Book Reviews

Amaral, Patrícia and Ana Maria Carvalho (eds.)

The volume Portuguese-Spanish Interfaces: Diachrony, synchrony, and contact edited by Patrícia Amaral and Ana Maria Carvalho offers a comparison on specific Portuguese and Spanish linguistic issues. The main goal which this volume pursues is to create interfaces by exploring the linguistic dimensions in which the comparison of Portuguese and Spanish can be particularly fruitful. Therefore, it also constitutes a contribution with theoretical relevance. Here, the term ‘interfaces’ refers to the diversity of the encounters of the two languages as well as to their resultant common boundaries in relation to history and structure.

The volume comprises an introduction authored by the editors and seventeen chapters which are organized in four different sections. The first two sections offer a comparative approach regarding Portuguese and Spanish linguistic phenomena. While the first section deals with diachronic topics, the second one focuses on synchronic topics. The third and fourth section converge on the subject of language contact. The third section is dedicated to the contact between Portuguese and Spanish both on the community and individual level. The fourth and last section instead concentrates on the African legacy in Spanish and Portuguese both in the Americas and the Iberian Peninsula.

The first section, entitled “Comparative perspectives in diachrony”, consists of four chapters in which parallel and divergent aspects of the historical development of Portuguese and Spanish are compared. In the first chapter, “The position of Ibero-Romance in the Romania and of Portuguese within Ibero-Romance”, Dieter Wanner gives a comparative overview of the major linguistic varieties within the Iberian Peninsula regarding the most important phonological, morphological, and syntactic aspects. The novelty of his overview lies in his choice to focus on Portuguese instead of Spanish. By doing so he illustrates, on the one hand, the close relation between Portuguese and
the other non-Castilian Ibero-Romance varieties and even other more distant Romance varieties and, on the other, the striking innovations displayed by Portuguese and also Galician within the Iberian varieties. In the following chapter, “Syntactic change in Portuguese and Spanish: Divergent and parallel patterns of linguistic splitting”, Ana Maria Martins explores the syntactic change in clitic placement and post-nominal *algum*/*alguno* and detects two patterns of change. The ‘inverted-Y’ pattern refers to a split in an originally parallel path of a linguistic phenomenon, like the clitic placement, which coincided in the initial stage in the Middle Ages, but which soon diverged into two distinct paths in each language. The second change pattern, the ‘I’ pattern, refers likewise to a common path, however, the splitting occurs along this path when only one of the two languages takes a step ahead. This splitting pattern can be observed in the case of post-nominal *algum*/*alguno*. Portuguese advances in this common path in the 18th century, while Spanish doesn’t display any further language change regarding post-nominal *alguno*. In the third chapter of the section, “Judeo-Spanish in contact with Portuguese: A historical overview”, Aldina Quintana examines the influence of Portuguese on Judeo-Spanish spoken in the Ottoman Empire, focusing on the timespan between the 15th and 18th century. The author exposes the different contact situations over time and relates the phonological, morphological and lexical impact of Portuguese on Judeo-Spanish to the different socio-historic contexts in which the particular encounters took place. The section closes with Manuel Delicado Cantero’s chapter “Dequeísmo and queísmo in Portuguese and Spanish”. The author presents a theoretical discussion on the definitions of the two phenomena, based on an examination of diachronic and synchronic data. The comparative approach allows the author to isolate the cases of deceptive *dequeísmo* and *queísmo* phenomena, since they display to be part of an internal paradigm both diachronically (e.g. *temer de que*) and synchronically (e.g. *gostar de que*). Therefore, a set of more accurate criteria to classify the evidence can be established. Furthermore, the comparison reveals the role played by analogy in syntactic change patterns related to *dequeísmo* and *queísmo*. The outcomes caused by analogical mechanisms do not only diverge between Portuguese and Spanish but also between some varieties within the two languages. Therefore, these phenomena should rather be analysed within their grammatical contexts, synchronically and diachronically, and not from a prescriptive point of view that links the two phenomena to only one particular variety spoken in recent times.

