



# Kriolu in School?! A Real Need in Cabo Verde

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## ABSTRACT

In Cabo Verde there is no tradition of formal teaching of the Cabo Verdean language (CVL), the mother tongue of virtually all of the islands' inhabitants. Instead, the language of education is exclusively Portuguese. In this article I analyse this sociolinguistic context and specifically examine three innovative bilingual education models (two with the Cabo Verdean diaspora in Portugal and one in Cabo Verde itself) that introduce CVL as the language of instruction in schools. These models are Let's Talk at School—*Nu ben papia na skóla* (2002–2005) and Turma Bilingue [Bilingual Class] (2007–2012), both carried out in Portugal, and the Cabo Verdean project, *Si ka fila tudu ta fila un ponta* [If Everything Is Not Achieved, at Least Something Is] (2013–2019). I participated in the former two projects and directed the latter. This article reflects upon my experiences in the context of my work as an educator, links this experience to theoretical discussions within academia and also highlights the practical challenges and opportunities inherent in establishing bilingual education programmes. I argue for the benefits of the use of mother-tongue and minority languages in classrooms since this maximises the learning experience and potential of students by fostering opportunities for the development of their bilingualism and biliteracy. With specific reference to the situation in Cabo Verde, I call for greater investment in the training of teachers and the creation of appropriate teaching materials, which, I argue, will require increased political courage to prioritise the issue of language in schools.

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In this article, I analyse the sociolinguistic context of the Cabo Verdean education system, specifically initiatives to introduce the Cabo Verdean language (CVL) as the language of instruction in schools. First, I examine bilingual education (in Portuguese and CVL) in the Cabo Verdean diaspora, specifically in Portugal, as it was there that such models were first introduced. I personally participated in two of these experimental projects carried out in Portugal, namely Let's Talk at School—*Nu ben papia na skóla* (2002–2005) and Turma Bilingue [Bilingual Class] (2007–2012). Finally, I present an in-depth report on the project *Si ka fila tudu ta fila un ponta* [If Everything Is Not Achieved, at Least Something Is], a bilingual education experiment carried out in Cabo Verde (2013–2019). I was the coordinator of this last project and therefore I write about it from my own perspective and provide a personal report on the challenges and opportunities inherent in establishing bilingual education programmes in Cabo Verde.

## RESEARCH CONTEXT: LANGUAGE AND PRESTIGE IN CABO VERDE

In Cabo Verde, the official language, Portuguese, has traditionally been considered the language of prestige, and the mother tongue, CVL, commonly known as Cabo Verdean Creole, has the status of national language. However, while the prestige language is restricted to formal contexts, especially in its written form, the mother tongue is widely used in all informal contexts of everyday life, especially in spoken communication, and it is gradually being increasingly used in formal contexts such as the media, politics, the courts, and so on. Formal education in Cabo Verde has always been marked by the official exclusion of the mother tongue, a situation that has been lamented since the nineteenth century and publicly criticised since the first half of the twentieth. However, well into the twenty-first century the use of the mother tongue in Cabo Verdean schools is still an exception, and the recommendations made by UNESCO on this subject since 1953 are still being ignored. Being educated in their mother tongue is a fundamental right to which Cabo Verdean children do not yet have access. This right has been slow to reach countries that were subject to colonisation, such as Cabo Verde, where linguistic prejudice and the stigma of the mother tongue persist, despite its widespread use by all social strata. It is important to emphasise that the prohibitive measures that restrict the use of CVL at school have proved to be ineffective for they have succeeded in reinforcing the political power of the Portuguese language, but have not favoured its development as a language used in informal contexts. As Ferreira (1985) states, “Languages do not impose themselves. They teach themselves. They spread themselves. They give themselves prestige” (p. 141). The imposition of Portuguese as the exclusive language of instruction has failed to undermine the vitality of CVL, even in spaces where its presence was deemed undesirable, such as schools.

