

FROM PAREMIAS, VARIANTS AND SYNONYMS: INTERFACES BETWEEN
PORTUGUESE AND SPANISH IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF PLE

*DE PARÊMIAS, VARIANTES E SINÔNIMOS: INTERFACES ENTRE PORTUGUÊS E
ESPANHOL NO ENSINO-APRENDIZAGEM DE PLE*

*DE PAREMIAS, VARIANTES Y SINÓNIMOS: INTERFACES ENTRE EL
PORTUGUÉS Y ESPAÑOL EN LA ENSEÑANZA Y APRENDIZAJE DE PLE*



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ABSTRACT: Having proverbs as the object of study and application in the teaching and learning of Portuguese as a Foreign Language (PLE), a proposal will be presented aiming to provide students with the opportunity to expand their vocabulary and refine their understanding of certain sententious statements, using the Spanish language as a bridge language. The choice of this language was based on the context of teaching Portuguese as a Foreign Language to groups of students from different countries around the world. The corpus to be worked on in the classroom will start with the presentation of proverbs in Portuguese known and published in the Refranero Multilingüe of the Cervantes Institute. Information on variants and synonyms of these sententious statements will be expanded through the students' research in the RM and in paremiographic repertoires in Portuguese and Spanish. This work will be based on studies by Teixeira de Faria (2021) on synonymy and variation and Sevilla Muñoz & Crida (2017) on the typology of proverbs, among others.

KEYWORDS: PLE. Proverb. Synonymous. Variant. Refranero Multilingüe.

RESUMO: Tendo as parêmias como objeto de estudo e aplicação no ensino-aprendizagem de PLE, será apresentada uma proposta que visa dar aos estudantes a possibilidade de ampliar o vocabulário e depurar a compreensão de certos enunciados sentenciosos, servindo-se da língua espanhola como língua-ponte. A escolha desse idioma fundamentou-se no contexto do ensino de Português como Língua Estrangeira para grupos de estudantes provenientes de diferentes países ao redor do mundo. O corpus a ser trabalhado em sala de aula partirá da apresentação de parêmias em língua portuguesa conhecidas e publicadas no Refranero Multilingüe do Instituto Cervantes. Ampliar-se-á informação de variantes e sinônimos desses enunciados sentenciosos através da pesquisa por parte dos estudantes no RM, assim como em repertórios paremiográficos em português e espanhol. Este trabalho se apoiará nos estudos de Teixeira de Faria (2021) sobre sinonímia e variante e Sevilla Muñoz & Crida (2017) sobre tipologia das parêmias, entre outros.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: PLE. Parêmia. Sinonímia. Variante. Refranero Multilingüe.

RESUMEN: Teniendo las paremias como objeto de estudio y su aplicación en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de PLE, presentaremos una propuesta que visa dar a los estudiantes la posibilidad de ampliar el vocabulario y depurar la comprensión de ciertos enunciados sentenciosos, sirviéndose del Español como lengua-puente. Este idioma fue seleccionado partiendo de la base de la enseñanza de Portugués como Lengua Extranjera a grupos de estudiantes originarios de diversos países del mundo. El corpus a ser trabajado en clase partirá de la presentación de paremias conocidas y publicadas en el Refranero Multilingüe del Instituto Cervantes. Se ampliará la información de variantes y sinónimos de esos enunciados sentenciosos por medio de la consulta de los estudiantes al RM, así como en repertorios paremiográficos en portugués y español. Nos apoyaremos en los estudios de Teixeira de Faria (2021) sobre sinonimia y variante y Sevilla Muñoz & Crida (2017) sobre tipología de las paremias, entre otros.

PALABRAS CLAVE: PLE. Paremia. Sinonimia. Variante. Refranero Multilingüe.

Introduction

Consolidating linguistic structures and expanding vocabulary are challenges that all teachers face throughout the teaching-learning process of a foreign language at any level of Development. In the activity to be presented, the aim is to recover previously learned linguistic codes and introduce new elements related to the retrieved material. The objective is for these elements to serve as a means of reinforcement and lexical addition, following the parameters of the communicative approach.

This proposal is intended for students of Portuguese as a Foreign Language (PLE) in Spain, at levels B2, C1, and C2, according to the *Common European Framework of Reference* (CEFR). It is, therefore, a multicultural environment in which Spanish will be used as a bridge language whenever necessary for proper understanding.

