

Aspectual Verbs in European and Brazilian Portuguese

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Abstract

This paper is about the semantics and the syntax of aspectual verbs in European and Brazilian Portuguese. Some of these verbs select a+Infinitive in the European variety whereas the same verbs select that structure and Gerund in the Brazilian variety. We show that this discrepancy can be explained in semantic and syntactic grounds due to the different nature of the semantic 'input' (stative or eventive), the availability of tense constructions and the functional structure of the embedded domain. Another group of aspectual verbs do not differ in their syntactic structure in the two varieties as their structure (de+Infinitive) is the same, although syntactically different from a+Infinitive, but they do differ in their semantics and also in the selection of different verbs.

1. Introduction

The main goal of this paper is to articulate the semantic and syntactic characterization of aspectual verbs in European Portuguese (EP) and Brazilian Portuguese (BP). These verbs occur in two different structures in both varieties: 1. *a* + Infinitive (*Inf*) / Gerund (*Ger*); 2. *de* + Infinitive¹. The first pattern is associated with semantic and syntactic distinctions in both varieties,

¹ We do not consider verbs like *começar* / *acabar por* as they do not behave as aspectual operators.

whereas the dissimilarities in the second one are fundamentally semantic, the syntax being basically uniform. In brief, in the first case, as *Ger* is not available in standard contemporary EP in the relevant constructions, these can differ with respect to the availability of tense values and forms, the functional structure of the embedded domain and the stative/eventive nature of the ‘inputs’ at stake. In the *de + Inf* constructions, the aspectual verbs have a quite similar ‘output’ but their ‘inputs’ are of a different aspectual nature.

In section 2 we present the semantic analysis of aspectual verbs that select *a + Inf* or *Ger* structures in both varieties. Section 3 will analyse the syntax of the same verbs. Section 4 will deal with the second type of aspectual verbs, those that select *de + Inf* in both varieties, from both a semantic and a syntactic point of view.

2. Aspectual verbs as semantic operators

We assume that the main semantic feature of aspectual verbs is to modify the inner temporal properties of the eventuality with which they co-occur, being true aspectual operators, as defined in Moens (1987). In this respect, the main function of verbs like *começar*, *passar*, *continuar*, *estar*, *andar*, *ficar*, *deixar*, *parar* or *acabar*, when they occur in one of the structures mentioned above, is to select an aspectual class as its ‘input’ and convert it into another one with (possibly) different temporal features as its ‘output’ (cf., among others, Cunha, 1998).

Having said this, we must elucidate what can be considered as an ‘input’. In fact, for an aspectual transition to obtain, the ‘input’ is constrained by the necessary conditions that must be met, in particular the existence of one or more phases of the eventuality that must have occurred before the application of the operator. This means that, in many cases, the ‘input’ is not of the same aspectual nature as the basic predication, since derived situations may also be at issue, as long as they meet the required conditions to serve as ‘inputs’ for a given aspectual operator.

The aspectual nature of the ‘output’ corresponds to the final reading of the sentence itself and its aspectual class is determined by the familiar tests (Dowty, 1979, Moens, 1987, Cunha, 1998).

2.1. Aspectual verbs in EP: *a + Infinitive*

In order to illustrate and clarify what we said about the nature of the ‘input’ and the ‘output’ of aspectual verbs, we will briefly analyse the behaviour of some of these in EP².

The Progressive form, *estar + a + Inf (be + A + Inf)* for instance, is used to convert a process in progress into a stative predication that is, a progressive

² We adopt Moens’s classification for aspectual classes: states, processes, culminated processes and culminations.

state. This conversion involves the presence of a basic or derived process as its 'input'. This would explain why the Progressive hardly applies to states (Vendler, 1967, Dowty, 1979, Vlach, 1981). However, the basic states do not form a homogeneous class and, following Cunha (1998), we must admit a fundamental distinction between non-phase states and phase states as the latter can be integrated in the Aspectual Network and converted into a process whereas the first ones cannot undergo any kind of transition, remaining always stative. This distinction allows one to understand why some basic states can appear in a progressive form and others cannot, as shown by the contrast between (1) and (2) where a phase-state behaves very similarly to events in this respect (see examples (3)-(5))

- (1) *A Maria está a ser alta. (non-phase state)
the Maria is A to-be tall
'Maria is being tall'
- (2) O meu cão está a ser agressivo. (phase state)
the my dog is A to-be aggressive
'my dog is being aggressive'
- (3) O Pedro está a correr. (process)
the Pedro is A to-run
'Pedro is running'
- (4) A Rita está a comer uma maçã. (culminated process)
the Rita is A to-eat an apple
'Rita is eating an apple'
- (5) O gato está a morrer. (culmination)
the cat is A to-die
'the cat is dying'

The analysis of these examples shows that only non-phase states cannot occur in the Progressive. The other aspectual classes seem to combine straightforwardly with this operator. However, to obtain such acceptable results, they have to be previously converted into processes. So, culminated processes like the one in (4) have to lose their culmination in order to meet the conditions required by the Progressive form.³ The same transition would obtain with culminations like (5), provided that a process had previously been added to them. Phase states have to be converted into processes in order to combine with the Progressive: such assumption explains why only this kind of states can occur in the above-mentioned context, contrasting with others that cannot.

As we said, the 'output' of the Progressive is a state. This can be confirmed by the behaviour of progressive sentences with respect to temporal adverbials and to several structures expressing agentivity, that is, basic

³ This would help us to explain the presence of the well-known *Imperfective Paradox* discussed in Dowty (1979).

agentive structures like *ler o jornal* (to read the newspaper) become generally non agentive in the context of a progressive construction.⁴

- (6) O Rui esteve a ler o jornal durante 2 horas / ? às 2 horas / *em 2 horas.
the Rui was A to-read the newspaper for 2 hours/at 2 pm/in 2 hours
- (7) *Rui, está a ler o jornal!
Rui, be A to-read the newspaper!
- (8) *A mãe obrigou o Rui a estar a ler o jornal.
the mother forced the Rui to be A to-read the newspaper

A similar analysis can be given to the ‘inputs’ of *andar* and *ficar*, as their combinatory conditions are fairly the same as those for *estar*.⁵ The most significant differences arise with their ‘outputs’: *andar* gives as its ‘output’ a habitual (or iterative) state, while *ficar* triggers a punctual event associated with a process.⁶ The reason why we advocate a process in the ‘output’ of *ficar* is due to the fact that sentences with this aspectual verb are acceptable in contexts like the ones in (7) and (8), that is, *ler o jornal* (read the newspaper).does not loose its agentivity, in contrast to *estar a* (to be + A + Inf).

Consider now the aspectual verb *começar* (to begin/start). Informally, we can say that its basic semantic function is to indicate the beginning of a given situation. But, what are, precisely, the necessary conditions that must be met in order for this verb to be appropriately used? We hypothesise that the ‘input’ for this verb is identified with a period leading up to, but not including, the initial portion of a basic or derived process. We consider then that such an ‘input’ is a kind of a preliminary state inasmuch as it should be viewed as a stable period of time preceding a (basic or derived) event.⁷ This explains why

⁴ For a much more detailed discussion about the arguments in favour of this point, see, e.g., Dowty (1979), Vlach (1981) and Cunha (1998).

⁵ It is difficult to give an accurate translation of *andar + a + Inf* or *ficar + a + Inf*. We suggest for a sentence like *ele anda a ler este livro* the following translation: *he is (currently) reading this book*. For a sentence like *ele ficou a ler este livro* we suggest the following translation: *he stayed reading this book*.

⁶ However, it should be mentioned that *andar* and *ficar* do not occur with all basic culminations (coerced into processes).

(i) Ele está / anda / ?fica a morrer.

(ii) Ele está / *anda / *fica a chegar a casa.

See Oliveira, Cunha & Matos (2001) for a more detailed discussion of the data. It should also be pointed out that the punctual event (associated to a process) of *ficar*, although not generally explicit, can be seen in examples like the following:

(i) Quando saí, o Pedro ficou a ler um livro.
when I left, the Pedro ‘stayed’ A to-read a book

⁷ Preliminary states are needed in the Aspectual Network not only in order to account for the ‘input’ of *começar* but also to explain the semantic behaviour of other aspectual structures like *estar para* (cf. Cunha, 1998).

non-phase states are incompatible with *começar*, like in (9), and phase states (because they can be previously coerced into processes) and most events are acceptable (see (10)-(14)). The reason why we consider a preliminary state is due to the impossibility of detecting any successive phases in the situation preceding the aspectual operation carried out by *começar*. This explains again why non-phase states cannot co-occur with this aspectual operator, that is, *começar* requires a change in the aspect profile of the situation which does not exist either in the preliminary state or in the non-phase one.