After independence, in April 1979, the first ever event to focus on CVL was held, the First Linguistic Colloquium on Cabo Verdean Creole, in the city of Mindelo, organised by the then General Directorate of Culture, part of the Ministry of Education and Culture, and funded by UNESCO. This colloquium marked a new era for CVL. It brought together academics, cultural agents, writers, anthropologists and linguists, resident citizens, and members of the diaspora, as well as foreign linguists. The use of the mother tongue in the education system was one of the themes widely debated and highlighted by several speakers, especially Dulce Duarte, who in addition to defending Cabo Verdean Creole's status as a language, clearly emphasised the need to teach the mother tongue in schools, providing guidelines for its implementation and suggesting methodologies for teaching Portuguese as a second language and CVL as the mother tongue (Duarte, 1998; Veiga, 2000). Since 1979, several events have been held and legal regulations have been introduced that evidence a growing appreciation of CVL. In 1989, the General Directorate of Extra-Curricular Education, part of the Cabo Verdean Ministry of Education, held the Forum on Bilingual Education (Lopes, 2011) following the Experimental Bilingual Literacy Project, started in 1987, aimed at an adult audience.

In 1993, the Cabo Verdean Language Homogenisation Group was formed, chaired by the linguist Manuel Veiga, and also composed of Alice Matos, Dulce Duarte, Eduardo Cardoso, Inês Brito, José Luís Hopper Almada, and Tomé Varela da Silva. The Group formulated the ALUPEC

(Unified Alphabet for Written Cabo Verdean) (Cardoso, 2005) in 1994, which was approved in 1998 by the Cabo Verde Council of Ministers, through Decree-Law 67/98, of 31 December 1998.<sup>1</sup>

In this document, it is established that “Since Creole is the everyday language in Cabo Verde and an essential element of national identity, the harmonious development of the country necessarily involves the development and valorisation of the mother tongue”. In addition, the legislation states that “The Education System Reform must implement a teaching strategy for Creole, taking into account the implications of the introduction of our language in the curricula” (Decree-Law 67/98, of 31 December 1998).

At the legal level, in addition to Decree-Law 67/98, of 31 December 1998, other official documents were subsequently published that support the valorisation and inclusion of Cabo Verdean Creole within the official education system. These include Resolution No. 48/2005, of 14 November 2005, which defends the valorisation of Cabo Verdean Creole, its introduction into schools and the development of its study by nationals and foreigners, as well as the concept of “conscious bilingualism”:

“conscious bilingualism” advocated by the current Government Programme [that is, that of the 6th legislature] is a requirement of the historical, social, cultural, heritage, and sentimental value of the two main languages of our anthropological experience—Cabo Verdean and Portuguese. However, it is not possible to build a “conscious bilingualism” if there is no real and progressive parity in terms of the status, teaching, and use of the two languages”. (Resolution No. 48/2005, of 14 November 2005)

Decree-Law No. 8/2009, of 16 March 2009, establishes the Cabo Verdean alphabet, developed from the earlier ALUPEC, and refers to experiments conducted abroad, particularly in the United States, where it has already been used successfully. The Basic Law of the Educational System, revised by Legislative Decree No. 2/2010, of 7 May 2010, also defends the valorisation of the Cabo Verdean national language and its introduction into the education system (articles 9, 10, and 25). Resolution no. 47/2012, of 23 August 2012, concerning the creation of the National Commission for Languages, defended the “pursuit of measures that enshrine the development of Cabo Verdean—verbal and sign language—alongside Portuguese [...] at the national and international level (preamble and article 4). In addition, Resolution No. 32/2015, of 15 April 2015, approved “measures leading to the affirmation and enhancement of the Cabo Verdean language”, highlighting “the introduction of teaching of and in the mother tongue in the education system, from preschool to higher education, as well as the institutionalisation of a bilingual teaching model more suited to the country’s context”.

Despite these positive developments at the level of legislation, the language of instruction in Cabo Verde remains Portuguese. Duarte (1998, p. 215) and Pires (2010, p. 149) state that 90 per cent of school-age children speak Portuguese for the first time when they start school and their experiences of using this language are limited to the classroom. In everyday life, they rarely have the opportunity to hear or have contact with the Portuguese language in other contexts. Lopes (2011, p. 114) states that there are some families who use Portuguese at home and also learn this language in an informal context, but such cases are very rare, and the speakers in question still consider Portuguese “the problematic language”. Duarte (1998) even states that “a very high percentage of school-age children come from environments where Portuguese is not spoken [...] Furthermore, these children, once they leave primary school, unlearn Portuguese, not only because of lack of knowledge of the language, but also because of lack of practice” (p. 132).

