Abstract

One of the differences between Brazilian Portuguese (henceforth BP) and European Portuguese (henceforth EP) is that post-vocalic laterals are vocalized in the former. This fact has been traditionally analysed as a phonological phenomenon in which a lateral is realized as a back rounded glide when in syllable final position: /sal/ \(\rightarrow [sáw] \) sal "salt" (cf. Câmara (1970), Callou & Leite (1990)). According to this process forms which have a distinct pronunciation in EP become homophonous in BP. Thus, EP has the forms "bad" man [máw]/ "badly" mal [mál] and "tail" cauda [káwda]/ "syrup" calda [kálda]. On the other hand, BP forms "bad" mau/ "badly" mal are pronounced as [máw] and forms such as "tail" cauda/ "syrup" calda are pronounced as [káwda]. In this paper we intend to evaluate the adequacy of assuming a phonological input such as /sál/ for sal "salt" [sáw] in BP. We argue that assuming an input such as /sáw/ is more adequate to a synchronic analysis of BP. Our proposal is based on variation involving forms which present postvocalic /l/ in word-internal position. In order to discuss the so-called postvocalic /l/ in word internal position as in calda "syrup" [kálda] one has to consider the behaviour of "r" sounds in BP. There are two types of "r" sounds in BP which we will refer to as weak and strong "r's" (cf. Oliveira (1983, 1999)). The weak "r" occurs intervocally as a tap: caro "expensive" [káru]. The strong "r" - which we will represent as R - may be manifested as a number of different sounds and occurs in syllable initial position: carro "car" [káRu], rato "rat" [Rátu], desrespeito "disrespect" [desRespejtu]. When an "r" follows a syllable that ends in a vowel either the tap or the strong R may occur: caro "expensive" [káru], carro "carro" [káRu]. When "r" follows a syllable that ends in a diphthong it is typically manifested as a tap as in Laura "Laura" [láwra] and feira "street market" [féjra] and occasionally as the strong R as in bairro "neighborhood" [bájRu]. When "r" follows a syllable that ends in a consonant –as in desrespeito "disrespect"– the strong R occurs systematically: [desRespéjtu]. When considering BP words which are claimed to have a word-internal postvocalic /l/ followed by an "r" sound – such as bilo "lace bobbin" or guela "gill" – we get either the tap "bilo [wRlo],[gue]" or the strong R "bilo,wRlo,gue". Different speakers may vary the choice for the "r" sound depending on the word in question. The analysis is based on data from Brazilian university students. We intend to evaluate the best approach to analyse the variation concerning "r" sounds followed by a postvocalic /l/. We will consider a perspective which assumes it reflects a sound change in progress and also a proposal which assumes that it reflects a case of lexical diffusion.

One of the differences between Brazilian Portuguese (henceforth BP) and European Portuguese (henceforth EP)\(^1\) is that post-vocalic laterals are vocalized in the former. This fact has been traditionally analysed as a phonological phenomenon in which a lateral is realized as a back rounded glide when in syllable final position (cf. Câmara (1970), Callou & Leite (1990)). The data in (1) illustrates this proposal.
Note that some forms which have a distinct pronunciation in EP become homophonous in BP. This is due to the process of lateral vocalization. Forms in (2) indicate major features of word-final /l/ in BP and EP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>European Port</th>
<th>Brazilian Port</th>
<th>&quot;mau&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;mal&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;calda&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;cauda&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[mál]</td>
<td>[máw]</td>
<td>bad</td>
<td>badly</td>
<td>syrup</td>
<td>tail</td>
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<tr>
<td>[máw]</td>
<td>[máw]</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>[káwda]</td>
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<td>[káwda]</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In this paper we intend to evaluate the adequacy of assuming a phonological input such as /mál/ for mal "badly" [máw] in BP. This is the traditional view assumed by all works in BP phonology. We will provide evidence which shows that such a view is in fact inadequate. We argue that assuming an input such as /máw/ mal "badly" is more adequate to a synchronic analysis of BP.

The data we analyse was collected from 60 subjects (18 male and 42 female) all of whom are undergraduate students at the Federal University of Minas Gerais. The data is divided into three sets. The first set comprises a group of words which present a syllable-final /l/ (eg. "bilro" pronounced as "bi[w]ro") and some words have a syllable-final u-diphthong (eg. "besouro" pronounced as "beso[w]ro"). The second set of data is intended to investigate plural forms of final-/l/ (eg. "anel") and final-/u/ (eg. "trofêu") words. The final

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1 For the matter addressed in this paper EP and Southern Brazilian dialects display the same behaviour, i.e /l/ vocalization does not take place. When reference is made to EP in this paper it also includes the Southern Brazilian dialects.
set of data is aimed at investigating derived forms of final-/l/ and final-/u/ words. By analysing these data we intend to show that the alleged syllable final-/l/ words are better analysed as presenting a high back rounded vowel in word-final position.

To defend our proposal we will consider formerly those forms which have an alleged syllable final /l/ in word internal position (calda "syrup"). Further evidence will follow from cases where it is assumed there is an /l/ in word-final position (mal "badly") and in some derived forms (saleiro "salt shaker", salgado "salty").

