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# Mirandese as an Endangered Language

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## 1. Introduction

Mirandese was legally recognized as a language during the late 1990s by the Parliament of the Portuguese Republic, under National Law 7/99, following the recent trend in Europe, especially in Spain, to view 'rural linguistic minorities' as 'communities who use a regional language.' However, compared with its neighbouring languages, the Mirandese language has certain unique characteristics, such as the process of its establishment and its typological features.

In this paper, I will analyse these peculiarities in the following order:

- geographical situation (2.0.)
- phonological features (2.1.)
- morphological features (2.2.)
- lexicological features (2.3.)
- originality in the process of establishment as a language (4.1.)

In addition to the above mentioned characteristics of Mirandese, the paper will also consider which linguistic features could be regarded as an 'endangered language' and lessons to be learned from the experience of Mirandese for the protection and promotion of endangered languages. The following points will be discussed:

- 'variants' of a language, or, 'minor language' in the language group, which are included in relatively close-related languages (such as the Romance languages group) could be classified as 'endangered languages.'
- (3.)

-- succession of the endangered language in the era of globalisation. ( 5. )

2. Typological description of the Mirandese language: What are the differences between it and surrounding languages ?

### 2.0 Geographical situation

The Mirandese language was originally spoken on the right bank of the midstream of the Douro River at the northwest part of the Iberian Peninsula ( see Map 1 ) In this area, the Douro River forms a deep canyon which defines the border between Portugal ( right/west bank ) and Spain ( left/east bank, where this river is known as Duero ) The nearest city with a population of more than 100,000 is Salamanca ( 166,000 in 2001 ), located southeast of the town of Miranda do Douro.<sup>1</sup> The border zone which the Douro/Duero River defines is called ' Douro/Duero Internacional '<sup>2</sup> and extends 112 km from north to south along. The northern half of this zone is called ' Terras de Miranda ' in the west bank or Portuguese territory and ' Sayago ' in the east bank or Spanish territory<sup>3</sup>. Most of the northern half of the ' Terras de Miranda ' is the original zone where Mirandese is spoken<sup>4</sup>. By administrative division, this area includes most of the municipality of Miranda do Douro<sup>5</sup> and three parish towns of the municipality of Vimioso<sup>6</sup>, which forms the westernmost part of the original zone. The relief of this zone, where the altitude varies from 450m to 800 m, is mainly a plateau ( *Planalto mirandês* ) and it is separated by valleys, namely, to the east by the Douro river and to the west by the Angueira River, though there is no topological obstacle to the north ( the border with Spain ) or to the south.

Most of the original area is used for agriculture, pasturage<sup>7</sup> and forestry, though its productivity is relatively low because of the aridity of the land. In some villages there are small-sized industries, namely, metalworking and cask making in Palaçuolo ( *Palaçoulo* in Portuguese ) and winery and olive

oil making in Sendin ( *Sendim* in Portuguese, the southernmost and largest village in the original area of the Mirandese language ) These are considered important as model cases for the development of the local economy, not only in the zone of the Mirandese language but for the whole Trás-os-Montes region,<sup>8</sup> which includes the Terras de Miranda as the eastern border ( lined by the Douro river )

However, the geographical character of the Mirandese language can be defined not only as a rural language as mentioned above, but also as an urban language resulting from emigration from this area. Mirandese speakers have emigrated mainly to the coastal zone in Portugal ( Lisbon, Porto, etc. ) France ( Paris, Bordeaux, etc. ) Spain ( Madrid, Bilbao, etc. ) but also to Brazil, Canada ( Toronto, etc. ) South Africa Rep., Australia and even to Kobe city in Japan. It is considered that the population of emigrants from the original area of the Mirandese language is far larger than the population which is located in the original area. This factor makes it very difficult to calculate the number of speakers, adding to the decline of the language's use and the immigration to the Mirandese area<sup>9</sup>.

This is the main reason why it has been complicated to apply to the European Union's scheme for the protection and promotion of ' Lesser-used languages and Minority languages,' since there is little consideration for language like Mirandese which are not based only on region ( such as Welsh or Catalan ) but at the same time also contain ' new-comer'<sup>10</sup> characteristics ( such as Arabic, Ukrainian, and so on ) in urban areas. In other words, the study of the Mirandese language can be seen as a model case for how to deal with the common issues of endangered languages originally located in rural areas of under-developed countries which suffer a sharp decline of speakers both through underuse of the language use and as a result of emigration, rural exodus or diaspora.