School has been virtually the only means of accessing the Portuguese language. There is no coordinated support for fostering bilingualism in Cabo Verde. Individuals become bilingual independently of the school system and their language learning trajectory is usually characterised

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<sup>1</sup> Reference should also be made to the Forum on Pathways to Valorize the Cabo Verdean Language: The Role of the National Assembly, held in 2002 by the Cabo Verdean Parliament; the Forum for Evaluating ALUPEC, held in 2008, an initiative of the Ministry of Culture (Lopes, 2011); and the First Reflection Workshop on Bilingual Education in Cabo Verde, organised by the Ministry of Education and Sport in February 2015, in the context of the Pilot Experiment on Bilingual Education, attended by Jamaican linguist Rocky Mead and Portuguese linguist Dulce Pereira, both Creole specialists with experience in implementing bilingual education projects in their respective countries of origin.

by sequential acquisition, since those who are fluent in Portuguese usually learned it at school and in a formal context. Bilingualism is not promoted and although, socially, Cabo Verde is considered a bilingual country, its policies do not encourage true bilingualism. In the educational context, the mother tongue has been used only as a resource to support Portuguese language learning (Monteiro, 2009). Teachers often have to use their mother tongue to be able to teach in Portuguese. Gomes (1998, p. 44) states that 75 per cent of Cabo Verdeans speak both languages and that only 25 per cent are exclusively Creole speakers. However, language proficiency in Cabo Verdean is considerably better than in Portuguese, since there have been a significant number of updates to the linguistic norms of Cabo Verdean in recent years. Most speakers are not very fluent in Portuguese; they tend not to use it on a daily basis, communicating predominantly in their mother tongue. Even those who have satisfactory proficiency in both languages generally perform better in their mother tongue than in Portuguese.

Rosa (2010, p. 104) discusses cases of higher education students in Cabo Verde that demonstrate a fragile command of Portuguese and awkwardness around speaking the language. Lopes (2011, p. 116) confirms these findings with the data she collected, which show that over 90 per cent of young people feel more comfortable speaking CVL, as opposed to just over 5 per cent for Portuguese. Reading and writing present the opposite situation, with Lopes demonstrating that about 80 per cent feel more comfortable reading and writing in Portuguese, as opposed to about 7 per cent for CVL (Lopes 2011, p. 116). The percentage gaps between the use of the two languages in oral communication and reading and writing highlight the diglossia that exists in the country, since the Cabo Verdean language is not part of the education system. This situation, according to Mouta (2019, p. 13) results from a bilingualism characterised by asymmetric skills in spoken communication and writing, known as a modal diglossia (Lopes, 2016, p. 183), which reflects a lack of equity between the use and domains of use of the two languages. In other words, each of the languages is activated depending on the mode in question, whether oral or written, usually associated with its use in informal or formal contexts. Mouta (2019, p. 13) also states that Creole has been absolutely dominant in oral interactions in the archipelago for a long time now, while Portuguese is still the only written language. The bilingual education pilot project described below aims to help reduce this asymmetry referred to by Mouta.

## EXPERIMENTS WITH THE CABO VERDEAN LANGUAGE IN SCHOOLS

Educational experiments involving CVL are the result of long-term projects and have been developed mainly in the Cabo Verde diaspora, namely in Portugal (Cardoso, 2005; Pereira, 2006; Pereira, Martins, & Antunes, 2013) and in the United States (Gonsalves, 1999). They have involved migrant communities and aimed to valorise their mother tongue and promote better integration into the host country. Language has been a powerful identity marker for Cabo Verdeans in the diaspora for several generations. CVL prevails in the family space and serves as a vehicle for communication between Cabo Verdeans living in different parts of the world. It can even be said that language is what unites Cabo Verdeans both inside and outside Cabo Verde itself.

