareness which had begun to grow of such diversity:

‘Contemporary Portugal, in common with most other European Union countries, has over recent years increasingly begun to recognize its established cultural diversity.’
(Naysmith & Souta, 1997: 35)

There was, it must be said, far less recognition of linguistic diversity at the time. Indeed, despite the fact that most of the Cabo-Verdean pupils in the school used Crioulo at home, many parents denied using their mother tongue with their children, claiming to use exclusively Portuguese.

Since then, the number of languages and cultures represented here has continued to grow – almost exponentially. Even in the small village where I live near Castro Marim, cultural diversity is not only represented by the crews working on my house. I have met many other migrants, all of whom live and work here in the Algarve and, who have brought their languages and cultures with them. My GP is Spanish; our cleaning lady is Romanian, as is my dental nurse; our gardener’s girlfriend is Bulgarian, and there is a Moldovan family living very near us, not to speak of the village’s Belgian, British, Dutch and German inhabitants . In the classes I have taught in the university in Faro, I have had Cabo Verdean, Chinese, Iraqi, Molda-

van, Russian and Ukrainian students. A few are short-term migrants, having come to study here and who plan to go back home after they graduate. Most are here to stay, however. Many now have Portuguese nationality and, not surprisingly, some now have Portuguese partners.

3. Portugal's contemporary immigrant population

How is this diversity of languages reflected in the national picture? The latest figures available report a population of foreigners resident in Portugal of 388.731 (Sefstat, 2015), just over 4% of a total population of 10.562.178. Jakub Marian (jakubmarian.com), drawing upon data from the United Nations and Eurostat, gives a significantly higher estimate for the same year of 7.9%. Although this figure has been declining since 2010 (1.6% in the year since 2014), it has grown almost ten times since the first year that such statistics were kept (1980). The biggest group, not surprisingly, is Brazilian (82.590 residents, 21% of the total migrant population), although it was also Brazilians who represented 75.9% of the decline in the overall migrant population. 2015 also saw declines in the migrant population from Cabo Verde and Angola, another two countries with Portuguese as an official language. The most represented countries of

origin apart from Brazil in order of numbers of migrants are:

- *Cabo Verde (38.674, 10%)*
- *Ukraine (35.779, 9%)*
- *Romania (30.523, 8%)*
- *China (21.329, 5%)*
- *Angola (18.247, 5%)*
- *The UK (17.230, 4%)*
- *Guiné-Bissau (17.091, 4%)*
- *Spain (10.019, 3%)*
- *São Tomé e Príncipe (9.546, 2%)*
- *Others (107.723, 28%, with significant increases noted from Italy and Nepal)*

69.1% of this population are resident in Lisbon, Faro and Setúbal. Slightly more than half are women and 21.6% of the residency permits issued in 2015 were to citizens of the European Union. 33.901 foreign residents applied for Portuguese passports in 2015 (an increase of 4.8% on the previous year).

These figures are, of course, likely to under-estimate the numbers of residents from ethnic minorities, as they only count foreigners and not earlier waves of migrants, who now have Portuguese nationality, in particular from the African countries listed (one reason for the disparity between the Sefstat and Jakub Marian figures). Perhaps the

most significant factor, though, is the way in which migrants from the former colonies are fast being eclipsed by migrants from elsewhere in Europe, particularly Eastern Europe.

As is the case with migrants everywhere (apart perhaps from the UK migrants, who are probably generally older), these people are more likely to have children of school age and so their mother tongues are likely to be evident in the school population. At the school level, the figures are less sure, but Araújo (2006), in her study of two schools in a medium-sized Portuguese town, suggested that approximately 10% of the schools' student populations were from ethnic minorities. Reste and Ançã (n.d., but reporting figures from 2008/9) suggest that there are 77.019 school-aged children speaking a home language which is not Portuguese, with 50 nationalities represented. Mira Mateus (2011) suggests that there are 90.000 such children, with 120 nationalities and 80 languages represented, with Moreira (2012) adding:

'In 2008 ... 44332 students ... (ca 2.3% of the school population) ... spoke Portuguese as a non-native language.'

4. The background to migration in the UK

What about the comparison with the UK? In the late 1980s, the contrast was significant. The UK was neither mono-cultural nor mono-lingual even then, having experienced significant migration, especially from the Commonwealth (formerly the British Empire), since the end of the Second World War. 43% of London school children had been recorded as speaking a language other than English at home (ILEA, 1987) and 22.7% did not speak any English at home (ILEA, 1986). It was not only a London or, indeed, a solely urban phenomenon, though. Of course, 'inner city' areas saw greater numbers of bilingual citizens. However, as Jill Bourne concluded in her study *Moving into the Mainstream*, published in 1989:

'in talking about bilingual pupils, one is not talking about exceptional cases in a few urban authorities, but about a substantial part of the school population.'
(1989: 32).