## 2.1. Phonology

With respect to the principal differences of the Mirandese language compared to its neighbouring languages, one may begin with phonological facts ( refer also to Table 1 )

2.1.1. Mirandese keeps the Latin intervocalic consonants *-n-* and *-l-*, different from Portuguese ( but similar to Astur-Leonese/Spanish )( *lhuna* for Portuguese [ Pt. ] *lua*, *salir* for Pt. *sair* )

2.1.2. It exhibits the palatalisation of Latin *-nn-*, *-mn-* and *-ll-*. ( *cundanhar*, *canha*, *ampolha*, *cabalho* )

2.1.3. The existence of double vowels with rising diphthongs *-ie-* ( *sierra*; common in Spanish ) and *-uo-* ( *puonte*, *fuonte*; instead of *-ue-* in Spanish )

2.1.4. The existence of *lh-* [  $\lambda$  ] at the beginnings of the word, originated by the palatalisation of the Latin initial *l-*. ( *lhado*, *lhume* )

2.1.5. The tendency for inexistence of high atony vowels at the beginnings of the word itself. When appearing above vowels in the beginnings of words, they form falling diphthongs. ( *eigreja*, *eidade*, *ourelha*, *oubrigar* ) If starting with nasal vowels, they will be less high and/or changed to double vowels. ( *amportante* for Pt. *importante*, *ounir* for Pt. *unir* )

2.1.6. When the second syllable begins with a consonant, *des-* is reduced to a sibilant sound, which is voiced ( *z-* ) or voiceless ( *ç-* ) sibilant, depending on the following consonant. ( *znudo*, *çcalçar* )

2.1.7. Latin *Cl-* and [ *nasal( n )+cl-* ] or Latin *Pl-* and [ *nasal( m )+pl-* ] are normally pronounced as [ t ] and written as *ch* ( *chave*, *mancha*, *cheio*, *incher* ) instead of [ ] as in Portuguese and occurs more frequently than in Spanish which is pronouncing these Latin scripts as [ t ] in some cases also.

2.1.8. The independent sibilant sound in the first syllable is not preceded by a vowel ( *E-* ) ( *star* ) which is different from Portuguese or Spanish ( *estar* )

however, colloquial pronunciation in the Lisbon area also drops the initial *E* in this case.

2.1.9. Latin suffix *-rius/ -rium* is changed to *-iro* (*neçairo, dicionairo*)

2.1.10. Case of *palomba* (dove) : One of the major characteristics of the western Ibero-romance language from eastern Ibero-romance is the maintenance of Latin *-mb-*. For example, *Columbus* > *Colomba* (Portuguese) / *Colón* (Spanish [ Sp. ]), *plumbum* > *chumba* (Pt.) / *ploma* (Sp.) and *palumba* > *pomba* (Pt.) / *paloma* (Sp.) In the meantime, concerning the above Latin *palumba*, in Portuguese, as a typical phenomenon of the western Ibero-romance, *-l-* is dropped (*pomba*), however, in Mirandese, kept as *palomba*. This is one of piece of evidence that Mirandese keeps features of the prototype of Ibero-romance languages.

## 2.2. Morphology

Important features of the morphology are:

2.2.1. The utilisation of prenoun *bós* (*vós* in Portuguese and Spanish; the second person plural) as a form of honorific treatment for the second person both singular and plural, instead of modern Portuguese and modern Spanish (but similar to medieval Portuguese/Spanish)

2.2.2. The predominance of utilisation of single tense instead of compound tense, which is different from modern Spanish (but similar to the Portuguese/Galician/Astur-leonese/Spanish spoken in the western regions of Spain)

2.2.3. The possibility of the construction of negative phrases through negative infinitive. (see Table 2)

2.2.4. The gender of the following nouns:

*la calor* (feminine [ f. ]) / *la fiebre* (masculine) / *la fin* (f.)

2.2.5. The utilisation of a personal infinitive different from Spanish (but simi-

lar to Portuguese )

Resolbírun cortar la lhéngua de un bicho *para la lhebáren* a la mal cumo proba.