### EXPERIMENT IN PORTUGAL

A number of bilingual education projects using Portuguese and CVL have been carried out in Portugal. Cardoso (2005, p. 56) highlights three involving Cabo Verdean children that were introduced in the metropolitan Lisbon area. The first was the Bicultural Education in Pre-Primary and Primary School Pilot Project, led by the Cristo Rei Parish in Algés and financed by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, which ran for four years, between 1990 and 1994, and was coordinated by Raja Litwinoff (see Litwinoff, 1994). The second, Educational Guidelines and Practices for Nursery Schools in a Bilingual Context, ran between 1998 and 2000, was promoted by the Entreculturas Secretariat and was focused on two nursery schools. It was developed in Portugal, in partnership with Denmark and England, and Dulce Pereira was a consultant and collaborator (see Pereira, 2006). These projects proved that CVL and Portuguese can coexist harmoniously in the school environment and can offer significant advantages for the linguistic development of the children involved. However, both projects came to an end and were not continued.

The third example, the most high-profile, was a bilingual education project implemented in Portugal in the 2008/2009 school year. It was coordinated by the Institute of Theoretical and Computational Linguistics (ILTEC) and financed by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation,

in the Vale da Amoreira group of schools in the municipality of Moita, and lasted five years (2007–2012), the first of which was devoted to preparing for its implementation. This example, called *Turma Bilingue* or Bilingual Class, was an integral part of the Bilingualism, Learning of L2 Portuguese and Educational Success in Portuguese Schools project. It was an experimental pilot research project whose main objective was to create and trial in Portugal an alternative way of teaching in the so-called first cycle (years 1 to 4), based on the development, learning, and regular use of two languages in the classroom. It aimed to simplify and “optimise” the integration of minority children into the Portuguese community, improving their performance at school and fostering their linguistic, cognitive, social, and cultural development of not only these children, but also of those belonging to the host community.

This trial consisted of monitoring the educational progress of one particular class in a public school, a class that contained a balance of students of Portuguese and Cabo Verdean origins, during the four years corresponding to the first cycle of Basic Education. In addition to the Portuguese teacher who covered the normal curriculum in Portuguese, the class also had a part-time Cabo Verdean teacher (the author of this article) who taught classes in CVL. As part of this project, the children of Portuguese and Cabo Verdean roots were taught to read and write in CVL and developed their language skills in both languages, despite only one hour of teaching time being dedicated to CVL per day. According to Pereira et al. (2013), in the areas assessed in Portuguese language performance (graphic aspects, narrative structure, and textual cohesion), the data collected through language tests in the bilingual class (up to the third year of schooling) generally indicated better results than those of the control class (which received monolingual teaching of an otherwise identical nature, to allow a comparative assessment).

## PROJECTS CARRIED OUT IN CABO VERDE

In Cabo Verde, the language of instruction has always been exclusively Portuguese and experimental attempts to use Cabo Verdean in schools have been very few and far between. The first recorded official attempt was the Experimental Bilingual Literacy Project in 1987, which lasted for five years. It was initially a mother-tongue adult literacy project supported by Swiss collaboration in Cabo Verde, and it followed UNESCO guidelines (IV International Conference on Adult Education, 1985) that proclaimed the right of all individuals to be educated in their mother tongue (Fanha, 1989). By agreement of the foreign and national consultants who were part of the team, as well as the Minister of Education, the project’s aim shifted to include literacy not only in CVL but also in Portuguese. This decision reflected the realities of the context, as there was no advantage in teaching adults to read and write only in Cabo Verdean, bearing in mind that the only recognised official language is Portuguese (Fanha, 1989).

There have been other examples of the mother tongue being used in schools but serving as a transitional language to Portuguese. This was the case of the Let’s Talk at School—*Nu ben papia na skóla* project, coordinated by Maria da Luz Correia, from the João de Deus Higher School of Education (Portugal), and co-financed by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, which ran for three years between 2002 and 2005. The participants were children aged between five and twelve whose mother tongue was Cabo Verdean Creole and who attended schools where the language of instruction was Portuguese. The main objectives were to contribute to the acquisition and development of basic communication skills in Portuguese, considered transversal skills in the basic education and preschool curriculum, to improve, design, and make experimental use of bilingual (CVL–Portuguese) materials to support the learning of Portuguese as a second language in schools in Portugal (Greater Lisbon) and Cabo Verde (islands of São Vicente, Santo Antão, and Santiago), and to prevent the social and school exclusion of children whose mother tongue was not the official language of instruction. I also participated in this project, collaborating with the team to create bilingual teaching materials.

