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**Dative Shift in Varieties of Portuguese:
Drift or Contact?**

Abstract

The Dative shift is observed in Brazilian Portuguese (BP), Mozambican Portuguese (MP), and São Tomean Portuguese (STP). It comprises the alternation between a prepositional dative construction (PDC) and a double object construction (DOC) as complements of a ditransitive verb. DOCs are not detected in the Portuguese spoken in Portugal; however, we brought evidence of their presence in Old Portuguese, a prefigured feature of the Contemporary varieties of Portuguese. The data showed that BP, MP, and STP converge by presenting the same structural possibilities of expressing the recipient. DOCs are detected among university speakers in different regional varieties of BP, so they can't be attributed to the contact, due to slavery, with Bantu languages, whose grammars contain DOC. Since BP is also characterized as a dominant variety of pluricentric Portuguese, we argue that specific linguistic features are not enough to establish the degree of submission to the original linguistic norms.

1. Introduction

This paper focuses on the dative alternation (Dative Shift) observed in *Brazilian Portuguese* (BP), *Mozambican Portuguese* (MP) and *São Tomean Portuguese* (STP). The comparison of the constructions observed in BP and the African varieties yields important evidence regarding the origin of the patterns in transplanted varieties. The observed patterns are divergent from contemporary European Portuguese (EP); therefore, it is important to investigate if the new pattern is an outcome related to: a) an internal drift, since certain features may be prefigured in synchrony (Middle Portuguese, for instance); or b) the result of contact with the native languages encountered in the new settlement, or from later contact with another new language. This is the case of the contact that took place between the Portuguese with Bantu languages in Brazil, due to the

intense slave flow from Africa that started at the beginning of the 16th Century, in 1538, and originated from several trading posts located on the West Coast of Africa by the Portuguese (Mussa, 1991:138; Gomes, 2019).

The main issue is whether the dative shift observed in BP, MP and STP is the result of drift or contact. This distinction is important since the varieties of a pluricentric language have been approached in terms of the mutual relationship between the original language (Dominant Variety) and the ones developed in other countries. It takes into account the dominance of the former over the others, the extent to which their grammatical features are convergent or divergent, and the importance of the process of standardization and codification of the transplanted languages (Clyne, 1992). We argue that the distinction between dominant and non-dominant varieties of a pluricentric language cannot be treated as a dichotomy, since linguistic patterns are dynamic, not static, in a way that the resulting transplanted language may exhibit both conservative and innovative features concerning the original language (Duarte, Gomes and Paiva, 2022). As observed in several Germanic languages, dative alternation is described as follows: the alternation between expressing the internal arguments of a ditransitive verb as an NP and a prepositional dative construction (PDC), or as a double object construction (DOC), respectively (Larson, 1988):

- (1) Mary gave the book *to John* (PDC);
- (2) Mary gave *John* the book (DOC).

The construction in (2) is characterized by the occurrence of two NPs, since the preposition is obligatorily missing, and the recipient/beneficiary argument is adjacent to the verb. According to Larson (1988), Romance languages don't exhibit dative shift.

(3)	A	Maria	deu	um livro	<i>ao</i>	<i>João</i>	
	Det	Mary	gave	a book	to.Det	John	
(4)	A	Maria	deu	<i>ao</i>	<i>João</i>	um	livro
	Det	Mary	gave	to.Det	John	a	book
(5)	A	Maria	<i>deu-lhe</i>		um	livro	
	Det	Mary	gave	<i>him.CL</i>	a	book	

In fact, it is well-documented that the indirect complement of a ditransitive verb is expressed by a prepositional phrase (PP) nonadjacent to the verb, as in (3), or adjacent to the verb, as in (4), or with a clitic pronoun as in (5), specifically to convey dative case.

The comparison relies on data from varieties of pluricentric Portuguese.