In order to discuss the so-claimed postvocalic /l/ in word internal position as in calda "syrup" [káwda] one has to consider the behavior of "r" sounds in BP. There are two types of "r" sounds in BP which we will refer to as weak and strong "r's" (cf. Oliveira (1983, 1999)). The weak "r" occurs intervocally and it is manifested as a tap and the strong "r" - which we will represent as R - may be manifested as a number of different sounds and occurs in syllable initial position:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Weak 'r'} & \\
\text{a. caro} & "expensive" & [\text{káru}] \\
\text{Strong 'R'} & \\
\text{b. 1. carro} & "car" & [\text{káRu}] \\
\text{2. rato} & "rat" & [\text{Rátu}] \\
\text{3. desrespeito} & "disrespect" & [\text{desRespejtu}] \\
\end{align*}
\]

When an "r" follows a syllable that ends in a vowel either the tap or the strong R may occur: caro "expensive" [káru], carro "carro" [káRu]. When "r" follows a syllable that

\footnote{2 The strong R may be phonetically manifested in BP as [h, ň, x, y, ř].}
ends in a diphthong it is typically manifested as a tap as in Laura "Laura" [láwra] and feira "street market" [féjra] and occasionally as the strong R as in bairro "neighborhood" [bájRu]. When "r" follows a syllable that ends in a consonant – as in desrespeito "disrespect" – the strong R occurs systematically: [desRespéjtu].

Let us then consider the output for BP words which are claimed to have a word-internal postvocalic /l/ followed by an "r" sound:

(4) a. bilro "lace bobbin"
b. guelra "gill"

If we consider the dialects which pronounce an /l/ in syllable final position – as EP and Southern Brazilian ones – we observe that the strong R always occurs after the syllable final /l/. This is illustrated in (5a). In those dialects where /l/-vocalization occurs we find the data shown in (5b).

(5) a. bi[lR]o or bi[wR]o "lace bobbin"
gue[lR]a or gué[wR]a "gill"
b. bi[wR]o or gué[wR]a "gill"

3 The weak 'r' also occurs in branching onsets: prato [prátu] "plate". This environment is not relevant to the
The first syllable in the words in (5b) ends in [w] for BP speakers. Concerning the output for the "r" sound which follows [w] we get either the tap "bi[wr]o, gue[wr]a" or the strong R "bi[wR]o, gue[wR]a". Different speakers may vary the choice for the "r" sound depending on the word in question. That is, a speaker may have "bi[wr]o" and "chi[wR]ear". This shows that the same speaker does not have a single pattern as expected if the sound change – from /l/ to [w] – applies systematically the same way to any word which displays the structural environment requested.

The fact that either the tap or the strong R may occur in the words in (5b) show a similar behavior of "r" sounds when followed by a vowel (ca[r]o, ca[R]o) or a diphthong (Lau[r]a, bai[R]o). If the glide [w] behaved like a consonant in "bilro, guelra" the "r" sound should systematically be the strong R (cf. des[R]espeito) and this is not the case in BP. Note, thus, that in those cases where the /l/ is pronounced – as in EP and South Brazil – (cf. (5a) the strong R always occur.

Our proposal is that "bilro, guelra" in (5a) dialects have inputs such as /biwro, biwRo/ and /gewra, gewRa/. We assume that these competing forms show that these words have not yet completed their history in the language. Thus, the input for the alleged word-internal postvocalic /l/ is in fact /w/: /káwda/ for both calda "syrup" and cauda "tail".
In search of further supporting evidence we will consider the other two sets of data which were pointed out earlier in this paper. Let us now consider the behavior of the so-called post-vocalic /l/ in word final position.

Analysis which propose inputs such as /sál/ for *sal* "salt" intend to account not only for the occurrence of [l] in some derived forms – such as [saléjru] *saleiro* "salt shaker" – but they also aim at accounting for plural forms of the so-called final /l/ forms. It is important to mention that forms which end in a /w/-diphthong make their plural by adding /s/ to the singular form: *degrau-degraus* "steps". On the other hand forms which end in a so-called word-final /l/ make their plural by deleting the final /l/ in the singular form and adding /is/ to it: *sais* "salts". Notice that the arguments for assuming an input with word-final /l/ in order to account for plural forms is actually ad hoc. In fact when using the plural forms of the so-called final-/l/ words (*sais* and *degraus*) BP speakers typically have three alternatives. Following the most current pattern for synchronic BP they only use the plural mark in the article: "*os sal*" and "*os degrau*". They may also use the plural ending inadequately: "*os sa[ws]*)" and "*os degra[is]*)". Of course the third alternative is to use the standard plural forms "*os sais*" and "*os degraus*". We argue that this behavior shows that the so-called final-/l/ words and the words ending in a /w/-diphthong display the same behavior as other words which have irregular plural forms in BP: *ovos, pães, irmãos, leões*, etc. So, they should be treated as exceptional individually learned words. Thus, there is no need to assume a word-final /l/ to account for differences involving plural forms of syllable final /l/ and final /w/-
diphthongs words in BP. The output for both cases is a syllable-final /w/: /degráw/ degrau "step" and /sáw/ sal "salt".

Let us finally consider the relationship between forms such as "sal, saleiro, salgado" for "salt, salt shaker, salty". We ought to account for the fact that an [l] appears in derived forms such as [saléjru] saleiro "salt shaker" being that we assume a representation for the underived form as /sáw/ sal "salt". We argue that the BP sound structure does not typically allow for intervocalic glide /w/ in pretonic position. Thus, a form like [sawéjru] may be interpreted as not fitting the sound pattern of the language. Considering that [sawéjru] is not adequate speakers find the possibility of an output such as [saléjru]. It remains for us to address how words such as "sal, saleiro, salgado" are related in the language. We claim that they may have a semantic relationship but not a phonological one. Thus, these words are lexically listed as individual items: /sáw, saléjro, sawgádo/.

In this paper we argue that there is no syllable final-/l/ in BP. We analysed the so-claimed syllable final-/l/ words in medial position (calda), in word-final position (sal) and the related forms (saleiro, salgado). Our proposal is that the so-called process of lateral vocalization actually reflects a sound change which has been completed for most words which actually have a glide /w/ in syllable final position. Some words – such as "bilro, guelra" - still display some competing forms as a consequence of an undergoing sound change.
Bibliography


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