An individual initiative was implemented by a teacher, Júlia Pereira (see Pereira, 2009) in a semi-private school in the city of Praia, which aimed to test the effectiveness of a reading method involving the mother tongue with students in their first year of schooling and to identify the advantages and limitations posed by learning this language. The results of this brief study showed that literacy in the mother tongue is possible and practicable and does not affect the learning of the Portuguese language. They also illustrated that most students achieved the desired objectives, that is, they learned to read (short texts) in both CVL and Portuguese and the teaching of the mother tongue stimulated the teaching of the Portuguese language.

The first experimental project aimed at teaching CVL to primary school children to be officially recognised by the Ministry of Education began in the 2013/2014 school year and was approved for six years. This bilingual education pilot project marked a turning point in Cabo Verde (Cardoso, 2018). The following section describes the evolution of this innovative initiative that places CVL and Portuguese on an equal footing in the classroom, without prejudice of any kind, thus promoting biliteracy and true bilingualism in the education system.

## **KRIOLU IN SKÓLA?! – A GENUINE BILINGUAL EDUCATION PILOT PROJECT**

The bilingual education pilot experiment, which began in the 2013/2014 school year, stemmed from a project entitled *Si ka fila tudu ta fila un pónta*. This was an action research project aimed at fully implementing the objectives outlined by a PhD course in Linguistics taught at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences at the Universidade Nova in Lisbon. The pilot experiment broke with the tradition of exclusively using the Portuguese language in formal education and overcame the obstacles that had prevented formal teaching of the mother tongue. It introduced CVL into the classroom alongside Portuguese, where it played a key role in the teaching/learning process and in the school life of the groups of students involved.

This project was presented to Cabo Verde's Ministry of Education for the first time in 2010, but despite having received a favourable response, it was only three years later that it was approved for implementation. The authorisation to introduce the experiment was signed on 6 August 2013 by the Minister of Education and Sports, Fernanda Marques, over six school years (the first to sixth year, between 2013 and 2019), as proposed, and in September 2013 the first two classes began their bilingual education journey. This bilingual education project began without any financial support but was closely monitored by the Ministry of Education and Sport's supervisory team. With the approval of the ministry, in September 2013 the pilot project commenced in two primary schools on the island of Santiago, one in an urban area and the other in a rural one. Ponta d'Água school (in the city of Praia) and Flamengos school (in the municipality of São Miguel) were chosen because previous contact had been made with experienced, motivated, and enterprising teachers in these schools. These staff members were willing to innovate and embrace new challenges; in short, they were teachers with the ideal profile to take part in this experiment. In the classrooms concerned, both Portuguese and Cabo Verdean were studied and used as the language of instruction in other subjects such as mathematics and integrated sciences, thus promoting not only bilingualism, but also biliteracy (Kabuto, 2011; Kenner, 2011).

This model was put into practice in two bilingual education experiments that served as a reference for the Cabo Verdean project. The first was the Jamaican Creole–English Bilingual Education Project implemented in 2004 in Jamaica by the Jamaican Language Unit of the Department of Language, Linguistics and Philosophy at the University of the West Indies, in Mona, Jamaica (Carpenter & Devonish, 2010; Morren & Morren, 2007); the second was the aforementioned Turma Bilingue project, coordinated by Dulce Pereira and implemented in Portugal between 2008 and 2012 by the Institute of Theoretical and Computational Linguistics. Both experiments produced good results and served as a reference due to the fact that the former involved a sociolinguistic context similar to that of Cabo Verde and the latter involved both Portuguese and CVL.

According to the description in Cardoso (2018), *Si ka fila tudu ta fila un pónta* was rooted in an analysis of the linguistic realities of Cabo Verde. The following factors were of particular relevance:

- i. The context of diglossia, in the sense of language hierarchies;
- ii. The mother tongue being ignored in the teaching/learning process;
- iii. Teaching in Portuguese has proved to be ineffective and leads to high failure rates;
- iv. Existing legislation in Cabo Verde (the Constitution and other legal guidelines)<sup>2</sup> supports initiatives that value the mother tongue, its introduction into teaching, and the development of the second language with a view to giving parity to the Portuguese and CVL;

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2 For example, Resolution No. 48/2005; Official Bulletin No. 46, of 14 November 2005; and Decree No. 2/2010 referring to the Revision of the Education System Basic Law, article 10, item h.