- (9) *O Pedro começou a ter um B.M.W.. (non-phase state)
the Pedro COMEÇAR-Past A to-own a B.M.W.
- (10) A escalada começou a ser perigosa. (phase state)
the climbing COMEÇAR-Past A to-be dangerous
- (11) O cavalo começou a correr.
the horse COMEÇAR-Past A to-run
- (12) Os operários começaram a construir a casa.
the workers COMEÇAR-Past A to-build the house'
- (13) O Pedro começou a ganhar a corrida.
the Pedro COMEÇAR-Past A to-win the race
- (14) ??/*O comboio começou a chegar.
the train COMEÇAR-Past A to-arrive

The contrast between (13) and (14) shows that some culminations resist co-occurrence with *começar*. As we can see, (14) is not acceptable whereas (13) is. This is due to the fact that only some culminations admit the adding of a sufficiently extended preparatory phase and this is, as we have seen before, the required condition for the operator to obtain. What we have just said confirms our hypothesis about the nature of the 'input', that is, that we are dealing with a preliminary state of an event.

The 'output' brought about by *começar* is a punctual event that establishes the beginning of a (basic or derived) process as shown in (15). The reason why we restrict the 'output' to processes is related to a kind of 'Imperfective Paradox' triggered by *começar*, since a sentence like *O Rui começou a comer a maçã* ('Rui COMEÇAR-Past A to eat the apple') does not entail, in itself, the truth of *O Rui comeu a maçã* ('Rui ate the apple').

In case we accept a sentence like (16) as some speakers do, the only possible reading includes the final part of the preliminary state preceding it, meaning that 'it took 5 minutes for Mary to start working'.

- (15) A Maria começou a trabalhar / ler o livro às cinco horas.
the Maria COMEÇAR- Past A to-work / to-read the book at five
- (16) ?A Maria começou a trabalhar em cinco minutos.
the Maria COMEÇAR- Past A to-work in five minutes'

We would presume that an aspectual operator like *passar* shares a great number of similarities with *começar*, since it points to the beginning of a given situation. However, it combines only with basic or derived (mostly habitual) states.

Examples in (17)-(18) show that *passar* is compatible with both non-phase and phase states.⁸ Moreover, it can combine with events whenever they can be previously coerced into habitual states, as in (19)-(22), where (21)-(22) are ruled out due to the fact that, for different reasons, they cannot be coerced into habitual states:

- (17) A Maria passou a ser portuguesa. (non phase-state)
the Maria PASSAR-Past A to-be portuguese
- (18) O meu cão passou a ser agressivo. (phase-state)
the my dog PASSAR-Past A to-be aggressive
- (19) A Maria passou a trabalhar na biblioteca.
the Maria PASSAR-Past A to-work in the library
- (20) O Pedro passou a ler o jornal.
the Pedro PASSAR-Past A to-read the newspaper
- (21) *O meu gato passou a morrer.
the my cat PASSAR-Past A to-die
- (22) *O Pedro passou a comer esta maçã.
the Pedro PASSAR-Past A to-eat this apple

Concerning its ‘output’, *passar* equally seems to receive a stative interpretation, of the same nature of the ‘input’. But a kind of a punctual event is associated with this state in order to mark the transition.⁹ This is due to the fact that some restrictions apply to the co-occurrence with some temporal locating adverbials. Examples (23)-(24) reveal similar restrictions to those exhibited by individual-level non-phase states as in *a Maria foi alta *às 2 horas/*em 2 horas/*durante 2 horas* (*Maria was tall at 2 o'clock/in 2*

⁸ It is difficult to translate *passar*. When the basic predications are states, the approximate meaning is *to become* (*Portuguese / aggressive*); when the basic predications are events the meaning is similar to *to begin to (work) in a habitual manner*.

⁹ As one of the referees mentioned, there are some apparent counter-examples to this generalization:

- (i) Depois dos assobios, passou a defender ideias menos radicais na sua exposição.
after the whistles, ‘passou’ to-argue for less radical ideas in his talk.

However, this is not a truly counter-example as it shows a different behaviour: (i) without *depois dos assobios* (after the whistles), the sequence is not possible unless we remove *na sua exposição* (in his talk), acquiring, in this case, a habitual state reading. This means that, contrary to the cases under discussion in this paper, which can occur without any adverbial, there is in (i) some kind of inference of a situation already going on which suffers some transition (or even some kind of interruption). What these examples do have in common is a kind of a punctual event to mark a transition.

hours/for 2 hours).¹⁰ But, at the same time, there are some adverbials that can occur with this aspectual verb, as in (24'):

- (23) A Maria passou a ser alta *às 2 horas/*em 2 horas/*durante 2 horas.
the Maria PASSAR-Past A to-be tall at 2 o'clock/in 2 hours/for 2 hours
- (24) *Às 2 horas/*em 2 horas/? durante 2 anos o Pedro passou a ler o jornal.
at 2 o'clock/in 2 hours/for 2 years the Pedro PASSAR-Past A to-read the newspaper.
- (24') Desde 1 de Janeiro o Pedro passou a ler o jornal.
Since 1st of January the Pedro PASSAR-Past A to-read the newspaper

We can, then, conclude that both the 'input' and the 'output' of *passar* convey stative predicates. However, although the main function associated with this aspectual verb is that of expressing the bringing about of a new stative predication of the same nature of the 'input', there is a kind of a punctual event associated to it for marking the transition.¹¹

Let us, finally, look at the semantic behaviour of the aspectual verb *continuar* (to continue). Informally, we can say that this verb adds a new temporal portion of a given durative situation. This is the reason why culminations are unacceptable in sentences with *continuar* (see (29)), although they can occur if interpreted iteratively, e.g., as derived processes like in (30):

- (25) A Maria continuou a ser gorda. (non phase-state)
the Maria CONTINUAR-Past A to-be fat
- (26) O meu carro continuou a ser barulhento (phase-state)
the my car CONTINUAR-Past A to-be noisy
- (27) Os gnus continuaram a pastar.
the gnus CONTINUAR-Past A to-feed
- (28) O meu pai continuou a pintar a parede.
the my father CONTINUAR-Past A to-paint the wall
- (29) *O comboio continuou a chegar.
the train CONTINUAR-Past A to-arrive'

¹⁰ The adverbials in (24) are rearranged in order to avoid the reading in which they affect the basic predication. In fact, we are not concerned here with the possibility that temporal adverbials with narrow scope (those characterizing the basic situations from which habituals are constructed) can occur in the structures under analysis, since they do not affect the final interpretation of the sentence as a whole, i.e. the 'output' of *passar*.

¹¹ We postulate a kind of event marking this transition in some ways similar to the proposal advocated by Kamp & Reyle (1993) for the combination of a state and the Present Perfect.

- (30) O João continuou a acordar cedo.
the João CONTINUAR-Past A to-break his harm

This verb takes as its ‘input’ a state, apparently without any restrictions, or a (basic or derived) process. One of the reasons why this is so is that once again we face a kind of Imperfective Paradox (that is, from the truth of *A Maria continuou a comer o bolo* (‘Maria continued to eat the cake’) we cannot infer in any way that *A Maria comeu o bolo* (‘Maria ate the cake’) is also true). Taking into account that *continuar* does not affect the internal structure of the eventualities in its scope, since it only adds a new temporal portion of the same type of situation to the eventuality with which it combines, we have to postulate that *continuar*₁ takes as its ‘input’ a state and as its ‘output’ another state of the same type, and *continuar*₂ takes as its ‘input’ a (basic or derived) process and as its ‘output’ a process. So, although it carries some aspectual information, *continuar* does not fit our definition of operator because it only adds a new temporal portion of the same type of the ‘input’.¹²

The following table sums up what we have just said about various aspectual verbs.