The "Activity Application" section of the proposal is divided into the following points: Introduction, Explanation of the Material, and Development, the latter divided into three parts, including Evaluation. In general terms, the Introduction will verify what students recognize as folk sayings, proverbial phrases, maxims, etc. The Explanation of the Material addresses the different types of *paremias* and their taxonomies, following Sevilla Muñoz and Crida's (2017) concepts. In the Development, the first part of the activity focuses on identifying images that represent the *paremias* or sententious statements selected in their most well-known form. The second part consists of researching variants (statements with morphosyntactic variation that does not affect the overall meaning of the *paremia*) and synonyms (statements with a sense close to the chosen *paremia* but with different lexicon or morphosyntax) related to the provided examples (TEIXEIRA DE FARIA, 2021).

Following this, the theoretical foundations grounded in Krashen (1982) are presented in the first and second places, respectively, with his contribution to the hypotheses in which the acquisition-learning of a foreign language can occur, and in Almeida Filho (2015), with the application of the Communicative Approach in the classroom. In the third place, the proposal for the activity titled "*De paremias, variantes e sinônimos* (Of *paremias*, variants and synonyms)" is presented, which uses the *Refranero Multilingüe*² of the Cervantes Institute (hereinafter, RM) as a research tool. In conclusion, some final considerations and bibliographic references are presented.

² The *Refranero Multilingüe* shelters *paremias* from 25 languages and is our largest digital *paremiographic* dictionary. It is continuously enriched with new contributions from all parts of the world.

Acquisition and Learning of FL

Understanding the mechanisms that aid in acquiring and learning a foreign language is of utmost importance for developing and implementing any educational activity. One of the most relevant studies on the subject is the framework proposed by Krashen (1982), which considers the following hypotheses in the process of FL acquisition/learning:

1. *The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis.* The author contends that there are two ways in which a student can learn a second language: through natural acquisition, a process that occurs in the subconscious, or through formal learning, which takes place at a conscious level;
2. *The Monitor Hypothesis.* The student's knowledge acts as a monitor for their learning. The following conditions must be met to substantiate this hypothesis: a. reflection on the language being studied; b—observation of sentence structures; c. mastery of the rules of the target language;
3. *The Natural Order Hypothesis.* This hypothesis is associated with FL acquisition. Krashen argues that a foreign language learner assimilates specific grammatical structures before others in a process similar to acquiring a mother tongue;
4. *The Input Hypothesis.* The student will achieve better results if the information received is slightly above their level of linguistic competence;
5. *The Affective Filter Hypothesis.* According to the author, the affective aspect holds particular relevance among the mentioned hypotheses, as it can directly influence the performance of the foreign language acquisition/learning process and its outcomes. Factors such as self-esteem, motivation, and low anxiety are intrinsically linked to success or failure in this instructional context.

With the affective filter hypothesis presented by Krashen, numerous studies on the effects of motivation, self-esteem, and low anxiety in students reaffirm the importance of the emotional aspect in the acquisition/learning of a foreign language. Some researchers, such as Brown (2007), draw attention to the teacher's role in transforming students' negative attitudes, which often stem from stereotypes that do not correspond to reality³.

³ For a more detailed study on the three factors considered most relevant in the affective filter for language teaching, we highlight the following authors: Arnold (1999); Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982); Masgoret and Gardner (2003); Onwuegbuzie, Bailey and Daley (1999); and Yang (1999).

The Communicative Approach in FL Class

While acknowledging the role played by the teacher's approach in the teaching-learning process, it cannot be considered the sole driving force in this journey, as argued by Almeida Filho (2015, p. 35, our translation), emphasizing that:

In addition to the teacher's and students' affective filters, combining motivation, blockages, anxieties, group pressures, physical fatigue, and occasional oscillations as counterforces in a given configuration, the teacher's approach still has to relate to other potential forces. These include the student's approach to learning, the teaching approach underlying the adopted teaching material, and the values others desire in the school context (the institution, the principal, and other leading teachers with more seniority and greater power within the faculty).

When teachers teach in real life, they construct their teaching from their approach in tension with other potential forces and eventually under the dominance of one of them (often their approaches) [...].