These have been characterized by a symmetric or an asymmetric relationship with the Portuguese spoken in Portugal, also referred to as European Portuguese (EP). BP has been characterized as a dominant variety (DV) of pluricentric Portuguese (cf. Duarte; Gomes; Paiva, 2016: 61), which corresponds to a symmetric relationship with EP. Meanwhile, MP and STP have been classified as non-dominant varieties (Mendes, 2016: 86), which corresponds to an asymmetric relationship with EP and BP. We will show that, despite different historical and linguistic contexts during and after the colonial period, BP, MP and STP, concerning EP, are partially convergent. This is because the four languages express dative using a PDC, but differ in relation to the dative shift, since they present the DOC.

2. Materials

Our analysis is based on data from oral modality collected from different corpora, as described below.

1. *Brazilian Portuguese*: Censo 1980, with 64 speakers from Rio de Janeiro City, and Censo 2000, with 32 speakers distributed according to: age (15-25; 26-49; 50+), schooling (elementary school I, elementary school II, high school) and gender.
2. *Mozambican Portuguese*: Projeto PPOM (Panorama do Português Oral de Maputo), 40 speakers from Maputo, from elementary school to pre-college.
3. *Mozambican and Brazilian Portuguese*: Projeto COMPARAPORT¹: 18 speakers born in Rio de Janeiro and 18 in Maputo, stratified according to: age (18-35 / 36-55 / 56-75), school level (Elementary School, High School, and College Graduation) and gender. 1/3 of the Mozambican sample is composed of native MP speakers.
4. *São Tomé and Príncipe Portuguese*: 17 interviews that belong to the sample VARPOR (Variedades Africanas do Português) – Center of Linguistics of the University of Lisbon, with the same social stratification as the MP sample. STP is the first language of the majority of the population that also speak Forro Creole.

In the following section, we present a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the data extracted from these samples.

¹ Available at: www.corporaport.letas.ufrj.br.

3. Results

The data collected from the MP corpora showed that the dative argument can be expressed by a prepositional phrase nonadjacent (6) or adjacent (7) to the verb, and by a dative clitic (8), as in EP. It was also observed that the recipient/beneficiary dative argument can be expressed by a double object construction (9) and by a non-canonical DOC (10). The example in (10) is a non-canonical DOC, since the recipient/beneficiary dative argument is nonadjacent to the verb, differing from the DOCs observed in other languages, such as Germanic languages, exemplified in (1) and (2).

(6)

Se for	uma senhora	grávida	eu tenho	que	ceder	lugar	a	ela	(PPOM)
If it.is	a lady	pregnant	I have	to	give	seat	to	her	

(7)

Pede	cobrador	o	meu telefone	que	tirate	(COMPARAPORT)			
Ask	to.Det collector	the	my phone	that	took.2PS	(from me)			
	the collector	the	the phone			(from me)			

(8)

se	eufor mais novo	tenho	que	lhe	ceder	lugar	(PPOM)
if	I am younger	have.1PS	to	him	.give	seat	
if	I were younger	I have	to	give him	the seat		

(9)

Entrega	senhor	uma	cerveja	(VAPOR)
Give	mister	a	beer	
Give	the mister	a	beer	

(10)

se for	um	velo,	tenho	que	ceder	lugar	o	velho	(PPOM)
If it's	an	old.man	have.1PS	to	give	seat	Det	old.man	
If it is	an	old man,	I have	to	give	the seat	to the	old man.	

STP exhibits the same structural patterns observed in MP data. The dative complement can be expressed by a non-adjacent prepositional phrase (11), as adjacent to the verb (12), with a dative clitic as in EP (13), as a DOC (14), and as a non-canonical DOC (15).

(11)

vender bilhetes	a	toda	a	população	(VAPOR)
sell tickets	to	all	the	population	
to sell tickets	to	all	the	population	

(12)	dar	a meu filho	tudo	o que	se calhar	não	tive	(VARPOR)
	give	to my son	everything	that	maybe	not	had.1PS	
	to give	my son	everything	that	I did	not	have	

(13)	Eu pedi- lhe	explicação	(VARPOR)
	I asked him.CL	explanation	
	I asked him	an explanation	

(14)	de vez em quando [...]	tinha	que	dar	as	pessoas	voador	(VARPOR)
	Once in a while [...]	had.1PP	to	give	the	people	voador (fish)	
	Once in a while	we had	to	give	the	people	some fish.	

