

# **P H R A S I S**

**Portuguese in Contact and in Contrast**

Edited by Renata Enghels and Clara Vanderschueren

**PHRASIS**  
**Studies in Language and Literature**  
VOL. 2008 (2)

# Table of contents

## Introduction

RENATA ENGHELS & CLARA VANDERSCHUEREN

## Variation linguistique en portugais et contact de langues

MARIA ANTONIA COELHO DA MOTA

## Grammar variation in the expression of verb arguments: the case of the Portuguese Indirect Object

ANA MARIA BRITO

## Papiamentu: a diachronic analysis of its core morphology

BART JACOBS

## Constructions with *SE* in African varieties of Portuguese

AMÁLIA MENDES AND ANTÓNIA ESTRELA

## Lusismos e galeguismos em espanhol. Uma revisão dos dados

FERNANDO VENÂNCIO

## Ficar et Rester: continuité et rupture

PIERRE LEJEUNE

## Introduction

The Phrasis thematic volume *Portuguese in Contact and in Contrast* includes a selection of seven papers presented at the PCC-conference, held at Ghent University (Belgium) in November 2008. The aim of this workshop was to unite linguists from various backgrounds studying the Portuguese language, with a special focus on two major areas of research: *Portuguese in Contact* or the study of the Portuguese varieties as they have historically risen through cultural and linguistic contact situations and secondly, *Portuguese in Contrast* or the particular position of Portuguese within the Romance languages group.

Given the diverse contact situations as a result of historical factors, Portuguese has gone – and is still going – through a complex process of creation, renewal and diffusion. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, this language left indelible tracks within various nations throughout the world. More particularly, thanks to the Great Discoveries, Portuguese has been spread as a *lingua franca* over the four major continents. As a result, nowadays it is spoken not only in the European peninsula and in the autonomous regions of the *Açores* and *Madeira*, but also in the vast country of *Brasil*, as well as in the young African republics of *Cabo Verde*, *Guiné-Bissau*, *Angola*, *Mozambique*, *São Tomé e Príncipe* and in Asian *Macau* and *Timor*. More recently, through economic emigration the language is exported to countries such as France – not by coincidence Paris is said to be the second Portuguese city in numbers of inhabitants –, Germany, Switzerland, Luxemburg, the USA, Canada and South-America. To this very day, these particular situations of language contact have been an inexhaustible source of interesting language phenomena that have caught linguists' attention.

Throughout history, language contact has in fact been a major dynamic force in the development of the Portuguese language. Indeed, several substrata and superstrata left their – more or less prominent – footprints in today's language: (1) the primitive native dialects, like Celtiberic, (2) Latin, as the common origin of the Romance languages, whose influence can of course be situated not only in the earliest centuries of this age but also from the 12<sup>th</sup> until the 15<sup>th</sup> century with the inclusion of various erudite expressions, (3) weaker contributions by Greek, by Semitic as well as by Germanic languages and Arabic and finally (4) African, Asiatic and American elements as well as the obvious lexical borrowings from French, Spanish, Italian, English and German, present in other languages as well. Let us consider some of the most significant examples of language contact in the history of Portuguese.

As is evident, the different tribes living on Lusitanian territory played an important role in the formation of its language. After the conquest of Lusitania by the Romans, their *Sermo Vulgaris* mixed with and gradually supplanted the primitive dialects of these native tribes. However, the former presence of the Celtic civilisation in Portugal can still be observed for instance in names of rivers (*Douro*, *Tâmega*) and towns (*Conimbriga* > *Coimbra*). Later on, in the 5<sup>th</sup> century, Germanic invasions added a number of Germanic – especially Visigothic – words to the lexicon, mainly in the military lexicon (*trégua*, *guarda*, *elmo*, *espora*) and proper names (*Mafalda*, *Rodrigo*, *Fernando*, *Godinha*). The same occurred when the Arabs occupied the territory for 5 centuries (VIII-XIII), leaving traces in the lexicon with words as *açucar*,

*arroz*, *alface* and toponyms like *Alcácer do Sal*, *Alfama*, *Alcântara*. What's more, as a result of the close political and cultural relationships between Portugal and France, many Gallicisms found their way into the vocabulary (*chapéu*, *freire*) as well as in the orthography of Portuguese (<nh>, <lh>), especially in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. With the appearance of the first grammarians and chroniclers in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, Portugal was considered to have its own national language. However, language contact didn't stop at that point. The Spanish occupation at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century stimulated the import of Castilian elements.