The second part, “Comparative perspectives in synchrony”, comprises five chapters which compare synchronic issues related to phonology, morphology, and syntax in Portuguese and Spanish. The chapter “On the partially divergent
phonology of Spanish, Portuguese and points in between”, by Letânia Ferreira and D. Eric Holt, provides an overview of the major phonological differences and parallels between Portuguese and Spanish taking as the starting point of the comparison the early common Ibero-Romance period. After presenting the segmental inventories and their historical development of each language, the authors discuss syllabic structure and several phonological processes that can affect onset or coda position in the different varieties of Spanish and Portuguese. Furthermore, they consider some morphological properties, like nominal number agreement, clitic placement and, related to it, verbal morphology, and contractions of prepositions and articles, which are influenced by these phonological processes, e.g. consonantal and vocalic singular-plural alternations in Portuguese or dialectal variation of nasal singular-plural alternations in Galician. Taking into account different varieties of Spanish and Portuguese as well as further closely related Ibero-Romance varieties, as Galician and Mirandese, illustrates the possible different outcomes of the phonologically induced processes. As well the following chapter, “The intonational phonology of Peninsular Spanish and European Portuguese”, by Meghan E. Armstrong and Marisa Cruz, deals with Portuguese and Spanish phonology. It provides a comparison of the tonal inventories of these two varieties of Spanish and Portuguese and shows that they overlap generally. However, differences can be found. Firstly, Peninsular Spanish (PS) has more rising tones, while European Portuguese has more falling tones. Secondly, the results obtained in this analysis diverge with respect to tonal scaling since PS presents two contrastive rising bitonal boundary tones: LH% and LH% (the latter being formerly known as LM%). The authors stress the need of a unified prosodic transcription system for Ibero-Romance and eventually Romance intonation in order to describe the evidence in the respective varieties homogeneously. The next chapters of this section are dedicated to morphological and morphosyntactic issues. In “Similar and differing patterns of allomorphy in the Spanish and Portuguese verbs”, Paul O’Neill explores verbal stem allomorphy in the present tense system (indicative and subjunctive) in Portuguese and Spanish. By comparing the different patterns of stem allomorphy in the two languages within their historical development, he shows that they are not phonologically or semantically conditioned but, in fact, morphologically. In spite of their divergent outcomes, parallels can be detected regarding their organisation of allomorphy in accordance with their own morphomic patterns. The results offered by the analysis argue in favour for the inclusion of a morphomic level in the grammar. In the fourth chapter of this section, “On clitic attachment in Ibero-Romance: Evidence from Portuguese and Spanish”, Ana R. Luís compares the patterns of clitic pronoun attachment in the two languages. In both languages
clitic pronouns display properties of affixes which are placed either pre- or postverbally. Her analysis reveals that Spanish clitics attach morphologically to the verb, while Portuguese has a hybrid dual clitic attachment pattern: in postverbal position the clitics attach, like in Spanish, to a morphological host, whereas in preverbal position, yet not having been completely morphologised, they attach to a phrasal host. Furthermore, the author highlights the importance of the discussion on the inflectional status of clitic pronouns for lexicalist theories of grammar. However, according to Barbosa (1996) and other following contributions, clitic placement in Portuguese originates from the interaction between syntax and phonology. Therefore, the findings of Luís’ morphosyntactic analysis could be enriched by the inclusion of a phonological approach. Scott A. Schwenter focuses in “Two kinds of differential object marking in Portuguese and Spanish” on the similarities between Spanish and Portuguese, by arguing that Portuguese presents in its coding system of anaphoric direct objects (ADO) a parallel configuration to the differential object marking (DOM) in Spanish. However, this DOM configuration to Portuguese is limited to ADOs. The quantitative multivariate analysis exposes that in both Spanish and Portuguese the encoding of direct object referents is not only constrained in a similar way by animacy, definiteness and specificity, but also that these constraints maintain the same hierarchical relation. The second important finding of the analysis concerns the surface differences in Brazilian Portuguese (BP) and European Portuguese (EP) related to ADO referents realised as 3rd person clitic pronouns, null objects and tonic pronouns. Despite these well-known differences between BP and EP, the analysis casts light on their similarity by disclosing the similar independent variables that regulate the encoding of the ADO referents, namely animacy, definiteness, specificity and even discourse related factors as referential distance and topic continuity. According to García García’s (2014) recent research on DOM in Spanish related to inanimate DOS, DOM is motivated by the semantic roles assigned by the verb. It would be highly interesting to test if this factor is also valid for Portuguese.