(15)	as	pessoas	trabalham	mas	não	tem comida	para	dar	os	(VARPOR)
	Det	people	work	but	not	have food	to	give	the children	
	The	people	work	but	do not	have food	to	give	their children	

Finally, as for the dative argument of ditransitive verbs, BP exhibits the same structural pattern observed in MP and STP data: prepositional phrase nonadjacent (16) or adjacent to the verb (17), a dative clitic as in EP (18), a DOC (19), and a non-canonical DOC (20).

(16)	o cara	vem	ao	Brazil [...]	pra	dar um presente	pro	Papa	(CENSO 1980)
	the guy	comes	to.Det	Brazil	to	give a present	to.Det	Pope	
	The guy	comes	to	Brazil	to	give a present	to the	Pope.	

(17)	dar	a essa pessoas o	direito	à	propriedade	(COMPARAPORT)
	give	to these people the	right	to	property	
	to give	these people	the right	to	the property	

(18)	O professor	deu- lhe	zero	(COMPARAPORT)
	The teacher	gave him.CL	a zero	
	The teacher	gave him	a zero.	

(19)	Pede seu pai	a mesada	(CENSO 1980)
	Ask your dad	the allowance	
	Ask your dad	for the allowance	

(20)	Pede	<i>o seu</i> Aurino	pede	un comprovante	<i>ele</i>	(CENSO 1980)
	Ask	Det.Mr.Aurino	ask	a receipt	<i>he.NOM</i>	
	Ask	Mr. Aurino,	ask	for a receipt	to him.	

The data collected in MP COMPARAPORT and VARPOR samples was considered for the comparison of the distribution of the prepositional dative construction, clitic and DOC in spontaneously spoken MP, STP, and BP. The results are shown, respectively, in Table 1, 2, and 3.

Dative construction	Number of tokens	% of occurrence in the sample
PDC	58	70
DOC	7	8
Clitic	17	21

Table 1: Distribution of dative construction to express the recipient in MP

Dative construction	Number of tokens	% of occurrence in the sample
PDC	30	55
DOC	9	16
Clitic	16	29

Table 2: Distribution of dative construction to express the recipient in STP

Dative construction	Number of tokens	% of occurrence in the sample
PDC	37	92
DOC	2	5
Clitic	1	3

Table 3: Distribution of dative construction to express the recipient in BP

As the tables show, the PDC is the main construction in the three varieties of Portuguese, especially in the variety of BP spoken in Rio de Janeiro. The DOC and clitic variants are used to varying degrees in each context. In sum, these results show that MP, STP and BP, similarly to EP, mainly make use of PDC to express a dative argument of a ditransitive verb; however, contrary to EP, they exhibit double object construction (DOC). The three varieties also differ from Germanic languages, since the recipient/dative argument can be ex-

pressed by a NP non-adjacent to the verb (see non-canonical DOCs). Furthermore, although the three varieties converge towards the loss of the dative clitic, BP is more advanced in this process.

Finally, we must address the main issue of this paper: is the DOC the result of drift or contact? For some authors, it is the result of the contact with Bantu languages. According to P. Gonçalves (1996: 38-45), MP makes extensive use of DOC, along with dative passives (*Os filhos são escondidos a verdade (pelos pais)* – The children are hidden the truth (by the parents), both triggered by the L1 (a Bantu language) transfer together with an ambiguous EP input related to the use of the preposition (Gonçalves, 2002: 336). In P. Gonçalves (2002), following Duarte (1987), the author claims that as, in EP, the Recipient argument of a ditransitive verb can be cliticized (*Dina deu um livro ao João / Dina deu-lhe um livro* – Dina gave a book to-the John / Dina gave him a book), for L2 acquisition of Portuguese by L1 Bantu speakers, the EP data suggested that the indirect object argument can be realized as a nominal – the clitic *lhe*, therefore the preposition is not necessary.