5. The UK's contemporary immigrant population

What is the situation now? The UK census is carried out every 10 years, the most recent census having been carried out in 2011. This census (ONS, 2011) reports a minority ethnic population of around 12.9% of a total population of 63.182.178. Jakub Marian

(jakubmarian.com) gives an estimate for 2015 of 13.4%. The most commonly spoken languages after English and Welsh (another of the UK's indigenous languages) are:

- *Polish*
- *Punjabi*
- *Urdu*
- *Bengali*
- *Gujarati*
- *Arabic*
- *French*
- *Chinese*
- *Portuguese*

As in Portugal, the biggest minority ethnic group and language has changed over time from an ex-colonial language to an Eastern European one (Ukrainian in Portugal and Polish in the UK). As Strand (2015: 12) notes about English schools:

'White Other is now the largest ethnic minority in England and one of the fastest growing (n = 19,263 in 2013, representing 3.4% of all Y11 students. It consists of pupils from a wide range of nationalities and speaking a wide range of languages, but predominantly from Europe, including Polish (21%), Turkish (7%), Portuguese (5%),

Albanian (4%) and Lithuanian (4%) (see Strand et al, 2015).'

and a few pages later (2015: 17) adding:

'In 2013, 1.77M students, over one quarter (26.6%) of the age 5-16 maintained school population were from ethnic minorities ... the ethnic minority population has increased from 16.8% in 2003 to 26.6% in 2013.'

6. Responses to migration

It is the wave of migration from Eastern Europe which seems to have contributed greatly to the rise of the right-wing, populist United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and the result of the Brexit referendum in June 2016. Poles were among the first victims of racist attacks thought to be linked to the Brexit result (Lyons, 2016). There are, of course, 'reasons' for this discontentment. In particular, predominantly white, working class, English and Welsh men living outside London (and a few more pockets of the affluent south of England) feel let down by the London-based political establishment. As Kaubo recently noted, though:

'(the referendum's) immediate aftermaths have been less than reassuring: turmoil, uncertainty, xenophobia, racist attacks and the weakening of the Pound Sterling.,

More pertinently for this article, and perhaps particularly relevant to Kaubo's references to xenophobia and racism, it is not uncommon to hear former waves of migrants, particularly from the Indian sub-continent, complaining about this more recent wave from Eastern Europe and there is even the rather unedifying spectacle of a British Asian UKIP spokesperson. I have yet to experience this kind of complaint in Portugal, although there have been a few reports of small demonstrations in Lisbon of right-wing (skinhead) groups, a worrying and resurgent phenomenon in much of Europe now.

7.Minority ethnic groups and under-achievement

The real victims of under-achievement and marginalisation in both countries are not those complaining, however. In Britain:

'Black Caribbean students have long been a focus for concern over low educational achievement and this merits continued monitoring.' (Strand, 2015: 15)

Interestingly, too, the most significant under-achievers in Britain are Afro-Caribbean boys. In Portugal, it is African-

origin minority groups which are of concern, despite (or possibly partly because of) the linguistic proximity, but relative prestige, of Portuguese and the Crioulo spoken by a significant number of these (the Cabo-Verdeans):

'immigrant background students from African countries of Portuguese official language systematically show weaker school achievement compared either to pupils of non-immigrant background or those of other immigrant origins.' (Matias et al, 2016)

Vieira da Silva (2013) adds the Ciganos to those under-achieving, noting:

'certain groups, in particular the gypsy community (the only separate ethnic group) and those from former Portuguese colonies, experienced great difficulty being accepted and integrating in schools.'

It seems likely there is a significant 'race' element influencing the under-achievement of these groups. . It is of note, too, that in both countries, the under-achievers are from earlier waves of migration and not the 'new' Eastern European migrants. Indeed, Fonseca and Pereira (2016) report, in relation to Ukrainian migrants in Portugal, that, although most work in relatively low-skilled jobs, their *'average education level ... is high in comparison with both the Portu-*

guese population and other third-country nationals.’ Many Portuguese teachers I have discussed this with refer not only to the generally high educational achievement levels of the ‘new’ European migrants, but also the high levels of concern that their parents display about their children’s educational experiences. In Britain, post-Brexit publications refer especially to the need for skilled migrants (see, for example the IoD Policy Report ‘Post-Brexit Immigration Policy’, 2016) and there are frequent press reports in the broadsheet newspapers and journals on the dangers of a post-Brexit immigration policy that ignores the need to keep skilled European migrants. One recent Financial Times report headlined ‘The European migrants that Britain depends on’ starts with the sentence *‘Be careful what you wish for’*, going on to conclude that *‘Even after Brexit, the UK must keep its doors open to EU workers.’* (Financial Times, 2017)

8. Responses to linguistic diversity

Returning to linguistic diversity, in Britain, although there are still parts of the country, such as London, which report much higher numbers of children speaking a language other than English (45% of the primary school population and 35% of the secondary school

population, with over 40 languages represented), the average for England was 15% in primary schools and 11% in secondary schools (DfE, 2009). The numbers and percentages remain higher in Britain than in Portugal, but it is certainly true that Bourne’s description of the situation in Britain twenty or so years ago and given above (*‘in talking about bilingual pupils, one is not talking about exceptional cases in a few urban authorities, but about a substantial part of the school population.’* [1989: 32]) is as true of Portugal now, as it was of Britain then.