[ from D. M. Mendes Martins ( 2004 ) my italics ]

### 2.3. Lexicology

Important characteristics of the lexicology are:

#### 2.3.1. The presence of a diminutive suffix - *ico*

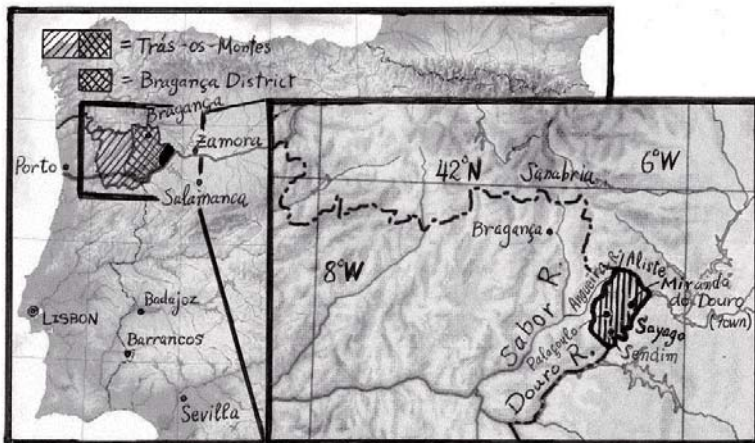
Historically, this suffix frequently appeared in the mountainous area of the north-central part of the Iberian Peninsula, i.e., in northern Meseta, from the southern foot of the Cantabrian Mountains to the north bank of the Tagus river. However, as centuries went by, Castilian/Spanish spread over the whole area of this region with the typical diminutive suffix - *ito*. In Mirandese, the presence of - *ico* is considered as a unique phenomenon. In the meantime, in Zaragoza, it is said that the - *ico* suffix is the most typical proof for Zaragozan. That means the - *ico* suffix remains at both edges of the original distribution<sup>12</sup>.

#### 2.3.2. Original vocabulary

In the following, I give some examples from Mirandese vocabulary which are thought to be typical for this language. Some of them have a similar distribution to that of the original area of Mirandese, however, most of these words are also understandable around the surrounding villages, which are officially considered out of the linguistic area.

*adego* ( at that time ) *anguelgue/enguelgue* ( *Acer monspessulanum* L. )  
*boubielho* ( hoopoe *Upupa epops*; mad ) *cachico* ( a little bit ) *çamarra*  
 ( leather ) *canhona* ( sheep ) *ende* ( there ) *garunho* ( mean ) *sarta* ( bead )  
*scanho* ( coach )<sup>13</sup>; *soto* ( small store ) *tabafeia* ( sausage of wheat with a little  
 meat ) *tagalho* ( flock [ of sheep ] )

In conclusion, at the linguistic basis of the Mirandese language one can see the trace of the proto-type of western Ibero-Romance language, thus many archaic vestiges can be observed. However, as a matter of fact, we can also easily find similarities with the surrounding Romance languages such as Portuguese or Spanish, which have derived from the same branch of Romance languages.



[ Map. 1 ] Original area of Mirandese

Latin		Portuguese		Spanish				
				( Astur- ) Leonese			Mirandese	
spelling	<i>example</i>	Lisbon	Mgdo.	Sendin	MIhd.	Cnst..	Snbr.	Valld.
-c-	<i>fic<u>u</u>s , vesic<u>a</u></i>	[ g ]	[ g ]	-	[ g ]	[ g ]	[ g ]	[ g ]
F -	<i>fil<u>i</u>us</i>	[ f ]	[ f ]	[ f ]	[ f ]	[ f ]	[ f ]	-
L -	<i>l<u>a</u>na , l<u>o</u>na</i>	[ l ]	[ l ]	[ l ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ l ]
-lī-	<i>fil<u>i</u>us</i>	[ ]	[ ]	-	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ x ]
-n-	<i>lan<u>a</u> , lon<u>a</u></i>	-	-	[ n ]	[ n ]	[ n ]	[ n ]	[ n ]
V -	<i>vas<u>u</u>s</i>	[ v ]	[ b ]	[ b ]	[ b ]	[ b ]	[ b ]	[ b ]

[ Table. 1 ] Phonetic comparison of Mirandese and surrounding languages  
 Abbreviations: Mgdo.: Mogadouro, MIhd.: Malhadas, Cnst.: Custantin, Snbr.:  
 Sanabria, Valld.: Valladolid

Mirandese	---	<i>Tenga</i>	<i>agarrado</i>	<i>ningua</i>	<i>delor</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>barriga</i>
Portuguese	<i>não</i>	<i>Tenha</i>	<i>apanhado</i>	---	<i>dor</i>	<i>de</i>	<i>barriga</i>
	not	Have	caught	[ nothing ]	ache	of	stomach
	which is: I wish you would not catch stomachache.						