As for DOC in STP, R. Gonçalves (2017) identified the use of DOC mainly, but not exclusively, with core-dative verbs, which only have a caused possession meaning, following Happaport-Hovav and Levin's (2008) classification of core dative verbs (*dar* 'give', *emprestar* 'lend', *oferecer* 'offer' or *mostrar* 'show'). She observed that individuals with ten or more years of schooling also produced DOC. The author attributes the use of DOC to the contact between this African variety with the dominant Portuguese-related creole (Santomean), characterized by the categorical use of DOCs to express recipients, although STP does not exhibit dative passive or other types of syntactic passives. Nonetheless, STP converges with EP, the target variety, mainly using a PDC introduced by a functional preposition. However, there is an overgeneralization of the preposition **para** instead of **a**, although 15 out of 47 speakers from the STP sample only produced PDC (and not DOC or the clitic *lhe*) introduced by preposition **a**. This overgeneralization, according to the author, is related to an ambiguous EP input regarding the preposition **a**, which is explained by R. Gonçalves. According to her, EP exhibits two homonymous prepositions **a**: (i) a preposition **a** that introduces the Recipient of both core and non-core dative verbs, and (ii) a preposition **a** that alternates with **para**, introducing the goal of non-core dative verbs (see also Torres Morais, 2007). For the author, the use of the preposition **para** to introduce arguments of core dative verbs may be the result of a reinterpretation of EP input: **para** was reanalyzed as a preposition

that also codes an abstract meaning such as preposition **a**. Therefore, considering the two sources of ambiguous EP input, the use of **lhe** to express the recipient and the two different uses of preposition **a**, R. Gonçalves concludes that Universal Grammar is also acting together with language contact in respect to the dative variation found in the STP. R. Gonçalves, Duarte and Hagemeyer (2022) deepen this hypothesis by comparing data from Angolan Portuguese, MP and STP to explain the distribution of the different variants in the expression of the dative argument. They claim that the presence of DOCs in African varieties of Portuguese is “the result of language contact in L2 settings of the acquisition of Portuguese“ (p. 31).

With respect to BP, according to Lucchesi (2012) and Avelar and Galves (2014), the DOC entered popular Brazilian grammar in the process of the acquisition of Portuguese as a second language by Africans, through the transfer of syntactic properties from their native (mainly Bantu) languages, to the emerging Portuguese varieties in Brazil. Lucchesi (2009: 367) argues that DOC, although available in many popular varieties of BP, is not grammatically correct for an educated urban speaker. For Barros and Calindro (2023), as in Lucchesi (op. cit.) and Avelar and Galves (op. cit.), based on data collected from Afro-Brazilian communities situated far from urban centers, DOC is an innovation of Afro-Brazilian Portuguese (ABP), a variety that emerged as a second language in the acquisition of Portuguese by Africans during the colonial period. Its origin in ABP can be understood in a model according to which

“Feature Economy and Feature/Input Generalization [...] constitute a major factor in L2 learning in contact scenarios” (p. 102).

The construction was then established and expanded beyond the original core structures, in the process of transmission of ABP as L1.

Now we provide evidence that points to the possibility of DOC as a prefigured feature that seems not to have developed in Contemporary European Portuguese, but may have developed in the transplanted Portuguese to the colonies, at least in the case of Brazilian Portuguese. The following excerpts come from Old Portuguese, 14th and 15th centuries, respectively in Vasconcelos (1970: 42) and Livro dos Conselhos de El-Rey D. Duarte (1423-1438/1982, p. 53, p. 75):

(21) E o caualleiro (...) **preguntou [Ø] todollos reys e [Ø] todollos primçepes e a todollos hommens** de todallas terras como poderia leixar aquell castello a seu salvo.

‘And the knight **asked [Ø] all the kings and [Ø] all the princes and to all**

the men of all the lands how (he) could leave that castle with safety.'