Table I: Semantic Effects of Aspectual Verbs in EP

| Aspectual Verb | Basic Predication | Input | Output |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <i>estar</i> | Events and Phase-States | (basic or derived) Process | Progressive State |
| <i>andar</i> | Events and Phase-States | (basic or derived) Process | Habitual State |
| <i>ficar</i> | Events and Phase-States | (basic or derived) Process | Punctual Event + Process |
| <i>começar</i> | Events and Phase-States | Preliminary State | Punctual Event (+ Process) |
| <i>passar</i> | Events and States | (basic or derived) State | State+ Punctual Event |
| <i>continuar</i> ₁ | States | State | State |
| <i>continuar</i> ₂ | Events | (basic or derived) Process | Process |

¹² The reason why we consider two different verbs *continuar* is due to the fact that they do have different ‘inputs’ and ‘outputs’. Moreover, this is relevant for comparing with BP verbs below.

In the following sections we will see how this analysis of aspectual verbs can help to explain discrepancies observed in the structures involving these verbs in European and Brazilian Portuguese.

2.2. Aspectual Verbs in EP and BP: *a + Infinitive/Gerund*

As we have just seen in the previous section, the aspectual verbs given in Table II co-occur with *a + Inf* in standard contemporary EP.¹³ However, interestingly enough, in BP we find that these aspectual verbs can appear with Gerund or with *a + Inf* contrasting, in this way, with EP. This means that the EP structures in which *a + Inf* is consistently required by aspectual verbs correspond to BP sequences in which both *a + Inf* and the *Ger* can take place. The examples (31)-(36) illustrate standard EP sentences where these aspectual verbs consistently select *a + Inf*, whereas examples (37)-(42) exhibit an unquestionable alternation between expressions taking *a + Inf* and *Ger* in BP¹⁴.

- (31) O João está a comer/ #comendo a maçã.
the João ESTAR-Pres. A to-eat/eating the apple
- (32) A Maria ficou a chorar/ #chorando.
the Maria FICAR-Past A to-cry/crying'
- (33) A Lígia anda a ler/ #lendo o livro.
Lígia ANDAR-Pres. A to-read/reading the book
- (34) O Rui começou a escrever/*escrevendo a tese.
the Rui COMEÇAR-Past A to-write/writing the dissertation
- (35) A Rita passou a viver/*vivendo na Holanda.
the Rita PASSAR-Past A to-live/living in the Netherlands
- (36) O Guilherme continuou a beber/ # bebendo o leite.
the Guilherme CONTINUAR-Past A to-drink/drinking milk
- (37) Cecon esteve inspeccionando os estragos causados pela chuva na avenida. (NILC, par 280628)
Cecon was examining the damages caused by the rain in the avenue
- (38) A barca perdeu o leme e ficou dando voltas, em círculos. (NILC, par 20492)
the boat lost the helm and FICAR-Past turning around, in circles
- (39) São Pedro andou lavando o céu e o ralo ficou bem em cima da gente. (NILC, par 22842)
Saint Peter ANDAR-Past washing the sky and the sieve was on top of us

¹³ Although the EP variety we are considering is the standard contemporary one, it should be pointed out that in some southern dialects the Gerund construction is also available to some extent, as we mention below. We use '#' to account for this.

¹⁴ See Oliveira, Cunha & Gonçalves (2003).

- (40) Muitas meninas começaram a chorar. (NILC, par 8774)
many girls COMEÇAR-Past A to-crie
- (41) O delegado Hélio Luz passou a suspeitar de Anísio. (NILC, par 10857)
deputy Hélio Luz PASSAR-Past A to-suspect of Anísio
- (42) Caído sobre o volante, continuou acelerando. (NILC, par 275520)
fallen on the steer wheel, (he) continued speeding up

Would it then be possible to find some adequate explanation for this? First of all, we would like to point out that the distribution of *a + Inf* / *Ger* with BP aspectual verbs is far from homogeneous. In fact, while some operators prefer, with very few exceptions, the Gerund construction, others, in contrast, require almost exclusively the presence of *a + Inf*. The following table, based on the examination of examples from the Corpus NILC/S. Carlos, is very significant in this respect.

Table II: *a + Inf* and *Ger*: distribution of BP Aspectual Verbs

| Aspectual Verb | <i>a + Inf.</i> | Gerund |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|--------|
| <i>esteve / estiveram</i> | 3 | 33 |
| <i>andou / andaram</i> | 0 | 90 |
| <i>ficou / ficaram</i> | 22 | 320 |
| <i>começou / começaram</i> | 3626 | 15 |
| <i>passou / passaram</i> | 2748 | 0 |
| <i>continuou / continuaram</i> | 167 | 248 |

A first look at the BP data presented in this table suggests that there are significant divergences concerning the different configurations in which the aspectual verbs are involved. In fact, aspectual verbs like *estar*, *andar*, *ficar* occur most preferably with the *Ger* structure, contrasting, in this regard, with *começar* and *passar*, which rather select *a + Inf*, in accordance to what happens with the EP southern dialects (see (34)-(35)). *Continuar*, on the other hand, seems to be the only operator that can occur with both structures in a balanced manner.

Before we continue the analysis, we would like to point out some important practical issues. Given the corpus extension and complexity, we decided to restrict the scrutiny of the forms in the third person (singular and plural) to the past tense (*Pretérito Perfeito (PPerf)*). The choice of this tense was mainly determined by the fact that *PPerf* preserves almost all the aspectual properties of the situations inside its scope. It contrasts, in this respect, with tenses like Present or *Imperfeito*, which may modify the internal temporal structure of the eventualities in their scope.

It is worth stressing that the misleading scantiness of examples with *estar* + *Ger* is due to the fact that the *PPerf* is not very common in progressive forms, since this tense imposes an obligatory termination on the situations in its scope, contrasting with the Progressive, which expresses chiefly aspectual progress or continuity. However, if we consider the corresponding data with Present tense, we see that the *Ger* structure is very common in BP, contrasting with the *a* + *Inf* one: while *está* / *estão* + *Ger* appears 24340 times, the corresponding construction with *a* + *Inf* comes out only 47 times.

Notice also that, in Table II, we have only recorded the figures concerning unequivocally aspectual constructions, ignoring cases in which the verbs under analysis express other semantic values. For instance, *começar* + *Ger* or *passar* + *Ger* can get interpretations other than the aspectual one: *começar* + *Ger* receives very often a strict temporal interpretation, corresponding to *começar por* in EP – see (43); *passar* + *Ger*, on the other hand, seems to be only possible with *passar* as a full verb, expressing either temporal or spatial “movement” – see (44) and (45), respectively.

- (43) Vinci começou pintando e só em 1990 passou à escultura. (NILC, par 879959)
 Vinci begun painting and only in 1990 moved to the sculpture
- (44) (...), reflexo do ano que passou estudando para o vestibular. (NILC, par 936887)
 reflex of the year (he)passed studying for the admission examination
- (45) Um asteróide do tamanho de um caminhão passou raspando pela Terra sexta-feira passada. (NILC, par 85142)
 an asteroid of the size of a lorry passed nearby the earth last Friday

At first sight, one could contemplate explaining the two possible constructions in BP saying that *a* + *Inf* is restricted to contexts in which the presence of the Gerund gives rise to differentiated readings, that is, non-aspectual ones. In other words, *a* + *Inf* would be a valid alternative only for those cases in which the presence of the Gerund explicitly carries out a non-aspectual interpretation; otherwise, the Gerund would be necessarily selected by the aspectual verbs.

However, as we will see, this hypothesis comes easily into trouble. If it can explain the behaviour of aspectual verbs like *começar* and *passar*, as the examples just presented suggest, it misleads the whole story about *continuar*. In fact, this aspectual verb supports either the *a* + *Inf* or the *Ger* construction, both expressing unequivocally an aspectual meaning. This is to say that both *Ger* and *a* + *Inf* structures can occur, in the relevant contexts, having an unambiguous aspectual reading. So, we are forced to reconsider that hypothesis in order to accommodate the relevant data.

A significant feature which can decisively influence the distribution of *a* + *Inf* and *Ger* within the BP aspectual verbs constructions relies on their own

semantic as well as syntactic structure. Pursuing this line of thought, we will investigate in the first place the relation between the selection of *a + Inf* or *Ger* and the aspectual classes involved in the ‘inputs’ required by the relevant aspectual verbs. This will be followed by their syntactic analysis.