Almeida Filho (2015, p. 43) considers that constructing a lesson should adhere to an approach that preferably consists of implicit and linguistic-communicative competence. One of the possible and complementary combinations relates to grammatical and communicative actions, whose interpretation by the author can serve as references in the formation of an approach to teaching, as expressed in the following excerpt:

[...] The grammatical focus is expressed through activities directed towards language form (explanations and exercises). The communicative focus prioritizes the construction of meaning in the (new) language (introductions to topics, explanations of activities in the language itself, tasks requiring dialogue and negotiations to reach a resolution, etc.). Focusing on form enhances competence in handling the language system while focusing on meaning promotes a (fluent) ability to use the new language. Each focus is typical of an approach: when it falls on form, it is grammatical, and when it falls on meaning (on the topic, for example), it is communicative (ALMEIDA FILHO, 2015, p. 43, our translation).

Regarding communicative and grammatical methods, the fact that they share some common traits does not prevent each way from maintaining its characteristics (ALMEIDA FILHO, 2015, p. 58). The author highlights some points of identification for a communicative teacher in the classroom: a. one who facilitates learning through topics that students can perceive as "valid experiences of formation and intellectual growth"; b. one who does not oppose the use of the mother tongue as support and interprets errors "as signs of growth in a new capacity for communication in another language"; c. one who raises questions to provoke

interactive acts; d. one who provides the means for subconscious learning to occur, focusing on important themes for the student and also on conscious learning of language-related issues in the target language; e. one who takes into account the "affective variables" of students; f. one who can guide the student in the development of communicative actions. Almeida Filho shares many common points with Krashen's thinking.

Activity Proposal

Table 1 - Didactic Activity: *Of paremias, variants, and synonyms*

<p>Languages: Portuguese and Spanish.</p> <p>Level: B2, C1 and C2.</p> <p>Target audience: students of Portuguese as a Foreign Language – PLE courses.</p> <p>Teaching: in-person.</p> <p>Content: linguistic.</p> <p>Strategies and skills: oral and written comprehension.</p> <p>Grouping type: in pairs or groups of three or four students.</p> <p>Preparation time: 10 minutes (for reviewing materials and content and checking internet access).</p> <p>Means and necessary materials: PowerPoint presentation, use of the <i>Refranero multilingüe</i> website. The use of a computer and internet access is essential.</p> <p>Approximate duration: approximately 3.5 hours.</p>
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Source: Adapted from the introductory framework of the Seminar: Introducción a la paremiología y la paremiografía, prepared by Julia Sevilla Muñoz

DESCRIPTION

This activity aims to allow students to expand their vocabulary and refine their understanding of certain sententious statements, using the Spanish language as a bridge in a multicultural environment.

The *Refranero Multilingüe* from the Cervantes Institute will be used as the reference corpus to be worked on in the classroom. Research on variants and synonyms can also be conducted in paremiographic repertoires in Portuguese and Spanish.

For the typological classifications of paremias, the divisions and taxonomies proposed by Sevilla Muñoz and Crida (2017) will be adopted. These categories include two groups of paremias determined by their origin (known or anonymous) and their use (cultivated or popular)⁴.

General Objectives:

- Stimulate the ability to assimilate new vocabulary;
- Encourage the manifestation of empirical knowledge in the attributions of meanings to paremias;
- Foster the planning and development of research action.

Specific Objectives:

- Present some paremias in the Portuguese language and their characteristics;
- Encourage the application of abstract thinking in L2;
- Expand vocabulary;
- Practice oral skills and teach the culture of Portuguese-speaking countries, using linguistic elements of popular wisdom as a vehicle.

⁴ Thus, on the one hand, they are classified as paremias of known origin and preferably cultivated use: the proverb (biblical, Greco-Latin, and from other sources), the aphorism (ethical, political, and aphorism of scientific or professional origin); and, on the other hand, as paremias of anonymous basis and preferably popular use: the proverb or folk saying (of general or limited reach), the proverbial phrase, the proverbial expression, and dialogism (SEVILLA MUÑOZ; CRIDA ÁLVAREZ, 2017).

APPLICATION OF THE ACTIVITY

1. Introduction (5-8 minutes)

Students were asked if they knew the meaning of proverbs or folk sayings.

2. Explanation of the Material (30-40 minutes)

PowerPoint presentation of the characteristics defining paremias, with a focus on proverbs or folk sayings.

Explanation of the meaning of "variant" and "synonym" of a paremia, with concrete examples.