- v. Cabo Verde's educational policy aims to "Increase the knowledge and standing of the written form of the Cabo Verdean national language, as the first language of oral communication, with a view to its official use alongside the Portuguese language".

In accordance with these underlying principles, objectives were drawn up that guided this project, with a view to minimising the problems identified and contributing to the improvement of academic results. Of the objectives listed in Cardoso (2018), the following were of particular importance:

- i. Implementing bilingual teaching practices in accordance with the Cabo Verdean context and international guidelines;
- ii. Promoting biliteracy by encouraging the use of CVL as a language of instruction and as a subject to be studied alongside the Portuguese language;
- iii. Improving student performance levels in different language skills (oral communication, reading, writing, and language use).

Based on these objectives, the proposed teaching model was a total bilingualism model, commonly known as dual language education or two-way bilingual education (Baker & Wright, 2021; Garcia, 2010; Lindholm-Leary, 2001; Torres-Guzmán, Abbate, Brisk, & Minaya-Rowe, 2002). This model promotes high levels of bilingualism, which encourages the development of skills in all linguistic domains in both languages and the transfer of knowledge from one language to another. The two languages are developed simultaneously on a 50-50 basis to ensure equity between them and that the goals of bilingualism and biliteracy are not put at risk. As Baker and Wright (2021) put it, "The mission of all dual language schools [...] is to produce bilingual, biliterate and multicultural children" (pp. 229-230). In line with this mission, the programmes of this model of bilingual education promote bilingualism with high levels of proficiency in the mother tongue and in the second language, a biliteracy with a high degree of fluency in reading and writing in both languages, very positive academic achievements in different areas of the curriculum, and positive sociocultural skills that develop active citizenship and critical awareness in terms of attitudes and behaviour.

As part of the project, each of the classes had two teachers, one responsible for teaching in Cabo Verdean and the other responsible for teaching in Portuguese. The two thus formed a pedagogical partnership, planning classes and making pedagogical decisions together, especially with regard to the topics and content to be taught at each stage. However, in the classroom they worked with students separately, with a specific timetable for teaching in each of the languages. The topics and content to be covered in class could be first introduced in one language or the other, and then be developed in both, but using approaches and materials that complemented each other so that the Portuguese class was not a repetition of the Cabo Verdean class. The two languages had the same status in the classroom, each accounting for 50 per cent of the overall teaching. Learning to read and write took place simultaneously in both languages, to achieve biliteracy via the integration of the communicative, cognitive, and grammatical approaches, both in relation to spoken language and reading and writing.

Chimbutane (2017) presents research that promotes the use of multilingual resources in classroom interaction as a legitimate communicative and pedagogical strategy. He identifies the pilot experiment carried out in Cabo Verde as one that favours language separation pedagogy. He states that this methodology, based on the separation of languages, establishes well-defined boundaries between the two languages, preventing interference from one language to the other, because these are autonomous languages in which there are aspects that must be developed separately and in a linear way. Chimbutane refers to the justification given by a teacher who implements bilingual education in Mozambique, whose view is that languages should be taught in such a way that neither encroaches on the space of the other. However, whenever there is a need to resort to the other language, this teacher supports this to facilitate communication, such as when a student knows what to say but does not yet have sufficient vocabulary to verbalise it in the second language:

she used the occasion to remind the students (in Changana) that they should not speak Changana in Portuguese classes since there were appropriate spaces reserved for them to speak this language. In a debriefing session after the lesson, Ms Marta argued that, by forbidding and avoiding the use of the students' L1 in L2 contexts, she wanted to ensure that her students

thought and wrote in Portuguese when in Portuguese lessons. Underlying Ms Marta's stance is the view that learners need to be maximally exposed to Portuguese language input if mastery of this language is to be achieved. (Chimbutane 2017, p. 320)

