

Abstract

The migratory experience of children and adolescents can configure and change their attitudes and behaviours resulting from the mismatch of learning situations. The academic success and psychosocial development of individuals, inherited and caused by family and community, may be affected by a noticeable awareness of environmental stimuli and various psychological reactions resulting there from. Will be a brief discussion on free narratives developed by students of Portuguese Second Language regarding experiences in the Portuguese context (school, family and community). The categorization reflected in the texts written by immigrant pupils is an indicative of exclusion behaviour generated by external agents and should be diagnosed in order to orient programs.

Behaviour: cognition and motivation

The aspect of mother tongue (MT/L1) and the language competency of the subjects in itself, is not the most important factor, but most probably, it is the cultural background that determines the predisposition and cognitive readiness for learning languages, as well as their attitude and representation of the actual linguistic competencies and their identity. The subject with migratory experience is affected on various personal levels (Lier, 2004; Lantolf, 2000) related with the learning of languages (the five selves). The communication competence is directly related to self-esteem and self confidence and motivation of the learner and as a social being. These dimensions develop at different time rates, when the learner is in a different context, this cause a confrontation on a ecological and interpersonal level (p.118, Lier 2004) and it is the self termed conceptual that is most affected in the context of learning of L2, since this implies expectations, investment, motivation, notion of power control and self discursive (p.118, Lier 2004). We have here what Lier calls "theory of me", where identity, roles, beliefs of 'the me' are found (Clyne, n.d.). This generates an attitude and position that influences the perception of competence and the perception of the other. The attitudes, in preference to the motives, have a greater influence in the learning process of the L2, note that these attitudes are shared by the family and this begins at home, well before the individual starts training, and we know that a 4/5 year old child already shows an attitude and decision that leads towards a target. Various studies, done in the same scientific field, come to assert the fact of personality (favourable the extrovert/introvert) motivation (not only of integrative but also instrumental), socio-cultural attitude (assimilation/generalization, influence of family background) and cognition (strategies and learning styles) being the self-analysis driving the learner of languages, according to Gillette (in Faerch & Kasper (1987), in the process of acquisition/learning, especially as the subject gets older (McLaughlin, 1985).

It is not enough to learn to read, write, speak and listen, there is also the acquisition of behavioural patterns different from those which we are used to (Sanz, 2005). Moreover, in analyzing language and verbal behaviour, it is important to consider the outlines of theories, as to allow for a more complete study that does not assume exclusively either a mentalist or a functionalist philosophy perspective (Cazacu, 1979; Catânia, 1999). In regulating languages processes, the individual depends not only on his own mental structures to produce verbal behaviors, but also on the relationships between them and the context of which they are part.

One of the tasks of a tests battery developed for the Phd research purposes (assessment of cognitive achievement in second language context) demands a text under the theme: "If portuguese culture, portuguese language and portuguese people were an island of fantasy, how would be it? Describe it, in few words".

This task is different from all of other tests and exhibit social representations of immigrant students, perceived through their narratives. Just a few participants accomplish this task and we will show a few texts, in portuguese language (language used by participants with low proficiency levels). The following examples sounds like peaces of a large poem. We can perceive general positive attitudes toward portuguese speaking people and about the language learning. The main aspects of these texts are related to the following items: liberty, friendship, facility for learning and adaptation, challenge, and notion of developed society. We suggest that this type of activities must be promoted in the classroom to detect attitudes and motivation of immigrant pupils, regarding the prevention of exclusion. This task should be accompanied by self questionnaires and other type of assessment tools.

Examples of narratives written by Portuguese second language learners:

o cheiro é agradável, a paisagem é bonita, os objectos são mais ou menos desenvolvidos e as pessoas são poucas preguiçosas...

era uma vez ,um menino que morava na ilha açores.o menino gostava muito de jogar futebol,ia escola sem ter os trabalho de casa feito.

Eu gosto muito de Portugal, eu acho que é um paraíso ainda por conhecer, porque ten uns lagais impresionantes, unos paisagens muito diferentes a proia, a montanha y umas cidades ceias do historia.Eu gosto também da gente do Portugal porque são muito am

Eu gosto desse sitio e tenho muitos amigos,o ar é muito limpo e não como o da Russia

uma ilha feia com muita chuva

os cheiros seriam bons. Dois terços da população seriam simpaticos e um terço antipaticos. Seria tudo lindo a minha volta, mas as vezes apareciam coisas que nao muito gosto, mas seria tudo calmo.

As pessoas que vivem nessa ilha são todas pessoas gangsters que andam a drede e são umas das pessoas mais impotante do mundo e a única coisa que gostam de fazer é cantar e dançar e actuar em países grandes.

Cultura em Portugal eu acho que é mais bonita.Há muitos paisagens, objectos que podem mostras pessoas muito bonitas.Ficava muito bonito. Eu acho que as pessoas que viverim nessa ilha imaginada tiveram muito medo de viver nessa ilha.

A ilha de Portugal tem paisagens lindissimas! Tem arvores muito altas até ao céu! O mar ao pé de ilha faz lembrar paraíso... As pessoas que moram nesta ilha estao sempre alegres e têm sempre um bom humor!

Eu gostei o Portugal e tenho muitos amigos que ajudarao para eu aprender o portugues e gosto esta escola de sao bernardo

Os cheiros de Portugal são como o Oceano Atlântico, cheiro a mar e sal, os paisagens cheios de casas velhas e bonitas com crianças a jogar ao futebol e avôzinhas falando na rua, encantadoras, os objectos simples e as pessoas amaveis e um bocado conservado

Participants

Case sample: 61 subjects (Portuguese as a SL learners, with migration experience), with a mean age of 16.1 and standard-deviation of 6.3. 19 (31,1%) are children (ages 7 through 12 years old), 22 (36,1%) are adolescents (ages 13 to 18 years old) and 20 (38,2%) are adults (ages 19 through 30 years old). The subjects attend High School, Secondary School and Higher Education. The participants of this study present a total of 26 different nationalities. This variety of nationalities and spoken languages is intentional, although we do not intend to specify nationality or speakers groups for the research, as is the usual perspective of studies in this area. The sample selection was based on two important criteria, which define specific aspects of the migration experience we intended to have: date of arrival at Portugal and Portuguese language proficiency. The proficiency indicator to each participant was based on specific diagnostic evaluation performed by the schools. The proficiency levels intended for this study are A2 and B1 (European Commission, 2001). A1 was not considered, because the student might not understand the questions proposed in the test battery. We stress the fact that these levels (including A1) are considered requisite to have educative support on Portuguese learning referred by the orienting documents (2005) and legislation for the application of curricular measures in the schools. On the other hand, we considered only subjects that arrived at Portugal for the first time, without previous knowledge on the Portuguese language, no more than four years ago, relating to 2006. We noticed that in total there are 22 languages in the sample of which the subjects are active speakers. In what concerns the support they get on Portuguese Language discipline (as SL), 42 (68,9%) are receiving support as a curricular discipline. This kind of support is at an initiation stage, because students have not arrived, mostly, over a year ago. The remaining 19 (31,1%) are not getting any kind of support (those that have been in Portugal longer).



Me and the others...