[ Table. 2 ] Example of the construction of negative phrases through negative indefinitive

### 3. Taxonomy in Romance languages

As mentioned above, the difference between Mirandese and the surrounding languages is not so immense, compared to the striking contrasts among neighbouring non-European languages distributed in Asia or in Africa. In addition, most of such relatively minor differences are not peculiar to Mirandese and the switch of linguistic characters to the neighbour lan-

guages is one of gradation. Supposing Mirandese were not in the family of Romance languages, it could be classified as a dialect or even a sub-dialect or a *patois* of the larger-distributed language.

In Japan, some linguists have repeatedly maintained that, linguistically speaking, the difference between Spanish and Portuguese is not great enough to consider them languages, but dialects. Thus the nomination of these languages is due to national borders, a situation which is different to that of dialect usage in Japan. This explanation provides an indulgence for Japanese dialectologists to affirm that, for example, the languages of the Ryukyu Islands are a kind of Japanese dialect.

However, we must also remember the detailed taxonomic order of languages in comparative linguistics is made and based on the classification of Romance languages by the studies of Romanists from the 18th century up to today, and the accumulation of these analyses has made a great contribution for the evaluation of linguistic differences among languages. Following these results, linguists and the Romanists themselves consider the division of relative languages is not always determined by political borders or ethnic characteristics, but also by the linguistic features themselves or even by the feeling of linguistic autonomy, as in the case of Mirandese.

Peter Trudgill in his article 'Glocalisation and the Ausbau sociolinguistics of modern Europe' (Trudgill, 2004) describes such change of linguistic nomination on the Iberian Peninsula as a sort of *Ausbau language*<sup>14</sup>. In the following section, I will analyse the transition of such taxonomic trends, focusing on the Mirandese language.

#### 4. Is the Mirandese language an endangered language?

4.1. Originality in the process of language establishment: A long road to recognition of the Mirandese language.

As mentioned earlier, Mirandese was legally recognised as a language in 1998 by the Parliament of the Portuguese Republic. Nevertheless there is a rumour among Portuguese that the Mirandese language was invented all of sudden by Portuguese linguists who are expecting EU aid for minority languages. However, the establishment of the Mirandese language was anything but sudden.

Apart from languages spoken by the agricultural labourers such as Romany, East-European, African etc., in the rural areas of Portugal, there could be heard only Romance languages, to which Portuguese belongs<sup>15</sup>. The change of language in Portugal mainland is geographically continuous, shifting gradually. In this situation it is rare that the division of one linguistic phenomenon corresponds with that of another issue. However, there are some extreme locations containing a lot of differences compared to Portuguese spoken in Lisbon or in Coimbra, which is thought as standard Portuguese in Portugal. Around the beginning of the 19th century, some Portuguese intellectuals who were influenced by Central Europe Romanticism, started to examine linguistic diversity in Portugal. From the latter half of this century this movement was succeeded by philologists who were interested in linguistic geography in France and Romanists mainly in Germany. One of the most enthusiastic scholars in Portugal concerning this issue was José Leite de Vasconcelos ( 1858-1941 )

Although the ' linguistic discovery ' of Mirandese was made by Vasconcelos, the linguistic uniqueness of this area had been noticed since 16th Century. However, at first, its character was extracted from another bank of Douro valley, known as *Sayaguese*, where the language was quite similar to that of the Portuguese side of the river at that time. Nevertheless, Sayaguese was often caricatured as the most boorish patois of the whole Iberian Peninsula. Cervantes himself described it, even twice in his *Don*

*Quixote* ( Part II, 1615 ) as follows<sup>16</sup>:

At first, Sayagese appeared in a mundane conversation between Don Quixote and Sancho:

Don Quixote ( quoth ) ‘ thou misappelier of good language, whom God confound. ’ ‘ Pray, sir, be not so sharp upon me, ’ answered Sancho; ‘ for you know I was not bred at court, nor have studied in Salamanca, to know whether I add to, or take a letter from my words. As God shall save me, it is unreasonable to expect, that the *Sayagues* should speak like the Toledans; nay, there are Toledans, who are not over nice in the business of speaking politely. ’ ( Chapter 19, my italics )

And repeated in the following passage, in which Don Quixote has just been awoken from a long daydream:

‘ So she would most certainly, ’ answered Don Quixote, ‘ had not the misfortune, which lately befall fer, blotted her idea out of my mind; such a misfortune, that I am in a condition rather to bewail than to describe her; for your grandeurs must know, that, going a few days ago to kiss her hands, and receive her benediction, commands, and licence for this third sally, I found her quite another person than her I sought for. I found her enchanted, and converted from a princess into a country wench, from beautiful to ugly, from an angel to a devil, from fragrant to pestiferous, from courtly to rustic, from light to darkness, from a sober lady to a junmping Joan; and, in fine, from Dulcinea del Toboso to a clownish wench of *Sayago*. ’ ‘ God be my aid, ’ cried the duke at this instant, with a loud voice: ‘ who may it be that has done so much mis-

chief to the world? ' ( Chapter 32, my italics )