However, the strict language separation model referred to by Garcia (2010) and Baker and Wright (2021) was considered to be the most suitable for establishing boundaries between the two languages. It was also deemed the most appropriate for catering to students' proficiency in each of the languages, for avoiding linguistic interference, and for promoting awareness that although Portuguese and Cabo Verdean are related, they are two distinct languages with different structures and uses. This methodology avoids the languages overlapping, avoiding possible negative interference. The learning of both languages is based on the syllabus, and both Portuguese and Cabo Verde are teaching languages and vehicular languages for content relating to all areas of the curriculum, avoiding the risk of a particular language specialising in a given subject.

The CVL programme was created from scratch, inspired by the documents *Programas de Português do ensino básico* [Portuguese Basic Education Programmes] (Reis, 2009), relating to the teaching of mother-tongue Portuguese in Portugal; *Programa do ensino básico* [Basic Education Programmes] (Marques, Maio, & Carvalho, 2011); and the *Programa da disciplina de língua Portuguesa* [Portuguese Language Discipline in Basic Education Programme—First Cycle] (Furtado & Tavares, 2011) used in Cabo Verde. The linguistic content was linked to that of the Portuguese programme taught in Cabo Verde in each year of schooling. Therefore, in order to implement the bilingual education pilot experiment, it was essential to carry out certain procedures before the process got underway:

- Elaborate a CVL programme;
- Train a group of teachers from both schools hosting the projects in the areas of CVL (alphabet, writing, and grammar), mother tongue teaching methodology, bilingualism and second language acquisition, production of teaching units, and pedagogical materials for mother tongue teaching;
- Produce teaching materials;
- Select team members;
- Meet with the Ministry of Education team;
- Meet with the children's caregivers.
- Prepare the teachers involved for the start of the bilingual experiment.

Teacher training covered the areas mentioned above, with no specific training for the Portuguese language, given that all teachers in the Cabo Verdean education system are qualified to teach Portuguese. There was no change to the curriculum or to the existing syllabus; CVL was simply introduced, which became the object of study and also the vehicular language of the content of other subjects in the curriculum, such as mathematics, integrated sciences, and so on.

There are no didactic materials on the market for teaching CVL, nor relevant publications aimed at a child audience. Therefore, all the resources used had to be created from scratch, although it was possible to use some that had been produced within the scope of the Turma Bilingue project carried out in Portugal, in which the mentor of this project was also involved as a CVL teacher. Initially the materials were created by the project mentor, but the teachers received training that enabled them to produce materials that would facilitate their work in the classroom, and thus progressively they also produced their own materials in response to their needs.

Rosa (2017) stated that the absence of "pre-fabricated" teaching materials was the main challenge faced by this project and calls for such materials to be produced:

There are still no teaching materials for the classes, which makes learning difficult. The teacher uses some materials they have produced and the support of books and short stories written in the mother tongue, for example "Lobu ku xibinhu", which is a classic of Cabo Verdean children's literature [...] most of the time, the students had access to literary texts through the teacher's computer, or the teacher would write the part of the text to be used that day on the blackboard and the students would copy it into their notebooks, and only then begin dealing with the subject of the

class, which results in a considerable waste of time. So, it is necessary to invest more, especially in the production of teaching materials that students can use not only in class, but also to study at home. (p. 89)

Rosa claims that there are no teaching materials, but then lists a set of materials produced and resources used in the classroom. His statement demonstrates that teaching is so compartmentalised that only readily available pre-existing textbooks that avoid “wasting time” are considered teaching materials. The materials for teaching CVL were produced, using authentic documents whenever possible, such as texts, oral traditions, songs, and so on, as Rosa states (2017). Efforts were made to design diversified and creative materials that would stimulate students, both linguistically and intellectually, and that would encourage communication, curiosity, and their involvement in the learning process, in line with Tomlinson’s (2009) perspective. Texts written in Cabo Verdean often had to be adapted and rewritten in accordance with the official alphabet for CVL approved in 1998, evaluated in 2008, and formally named the Cabo Verdean Alphabet in 2009 (item no. 4 of the preamble to Decree-Law 8/2009). Some texts translated from Portuguese were used and sometimes specific texts were also produced to help teach certain content. All this work always required a lot of dedication and commitment on the part of teachers, who invested in their own training and felt the need to deepen their knowledge, seeking on their own initiative to complement their basic training, via continued education and by obtaining new academic qualifications.