3. Development

Part I (25-30 minutes)

- a. Divide students into pairs or groups of three or four;
- b. Assign a number to each pair or group;
- c. Show various images (drawings, photographs, etc.) with an identifying number and ask each group with the corresponding number: "What is this image representing?"
- d. Move to another series of slides. Repeat the images, but this time, with spaces under each figure to be filled with the proverb. To facilitate the deduction process for students, only one of these spaces is filled with one of the words of the premium, as in the following example:

Figure 1 – Representation of the blacksmith's work



blacksmith

Source: Bianco (2016)

- e. The example presented refers to the popular *paremia* "*Em casa de ferreiro, espeto de pau*⁵". Perform the same procedure with the other examples. The goal is for students to recognize each famous proverb, even if the recognition is initially done in Spanish, before moving to Portuguese and completing the blanks accordingly.
- f. The steps following the recognition of each *sententious* statement are the contextualization of the *paremia* and opening a debate about its meaning and in what real-life situations it could be used. An example of contextualization could be a fragment from an interview with Ives Granda da Silva Martins Filho, Minister of the Superior Labor Court of Brazil⁶:

Why does outsourcing cause concern in labor terms? Because, on one hand, it does not allow the full integration of the worker into the company for which they effectively provide services. On the other hand, especially in the public service sector, the practice has shown that service-providing companies, especially in areas such as catering, kitchen, surveillance, cleaning, and maintenance, are mere labor intermediaries equipped with a small office, phone, and computer, to hire personnel and immediately pass them on to the public institution receiving the services. However, from one moment to another, they disappear from the market, leaving employees without their salaries and the institution without the benefits. Not to mention the parceling

⁵ This is a very famous Brazilian saying. A corresponding American expression conveys the same idea: "The shoemaker's son always goes barefoot".

⁶ The complete interview can be accessed at <https://sindeepres.org.br/so-o-juiz-integro-e-capaz-de-ser-imparcial/>. Accessed on January 10, 2023.

in tenders and the change of facade companies, maintaining the same employees in the public institution. A cleaning lady at TST once asked why they had changed her uniform when it was still brand new. She hadn't even realized that the previous company had disappeared, and she was now working for a new one, recently contracted. It's tough to admit, but "*em casa de ferreiro, espeto de pau...*" (emphasis added).

Parte II (30-40 minutos)

- a. To complete the verification and consolidation of the paremias in Portuguese, the second part of the activity will provide an online resource: the Refranero Multilingüe website of the Cervantes Institute (<https://cvc.cervantes.es/lengua/refranero/>). The search methods were explained: through the *Búsqueda* entry or the *Alphabetical List of paremias*.

Figure 2 – Refranero Multilingüe Homepage



Source: Author's collection

Figure 3 – Search Page of the RM

Centro Virtual Cervantes

Refranero multilingüe > Buscador

Refranero multilingüe

Búsqueda

Búsqueda:

Búsqueda avanzada

Búsqueda:

Idioma:

Tipos de paremia:

Idea clave:

Incluir:

Antónimos

Sinónimos

Variantes

Hiperónimos

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Source: Author's collection

Figure 4 – Page with Query Results

Centro Virtual Cervantes

Refranero multilingüe > Buscador > Resultados

Refranero multilingüe

Resultados de la búsqueda

Número de registros encontrados: 2
Registros del 1 al 2

ferreiro

Tipo: Refrán

Paremia: De ferreiro a ferreiro não passa dinheiro

Idioma: Portugués

[\(Ficha\)](#)

Tipo: Refrán

Paremia: Em casa de ferreiro, espeto de pau

Idioma: Portugués

[\(Ficha\)](#)

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Source: Author's collection

Figure 5 – Entry in the "Record" of the paremia

The screenshot shows the 'Record' section for the paremia 'EM CASA DE FERREIRO, ESPETO DE PAU'. The page header includes 'Centro Virtual Cervantes' and 'LENGUA'. The breadcrumb trail is 'Refranero multilingüe > Buscador > Ficha Paremia'. The title 'EM CASA DE FERREIRO, ESPETO DE PAU' is displayed in blue. Below the title, there are links for 'Otros idiomas' (ES, AL, DE, AR, CA, HR, FR, GL, GRC, EL, EN, IT, LA, FA, RO, RU, SB, EU) and tabs for 'Paremia', 'Variantes', 'Sinónimos', 'Antónimos', and 'Contextos'. The 'Paremia' tab is selected. The content includes: 'Idioma: Portugués', 'Enunciado: Em casa de ferreiro, espeto de pau', 'Traducción literal: En casa del herrero, pincho de palo', 'Marcador de uso: Muy usado', and 'Fuentes: Chaves E97; Machado1996 p. 207; Souza p. 1; Pinto2000 p. 78; Costa1999 p. 159'. The footer contains 'Centro Virtual Cervantes © Instituto Cervantes, 1997-2023. Reservados todos los derechos. cvc@cervantes.es'.

