



Broward County Public Schools

Developed By:

Heidi Marie Melius, Ed.D.
Speech/Language Program Specialist
South Central Area Exceptional Student Education

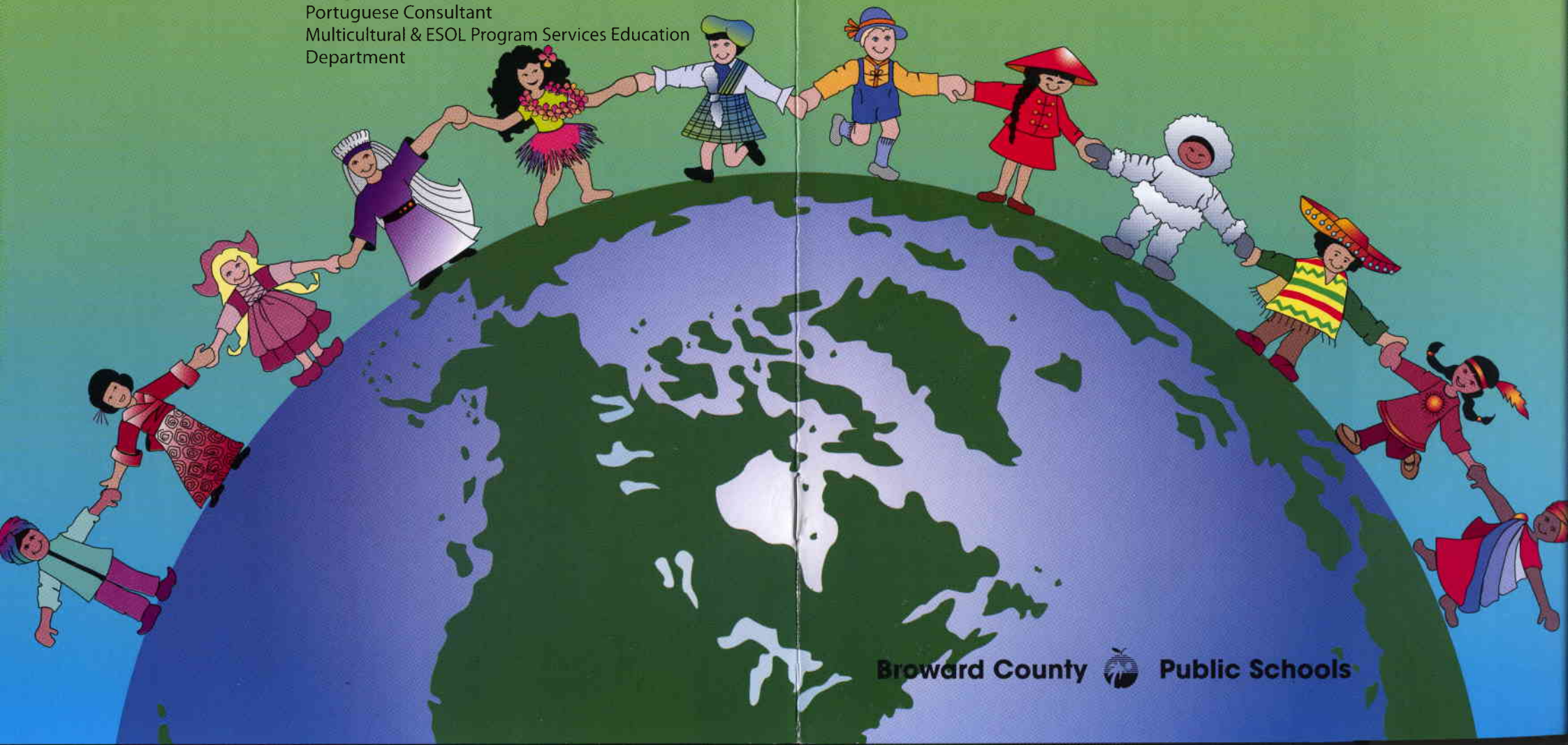
Diane K. Wilen, Ph.D., NCSP
Bilingual School Psychologist
Multicultural & ESOL Program Services Education
Department