In neither Portugal nor the UK, however, is there any organized provision for teaching or supporting children’s mother tongues within the state school system (European Commission, 2009), although in the UK it has been possible for some time for pupils to take what is usually referred to as a ‘community language’ at GCSE level (at around the age of 16) or ‘A’ level (at around the age of 18) and organisations from the countries where minority groups originate are often active in supporting the home language. The Portuguese Consulate, for example, employs teachers, who teach Portuguese to significant numbers of migrant children in the UK, and in other EU countries. The provision that exists is mainly voluntary or private,

though, reflecting the fact that neither country has any overall policy on multilingualism.

Why might recognition of and support for these 'minority' languages matter? Simply put, they are an important national and European resource. As a report on the UK says:

The UK needs a multilingual population in order to succeed in a globalized world, for global citizenship, for diplomacy, for security and international relations, and for developing a taskforce to operate efficiently in trade and investment.'

(Taylor, 2013: 1)

As the report goes on to say, multilingualism matters for a whole range of reasons. Among other things, it describes its cognitive and health benefits, its role in international and intercultural communication, its role in business and commerce, and in research and scholarship. Of course, without any overall official language policy on multilingualism, education practitioners, are only able to have a limited effect. As Taylor concludes:

'Developing appropriate and effective language strategies by government, businesses, and public service

providers needs to take account of the complex language landscape. This will require collecting more and better data on the linguistic diversity of this country.'

(ibid: 6)

That is far from saying we can have no effect, however.

9.Educational responses to diversity

Our mother tongue is an important part, maybe the most important part, of our identity and the recognition of our language and culture by important institutions within our society is perhaps the first step to recognizing our role in and potential contribution to that society. Respect for linguistic and cultural diversity is one of the important cornerstones of the European Union and is enshrined in Article 22 of the European Charter of Fundamental Rights (<http://europa.eu.int/comm/langmin.html>) – yet another thing at risk in the UK since Brexit. An equally important part of that recognition, however, stems from teachers and other education professionals, as representatives of that 'official' society.

So, what can educators, in particular, do? We can start by valuing the linguistic diversity we find around us and, as is often the case,

valuing something starts with collecting information about it. As information about linguistic diversity is not always easily available or secure, especially at the more local level, we might start by collecting information about the linguistic diversity that exists in the contexts where we work. One starting point might be to draw up a profile of the languages (and the cultures they represent) using the kind of profile suggested in the module 'The Multicultural Language Classroom: Challenges to Conceptions of Culture and Language' that I developed for the EU-funded Millenilang Project: Language Teachers Facing Change (2002). From there, you might move on to mapping the cultural and linguistic diversity in your institution and even try a language survey with the people you work with. Examples of these can also be found in the Millenilang module, admittedly focused on schools, but certainly adaptable to other situations. There are even Portuguese language versions! (see Appendix 1 and 2).

Our actions may have some influence on the different attitudes there are to minority languages and, of course, the connection between this and power:

*'There are varying attitudes towards multilingualism. At an elite level, at the higher end of the social scale, to be able to speak several languages is viewed very positively and is of high social value (see Wardhaugh, 2006: 96). If a person is multilingual because of education or social mobility (living in various 'prestige' countries, for example), this may provide them with a great deal of **cultural capital**. But, on another level, multilingualism is not always viewed positively. In the US, the dramatic growth of Spanish, for example, in places like Florida and New York, has been perceived as a threat to English, even though the reality is that English is a dominant language. There is the perception that immigrants don't want to learn English, though, as Talbot et al (2003: 262) remark, this seems unlikely, given the cultural capital and opportunities that being able to speak/use English can bring. Some Americans are not comfortable with bilingual immigrants, but it's often the case that immigrants want to be able to speak English and retain their home language.'*
(Mooney et al, 2011: 118)

Just replace 'Americans' with 'British', and 'Americans' and 'English' with 'Portuguese' in the final sentence.

Reflection and conclusion

Migration is, perhaps always has been, a fact of life. Page (2002: 159), for example, refers to a Jewish minority resident in Tarshish

(thought to be at least in part what is now the south of Portugal) as long ago as the first century AD. In relation to the UK, in 1996, the Commission for Racial Equality controversially, but almost certainly correctly, concluded that ‘everyone who lives in Britain today is either an immigrant or a descendent of an immigrant’. (Geographical Association). The challenge is not only to accept that, but to celebrate the benefits diversity can bring. That’s where we education professionals come in.