Comparing the results presented in Tables I and II, we can formulate some hypotheses about the relationship between the aspectual class of the ‘inputs’ and the relevant structures in BP sentences. While *estar*, *andar* and *ficar*, whose ‘inputs’ are of an eventive type, take preferably the *Ger*, *começar* and *passar*, which combine exclusively with ‘inputs’ of a stative nature, rather select the *a + Inf* form. On the other hand, *continuar*, which occurs without problems both with eventive and stative ‘inputs’, appears naturally with any of the above-mentioned structures.

This hypothesis is strengthened by the observation that *continuar a + Inf* appears mostly with stative contexts (basic or derived, mostly habitual – cf. (46)-(49)), contrasting with *continuar + Ger*, which is much more frequent with (basic or derived) eventive ‘inputs’ (cf. (50)-(51)):

- (46) Nos anos 50, Maria continuou a ter prestígio junto às instituições.
(NILC, par 847078)
in the years 50 Maria continued A to-have prestige at-the institutions
- (47) O rato do deserto continuou a ter seu metabolismo diminuído (NILC,
par 973248)
the rat of the desert continued A to-have its metabolism diminished
- (48) Seu pai continuou a trabalhar no Brasil depois de libertado. (habitual
state) (NILC, par 8800)
his father continued A to-work in Brazil after liberated
- (49) Uma nova geração de maestros continuou a tocar sistematicamente
suas composições. (habitual state) (NILC, par 1000303)
a new generation of conductors continued A to-play systematically
their compositions
- (50) Debaixo de chuva, Zagalo continuou orientando o time, pedindo mais
combate na defesa. (NILC, par 1224101)
under rain Zagalo continued guiding the team asking more fight in-
the defence
- (51) Wanderley não deu atenção à mulher e continuou vendo o jogo.
(NILC, par 295191)
Wanderley not paid attention to-the wife and continued watching the
game

Taking into account this analysis, we propose the following conclusions about BP aspectual verbs with *a + Inf / Ger*:

- a. Whenever an aspectual verb takes as its ‘input’ a (basic or derived) process, it combines preferably with Gerund.

- b. Whenever an aspectual verb takes as its ‘input’ a (basic or derived) state, it occurs essentially with *a* + Infinitive.

The generalization just presented describes a common behaviour of the BP aspectual verbs under consideration but it is not an unrestricted principle. Actually, we believe that this is a zone subject to change in a more clear way in BP than in EP, although the latter includes some southern dialects where *Ger* is also used. It is possible to find in BP some exceptional cases in which *estar* and *ficar* occur with *a* + *Inf* and, conversely, examples in which *começar* allows, in particular circumstances, the presence of a *Ger* in its aspectual reading. We can also find sentences in which *continuar* + *Ger* takes place in a stative environment and *continuar a* + *Inf* appears within eventive ‘inputs’ (see (52)-(53)).

- (52) Nesse período, a Telelistas continuou existindo, como pessoa
jurídica. (NILC, par 403051)
in that period, the Telelistas continued existing, as person juridical
- (53) Bebeu um gole e continuou a comer. (NILC, par 1276928)
[he] drank a sip and continued A to-eat

3. *a* + *Inf* and *Ger* constructions: the syntactic facts

In this section, we will show that the semantic differences between EP and BP in what concerns aspectual verbs taking *a* + *Inf* and *Ger* complements are intrinsically related to syntactic structural discrepancies. In this sense, the main goals of the next subsections are as follows: (i) to provide a syntactic distinction between *a* + *Inf* and *Ger* constructions; (ii) to account for the differences between EP and BP on syntactic grounds; (iii) to relate syntactic and semantic facts.

3.1. *a* + *Inf* constructions

3.1.1. General syntactic properties

The *a* + *Inf* construction is possible both in EP and BP, as illustrated by the following examples, in both of which it is selected by an aspectual verb:¹⁵

¹⁵ However, in contemporary standard EP this strategy is the preferred one (in the *Natura/Público corpus*, we found 4372 occurrences of the infinitival construction with *estar* against 27 occurrences of the gerundive construction), whereas in BP the same verb occurs mainly with *Ger* and rarely with the *a* + *Inf* construction. In BP, *a* + *Inf* occurs on a pair with *Ger*, depending on the semantic nature of the ‘input’ (see section 2.2).

- (54) As patrulhas estão a fazer rusgas (Natura/Público, par 227) (EP)
 the patrols are A to-make swoops
 ‘the patrols are swooping’
- (55) Muitas meninas começaram a chorar. (NILC, par 8774) (BP)
 many girls COMEÇAR-Past A to-crie
 ‘many girls started crying’

This construction – gerundive-infinitive, for Sten (1953), or Prepositioned Infinitival Construction, for Raposo (1989) – presents two main properties (see Raposo, 1989, among others.): (i) it occurs in syntactic isolation, as in (56) and (57), and (ii) it occurs as the final subject in the context of predicative verbs, as in (58) and (59):

- (56) [As patrulhas a fazer rusgas!] Que estranho! (EP)
 the patrols A to-make swoops! How strange!
- (57) [Manoel a dizer isso!] Que estranho! (BP)
 Manoel A to-say that! How strange!
- (58) [As patrulhas a fazer rusgas] é estranho! (EP)
 the patrols A to-make swoops is strange
- (59) [Manoel a dizer isso] é estranho! (BP)
 Manoel A to-say that is strange

Notice that, in these contexts, the *a + Inf* structure co-occurs with the final subject of aspectual verbs. This is so, because we are assuming, along with Raposo (1989) and Gonçalves (1992), among others, that these verbs are raising predicates, in the sense that they do not θ -mark the subject, this being an argument of the embedded infinitival verb. So, if the aspectual verb is absent, the final subject co-occurs with the predicate that selects it.

Based on these facts, Raposo (1989) claims that *a* is a preposition which heads a clausal domain, whose distribution is identical to the distribution of canonical small clauses. Yet, the characterization of *a* as a preposition poses several problems. First, prepositioned infinitival domains selected by verbs other than the aspectual ones do not occur in contexts like those in (56)-(59). Consider, for example, a verb like *insistir* (*to insist*), which takes a complement headed by the preposition *em* (*in*):

- (60) Os meninos insistiram em ver o jogo.
 the children insisted EM to-watch the game

In this case, the prepositioned domain does not occur either in syntactic isolation (see (61)) or as the final subject in predicative contexts (see (62)):

- (61) *Os meninos em ver o jogo! Que estranho!
 the children EM to-watch the game! How strange!

- (62) *Os meninos em ver o jogo é estranho!
 the children EM to-watch the game is strange!

Second, under certain conditions, the *a + Inf* domain selected by these aspectual verbs is distributionally equivalent to *Ger* constructions, as it was shown in section 2.2.

Third, no lexical material can interrupt the adjacency between *a* and the infinitival verb, contrary to what happens in contexts where the infinitival domain is selected by a non-aspectual verb. The relevant contrast is presented in (63) and (64):

- (63) *(O) Manoel está a *realmente* dizer isso. (EP/BP)
 (the) Manoel is A really to-say that
 (64) (O) João obrigou (a) Ana a *realmente* dizer isso. (EP/BP)
 (the) João forced (the) Ana A really to-say that

Finally, the complement of *a* cannot be replaced by the demonstrative *isso* (*that*) in the context of an aspectual verb (see (65)); on the contrary, replacement by *isso* is allowed in (64), as illustrated in (66):

- (65) *(O) Manoel está a *isso*. (EP/BP)
 (the) Manoel is A that
 (66) (O) João obrigou (a) Ana a *isso*. (EP/BP)
 (the) João forced (the) Ana A that

The specific behaviour of *a* in aspectual constructions led Gonçalves (1992) and Duarte (1993) to recategorize this element as an aspectual (Asp) head that constitutes a discontinuous morpheme with the infinitival marker, *-r*.¹⁶ The aspectual value is obtained when Asp amalgamates with T.

3.1.2. The structure of *a + Inf* constructions: Differences between EP and BP

As we have shown in the previous section, the *a + Inf* domain exhibits identical syntactic properties in EP and in BP. The crucial fact is that the preposition *a* is recategorized as an Asp head in both varieties. Now the question is to discuss the categorial status of the infinitival complement.