As referred to earlier, the first linguistic description of Mirandese was written by Vasconcelos in 1882, who treated it as a *co-dialect*. His ' discovery ' was widely recognised after his famous issue on the change of the century ( Vasconcelos, 1900, 1901 ) From then Mirandese was always treated as a dialect. Moreover, after its authorisation by the renowned Spanish philologist Menéndez Pidal ( 1906 ) as a sub-dialect of the ( Astur-)Leonese dialect it was considered to belong to the Spanish language, and Vasconcelos himself gave up his concept of co-dialect, re-classifying it according to the ordinary taxonomic order of languages. However in Portugal, Mirandese was treated as an authentic dialect<sup>17</sup> of the ancient Leonese language, and not in the sub-order of the actual ( Astur-)Leonese dialect which is a result of the political and cultural decline of the Leonese language after the integration of the Kingdom of Leon into the Kingdom of Castilla.

After the boom of linguistic geography on the whole Iberian Peninsula, both Spain and Portugal suffered from authoritarian governments from the 1930 s, which denied by force any cultural diversity, including linguistic matters, in the respective countries. Thus, each government forced a ' one country, one language ' policy on the people, even on the persons living at the edge of their land. In this hard situation, Mirandese survived not only due to the very low rate of literacy ( especially among women ) in Terras de Miranda, but also the struggles of one parish father who s name was António Maria Mourinho. His concept was to harmonize the Mirandese culture with the Portuguese authoritarian system by promoting its folklore dance and music as ' one of the ornamental flowers ' of *portugalidade*, or so-called ' Portugality.' One of the important items for his movement was the Mirandese ' dialect.' The dictatorship itself also sympathised with his idea,

because the uniqueness of Mirandese posed little threat to the system due to its demographic size and low educational situation.

This close relation between Mourinho and the authorities became more solid after the year 1960. People called this year ' the year of Africa ' because of the rush of independence from ex-British and ex-French colonies in Africa. At that time, Mirandese culture was used as a small and safe showcase to camouflage the Portuguese colonialism which continued up to 1974, and put forward as an expression of the generosity of Portuguese society towards cultural diversity, against the international opinion which was criticizing the out-of-date colonial policy of the Portuguese autocracy.

After the overthrow of the authoritarian government during the Carnation Revolution in 1974<sup>18</sup>, renewed influence came from the drastic change of attitudes toward cultural and linguistic diversity in Spain, which had also experienced modification of its political system due to the death of Franco. The movement to regain ownership of linguistic rights in the east corners of the Peninsula, i.e. the Basque and the Catalan languages, had reclaimed their linguistic uniqueness from long years ago on the basis of their ethnicity. Thereafter, this movement shifted to Galicia, at the north-west corner of the Peninsula, i.e., next to Portugal. These three languages were recognized officially, and finally, stimulated the neighbouring regions, such as Valencia, Aragon and Asturias.

In Asturias, there is a small-sized but active movement to gain recognition of the language, which is known as Asturian or *Bable*. However, in order to reinforce the activity, it was necessary to retrieve and demonstrate its wider geographical coverage as Astur-Leonese, because there is a linguistic continuity both north ( Asturias ) and south ( former Leon Region ) at the foot of the Cantabrian Mountains. Without this extension of their movement, it would be quite difficult to gain wider recognition. Thus, they

focused on Mirandese which not only has cross-border evidence of the distribution of Astur-Leonese but is also better-preserved than the Leonese language or southern Astur-Leonese area in Spain. In fact, in the areas where Leonese is spoken, the local language use had been diminished, due to the intensive Spanish-based education in schools and the pressure of linguistic unification by the authoritarian government. What's more, the linguistic autonomous mood was almost extinguished by an arbitrary reshuffle of regional units upon the reform from the former government, because the León Region<sup>19</sup> was scrapped and integrated into the Castilla-León Region<sup>20</sup>. The Asturians' interest in the 'Mirandese dialect' contributed to a wake up call for linguistic rights among Mirandese intellectuals through the 1970's and 80's<sup>21</sup>.

The entry of Portugal into the European Community in 1986 had an ultimate impact on both the national government and the community itself. Around this period they began to crystallise their understanding of Mirandese as a language and experimental education of Mirandese in Miranda do Douro commenced under the auspices of the Ministry of Education.