Language contact situations of Portuguese and Spanish regarding both bilingualism and language acquisition constitute the focal point of the third section, “Portuguese and Spanish in contact in communities and individuals”. Ana M. Carvalho argues against the assumption that Uruguayan Portuguese is to be considered as a stable mixed language as output of the encounter of Portuguese and Spanish in “Sociolinguistic continuities in language contact situations: The case of Portuguese in contact with Spanish along the Uruguayan-Brazilian border”. After a discussion of the socio-historical context of the presence of Portuguese in Uruguay, the author examines some of the main features of Uruguayan Portuguese, namely the expression of subject pronouns,
the vocalization of /ʎ/ and the palatalization of /d/ and /t/ before [i]. Despite heavy lexical borrowing and constant code-switching, Uruguayan Portuguese as well as Uruguayan border Spanish cannot be considered monostylistic but represent continuity in relation to the varieties of Portuguese and Spanish spoken in Brazil and Uruguay. Variations of forms are proven to be highly sensitive to social and ideological factors, therefore, local forms can coexist with supralocalized forms and are subject to the specific sociolinguistic context in which they are produced. Another border contact situation is studied by Cristina Martins in “Mirandese in contact with Portuguese and Spanish”. Firstly, the author describes the historical and geopolitical context of Mirandese, a minority language of Astur-Leonese descent spoken in Northeastern Portugal, followed by a presentation of its phonological and morphological features. Mirandese displays only few exclusive and distinctive features, rather, the features overlap with some Portuguese ones in contrast to Spanish or vice versa. This characteristic points to the transitional position of Mirandese between Spanish and Portuguese. After centuries of coexistence with Portuguese and Spanish, Mirandese is nowadays a severely endangered language. This fact is endorsed by a study of children’s proficiency of Mirandese. Although the children have a higher proficiency in Portuguese, they still perceive Mirandese and Portuguese as distinct entities. The next two chapters deal with Spanish-Portuguese contact situations in language acquisition. Jason Rothmann, David Giancaspro and Becky Halloran analyse the linguistic transfer of Spanish-English bilingual speakers when learning Portuguese as an L3 in the chapter “On the structural basis of non-redundant acquisition: Evidence from Spanish bilingual L3 Portuguese”. Through an analysis of the transfer of a morphosyntactic feature, differential object marking, existing only in Spanish and not in English or Portuguese, the study contributes to the theoretical discussion of formal linguistic models of L3. Independently of the subject’s proficiency in Spanish, the results indicate that the close typological relation of Spanish and Portuguese favour the linguistic transfer of these bilingual speakers when acquiring Portuguese, as predicted by the Typological Primacy Model (Rothmann, 2010, 2011, 2013). The section closes with the chapter “Cross-linguistic transfer of core aspectual conceptualizations in Portuguese and Spanish: Theoretical and methodological factors”, by M. Rafael Salaberry and Custódio Martins. By comparing data of L2 Spanish and Portuguese speakers and native Portuguese and Spanish speakers on verbal aspect marking, the results point out a high inconsistency. Adding contextual information increases the divergent aspectual interpretations among native speakers as they accepted both perfective and imperfective markers with all sentence types which included adverbia triggers. Based on the findings the authors claim the existence of
an invariant core meaning of aspect in Spanish and Portuguese that carries through even in complex contextual strings.

The last section, entitled “Portuguese and Spanish in the Iberia and the Americas: The African legacy”, is dedicated to language contact of Spanish and Portuguese with African languages. In “A historical perspective of Afro-Portuguese and Afro-Spanish varieties in the Iberian Peninsula” John M. Lipski analyses phonological and morphosyntactic linguistic features of African speakers in Portuguese and Spanish literary texts from the 15th to 18th century. As the African characters receive their voices only through a Portuguese or Spanish writer, often with the intention to ridicule the speaker, the portrayed features are closely examined according to the probability of their occurrence by comparing them to features that are present in contemporary Ibero-African creoles. By means of the comparison some features found in the literary texts can be assumed to have occurred in the Ibero-African varieties of the Iberian Peninsula, for instance, the loss of final /-ɾ/ in infinitives or the affixation of the plural morpheme /-s/ only to the first element of the noun phrase. In the next chapter, “Form selection in contact languages: Evidence from some Portuguese- and Spanish-lexified contact varieties”, J. Clancy Clements compares Ibero-based creoles and L2 contact varieties in order to identify a pattern of form selection in the process of conventionalization of the contact varieties. Through the analysis of copulative constructions, TMA markers and the pronominal systems, he shows that the frequency of forms in discourse and their detectability (i.e. perceptive salience: consisting of or containing a CV structure) in the input play a crucial role. Copulative constructions and TMA markers select frequent and simultaneously detectable forms. For the formation of the pronominal system, however, the unbounded pronouns are preferred over the highly frequent bounded pronominal forms. Hence, detectability cuts out frequency in the selection of pronouns. The third chapter of this section, “Portuguese remnants in the Afro-Hispanic diaspora”, illustrates the language contact between Afro-Portuguese pidgins and Spanish in Latin America. By providing historical and linguistic evidence, Armin Schwegler analyses the 3rd person subject pronoun ele as a remnant of Afro-Portuguese origin in four distinct varieties of Afro-Hispanic vernaculars, namely Palenquero, in Colombia, Chota Valley Spanish, in Ecuador, Bolivian Yungas Spanish, and Cuban Bozal. Afro-Portuguese features in Black Spanish were socially stigmatized in the New World and disappeared over time. Only in marginalized or in geographically isolated varieties, as the ones analysed in this chapter, they were subject to less linguistic purging. Consequently, forms of Afro-Portuguese origin as ele could persist in these varieties, even though as an archaic form. Similarly, the last chapter “Variation and change in Latin American Spanish
and Portuguese”, by Gregory R. Guy, argues in favour of the African impact in order to explain common phonological and morphosyntactic variables, for instance deletion of coda /-s/ and /-ɾ/ or number marking and agreement, in Brazilian Portuguese and Caribbean and Coastal varieties of Spanish. Besides presenting common variables, their distributional pattern across sociolinguistic variables is parallel in these varieties. The author discusses the convergence of the linguistic and social variables in relation to general explanations for linguistic similarity and difference between language varieties, namely ancestry, innovation, and contact. The linguistic phenomena under discussion are geographically widespread, but not all over the Latin American varieties, and they cannot be observed in the European varieties, or in particular cases, only to a small degree (e.g. seseo in Andalusian Spanish). Hence, Guy rules out innovation and ancestry and claims the prolonged contact with African languages to provide the commonly shared input for language change in these varieties of Spanish and Portuguese.