Following Gonçalves (1992), Duarte (1993) and Duarte & Gonçalves (2002), we assume that in the construction under analysis aspectual verbs select a TP domain. One of the most important empirical arguments for this analysis comes from negation. In fact, assuming, as Zanuttini (1996) and Matos (1999), that there is a strong correlation between sentential negation

¹⁶ The impossibility of inserting lexical material between *a* and the infinitival verb is a strong argument for the discontinuous morpheme analysis.

and T, the data presented in (67) and (68) suggest that the embedded infinitival domain is TP:¹⁷

- (67) muitos continuam a *não* acreditar (Natura/Público, par 62255) (EP)
 many continue A NOT to-believe
 (68) Rubião continuava a *não* ouvir nada (NILC, par 111799) (BP)
 Rubião continued A NOT to-hear nothing

Assuming that *a* is an Asp head and that T projects in the majority of cases, the partial representation of the infinitival domain in aspectual contexts of EP and BP is as follows:

- (69) $V_{asp} [TP [T' [AspP [Asp' [Asp\ a] [VP\ t_{SUB}\ V\ \dots]]]]]$ ¹⁸

In both varieties, the embedded T is dependent on the higher T, that is, the embedded domain cannot introduce a new temporal reference (see, for example, Newmeyer, 1975; Stowell, 1982; Raposo, 1987 and Ambar, 1992). Thus, the occurrence of modifiers with opposite temporal values produces ungrammatical sequences:¹⁹

- (70) *Muitos, *ontem*, continuavam a *não* acreditar nisso, *hoje*. (EP)
 many, yesterday, continued A NOT to-believe in-that today
 (71) *Rubião, *ontem*, continuava a *não* ouvir nada, *hoje*. (BP)
 Rubião, yesterday, continued A NOT to-hear nothing, today

On the contrary, whenever the embedded T is independent, the infinitival domain admits a modifier introducing a new temporal reference; as shown by the grammaticality of (72):

- (72) Os professores, *ontem*, obrigaram os alunos a apresentar o trabalho, *hoje*.
 the teachers, yesterday, forced the students to-present the work, today

¹⁷ Notice, however, that, in the *corpora*, we did not find this possibility when the aspectual verb corresponds to *estar* ('to be'). This can mean that this verb is close to auxiliaries, since the latter do not allow for embedded negation, too:

(i) *(O) João tem *não* dormido.
 (the) João has NOT slept

¹⁸ As we said before, we assume that the aspectual verbs under analysis are raising predicates; therefore, t_{SUB} stands for the trace of the subject raised to the matrix for Case checking purposes.

¹⁹ A dependent embedded T is the condition for Restructuring to apply when the matrix verb is a main verb, such as *querer* (*to want*) (see Gonçalves, 1999).

In (72), the adverb *ontem* (*yesterday*) refers to the moment when the teachers forced the students to present their work, whereas *hoje* (*today*) refers to the moment when the students have to present their work.

Although the structure of the infinitival complement selected by aspectual verbs seems to be identical in EP and BP, the two varieties differ *w.r.t.* the possibilities of clitic placement. In fact, in EP clitics selected by the infinitival verb can either occur in adjacency to this verb (see (73) and (74)) or freely climb to the aspectual verb (see (75) and (76)):

- (73) outros estão a fazê-lo agora (Natura/Público, par 983669)
others are A to-do-CL now
- (74) (...) as pernas começaram a queixar-se (Natura/Público, par 68832)
the legs COMEÇAR A to-complain- CL
- (75) ainda se estão a realizar os estudos preliminares
(Natura/Público, par 13662)
still CL are A to-do the studies preliminaries
- (76) que se começam a dar os primeiros passos (Natura/Público, par 5293)
that CL COMEÇAR A to-take the first steps

However, Clitic Climbing is very restricted in BP; the preferred option is to keep the clitic adjacent to the infinitival verb, proclisis being the more natural position, according to the pattern of clitic placement in this variety:²⁰

- (77) estava a se queixar
[s/he] was A CL to-complain

Since there is evidence in favour of T projection both in EP and in BP, the question now is how to derive the attested difference between the two varieties in what concerns Clitic Climbing.

Following Bartra & Suñer (1997) and Gonçalves (1999), let us assume that functional heads can be either active or inert/defective. Assume, also, that the relevant functional head in infinitival complements is the embedded T, which can be active or defective; if active, it checks the verb features, and the following facts are naturally derived:

(i) sentential negation is allowed in the embedded domain, as in (67) and (68), repeated in (78) and (79).²¹

- (78) muitos continuam a não acreditar (Natura/Público, par 62255) (EP)
many continue A not to-believe

²⁰ On clitic placement in EP and BP see Galves & Abaurre (1996), Galves (1997), Duarte & Matos (2000) and Duarte *et al.* (2001), among others.

²¹ Recall that we are assuming a correlation between T and negation, in the spirit of Zanuttini (1996) and Matos (1999).

- (79) Rubião continuava a *não* ouvir nada (NILC, par 111799)
 Rubião continued A not to-hear nothing (BP)

(ii) clitics are licensed in the embedded domain (see Duarte *et al.*, 2001), enclisis or proclisis being the available options, according to the general pattern of clitic placement in each variety, as shown in (73) and (77).

Notice that the two arguments also apply to infinitival embedded domains whose T is independent of the higher T and to finite embedded sentences. Consider the following examples:

- (80) Os deputados decidiram [aprovar a lei].
 the representatives decided to-approve the law
 (81) Os professores decidiram [que os alunos entregariam o trabalho hoje].
 the teachers decided that the students would-hand in the work today

In (80), the embedded T is independent of the higher T and, in such a case, sentential negation (see (82)) and clitics (see (83)) are admitted in the embedded domain:²²

- (82) Os deputados decidiram [*não* aprovar a lei].
 the representatives decided not to-approve the law
 (83) Os deputados decidiram [aprová-*la*].
 the representatives decided to-approve-CL

The same behaviour is attested in embedded finite contexts like the one in (81):

- (84) Os professores decidiram [que os alunos *não* entregariam o trabalho hoje].
 the teachers decided that the students not would-hand in their work today
 (85) Os professores decidiram [que os alunos *o* entregariam hoje].
 the teachers decided that the students CL would-hand in today

Let us now assume that in EP, the embedded T of aspectual constructions can also be defective in what concerns its V-features. In this case, the embed-

²² In (80), the embedded T is independent of the higher one since the tense of the infinitival domain is autonomous from the tense of the matrix; consequently, the infinitival domain can introduce new temporal information. This fact is illustrated in (i), where the co-occurrence of two modifiers with non-overlapping temporal values is allowed:

- (i) Os deputados, *ontem*, decidiram aprovar a lei *hoje*.
 the representatives yesterday decided to-approve the law today

ded V cannot check its features against the embedded T; consequently, the embedded V must rise to the matrix T, as a last resort operation in order to prevent the derivation from crashing. Raising of the embedded V results in the formation of a complex predicate, that is this verb and the matrix one behave like a syntactic unit and they check their features against the same T head – the matrix one.²³ The empirical data that support the complex predicate analysis are essentially the following:

(i) clitics depending on the embedded verb occur in adjacency to the matrix verb, since there is no verbal host in the embedded domain; this is illustrated in (75) and (76), repeated in (86) and (87):

(86) ainda *se* estão a realizar os estudos preliminares
(Natura/Público, par 13662)

still CL are A to-do the studies preliminaries

(87) que *se* começam a dar os primeiros passos
(Natura/Público, par 5293)

that CL begin A to-take the first steps

(ii) if clitic climbing applies, sentential negation is no longer allowed in the infinitival complement; recall that we have assumed a close relation between active T and negation:

(88) *O Presidente disse que muitos o_i começaram a não apreciar t_i .
the President said that many CL_i COMEÇAR-Past A not to-appreciate t_i

(iii) SE passive is allowed, and, in consequence, the Object of the embedded verb becomes the subject of the matrix; this can be interpreted as a transparency effect, that is, the embedded TP domain does not qualify as a barrier for NP extraction:

(89) que *se* começam a dar [os primeiros passos]_{SUB}
(Natura/Público, par 5293)

that CL COMEÇAR-Pres A to-take the first steps

(90) ainda *se* estão a realizar [os estudos preliminares]_{SUB}
(Natura/Público, par 13662)

still CL are A to-do the studies preliminaries

From the syntactic point of view, the complex predicate formation is the main difference between EP and BP in *a + Inf* constructions selected by aspectual verbs. In fact, in the NILC *corpus* we have found only two

²³ On complex predicates see Rizzi (1982), Burzio (1986) and, for EP, Gonçalves (1999).