- (22) ...e daqui avante em cada mês **ele va requerer [Ø] todos os oficiães** em presença de seus escriuães que lhe deçlarem se receberão mais alguma cousa ou he facta alguma despesa da que aviam.

'And from now on each month **he will require [Ø] all the officials** in the presence of their scribes that they declare if they will receive anything else or have done any expense that they had to do...'

- (23) ... que uyse muytos livros que **ensynaroom [Ø] os reis** e príncipes que grandes deuem ser...

'... that see many books that ...taught...[Ø] **the kings** and princes that great (they) should be...'

This data is important as a register of the expression of the recipient of a dative argument, adjacent to the verb expressed by a NP in Old Portuguese, although these verbs do not belong to the give-type (core datives) subclass proposed in Rappaport-Hovav and Levin (2008). The behaviour of English ditransitive verbs has been used to sustain syntactic models that seek to explain this alternation in many languages. More recently, Bresnan et al. (2007: 11) provided evidence that English dative verbs have "more syntactic flexibility than we thought, occurring more freely in alternative constructions". They found web data that expands the limits of the syntactic and semantic constraints usually referred to in the literature, as in (24) and (25):

- (24) This story is designed to **give the creeps to people who hate spiders**, but is not true.)
- (25) Design? Well, unless you take pride in **giving a headache to your visitors** with a flashing background? no.

Examples (24) and (25) are idioms that challenge the meaning-to-structure mapping hypothesis, according to which events that involve a change of state are only coded by a DOC (Gropen et al., 1989). The authors also provided evidence that the verb meaning alone is not enough to predict the alternation between DOC and PDC. Analyzing data from spoken and written corpora, they concluded that the same model works for spoken and written English: dative alternation is constrained by discourse accessibility and animacy of the recipient, along with syntactic and semantic properties, such as the length difference between the theme, the recipient, and the verb class. These constraints function as a tendency, not as a categorical restriction for each construction (PDC and DOC). Thus, these results show that a deeper comprehension of dative al-

ternation in many languages may profit from analysis that expands the knowledge of the phenomenon based on spontaneous use.

Examples of DOC in Old Portuguese appeared more than once. But, even if it occurred once in a representative corpus of the period, it could be considered significant evidence. More recently, studies on Historical Linguistics and Corpus Linguistics have highlighted the importance of words and constructions that occur once in a context or text (from Greek, *Hapax Legomena*). According to Hilpert (2017), *Hapax Legomena* can be considered a starting point for the development of new structures/constructions. Until now, there is no record of the occurrence of DOC in Classical Portuguese (CP). There are, at least, two possible explanations for this fact: either, there is no such construction in CP, or its low frequency in the language (as appears to be the case in the precedent period) makes it difficult to identify this type of data. All the studies about dative alternation in contemporary EP confirm that the only two possibilities of expressing the recipient are the PDC and the clitic 'lhe'. Since the data from Old Portuguese indicates the occurrence of dative recipients expressed by a NP, it is plausible to suppose that this was a characteristic of the Portuguese transplanted to the colonies that has not evolved in Modern EP. Therefore, the effect of linguistic contact, according to each colony's history, could be considered not as a trigger of DOCs in transplanted Portuguese, but as a factor that may have contributed to its development in the Portuguese spoken in the different settlements. And as for Lucchesi's (2009: 367) view regarding the marginality of the phenomenon in BP, restricted to popular Brazilian Portuguese and ungrammatical in standard BP spoken in urban centers, we provided evidence that the DOC, in BP, even though with a low token frequency, is produced in urban varieties. Our data comes from urban Rio de Janeiro, but in other regions, such as Minas Gerais, it is usual and unnoticed by "educated" speakers. DOC is subject to diatopic variation. As it is more frequent in Minas Gerais than in Rio de Janeiro, it can be analyzed as a regional phenomenon, just like the absence of the reflexive pronouns paradigm in Minas Gerais (Assis, 1988; Rocha, 1999; Lima, 2006). Hence, it can't be equated as a non-urban, low-class feature of BP. Interestingly, in R. Gonçalves (2017: 30) data from STP, DOCs were also produced by speakers with higher levels of education. Whilst 21 out of 47 speakers only produced PDCs, 8 of these had a level of education between the 1st and the 9th grades. Gomes (2003) also registered, in the variety spoken in Rio de Janeiro, two occurrences of DOC in a sample only with university speakers (NURC Sample 1970), and the prevalence of the preposition 'para' to introduce PDC above

