

Foreword

In the year 2000, a triennial project entitled *Português Europeu e Português Brasileiro: Unidade e Diversidade na Passagem do Milênio (European and Brazilian Portuguese: Unity and Diversity at the Turn of the Millennium)* was launched, which involved numerous researchers from both Portuguese and Brazilian universities. The main goal of the project was the investigation of the most salient dissimilarities between the two varieties of Portuguese under study (EP and BP, for short), in the semantic and syntactic domains, leaving aside lexical, morphological and phonological matters.

From the beginning, the research team was led by the common-sense evidence that variation on the syntactic side was considerably more significant than on the semantic one. Nevertheless, three semantic areas of variation were early identified, namely: nominal semantics, temporal semantics (taken in a very broad sense) and mood semantics. Within the nominal semantics area, two topics came forth more blatantly: first, the use of the quantificational form *todo* – “every / the whole, ...” – as a universal operator that may end up either as a counting quantifier or a measuring quantifier, involving in the latter case the total part of some entity; second, the range of use and the interpretation of singular and plural bare nominal structures. In the temporal semantics area, the main divergences appeared to have to do with, on one side, a slight differentiation of tense values, in particular those conveyed by the imperfect indicative (*gostava* / “liked”), and, on the other side, a considerable mismatch in the form of adverbial temporal locators, chiefly depending on the presence vs. absence of a preposition and, in the positive case, on the selected preposition. Finally, on the matter of the mood system, it seemed worth exploring the *prima facie* evidence that the two varieties, while keeping the same array of mood values, mainly the basic opposition indicative / subjunctive, are not coincident in the factors governing their selection. Besides these predominantly semantic fields, also the gerund, a transversal topic that cuts across diverse semantic and syntactic domains, was defined as a major research topic.

Other relatively minor divergence points were also pointed out in the initial inquiries, namely within the area of negation: the apparent evolution in the

expression of negation reinforcement in Brazilian Portuguese (with the seemingly growing use of the negative particle *não* in sentence final position, sometimes dispensing with the typical pre-verbal sentential negation), and the appalling diametrically opposite value of the assertion reinforcer *absolutamente*, which, if taken in isolation as a reply, means *yes* in European Portuguese and *no* in Brazilian Portuguese.

The papers included in this issue of the *Journal of Portuguese Linguistics* report on part of the more semantically oriented research of the above mentioned project, addressing topics in nominal, temporal and mood semantics, plus the gerund. The first paper in this volume, *Bare Nominals and Number in Brazilian and European Portuguese*, by Ana Müller and Fátima Oliveira, which falls within nominal semantics, offers a global view of the values of both singular and plural bare nominal constructs in EP and BP, showing that the widespread use of this kind of structures, particularly in subject position, has become a distinctive feature of BP. The authors propose a semantics for the nominals under analysis, relating it to previous cross-linguistic accounts, which they revise.

The second and third papers deal with temporal semantics. In *Differences between European and Brazilian Portuguese in the use of temporal adverbials*, Telmo Mória and Ana Teresa Alves display an extensive description of temporal location and duration operators in the two varieties, and, furthermore, show that some systematic tendencies in the evolution of BP may surface in this domain, namely the preference for finite over infinitive subordinate clauses and the dropping of function items like articles and prepositions. Next, in *Anaphoric temporal locators in European and Brazilian Portuguese*, Ana Teresa Alves focusses her attention on anaphoric temporal locators with different degrees of vagueness. Her main contention respects what she considers to be a systematic dependency of the presence vs. absence of an explicit location operator, a preposition, on deixis and anaphora relations.

In the fourth paper, *On the system of mood in European and Brazilian Portuguese*, Rui Marques, based on the assumption that mood essentially conveys modality values, aims at proving that EP and BP diverge with respect to the modal values that determine the choice of mood, in particular the indicative and the subjunctive. In his view, while EP follows the pattern of languages that are mostly sensitive to epistemic values, BP is moving towards the pattern in which sensitivity to the real / unreal opposition prevails.

In the two last papers the gerund emerges as a central topic, although addressed from different standpoints and with different links. In *Differences between European and Brazilian Portuguese in the use of the «gerúndio»*, Telmo Mória and Evani Viotti explore two kinds of occurrences of the Portuguese gerund: what they call the “periphrastic” gerund, where this verb form is associated with an aspectual verb, and the adverbial gerund, where the gerundive clause may take different semantic values vis-à-vis the main clause.

The authors claim that the more striking difference between EP and BP lies in the tendency of the first variety to avoid and of the latter to extensively adopt the gerund in periphrastic constructions, albeit, according to them, the second move is not yet established in a systematic manner. In *Aspectual Verbs in European and Brazilian Portuguese*, Fátima Oliveira, Luís Filipe Cunha and Anabela Gonçalves concentrate on the verb constructs that may occur in the clausal complement of aspectual verbs, that is, in both varieties, the gerund verb form and the infinitive preceded by a preposition. The authors relate the general preferences of EP and BP for the infinitive and gerundive forms, respectively, from what they claim to be dissimilar syntactic properties of the embedded domain in the two varieties. Furthermore, they try to demonstrate that the persistence of the two possibilities of construction in BP correlates with the eventive or stative nature of the structure the aspectual verb combines with.

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