occurrences of Clitic Climbing²⁴ and no occurrence of SE passive in adjacency to the aspectuals *estar*, *começar* or *continuar*. This means that in BP the infinitival complement contains the necessary and sufficient functional heads to license the features of the embedded verb, thus avoiding, in a high percentage of cases, the formation of the complex predicate

Assume, again, that in BP T projects in the embedded domain. As in EP, this head is dependent on the matrix T, since the temporal specifications of the infinitival complement are dependent on the temporal specifications of the matrix. Following Duarte *et al.* (2001), we claim that in BP T can also be defective or active, as in EP. However, whereas in EP the defectivity of T forces the complex predicate formation, in BP it has consequences on clitic placement. According to the authors, in BP:

(i) if T is active (and in the absence of a proclisis trigger), enclisis is the pattern of clitic placement, as shown by (91)-(93):

(91) (...) este estava a dar-*lhe* notícias do ataque(...) (NILC, par 125019)

this was A to-give-CL news of-the attack

(92) (...) comecei a copiá-*lo* (NILC, par 44824)

[I] COMEÇAR-Past A to-copy-CL

(93) (...) ela continuava a fugir-*me* (NILC, par 103867)

she continued to-escape-CL

(ii) if T is defective, proclisis to the embedded verb is obtained, as illustrated by (94)-(96):

(94) (...) ele estava a *se* queixar (NILC, par Opinião-94^a-opi-2)

he was A CL to-complain

(95) a burguesia urbana começou a *se* organizar (NILC, par 131630)

the middle-class começar-Past A CL to-organize

(96) (...) o Universo continuará a *se* expandir (NILC, par 97227)

the Universe will-continue A CL to-spread

In synthesis, in *a + Inf* constructions dependent on aspectual verbs Syntax meets Semantics. On the one hand, the semantic facts led us to conclude that EP is distinct from BP in the sense that in the latter the aspectual nature of the ‘input’ generally restricts the occurrence of the *a+ Inf* construction, contrary to what happens in EP. On the other hand, the syntactic facts allow us to conclude that the infinitival complement is structurally distinct in the two varieties. In fact, although T can be either active or defective in these varieties, the defectivity of this head has distinct consequences: in EP, it

²⁴ We do not consider the cases where the impersonal/nominative clitic SE occurs in adjacency to the matrix verb, since, in this case, the clitic corresponds to the indefinite subject of this verb.

forces the complex verb formation, and Clitic Climbing is attested; in BP, the defective T does not prevent clitics from being licensed within the embedded domain but it restricts their position *w.r.t.* the verb. This fact suggests the following hypotheses about BP (see Duarte *et al.*, 2001): (i) a defective T licenses clitics or (ii) a functional head [-T] non distinct from V (namely Asp, in the constructions under analysis) can also license clitics. The fact that proclisis to participles is the only available option in the context of auxiliary verbs, where no T is projected in the domain of the main verb (see (97)), constitutes empirical evidence in favour of the second hypothesis.

- (97) Eu devia ter [*me casado com ele*] (NILC, par 22649)
I should to-have CL marry with him

3.2. Gerund constructions

The data presented in section 2.2. show that in BP, when the aspectual verb takes as its ‘input’ a (basic or derived) process, it occurs, in a high percentage of cases, with Gerund. On the contrary, whenever the aspectual verb takes as its ‘input’ a (basic or derived) state, it appears preferably with *a + Inf*. Recall that in EP, the Gerund construction is productive in some southern varieties, but it is not the preferred option in the standard contemporary variety.

A+Inf and Gerund domains share a significant number of properties. In fact, both domains occur in syntactic isolation (see (98) and (99)), and as the final subject in the context of predicative verbs (see (100) and (101)); moreover, the aspectual value is the same in both cases.

- (98) [Manoel a dizer isso!] Que estranho!
Manoel A to-say that! How strange!
(99) [Manoel dizendo isso!] Que estranho!
Manoel saying that! How strange!
(100) [Manoel a dizer isso] é estranho!
Manoel A to-say that is strange
(101) [Manoel dizendo isso] é estranho!
Manoel saying that is strange

The identical behaviour of the two constructions suggests that the Gerund domain is also a projection of Asp. However, in the *a + Inf* construction this head is lexicalized by *a*, whereas in Gerund constructions the same head is empty and checks the V-features of the Gerund, after V movement.²⁵ The fact

²⁵ According to the Minimalist Program assumptions (Chomsky, 1995), when the lexical items are inserted into the derivation, they are already inflected, and check their features against the appropriate functional heads. If features match, the derivation converges; otherwise, it crashes.

that sentential negation is allowed in some contexts (namely with *continuar*) suggests that T projects in some gerundive contexts (see, for instance, (102)):

- (102) o Carrefour e o Sé continuam *não* vendendo
the Carrefour and the Sé continue NOT selling

However, we did not find in the NILC *corpus* the possibility illustrated in (102) with the aspectual verbs *estar*, *ficar* and *começar*. Thus, we propose that two different structures are involved, as we partially represent in (103) and (104):

- (103) Vasp [_{TP} [_{T'} [_{AspP} [_{Asp'} [_{VP} *t*_{SU} V ...]]]]]]

Vasp [_{AspP} [_{Asp'} [_{VP} *t*_{SU} V ...]]]]

In (103), T is active, and sentential negation in the embedded domain is allowed, as expected. In this case, proclisis – but not enclisis – is obtained in virtue of the negation operator. However, if T is defective or does not project as in (104), proclisis is obtained.²⁶ If this is true, we account for (105):²⁷

- (105) As pessoas estão [*me dando apoio nas ruas*] (NILC, par 10046)
the people are CL giving support in the streets

4. de + Infinitive constructions

The aspectual verbs having this construction are related to interruption, cessation, conclusion or culmination of an eventuality. Those verbs are the following: *deixar de*, *parar de* (*stop*), *acabar de* (*finish/to come to an end*), in EP and BP, and *terminar de* (*terminate*) in BP. In both varieties their dissimilarities are fundamentally semantic as they exhibit identical syntactic properties.

4.1. The semantics of ‘de + Inf’ constructions

4.1.1. ‘Acabar de’ in EP

According to the aspectual nature of the ‘inputs’, *acabar de* in EP may be either an aspectual operator or may have a temporal reading. In BP this distinction is very much associated (although not always) with two different verbs: *terminar de* and *acabar de*.

As an aspectual operator, *acabar de* (to *finish*) selects processes and culminated processes as basic predications. However, its ‘input’ must be

²⁶ Recall that proclisis is also obtained in *a + Inf* constructions if T is defective.

²⁷ Once again, we follow Duarte *et al.* (2001) in assuming that in BP either a defective T or a functional head [- T] non-distinct from V (namely, Asp) license clitics in BP.

coerced into a process and the ‘output’, as it marks the end of a situation, is a culmination (or possibly a culminated process) taking into account the adverbials with which it can co-occur (see (106)-(107)). This aspectual verb cannot combine with states (see (108)-(109)) and when the basic predication is a culmination it has a temporal reading (110).

- (106) Ontem, o Rui acabou de ler o livro às 5 horas.
yesterday, the Rui ACABAR-Past DE to-read the book at 5 o'clock
‘Yesterday, Rui finished reading the book at 5 o'clock’
- (107) Ontem, o Rui acabou de ler o livro em meia hora.
yesterday, the Rui ACABAR-Past DE to-read the book in half an hour
- (108) *Ontem, o Rui acabou de ser alto.
yesterday, the Rui ACABAR-Past DE to-be tall
- (109) *Ontem, o Rui acabou de gostar de linguística.
yesterday, the Rui ACABAR-Past DE to-like linguistics
- (110) *Ontem, o Rui acabou de sair.
yesterday, the Rui ACABAR-Past DE to-leave

When *acabar de* (to have just) has a temporal reading, it accepts also phase states (111), culminations (112) and points (113).

- (111) O Rui acabou de ser simpático: ofereceu-me um livro.
the Rui ACABAR-Past DE to-be nice: [he] offered me a book
‘Rui has just been nice: he offered me a book’
- (112) O Rui acabou de sair (neste momento / há pouco).
the Rui ACABAR-Past DE to-depart (in this moment / a while ago)
- (113) O Rui acabou de bater à porta (neste momento / há pouco).
the Rui ACABAR-Past DE to-knock at the door (in this moment / a while ago)

However, it should be noticed that the temporal perspective point is in the relevant interval adjacent and immediately subsequent to the terminus of the eventuality. If this is not the case, with culminations, states and points that localization does not take place as we can see, for instance, in the contrast between (114) and (115).