Just before the legal recognition of the Mirandese language, which was approved by the Republic Parliament in 1998 and issued into national law in the next year, a group was formed to edit the *Orthographic Convention of the Mirandese language*. It consisted of linguists and certain native speakers of Mirandese who had written literature in their way of writing. This process accelerated the formation of legal recognition, together with the local enthusiasm, the Mirandese education, the eagerness of municipality staff and also the feeling of solidarity and support by intellectuals living in big cities, many of whose families had emigrated from the original zone of Miranda or from the Trás-os-Montes region.

Thus, the recognition of Mirandese as a language was finally realised more than 100 years after Vasconcelos' *linguistic discovery*.

#### 4.2. 'Regional and minority language' in Europe: Is the Mirandese language one of the endangered languages in the world?

There is no doubt that the European Union and the Council of Europe ultimately had the greatest impact on the eventual realisation of legal recognition of Mirandese, and the constant support from them is essential to stabilize the activity of the promotion of the Mirandese language. However, there are also some further implications worth considering.

For the EU or the Council of Europe, the target of the protection or promotion is designated as a 'regional and minority language' or a 'lesser-used language.' In fact, this target has its traditional or historical territory of distribution with considerable dimension, as 'regional' though some limited 'old-timers' such as Yiddish or Romany could also be included in the scheme. Thus, under this scheme there is little consideration for the minority languages of 'new-comers' in Europe, especially in urban areas. Meanwhile, the concept of endangered languages is normally used for non-European languages. It may be very clear to nominate some morphologically 'isolated' language with reduced numbers of speakers, especially in less developed areas or at least less investigated areas in descriptive linguistics as an endangered language. In a word, objectively by now, there is little link between the category of the endangered language and that of regional or minority languages in Europe.

Moreover, the languages of the 'new-comer' minorities in cities are one of the target of multilingualism under the whole scheme of multiculturalism or pluralism; however, the excess of this policy is sometime criticised as a factor that interrupts the process of integration into the 'host culture.' In

order to overcome such criticism, some EU countries are making a trial of plurilingualism, asking for 'new-comers' to respect the host language as well as their mother tongue. However, there is almost no consideration for the endangered languages which are brought by the 'new-comers.' For example, in Germany, there is some attention given to Turkish, Arabic, Vietnamese and Chinese; however this is unlikely to extend to effective linguistic aids for the speakers of endangered language from Africa. A similar situation can be observed in Lisbon. In an interview in 2006 I found a large number of African immigrants who claimed to be speakers of various endangered languages which are distributed in the former Portuguese colonies of Africa, such as Guine-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique, and so on. However, these languages are ignored in the educational system in Portugal. That means, actual plurilingualism policy comprises only the host language and majority languages among them.

If terms such as regional or endangered language are interpreted in a narrow sense, the Mirandese language could be marginal due to the categories mentioned above. Firstly, Mirandese does not have sufficient territory and demographical condition as a regional language, which is an important factor for inclusion in the scheme under EU policy. Second, Mirandese could be excluded also from the category of the endangered language because of the relativeness in the neighbouring languages and its location in Europe.

However, regarding the first issue, the Mirandese language has been successfully included in the promotion scheme of the EU and the Council of Europe because of its long process of efforts and by the legal recognition of the Portuguese government. On the second point, Mirandese is gaining recognition as an endangered language through several efforts. One of these can be seen in the participation in *l'Association Internationale pour la Défense des Langues et Cultures Menacées* (AIDLCM) which is one of the

historical groups which has contributed to improving solidarity towards endangered languages for 60 years. AIDLCM held its 22nd congress in Miranda do Douro in July 2005.

#### 5. Conclusion: Could the Mirandese language be a model for the promotion of endangered languages?

As referred to in the former sections, though there are some arguments over its classification, the Mirandese language could be regarded both as an endangered language and a ' regional and minority language ' in European context. Thus, the Mirandese language can enjoy its interactive position on the border of these two categories, which have so far not experienced significant integration.

This condition of Mirandese could offer some clues to improving the future of disregarded endangered languages around the world for following reasons:

-- Speakers of the Mirandese language are not claiming its ethnic originality or nationalism; however, they are seeking only the recognition of its linguistic uniqueness. This consciousness brings into question the over-simplistic link between ethnicity and the taxonomic classification of languages, which always brings serious damage to the image and the possibility of promotion of endangered languages, especially when these are discussed in the context of predominant nations or states. Facing such paradoxes will be inevitable in the process of modernization and unification of every developing country, especially those where which have a lot of endangered languages. Therefore, Mirandese could offer one example in which endangered languages co-exist with big-scaled or ' national ' languages.