Furthermore, during the period of the Great Discoveries, Portuguese spread around the world. Due to the many contacts with other civilizations, the language could once again be enriched with 'exotic' elements: Bantu in Africa, Tupi in Brazilian territory, numerous Asian languages in the Asian territories, etc. These contacts gave rise to the several national varieties (like Brazilian and Mozambican Portuguese), as well as to a range of Creole languages. The most dynamic ones can be found in Africa (*crioulo cabo-verdiano*, *crioulo guineense*, *Fa d'Ambu*, etc.). Cabo Verde is the only former Portuguese colony where a Creole dialect is the native language and Portuguese the preferred 'foreign language'. In Asia, other Creole languages survive (with difficulty) in the former Portuguese colonies in India, in Macao or are dying out in Sri-Lanka (Ceylon), Malacca, Macao and Java.

The most well-known overseas national variety is, obviously, Brazilian Portuguese. It is common knowledge that this variety presents a number of particular characteristics as compared to European Portuguese. These divergences are situated not only at the levels of lexicon (e.g. *abacaxi* (BP) vs. *ananás* (EP)) and phonetics (e.g. the pronunciation of the non-stressed final vowels such as those spelled *e* and *o*: [ə] / [u] (EP) vs. [i] / [o] (BP)), but also at a syntactic level (more or less pro-drop, position of clitic pronouns, etc.). Some of them (mostly lexical phenomena) can be explained as a result of linguistic contacts with different ethnic groups, all having their own linguistic background (e.g. Tupi) within this large territory. Similar influences by indigenous language contact are observed for other national varieties, like Mozambican or Angolan Portuguese.

Finally, inside the national Portuguese borders, Portuguese presents some dialectal variation, although to a limited extent. A rather unified central-southern dialect can be clearly distinguished from various dialects in the North (*minhoto*, *transmontano*, *beirão*, *beirão litoral*). Logically, the border dialects show a number of Castilian properties and within Spain itself, Astur-Leonese is clearly a Spanish transitional dialect zone between Castilian and Portuguese.

Each of the studies collected in this volume focuses on a particular aspect of the numerous linguistic particularities generated by the rich history of Portuguese as outlined above. The first paper by M.A. Mota (*Variation linguistique en portugais et contact de langues*) provides a more general overview of the linguistic variation and change in course in officially Portuguese-speaking countries and of the work still to be done in the field of comparative studies on the different Portuguese varieties. After giving a brief historical overview of the

spread of the Portuguese language, the author presents a series of recent case studies which illustrate the productive linguistic research that has been carried out by linguists from Portugal, Brazil and Mozambique. Assuming, with Lightfoot (1999), that one and the same language potentially includes several grammars leading to several varieties, she discusses some striking points of difference between the national varieties of Portuguese, such as: the maintenance and creation of CV syllables in Brazilian and African Portuguese as opposed to the phonetic reduction of the vowels in European Portuguese; the disappearance of the final *r* in Brazilian; the different formalization of direct object pronouns in Brazilian and European Portuguese; the loss of subject-verb agreement and simplification of the verbal paradigm in Brazilian Portuguese; the use of existential *ter* in Brazilian Portuguese; the different object marking in Cape Verdean Portuguese as compared to European Portuguese.

Likewise, A.M. Brito's paper (*Grammar variation in the expression of verb arguments: the case of the Portuguese Indirect Object*) compares the Brazilian and African national varieties with the European standard, with a special focus on dative case marking. Brito observes that the dative case is losing ground in all non-European varieties, although with different outcomes in each of the varieties: whereas Mozambican Portuguese prefers to replace it by a Double Object Construction, Angolan and Brazilian Portuguese tend to use an oblique case, introduced respectively by the prepositions *em* and *para*. On the basis of universal syntactic principles and parameters of variation, the author states that the ambiguous nature of the preposition *a* in Portuguese – which is not only a dative, and exceptionally an accusative case assigner, but also a full preposition after verbs of motion – is one of the main factors inducing these changes in the non-European varieties. It is argued that the choice for the alternative constructions in the other variants is not arbitrary, since precisely the 'path' meaning of *a*, *em* and *para* with motion verbs forms a common ground that makes the replacement of *a* by the other two possible in dative contexts.