- (114) *Ontem, às dez horas, o Rui acabou de sair.
yesterday, at ten o'clock, the Rui ACABAR-Past DE to-leave
- (115) Ontem, às 10 horas, mal o Rui acabou de sair telefonou a Teresa a perguntar por ele.
yesterday, at ten o'clock, as soon as the Rui ACABAR-Past DE to-leave Teresa called A to-ask for him

4.1.2. *'Acabar de' and 'terminar de' in BP*

In BP, apart from *acabar de*, there is another verb, *terminar de* (to finish/terminate), which does not act as an aspectual verb in EP. According to the data in the NILC corpus, the first of these two verbs has mainly a temporal reading (see (117)) whereas the latter is aspectual (see (116)). So, the difference between the two varieties seems to be of a lexical nature, as EP has only one verb for both cases.²⁸ These observations are summed up in the table III:²⁹

- (116) À 0h de ontem, os detentos terminaram de cavar o túnel (NILC, par 348798)
 at 0 o'clock yesterday the detainee TERMINAR-Past DE to-dig the tunnel
- (117) Chico acaba de finalizar seu segundo CD (NILC, par 7325)
 Chico ACABAR-Past DE to-finish his second CD

Table III: Aspectual *acabar de* and *terminar de* in EP and BP

| Operator | Basic Predication | “input” | “output” |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------|-------------|
| <i>acabar de</i> (in EP) | Processes and Culminated Processes | Process | Culmination |
| <i>terminar de</i> (in BP) | Processes and Culminated Processes | Process | Culmination |

4.1.3. *'Parar de' and 'deixar de'*4.1.3.1. *In EP*

In EP, *parar de* (to stop) is in some respects similar to the aspectual verb *acabar de*: the basic predications are processes and culminated processes (see (118)-(119)) and the ‘input’ is a process. But the ‘output’ is different, since it does not indicate the end of a situation but its (temporary) interruption. So, its ‘output’ is a punctual event associated with a ceasing state. However, the ‘output’ is somehow unstable as it can focus either the punctual event (see (120)) or the ceasing state as in example (121).

²⁸ In the 84 occurrences analyzed in NILC corpus with *terminar de*, only four may be temporal and in 382 with *acabar de* only twelve are aspectual and forty two seem to be ambiguous.

²⁹ In BP *acabar* may co-occur with *Ger*, but in this case it is a different verb, parallel to the EP construction *acabar por* (to end up by). *Terminar por* is also possible but again it is not an aspectual operator as it is similar to *acabar por* in EP.
 (i) acabam prejudicando a suavidade de sua pele. (*Cláudia* 38, n.º 6, p. 147)
 (ii) terminamos por reproduzir essa cultura quando botamos só as meninas para cuidar de casa. (*Domingo*, n.º 1. 199)

- (118) O Rui parou de *ser alto / *ser simpático / *sair.
the Rui stopped DE to-be tall / to-be nice/to-leave
- (119) O Rui parou de correr / ler o livro.
the Rui stopped DE to-run / to-read the book
- (120) O Rui parou de ler o livro às 5 horas.
the Rui stopped DE to-read the book at 5 o'clock
- (121) O Rui parou de ler o livro durante 1 hora.
the Rui stopped DE to-read the book for an hour

Deixar de in EP can select states and events as basic predications but its 'input' is different depending on what it selects: when the basic predication is a state, the 'input' is also a state, and when the basic predication is an event the 'input' is a habitual state (see (122)-(123)). Nevertheless, this aspectual verb admits a different kind of 'input', a process, in some restricted cases of processes (possibly some culminated processes), like *chover* (to rain), *rir* (to laugh), and *ver* (to see) where there is not coercion to a habitual state. In this case, it is close to *parar de* like in (124)-(125). The somehow rare combination with a process as 'input' shows that in EP there is a hesitation between *deixar de* and *parar de*. Actually, the 'output' is very similar, that is, a punctual event plus a ceasing state, but while *parar de* focuses mainly on the punctual event, *deixar de* focuses on the ceasing state.

- (122) Ele deixou de ser gordo.
he DEIXAR-Past DE to-be fat
- (123) Ela deixou de ser simpática/ fumar /sair/ ler o jornal.
she DEIXAR-Past DE to-be nice/to-smoke/to-go out/to-read the paper
- (124) Deixou de chover.
[it] DEIXAR-Past DE to-rain
- (125) Naquele momento o condutor deixou de ver o carro em frente.
in that moment the driver DEIXAR-Past DE to-see the car ahead

If we compare *acabar de*, *parar de* and *deixar de*, we can say that the first one indicates the culmination of a process, the second one its (possibly temporary) interruption and the third one the cessation of a habitual state, as in (126)-(128).

- (126) O Rui acabou de fumar. ('Rui finished smoking')
- (127) O Rui parou de fumar. ('Rui stopped (the process of) smoking')
- (128) O Rui deixou de fumar ('Rui gave up smoking')

4.1.3.2. In BP

There is no noticeable variation in the behaviour of *deixar de* in BP and EP. As for *parar de*, it exhibits some differences, inasmuch as it can share EP

contexts of both *parar de* and *deixar de*. In (129) *parar de* selects a process whereas in (130) it selects a state.

- (129) (...) pediu a um policial que parasse de atirar (NILC, par 9520)
asked a policeman that [he] PARAR-Past DE to-shoot
- (130) aos quais pediu para pararem de ter medo (NILC, par 19554)
to whom [he] asked to PARAR-Past DE to-have fear

The possibility of EP *parar de* of highlighting the ceasing state is much more evident in BP. In the first variety, apart from its fundamental meaning focusing the punctual event, it also allows (although rarely) to focus the ceasing state when supported by measure temporal adverbials. On the other hand, *deixar de* (associated to a basic or derived state) focuses mainly the ceasing state but it also shows a somehow weak instability when it occurs with processes not coerced into habitual states. These are possibly the reasons why some BP examples with *parar de* correspond to *deixar de* in EP, as it happens, for instance, in BP example (130). So, it seems, according to the data, that *parar de* in BP instantiates two different types: one very similar to EP *deixar de*, combining with states (see (130)) and events, having in this latter case a habitual state as ‘input’ (see (131)), and another one similar to *parar de* in EP, like in (132).

- (131) O procurador (...), que parara de fumar, retomou o hábito (NILC, par 82989)
the attorney (...), who PARAR-Past DE to-smoke, regained the habit
- (132) (...) a fila, que não parava de crescer. (par 116105)
the queue that NOT PARAR-Past DE to-grow

Deixar de, is similar in both varieties, as we can see in examples (133)-(134). However it also shows some weak instability, as it allows in BP, like in EP, the possibility of having a process as ‘input’ (see (135)).

- (133) Noticiei que a grife italiana (...) iria deixar de vestir o time do Barcelona (NILC, par 12875)
[I] informed that the Italian make would DEIXAR DE to-dress the team of Barcelona
- (134) Gostaria que Jackson deixasse de ser pop star (NILC, par 9000)
[I] would like that Jackson DEIXAR DE to-be pop star
- (135) se a escurecesse totalmente (...) deixaria de ver os objectos (NILC, par 995)
if [he] would.darken it totally (...)would-DEIXAR DE to-see the objects

We see then that these two verbs are somehow unstable in both varieties but in a different way. In EP *parar de* mainly focuses the punctual event, as it occurs very naturally with ‘punctual’ adverbials, whereas *deixar de* prefers the ceasing state. In BP *parar de* seems to compete with *deixar de* in many cases, although the outcome is still not very clear, according to the data. The following table sums up what has been said:

Table IV: *Deixar de* and *parar de* in EP and BP

| Operator | Basic Predication | ‘input’ | ‘output’ |
|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <i>deixar de</i> EP and BP | States and Events | State (basic or derived) | ‘Punctual Event’ + Ceasing State |
| <i>parar de</i> in EP and <i>parar de</i> ₁ in BP | Processes and Culminated Processes | Process | Punctual Event + ‘Ceasing State’ |
| <i>parar de</i> ₂ BP | States and Events | State (basic or derived) | Punctual Event + Ceasing State |

4.2 The syntax of ‘*de + Inf*’ constructions

In the preceding section, we have shown that interesting semantic contrasts between EP and BP can also be found in the group of aspectual verbs that select *de + Inf*. In this section, we aim to show that (i) *de + Inf* is distinct from *a + Inf* complements in both varieties and (ii) *de + Inf* complements exhibit identical syntactic properties in both varieties.