This volume succeeds in pointing out common research topics in Portuguese and Spanish owing to their close structural relation and their common historical background. The comparative approach adopted in this volume constitutes a great enrichment in many regards. Firstly, the comparative analysis is very valuable in order to understand a specific language phenomenon because it permits an in-depth exploration. Moreover, this approach can open new interpretations even of a well-known and widely studied topic as well as it can enable to classify evidence on a broader and more accurate scale. Furthermore, it accounts for peripheral cases of a specific phenomenon which by means of the comparison can be relocated within an Ibero-Romance context, as for example in the case of dequéismo and queísmo in Spanish and Portuguese (Delicado Cantero) or the common origin of ele in distinct varieties of Spanish (Schwegler). Even regarding questions of dialectal variation, the analysis within an Ibero-Romance framework can indicate structural convergence. Hence, parallels can be detected where earlier research pointed out divergences due to distinct superficial realisations of particular linguistic functions, for instance the realisation of the anaphoric direct object in EP and BP (Schwenter). Besides giving new insights and explanations on concrete linguistic issues, the volume proves that the comparison of two closely related languages can offer interesting and important contributions to theoretical discussions, for example the study on L3 acquisition (Rothmann, Giancaspro and Martins) or the purely morphological analysis of stem allomorphy (O’Neill).

Likewise, the way that Portuguese has been taken out of the shadow of Spanish in the field of Ibero-Romance comparative studies is innovative. Precisely the repositioning of Portuguese as a language studied on par with
Spanish as well as highlighting the interfaces that these two languages form contributes hugely to the language specific and theoretical conclusions pointed out above. The potential of this comparative approach can still be exhausted by including more varieties in order to explore Ibero-Romance interfaces, as already some of the studies proposed by including varieties as, for example, Galician or Mirandese.

The chapters are arranged in four sections of equal length. The division of the first and the second section is based on their methodological approach, whether they focus on a diachronic (section 1) or a synchronic (section 2) perspective, while the third and the fourth section differ on the base of the languages which enter in contact in a community or individual level, namely Spanish/Portuguese vs. Spanish/Portuguese/African languages. However, some of the contributions show that diachrony, synchrony and contact are closely linked to each other. For instance, two of the chapters in the second section dedicated to synchronic perspectives rely to both synchronic and diachronic analysis (Ferreira and Holt; O’Neill). Thus, they are similar in their methodological and analytical framework to some other chapters placed in the first section, which is dedicated to the diachronic perspective. Similarly, some of the chapters which focus on diachronic analysis also expose synchronic outcomes of the historical development of a particular linguistic phenomenon. Hence, these chapters could have been organized together in one section.

A minor weak point that can be mentioned concerns the wide range of issues addressed. Some of the contributions are solely linked at a metalevel aiming to create a Portuguese-Spanish interface. For instance, a research on Judeo-Spanish and L3 acquisition of Portuguese share hardly more than the mere contact of Spanish and Portuguese. However, at a level linked to a specific language phenomenon or theoretical framework only some of them can be viewed as directly related to each other and provide further insights in their particular field.

In sum, by focusing on the interfaces of the two languages, the volume constitutes a valuable contribution in a twofold manner. Firstly, through their comparative approach the studies provide new evidence for both the Spanish and Portuguese related research. Secondly, they present, therefore, important contributions to theoretical discussions. Having highlighted the advantages of such an endeavour, it will hopefully inspire linguists to conduct further comparative studies in the distinct subfields. In a second step those results could be published in more specific volumes, combining in that way the interfaces and the specific research topics.

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References