-- In Lisbon there are several Mirandese classes at the university level and in private language schools for emigrants and their descendants from Miranda do Douro and other students who are interested in the language. This is largely due to the efforts of Amadeu Ferreira, a lawyer from Sendin who lives in the capital and established *Associaçon de Lhéngua Mirandesa*. This could offer the endangered language with the possibility to survive not only in its original location, where both the number of speakers and the population itself could sharply reduce, but also in urban areas with the emigrants of native speakers and people who are interested learning among the host society. Indeed this can be seen as a harmonious model of plurilingualism.

-- The Mirandese language demonstrates the possibility of a parallel system such as ' language( s ) within language( s )', by the long process of legalisation as language with the surrounding languages ( Portuguese, Spanish or Astur-Leonese ) This system could suggest a solution for many endangered languages which are losing the possibility to exist before the promotion is settled because of endless discussion with a spiral paradox, arguing over whether or not they are languages or dialects. This context of ' language( s ) within language( s )' also fits with the notion of plurilingualism.

Nowadays, there are inevitable trends of rural exodus from the remote areas in developing countries and the emigration from these areas to the urban areas of developed countries. Therefore, it will be quite difficult to protect and promote, or even investigate the endangered languages at the site of original distribution only.

The Mirandese language has been faced with this question from many decades ago and always looked seriously for ways to survive. As such, it

could offer an alternative model to protect endangered languages.

Notes:

- 1 The nearest city with a population of more than 10,000 is Zamora ( 66,000 in 2001 ) located upstream of the Duero River in Spain, approximately 55 km East of the town of Miranda do Douro. In Portugal, the nearest city with a population of more than 10,000 is Bragança ( 20,000 in 2001 ), approx. 85 km from the Miranda town.
- 2 In Spain, this is also called *Arribes del Duero*. At the same time, *Arribes del Duero* is treated with masculine gender as *los Arribes del Duero* in the Province of Zamora, however, in the Province of Salamanca, it is treated with feminine gender such as *las Arribes del Duero*.
- 3 Cabañas ( 1985 ) defined *Borrasao* as a variant of Leonese in *Terras de Miranda*; however, this term is not common in Portugal. On the other hand, some papers read it as *Terra de Miranda* instead of *Terras de Miranda*.
- 4 In the northern half of the Terras de Miranda, the western zone, which includes the principal area of the Municipality of Vimioso and the easternmost area of the Municipality of Bragança ( Outeiro de Miranda ) the Mirandese language is not actually spoken; however, there is a strong linguistic and cultural influence of the Mirandese language, and consists a corridor which links between the area of the Mirandese language and some parish towns and hamlets where the ' variants ' of the Astur-Leonese language are spoken, namely, Deilão, Petisqueira, Guadramil and Rio do Onor. Moreover, to the south of the Terras de Miranda, some parish towns and hamlets alongside the border to Spain at the northernmost of the municipality of Mogadouro, namely, Urros, Bemposta and Lamoso are counted as historical areas of the Mirandese language by some linguists in Portugal.
- 5 In the municipality of Miranda do Douro, the main town of Miranda do Douro

is not considered to be included in the area of the Mirandese language, though four hamlets in the parish of Miranda do Douro. Moreover, Atenor parish, which is located southwest of the municipality, is also considered out of the original area of the Mirandese language.

6 Specifically, Angueira, Caçarelhos and Vilar Seco are included. In the case of Caçarelhos, once it was considered that the Mirandese language had already disappeared ( Mourinho, 1987 ) however, my own field work in 2005 proved that there still remain speakers of the Mirandese language. Moreover, in the municipality of Vimioso, the parish towns and hamlets such as Avelanoso, Vila Cha de Ribeira, Campo de Viboras, São Joanico, Serapicos and Vale de Frades are considered by A. Mourinho ( 1987 ) as areas in which Mirandese is historically spoken.

7 Famous for *vaca mirandesa* ( the Mirandese Cow ) for cultivation and beef. After the recognition of the Mirandese language, the language itself and the indigenous cattle are the main resources for tourism in this area.

