

FIGURED PRONUNCIATION IN GRAMMATICA PORTOGHESE- BRASILIANA, BY GAETANO FRISONI (1898)

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The chapter entitled “Figured pronunciation in *Grammatica Portoghese-Brasiliana*, by Gaetano Frisoni (1898)” has its starting point in the work *Grammatica ed esercizi pratici della lingua Portoghese-Brasiliana*, written by Gaetano Frisoni and published in 1898 by the Milanese publisher Ulrico Hoepli. The book is intended for Italian speakers interested in learning Portuguese as a Foreign Language (PLE) and is set in a context where the Portuguese language was acquiring importance thanks to the intensifying commercial relations between the two countries and to the blood ties that increasingly linked the two nations, that were intensified by the migratory processes of the time. Frisoni, in addition to being a teacher and a translator, was the author of several works in the field of linguistic studies, with special emphasis on lexicography, grammatical studies and foreign language area. In the latter, Frisoni stood out for the elaboration of pedagogical grammars, among which we highlight the work that is the focus of this study.

The study of Frisoni’s grammar – by stimulating a look toward the past – puts us before the possibility of rescuing the history of authors, teaching materials, and

reference works that are often relegated to oblivion. In this sense, the proposed study is close to works already developed under the historiographical perspective and that aimed to revisit didactic works for teaching PLE, as well as shed light on authors and works neglected in the area until then, such as those developed by Félix (2004); Júdice and Almeida (2006); Almeida (2011); Schäfer-Priess (2012); Fonseca (2013); Almeida and Júdice (2016), among others.

Furthermore, dealing with the issue of pronunciation in a Portuguese as a foreign language teaching material dating from the 19th century and designed to be used in a non-immersion situation requires a displacement exercise from the reader situated in the 21st century, since the tools available today and widely used in the LE classroom for recording, reproducing and processing sound were non-existent at that time. Considering this restriction from the technological point of view for the development of a work on pronunciation, Rebelo and Santos (2016) emphasize the importance of the analysis of 19th century grammars or manuals, as these would be the resources available to understand how speaking was taught through writing and how the figured pronunciation was processed

Thus, standing before a nineteenth-century work with an interest in observing how the teaching of pronunciation was introduced raises the following questions: How did authors of teaching manuals, such as Gaetano Frisoni, for example, deal with this component? What strategies were used? How could teachers and learners work on developing the pronunciation of the target language with only the book as an auxiliary resource? What would be the practical exercises suggested by the author on the subject? With these questions in mind, the lesson aiming to address the theme of pronunciation in Frisoni's work was analyzed.

Considering the scope of this investigation, it is aligned with the foundations of an eminently historiographic research, with special emphasis on the Historiography of Foreign Language Teaching (SWIGGERS, 1998). According to Swiggers (2013), we can state that the *Grammatica ed esercizi pratici della lingua Portoghese-Brasiliana*-or, for short, the *Grammatica Portoghese-Brasiliana*-is included in what is described as “the material reflection (or deposit) of the history of linguistics” (SWIGGERS, 2013, p. 42). In this definition, Swiggers (*op. cit.*) includes grammars, vocabularies, theoretical texts, textbooks and even autobiographies, memoirs, prefaces, correspondences, among others. According to the author, all these materials should then be considered as sources of investigation into the development of linguistic ideas and practices (MALKIEL, 1969; SWIGGERS, 1982; ALTMAN, 2012). To this end, the historiographers, in doing their work, observe a triple dimension. This means that, first, they need to develop reflective

attitudes about the teaching of the foreign language which is the object of their investigation. Second, they need to take into account the descriptive linguistic work itself. With regard to the third dimension, the historiographer must consider data that allow for a contextualization of FL teaching, as the textbook is a reflection of the mindset of its time.

In the development of the chapter, in line with what was previously mentioned, besides the presentation of the work and its author, we undertook a study about Frisoni's view on the teaching of pronunciation, shedding light on the use of figured pronunciation as a didactic resource. This historiographical research, therefore, joins others with the same perspective and is committed to building a historical overview of the area of Portuguese as a Foreign Language, seen from the perspective of the development of teaching materials and their authors. By selecting pronunciation in aforementioned work as the focus of analysis, it was possible to approach both the author's theoretical knowledge, expressed through the description of the Portuguese language spoken in Brazil and its differences in contrastive analysis with the Italian language, and the methodology used for teaching pronunciation to Italian speakers at the time.

The figured pronunciation – a didactic resource employed by Frisoni in his work – consists, according to Onzi (2016, p. 60), “in an orthographic translation of the word through the combination of graphemes and accents in which the pronunciation appears”. Thus, figured pronunciation – or “orthographic translation” in Onzi's terms (*op. cit. loc. cit.*) – intends to provide the foreign language learner with a representation of the pronunciation of words thanks to a simplification of spelling and a rewriting of words. The reading of the figured pronunciation must be done by the learner according to their reading habits in L1 so that they may have an idea of sound realization of the target language.

The description and analysis carried out show Frisoni's concern in bringing to his students, in an accessible language, not only a contrastive study, but also characteristic aspects of the Portuguese spoken in Brazil. Hence, the student who is little familiar with the pronunciation of the target language and who had only the teacher as a speech model, could have access – through the figured pronunciation feature – to a solution to advance in their studies of the foreign language.

Throughout the analysis, the author's explanations of the pronunciation of the target language in comparison to the pronunciation of the Italian language, the proposals for figured pronunciation, as well as the analysis of one of the reading exercises with the application of figured pronunciation could be observed. The investigation also made it possible to raise the inconsistencies on the description

proposed by Frisoni, both with regard to the pronunciation of vowels and consonants. Regarding this aspect, we highlight, among others, the issues related to the pronunciation of <ç>, <m> or <e> unstressed at the end of a word. The author's solution for cases in which there is no correspondence between Portuguese and Italian pronunciation, as in the case of <g> followed by <e> or <i> or of <j> followed by either vowel also deserves attention. It is also worth noting that the comparison with works published at the same time in Brazil about the Portuguese language and its teaching were fundamental for the development of the analysis, especially those produced by Ribeiro (1883), Owl (1848) and Grivet (1881).

Finally, the contribution of this investigation to the rescue and preservation of the memory of teaching Portuguese as a foreign language must be highlighted. Also worthy of attention is the fact that Frisoni's work allows us not only to take a careful look at practices related to teaching pronunciation in a foreign language teaching environment, but also to reflect on the language that was spoken in Brazil at the time of your publication. One hopes, therefore, that this study can be one more contribution to linguistic historiography studies in the area of PLE.

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