In June 2014, the Monitoring Team of the Ministry of Education and an external assessor, a teacher of Cabo Verdean-English bilingual education programmes in the United States (Professor Inês Brito), met to evaluate the first year of the experiment. The team observed teaching in the two bilingual classes, and met with the teachers and with the education officials in order to hear about their experiences and their opinions on the progress of the experiment. The following are highlights of the resulting report (Cardoso, 2018):

- The education officials were unanimous in terms of the smooth running of the experiment and encouraged its continuation, emphasising the following aspects: the children’s commitment to completing homework; the motivation to learn and interest in going to school, the children’s pride in what they have learned, always showing willingness to teach their parents or correct what they say, whether in Portuguese or Cabo Verdean; the children’s lack of inhibition in relation to speaking Portuguese; their speed in learning reading and writing skills compared to other children who were attending or had attended the school.
- From the observation of the classes, it was possible to see that the students in the bilingual classes were developing their linguistic awareness, managing to establish clear boundaries between the two languages; they wrote and read naturally; they clearly differentiated between the two languages, whether in spoken or written forms; they actively participated in classes, regardless of the language being used at the time; they valued their mother tongue and were not afraid of Portuguese. They already had a developed communicative competence and moved between the two languages without fear of making mistakes.

Rosa (2017) also highlights the positive aspects of the project, namely the students’ interest in learning their mother tongue and discussing issues with parents:

The little ones report that the best part of learning their mother tongue is coming home and being able to share with and teach their parents (who most of the time do not know the written form of Cabo Verdean) what they have learned in class, as well as the storytelling time that the teacher introduced in the classroom, which shows how important oral literature is for Cabo Verdean culture. (p. 89)

Due to the success of the initiative, the Ministry of Education decided to extend the experiment to two more schools the following year, on the island of Santiago (both in Tarrafal). In the 2015/2016 school year this expansion continued, with the experiment being introduced into two more schools on Santiago (in São Domingos) and two schools on the island of São Vicente. In the 2016/2017 school year, however, this bilingual education experiment was cancelled, when the government of the 9th Legislature (2016–2021) took power in Cabo Verde.

It appeared that CVL no longer had a place within the education system, as the following statement illustrates:

The Government proposes to build an education system embedded in the concept of the knowledge economy that, from the bottom to the top, guides young people towards a proficient mastery of languages, [...] to build a cosmopolitan profile open to the world. (Programme of the 9th Government of Cabo Verde, 2016, p. 11)

Despite the various obstacles encountered from 2016 onwards, the two pilot classes at the Flamengos and Ponta d'Água schools continued with the experiment until the 2018–2019 school year, the official date agreed for the project's conclusion. The groups of students brought into the project when it was extended by the Ministry of Education and Sports under the previous government did not continue with classes in their mother tongue and the Cabo Verdean national language has ceased to play a central role in education policy.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Formal education in Cabo Verde has a long way to go in contributing to the construction of effective bilingualism. Existing legislation favours the development of the mother tongue and its inclusion in the education system, but the political courage to prioritise the issue of language has been lacking. The production of teaching materials is essential to give teachers greater support and confidence in the teaching process and for that there needs to be a strong investment in this area, as well as in teacher training. Taking into account the political objective of bringing the status of the two languages into alignment, the path forwards must involve the formulation of language policies that favour the construction of effective bilingualism and planning for the implementation of these linguistic measures that require the mobilisation of human, financial, and material resources. It is up to policymakers to give priority to the issue of language so that CVL and Portuguese can coexist harmoniously, and both can be enriched and developed. So that these advantages are not just reserved for those students who had the privilege of taking part in this experiment, it is necessary to move from legislation to action and pay serious attention to the mother tongue. It is necessary to invest in teacher training, and to create political and financial conditions and human and material resources that allow for the dissemination of bilingual teaching practice and recognise the value of CVL, respecting a basic and universal right for people to be taught to read and write in their mother tongue.

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