8 Trás-os-Montes means ' the backside of the mountains.' Thus, Trás-os-Montes is the remotest region from Lisbon or the coastal zone ( which is considered as a developed area ) of Portugal. Though historically, the name Trás-os-Montes had been used as an administrative unit, it is still used for the name of this area, even if it is not the actual unit. Actually, Terras de Miranda consists of the easternmost part of the District of Bragança as administrative unit in Portugal, which does not correspond with EU territorial units, used for statistical references. In this case, Terras de Miranda is the easternmost part of *Alto Trás-os-Montes* ( NUTS III ) which belongs to *Região Norte*, i.e. the North Region ( NUTS II )

9 Such movement is mainly caused by the construction of two dams in the municipality of Miranda do Douro in the 1950's and the development of tourism and commercial industry after the opening of the border in 1977.

- 10 This term is used as a pair with the opposite concept of 'old-timer.' However, whether 'new-comer' and 'old-timer,' its definition is quite relative, thus, the borderline of classification for these categories changes according to each standpoint.
- 11 The masculine article in Mirandese is written as *l*, different from *o* in Portuguese or *el* in Spanish.
- 12 Original distribution of the diminutive suffix *-ico* is indicated by Faust (1979) In the meantime, Urrutia and Alvarez (1988) indicate actual presence of this suffix in Aragon, Murcia and Granada, instead of the typical suffix *-ino* of Astur-leonese with *-uco* type as its oriental range. As Izui (1968) pointed out with the case of the alteration of Petrarca from his family name Petracco, *-co* type suffix in Vulgar Latin or Romance languages had been regarded as coarse.
- 13 This word stands for a pair of the long coaches normally put as a face-to-face disposition alongside the fireplace.
- 14 The theory of *Ausbau* for the establishing of language is introduced by H. Kloss (1967)
- 15 In this paper, the above mentioned minorities of rural area will be referred to as 'rural minority,' and the contrastive term will be 'urban minority.'
- 16 In this paper, I have used the English translation version of *World's Classics paperback* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1992) translated by C. Jarvis.
- 17 The concept of authenticity sometimes classifies the difference between languages and dialects, however, this concept could divide dialects into different categories. Thus V. Schirmunski (1930) categorised dialects by two orders, i.e. 'primary' and 'secondary' dialect, which is repeated by E. Coseriu et al (1980) Utilising this category, for example, E. Burr (2001) divided Iberian Romance variants into primary dialects (Asturian, Castilian or Aragonese) and secondary dialects (Andalusian or Canarian) However, such categorisation could raise further questions, such as the timing of the borderline of this classification. The sec-

ondary dialects are defined as those dialects which appear after the fixation of the standard language in which dialects based on. However, the historical period of fixation of standard language is quite changeable, by each parameter, as the first appearance of standard script, first appearance of legal document or else. Moreover, in the case of variants which are regarded as secondary dialects, some of them are formalised without or lesser influence of standard language or standard script in which these dialects are indicated to belong. Thus, though almost all variants are made before the establishment of the educational system of the standard language, the feeling of authenticity by such categorisation could bring discrimination for the variants which are difficult to prove their primariness. In Portugal, also, the main reason that Mirandese could be regarded as a language or at least a primary dialect is the categorisation mentioned above, but for the same reasons, variants such as Barranquenho (spoken in Barrancos town, on Spanish border in Alentejo) or Raboixeense (spoken in Rabo de Peixe village in São Miguel Island of the Azores Islands) are not treated as a language.

- 18 It is also worth noting that from this period, the traditional Mirandese folklore music (with the Mirandese verses) has been widely adopted into the Portuguese folk music movement. Such adaptation was first introduced by José Manuel Cerqueira Afonso dos Santos (Zeca Afonso, 1929-87) and contributed greatly towards wider recognition of the existence of the Mirandese language among Portuguese.
- 19 The former León Region was made of three provinces, namely, León, Zamora and Salamanca, from north to south. In the northern and western parts of the province of León and the westernmost area of the provinces of Zamora and Salamanca (i.e. with the border of Portugal) there is distribution of the Leonese language. To the south, the distribution of Leonesese penetrates into the northernmost area of the Region of Extremadura.

- 20 The Castilla-León Region consists of nine provinces, with the regional capital Valladolid, integrated with three provinces of the former León Region in the western border. Thus, after such integration, the former León is marginalised both politically and economically.
- 21 The interests of Asturians towards Mirandese have intensified since its official recognition by the Portuguese Republic as a language. Asturians are willing to link with Mirandese as leverage for the officialisation of *Bable* or the Asturian language. However, such Asturian activists tend to regard Mirandese as a controversial or out-dated concept, i.e., not as a language but as a ‘ dialect ’ of Asturian.

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