Leila Lacerda, SSP, NCSP
Bilingual School Psychologist
South Area Student Services

Olimpia Nunes
Portuguese Consultant
Multicultural & ESOL Program Services Education
Department

Potential Impact of Portuguese Syntax and Phonology on English Language Learners

Multicultural & ESOL Program Services Education



Broward County Public Schools



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Potential Impact of Portuguese Syntax on English Grammar

Native Portuguese speakers often transfer rules of grammar (syntax) from their first language onto the second language. This is a normal process and not a case of impaired language learning. A child may make an error in English syntax due to the influence of grammar rules from Portuguese. In order to accurately assess the English language skills of a native Portuguese-speaking child, the following examples of common errors may be useful.



Potential Impact of Portuguese Syntax on English Grammar
Potential Impact of Portuguese Phonology on English Pronunciation

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Portuguese Syntactical Structure

1. Descriptive adjectives come after nouns.
2. The "no" is placed before the verb to show negation.
3. Negation is shown by use of double negatives.
4. When the subject has already been identified, the subject pronouns can be omitted.
5. The modifier is placed after a noun to show possession.
6. Third person present "s" is not used in Portuguese.
7. Intonation, rather than noun/verb reversal, is used to ask a question.
8. Superiority is generally shown by placing the word "more" in front of the adjective rather than using the comparative form.
9. Articles are frequently used with body parts rather than possessives.

This may result in the following errors in English:

- My dress red is pretty.
- She no help.
- He no see nothing.
- My sister went to bed.
Was tired.
- I have the purse of my mother.
- He run three times a week.
- You are having dinner?
- He is more fat.
- You hurt the foot?

Potential Impact of Portuguese Phonology on English Pronunciation

For native Portuguese speakers, the systematic rules governing sound production may have an impact on the pronunciation of English words. Most of the pronunciation differences will be related to the unique characteristic of the Portuguese sound system. In order to accurately assess the articulation skills of a native Portuguese speaker, the following examples of common errors may be helpful. Issues of maturational readiness also contribute to correct sound production.



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Machi
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Portuguese Phonological Patterns

English Examples

1. Portuguese words generally end in vowels or in the phonemes /l/, /m/, /r/, /s/, /z/.
2. The Portuguese /s/ and /z/ are interchangeable.
3. There are no words that begin in /s/ blends.
4. In Portuguese, /s/ before /m/, /n/, or /l/ occurs only in middle-word position and is voiced as /z/.
5. There is no /r/ sound in initial word position for some speakers of Portuguese from different regions.
6. In words that begin with /h/, the /h/ is silent.

Speakers may add a vowel sound after other phonemes (e.g., grabby for grab).

eyes for ice
peas for peace

Speakers may add the "e" vowel before the word (e.g., estop for stop).

znap for snap
zlip for slip

Speakers may substitute /h/ for /r/ (e.g., hoe for row).

and for hand
eat for heat

Common Sound Substitutions:

1. "ch" for /t/ e.g., chew for two
2. /t/, /f/, or /s/ for voiceless "th" e.g., tank you for thank you, somesing/somefing for something
3. /d/ for voiced "th" e.g., dere for there, dese for these

Developmental Norms for Articulation for Native English Speakers*

SOUNDS	UPPER AGE LEVELS**
h, w, m, n, d, vowels	4.0
f, k, b, g, "y" (e.g., "yellow"), p, "ng" (e.g., "ring")	4.6
t	5.0
l, l – blends, "j" (e.g., "just")	6.6
v, r, r-blends, "ch," "sh," voiced "th" (e.g., "brother")	7.0
unvoiced "th" (e.g., "both"), z, s, s-blends	7.6

* Adapted by H. M. Melius (2005) from Exceptional Student Education (2003). Speech and Language Program Handbook. Ft. Lauderdale: The School Board of Broward County, Florida.

** Upper age at which 90% of the subjects correctly articulated the sound in initial and final positions of words. Derived from the Arizona Articulation Proficiency Scale.