Source: Author's collection

Using the provided proverbs serves as an example to illustrate the search in the RM. In the example above: "*Em casa de ferreiro, espeto de pau*" (The shoemaker's son always goes barefoot).

Figure 6 – Entry in the "Variants" section of the paremia

The screenshot shows the 'Variants' section for the paremia 'EM CASA DE FERREIRO, ESPETO DE PAU'. The page header includes 'Centro Virtual Cervantes' and 'LENGUA'. The breadcrumb trail is 'Refranero multilingüe > Buscador > Ficha Paremia'. The title 'EM CASA DE FERREIRO, ESPETO DE PAU' is displayed in blue. Below the title, there are links for 'Otros idiomas' (ES, AL, DE, AR, CA, HR, FR, GL, GRC, EL, EN, IT, LA, FA, RO, RU, SB, EU) and tabs for 'Paremia', 'Variantes', 'Sinónimos', 'Antónimos', and 'Contextos'. The 'Variantes' tab is selected. The content includes three entries: 1) 'Enunciado: Em casa de ferreiro, espeto de salgueiro (Carrusca, vol. II, p. 27; Lacerda2000 p.88; Costa1999 p. 159)', 'Traducción literal: En casa del herrero, pincho de sauce'; 2) 'Enunciado: Casa de ferreiro, espeto de pau (Brasil) (Carrusca, vol. II, p. 27; Machado1996 p. 131; Souza p. 1; Lacerda2000 p. 88)', 'Traducción literal: Casa de herrero, pincho de palo'; 3) 'Enunciado: Em casa de ferreiro o pior apeiro (Chaves E97; Carrusca, vol. II, p. 27; Machado1996 p. 207; Lacerda2000 p.88)', 'Traducción literal: En casa de herrero el peor apero'. The footer contains 'Centro Virtual Cervantes © Instituto Cervantes, 1997-2023. Reservados todos los derechos. cvc@cervantes.es'.

Source: Author's collection

Figure 7 – Entry in the "Synonyms" section of the paremia



Source: Author's collection

- b. Variants and synonyms are also presented.
- c. Next, the identified statements will be analyzed.
- d. Finally, students are instructed on the Evaluation activity, which will take place in the next class, with guidance for each pair or group to bring at least one laptop.

Part III - Evaluation (90 minutes)

For the material evaluation, it is suggested that each pair or group create a dialogue incorporating various paremias selected by the students from the *Refranero Multilingüe*. The procedure to be followed includes the following points:

- a. A maximum of two of the studied folk sayings from the previous class is accepted;
- b. they should use a minimum of five paremias in the dialogue. Variants or synonyms can also be used as long as the students justify these choices at the end of the presentation;
- c. The length of the dialogue should be approximately one and a half pages;
- d. The text in Times New Roman, size 12. The title of the dialogue in 14 and bold;
- e. The line spacing will be 1.5;
- f. The text will be sent to the teacher after the oral presentation and comments in the classroom.

Final considerations

Considering the acquisition/learning hypotheses proposed by Krashen (1982) and the formulations of Almeida Filho (2015) related to the communicative approach, a didactic activity has been developed to incorporate sufficient and varied elements to meet some of their assumptions. To achieve this, a theme previously addressed in earlier levels was used, expanding and deepening it, allowing the use of different language skills at each stage of the activity. This didactic proposal, naturally, can be applied in its original form or adapted as needed.

On the one hand, the chosen theme is attributed to the purpose of recovering components of oral language less known to students, such as folk sayings, and, on the other hand, to the lack of didactic activities in paremiology.

One of the considerations emphasized by linguist Almeida Filho relates to creating activities based on communicative methods, highlighting the complexities involved. He points out that the teacher's success in applying this paradigm is linked to the internalization of the new pattern.

Furthermore, the relevance of the role of the foreign language teacher is highlighted not only in the elaboration or selection of materials that promote interaction in the classroom but also in their performance as agents responsible for both the linguistic and emotional development of the student. Therefore, a discussion directed towards the learner's emotional aspect is open to be carefully considered given its influence on the acquisition-learning of a foreign language.

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