The two following articles, by B. Jacobs and by A. Mendes and A. Estrela, are concerned with specific variants of the Portuguese-speaking world. In the paper *Papiamentu: a diachronic analysis of its core morphology*, Jacobs exposes a new approach to the still unsolved problem of the Papiamentu genesis, emphasizing the linguistic relationships between Papiamentu (spoken on Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao) and the Upper Guinea branch of Portuguese based Creole (as spoken on Cape Verde and in Guinea-Bissau and Casamance). In the attempt to give further evidence towards the not uncontroversial claim made by Quint (2000) that these creoles have common origins, the author discusses a number of derivational and inflectional morphemes and their use in Early and Modern Papiamentu as well as in the other creoles, drawing on a wide range of secondary sources as well as primary Early Papiamentu texts stretching from 1775 to 1928.

In *Pronominal constructions in African varieties of Portuguese*, Mendes & Estrela zoom in on pronominal constructions in the five African varieties of Portuguese (Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe), and the divergences vis-à-vis these constructions in European Portuguese. Analyses of the *Africa Corpus*, compiled at the Centre of Linguistics of the University of Lisbon, show that the absence of clitic pronouns in

pronominal constructions, already pointed out by Gonçalves (1996) for Mozambican Portuguese, is a general tendency in the other four varieties too, although to varying degrees. The absence of clitics turns out to be perceptible in all types of pronominal constructions (i.e. reflexive/reciprocal, indefinite subject and inchoative constructions and constructions with intrinsically pronominal verbs), but especially with verbs which are intrinsically pronominal in European Portuguese. It is suggested that the opposition between argumental and non-argumental functions of the clitic is relevant to its potential omission. Besides the general clitic loss in the African varieties, the corpus data also contain cases of clitic insertion, although to a lesser extent. These are not unoften instances of hypercorrection, indicating a more general instability of the pronominal constructions.

To conclude, the contributions by F. Venâncio and P. Lejeune concentrate on intra-Romance comparison with Portuguese. In *Lusismos e galeguismos em espanhol. Uma revisão dos dados*, Venâncio posits the necessity of re-examining some traditionally stated *lusisms* in Spanish – i.e. lexical items originated on the basis of Portuguese or Galician (e.g. Gregorio Salvador 1967). Thanks to the actual mine of information available through current historical corpora (like Davies & Ferreira’s *Corpus do Português*), this job becomes more reliable. On the basis of these data, the author points out that some traditionally received Lusisms appear to be old Spanish words. In other cases words disappeared from Spanish usage after being accepted in Portuguese, and were reintroduced in Spanish by this detour. It is concluded that in contrast with the numerous and mainly cultivated Hispanisms in Portuguese, Spanish Lusisms are fairly scarce and belong to daily, concrete sectors.

Finally, in order to demonstrate that the semantic description of a polysemic element in a specific language benefits from the comparison of text fragments containing this marker and their translations, the article by Lejeune (*Ficar et Rester: continuité et rupture*) provides a comparative analysis of Portuguese *ficar* and French *rester*. After a semantic analysis of both verbs, it is shown that, in spite of the apparent similarities, the use of *rester* is more restricted than that of *ficar*, as the former is a good candidate for translation of the latter only when *ficar* takes the value of continuity (*Ficou em casa a semana toda*). When confronted with a sentence containing the verb *ficar*, the translator will have to identify the specific value of *ficar* at stake from contextual clues, as is exemplified by the elaborate analysis of examples from *Os Maias* (Eça de Queiroz). In this way, it is argued that the semantic description of lexical items, improved by the analysis of translations, may prove to be a useful tool for acquiring translation routines.

## References

- Gonçalves, P. 1996. “Aspectos da sintaxe do Português de Moçambique”, in Faria, I. et al. (eds.) *Introdução à Linguística Geral e Portuguesa*, Lisboa, Caminho, 313-322.
- Holtus, G. Metzeltin, M. & C. Schmitt (eds.). 1994. *Lexikon der Romanistischen Linguistik*, Band VI/2: *Galegisch, Portugiesisch*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Holtus, G. Metzeltin, M. & C. Schmitt (eds.). 1998. *Lexikon der Romanistischen Linguistik*, Band VII: *Kontakt, Migration und Kunstsprachen*. Tübingen: Niemeyer.

- Salvador, G. 1967. "Lusismos", in *Enciclopedia lingüística hispanica*, vol. II: *Elementos constitutivos. Fuentes*, Madrid, 239-261.
- Teyssier, P. 1980. *História da Língua Portuguesa*. Lisboa: Livraria Sá da Costa.
- Lightfoot, D. 1999. *The Development of Language: Acquisition, Change, and Evolution*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Quint, N. 2000. *Le Cap Verdien: Origines et Devenir d'une Langue Métisse*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Prof. dr. Renata Enghels  
Clara Vanderschueren

Ghent University  
November 2008