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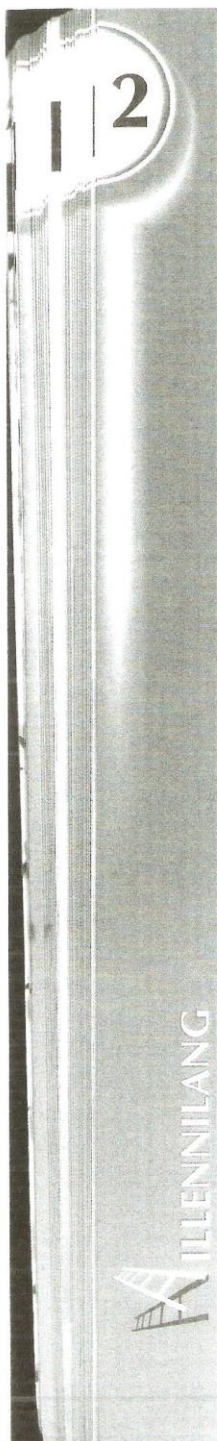
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Ficha curricular

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Appendix 1: A language profile



Perfil Linguístico

Língua	Urdu
Família	Ramo indo-iraniano do Inodo-Europeu
Usada por	Aproximadamente 45 milhões de pessoas, principalmente no Paquistão, Norte da Índia, no Reino Unido, no Canadá, que são essencialmente muçulmanos (Sunnitas)
Exemplo de forma de escrita	خوش آمدید
Sistema de escrita	Semelhante ao Árabe: escreve-se da direita para a esquerda na escrita Nastaliq, que difere levemente do Naksh, em que se escreve o Árabe.
Onde é usada	O Urdu é a língua oficial do Paquistão. Cerca de 5 milhões de pessoas no Paquistão falam-na como língua materna e 40 milhões como Segunda língua ou como acessória. Na Europa e na América do Norte, muitos muçulmanos falam Urdu, como língua segunda ou comunitária, frequentemente em concomitância com o Panjabi, sua língua materna.
Informação adicional sobre as línguas e seus falantes	Urdu, do ponto de vista gramatical, é essencialmente uma língua indiana, embora o seu vocabulário seja influenciado pelo Persa. O Urdu e o Hindi (língua oficial da Índia, geralmente associada aos Hindus), embora escritos de diversas formas, são mutuamente inteligíveis na sua totalidade. Se são a mesma língua ou línguas diferentes é objecto de considerável discussão.

Adaptado de Edwards, 1996, com a informação adicional de Campbell, 1995; Crystal, 1992; Dalby, 1999; Katzner, 1986.¹

Appendix 2: A language survey



Agora, responda ao questionário. Lembre-se de que isto não é um teste ou exame. Só pretendemos que nos fale da(s) língua(s) que utiliza. Acrescente mais colunas numa outra folha, se necessário:

Nome:		Idade:			
Turma:					
Que línguas fala? Primeiro a que mais usa <small>(Responda por escrito)</small>	Essa é a sua língua materna? Ou é uma segunda língua ou estrangeira? <small>(Desenhe um círculo 0)</small>	Compreende, fala, lê, escreve essa língua? <small>(Assinale com um visto ✓)</small>	Bem? Um pouco? Nada? <small>(Desenhe um círculo 0)</small>	Onde e com quem usa de modo habitual essa língua? <small>e.g. em casa, com a sua mãe; na escola, com o professor. (Escreva a sua resposta)</small>	Já viveu noutro país? Quanto tempo? <small>e.g. nasci em... e vivi até aos 5 anos; vivi em... 3 meses quando o pai lá trabalhava (Escreva primeiro as estadas mais longas)</small>
1	Língua materna/ Língua segunda ou estrangeira	Compreende Fala Lê Escreve	Bem / Um pouco / Nada Bem / Um pouco / Nada Bem / Um pouco / Nada Bem / Um pouco / Nada		1
2	Língua materna/ Língua segunda ou estrangeira	Compreende Fala Lê Escreve	Bem / Um pouco / Nada Bem / Um pouco / Nada Bem / Um pouco / Nada Bem / Um pouco / Nada		2
3	Língua materna/ Língua segunda ou estrangeira	Compreende Fala Lê Escreve	Bem / Um pouco / Nada Bem / Um pouco / Nada Bem / Um pouco / Nada Bem / Um pouco / Nada		3
4	Língua materna/ Língua segunda ou estrangeira	Compreende Fala Lê Escreve	Bem / Um pouco / Nada Bem / Um pouco / Nada Bem / Um pouco / Nada Bem / Um pouco / Nada		4