4.2.1. General syntactic properties

Consider the following sentence, illustrative of *de + Inf* constructions in both EP and BP:

- (136) Os meninos deixaram de ler o livro
the children DEIXAR-past DE to-read the book

The infinitival domain of this sentence is syntactically distinct from *a + Inf* constructions in the two varieties. First, contrary to *a + Inf*, *de + Inf* does not occur in syntactic isolation, as illustrated by the contrast between (137) and (138):

- (137) *[Os meninos de ler o livro!] Que pena!
the children DE to-read the book! What a pity!
(138) [Os meninos a ler o livro!] Que maravilha!
the children A to-read the book! How wonderful!

Second, the infinitival domain headed by *de* cannot occur as the final subject in predicative contexts (see (139)); once again, *a + Inf* complements exhibit a different behaviour (see (140)):

- (139) *[Os meninos de ler o livro] é uma pena!
the children DE to-read the book is a pity!
(140) [Os meninos a ler o livro] é maravilhoso!
the children A to-read the book is wonderful!

Third, *de + Inf* constructions are not distributionally equivalent to *Ger*; this fact distinguishes these constructions from *a + Inf*, as the contrast between (141) and (142) shows:

- (141) *Os meninos deixaram lendo o livro.
the children DEIXAR-Past reading the book
(142) Os meninos estão lendo o livro.
the children are reading the book

The contrast between the two constructions suggests that *de* cannot be seen as another lexicalization of the Asp head. In turn, if we assume that *de* keeps its prepositional nature in both varieties, we account for the similarity of *de + Inf* complements selected by aspectual and non-aspectual verbs.³⁰ Thus in both cases,

(i) the infinitival complement does not occur in syntactic isolation (compare (137) with (143)):

- (143) Os meninos gostam de ler livros. / *[Os meninos de ler livros!] Que maravilha!
the children like DE to-read books / the children DE to-read books!
How wonderful!

(ii) the infinitival complement does not occur as the final subject in predicative constructions (compare (139) with (144)):

- (144) Os meninos gostam de ler livros. / *[Os meninos de ler livros] é maravilhoso!
the children like DE to-read books / the children DE to-read books
is wonderful!

³⁰ In some contexts, this preposition can be reanalysed as a Complementizer, as shown in Gonçalves, Duarte & Miguel (to appear). We will not discuss this possibility here.

(iii) *Ger* constructions are disallowed (compare (141) with (145)):

- (145) *Os meninos gostam *lendo* livros.
the children like reading the book

Furthermore, characterizing *de* as a preposition accounts for the pattern of clitic placement. As the data available in *Natura/Público* and *NILC* reveal, in aspectual constructions, *de* preferably triggers proclisis in both varieties. So, this preposition behaves as a heavy word like the other prepositions.³¹ The examples in (146)-(147) stand for EP, the ones in (148)-(149), for BP:

- (146) (...) os dois países deixaram de *se* encarar como inimigos (...)
(*Natura/Público*, par 20233)
the two countries DEIXAR-Past DE CL to-face as enemies
- (147) John Sculley (...) acabou de *se* demitir (*Natura/Público*, par 63746)
John Scully (...) ACABAR (have-just) DE CL to-resign
- (148) os dois deixaram de se ver em Dezembro de 1992
(*NILC*, par Brasil-94b-pol-1)
the two DEIXAR-Past DE CL to-see in december of 1992
- (149) (...) acabaram de *se* mudar para São Paulo
(*NILC*, par Especial-94^a-nd-2)
[they] ACABAR (have-just) DE CL to-move to São Paulo

Interestingly, although proclisis is the preferred option, enclisis can also be obtained both in EP and in BP. See, for instance, the data in (150) and (151):

- (150) (...) deixou de produzir-*se* essa planta (*Natura/Público*, par 58160)
DEIXAR-Past DE to-produce-CL that plant
- (151) (...) os comunistas haviam deixado de *sê-lo*
(*NILC*, par Mais-94a-nd-1)
the communists had DEIXAR-Past DE to-be-CL

Duarte *et al.* (2001) and Brito, Duarte & Matos (2003) suggest that enclisis in non-finite domains selected by prepositions other than *a* are a specific case of clitic placement. As the authors remark, this phenomenon is also attested in the context of non-aspectual verbs, as illustrated in (152) and (153) (from Brito, Duarte & Matos, 2003: 864):

- (152) Telefonei à Maria para {*a* convidar / convidá-*la*} para a festa.
[I] called to-the Maria PARA{CL to-invite / to-invite-CL} to the party

³¹ The exception is the preposition *a*, which is not a proclisis trigger. As remarked by Brito, Duarte & Matos (2003), Said Ali (1908) has found, in 100 pages collected from texts of the XIX century, 88% occurrences of proclisis in non-finite contexts headed by prepositions other than *a*.

- (153) Preciso de encontrar-*te*.
[I] need DE to-meet- CL

The fact that proclisis is preferred over enclisis in the context of *de + Inf* (the EP and the BP *corpora* contain a higher percentage of proclisis) means that *de* is a heavy word, as it is usually assumed for prepositions.

4.2.2 *The structure of 'de + Inf' complements*

The data presented in the previous section suggest that *de + Inf* complements have the structure partially represented in (154):

- (154) $V_{asp} [PP [P' [de [TP \dots]]]]$

The embedded T is dependent on the higher one, since it cannot introduce a new temporal reference:

- (155) *O João, *ontem*, deixou de ler o livro, *hoje*.
the João, yesterday, DEIXAR DE to-read the book, today

In this case, non-finite T is active both in EP and in BP. Thus, the embedded verb checks its features within the embedded domain and, so do the clitics. As expected, and contrary to what happens in *a + Inf* construction, Clitic Climbing is disallowed even in EP:³²

- (156) *Os meninos deixaram-*no*_i de ler *t_i*.
the children DEIXAR-CL to-read *t_i*

In synthesis: (i) *de* is distinct from *a* in both varieties, in the sense that the former is a preposition whereas the latter is the lexicalization of an Asp head; (ii) *de + Inf* constructions have essentially the same syntactic structure in both varieties; the differences are fundamentally semantic and/or lexical distinctions, such as the temporal vs. aspectual one, found in *terminar de* and *acabar de* in BP in contrast to *acabar de* in EP or the different choice made by both varieties of *parar de /deixar de*.

Concluding Remarks

The analysis of the two major types of aspectual verbs in EP and BP, exhibiting *a + Inf /Ger* and *de+Inf* structures, showed that the first type is of a great interest on semantic and syntactic grounds as the almost exclusive selection of *a + Inf* in EP is due to the fact that in this variety the embedded T can be either active or defective. In the case that T is defective, the embedded

³² This is confirmed by the data in *Natura/Público*, where Clitic Climbing is very rare.

verb raises to the higher T in order to check its features, thus forming a complex predicate with the aspectual verb. On the contrary in BP *a + Inf* and *Ger* structures may compete, depending on the class of the selected aspectual verb. In this variety the infinitival complement is structurally distinct from the one in EP as it contains the necessary and sufficient functional heads to license the features of the embedded verb, which avoids the formation of the complex predicate. At the same time we can see that some verbs occur mainly with *Ger*, some others with *a + Inf* and one verb (*continuar*) selects both structures. This corresponds in an extensive way to differences in the semantic nature of the ‘input’ of these verbs before they operate the aspectual transition. In fact, the selection of *Ger* is very much related to an eventive (process) ‘input’, and the selection of *a + Inf* to a stative ‘input’. The verb *continuar*, which selects both structures, has mainly an eventive ‘input’ when it selects *Ger* and a stative one when it selects *a + Inf*.

The structure *de+Inf*, although different from *a + Inf* in its syntactic analysis, does not show any syntactic discrepancies in the two varieties. These are left for the lexical and semantic domain as there are two pairs of verbs in BP that show some significant differences. The verb *acabar de* in EP corresponds to the pair *acabar de /terminar de* in BP exhibiting a temporal /aspectual contrast. *Parar de* and *deixar de*, show in the two varieties some distinct ‘inputs’ as the first one in BP is similar in some respects to the latter one in EP, having some semantic overlapping. These BP aspectual verbs seem to be much more unstable than the EP ones.

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