80% among High School and Elementary School speakers (Censo 2000). From COMPARAPORT corpora, example (15), and the following (26) from STP, (27) from MP, and (28) from BP (Gomes, 2003), are examples of DOCs produced by college speakers:

- (26) respondi **ele** em nosso português, (...) eu respondi **ele**
 answered he.Nom in our Portuguese (...) I answered he.Nom
'I answered him in our Portuguese (...) I answered him'
- (27) o próprio encarregado... no lugar de pedir **o professor** a dar
 the very person-in.chargeinstead of ask the teacher to give
 mais assistência ensinando os alunos....
 more assistance teaching the pupils
'The very person in charge, instead of asking the teacher to give more assistance to the pupils.....'
- (28) (Napoleão) ele permite **os países** que estavam no seu domínio...
 (Napoleon) he allows the countries that were in.the his domain
'he allows the countries that were under his domains....'

Hence, considering all the previously outlined evidence, it is possible to conclude that DOC is not rooted, at least for BP, in a popular variety that evolved from the contact of L2 acquiring Portuguese by L1 Bantu speakers in rural settings, but then from a structural possibility of the transplanted Portuguese to the colonies, which might have expanded in the new colony since the 16th century.

4. Conclusion

Returning to the issue addressed in the title of this paper: is the dative shift observed in MP, STP e BP the result of a drift or is it the result of the contact with Bantu languages? In this paper, we brought evidence that DOC was already a structural possibility in Old Portuguese, thus, in relation to contemporary Portuguese languages, a prefigured feature in a certain synchrony. It is then possible that it was a characteristic of the Portuguese transplanted to the colonies, that have not evolved in Modern EP. As observed in different corpora, we also brought evidence that DOCs are not restricted to speakers with low educational level, or restricted to afro-descendent speakers, as in BP. DOC may not even be produced by low educational level speakers. R. Gonçalves (2017) found speakers in STP, from 1st to 9th grade, that only produced PDCs, whilst speakers with ten or more years of schooling produced DOCs along with PDCs.

The COMPARAPORT data includes college speakers, so DOC is not restricted to speakers with low educational level. Gomes (2003) also found DOC in NURC Sample from Rio de Janeiro, with university speakers. Therefore, DOC cannot be considered ungrammatical for an educated, urban, Brazilian Portuguese-speaker. DOC may be stigmatized in some varieties and contexts of use, meaning that Lucchesi's statement needs to be verified for BP. However, the effect of the contact between the transplanted Portuguese and Bantu speakers can be taken into consideration, not as a trigger of DOCs, but as a factor that may have enhanced its development in the Portuguese spoken in different settlements.

The comparison outlined in this paper shows that the evolved patterns in each of the new varieties (MP, STP and BP) follow the same trends, when considering the syntactic strategies to express the IO of a ditransitive verb, including the non-canonical DOC. These trends are opposite in the sense that they are conservative in relation to EP, when related to the prepositioned dative construction, and innovative due to the presence of the DOC and the loss of dative clitic. Although BP is characterized as having a symmetric relationship with EP regarding the dative shift, it is completely aligned with MP and STP as both languages are characterized as Non-Dominant Varieties of Pluricentric Portuguese. Therefore, if specific linguistic features are not enough to establish the degree of submission of the new varieties to the older or original linguistic norms, what criteria would support the classification of MP and STP as NDVs and BP as DV in relation to EP? It seems that the criteria that establish the distinction between Pluricentric Languages as Dominant and Non-Dominant Varieties are external, more related to "the historical relationship among the nations, and based on a static, rather than a dynamic, concept of linguistic norm." (Duarte, Gomes, Paiva, 2022: 169).

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