

“PODE PARÁ” – MODAL VERB ON BRAZILLIAN PORTUGUESE’S IMPERATIVE PHRASES: A SEMANTIC-PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS

“PODE PARÁ” – VERBO MODAL NAS SENTENÇAS IMPERATIVAS DO PORTUGUÊS
BRASILEIRO: UMA ANÁLISE SEMÂNTICO-PRAGMÁTICA

"PODE PARÁ" - VERBO MODAL EN LAS SENTENCIAS IMPERATIVAS DEL PORTUGUÉS
BRASILEÑO: UN ANÁLISIS SEMÂNTICO-PRAGMÁTICO

Dirceu Cleber Conde*

Ednei de Souza Leal**

Roger Alfredo de Marci Rodrigues Antunes***

Universidade Federal de São Carlos

ABSTRACT: In this paper, we suggest a semantic-pragmatic interpretation for Imperative Sentences (Imp) in Brazilian Portuguese (BP) using the modal verb "poder" (can), differently from other interpretations verified in the specialized literature, which are: syntactic interpretations of Imp, or a functionalist-based semantics. Therefore, we will try to suggest interpretations of the Imps, taking as theoretical foundation the Pragmatic theories of Acts of Speech, and a simplified model of Formal Semantics. The reason and stimulus for such aim come from the readings of Jary & Kissine (2014), a work that precisely seeks semantic and pragmatic interpretations for Imps. Thus, from the various theoretical proposals presented by those authors, we assume as methodology the verifunctional Denotational Semantics and the Acts of Speech to show the possibility of Imp interpretations in BP.

KEYWORDS: Imperatives. Modals. Verb "poder". Semantics. Pragmatic.

RESUMO: Neste trabalho, procuraremos sugerir uma interpretação semântico-pragmática para as Sentenças Imperativas (Imp) no Português Brasileiro (PB) que se utilizam do verbo modal/operador modal “pode/poder”, ao contrário de outras interpretações que se constata na literatura especializada, as quais sejam: interpretações sintáticas das Imp ou de uma semântica de base funcionalista. Aqui, ao contrário, procuraremos sugerir interpretações das Imp, tendo como fundamentação teórica as teorias Pragmáticas de Atos de Fala e um modelo bastante simplificado de Semântica Formal. A razão e o estímulo para tal trabalho surgem da leitura de Jary e Kissine (2014), obra que justamente procura interpretações semânticas e pragmáticas para as Imp. Assim, das diversas

* PhD Professor of Department of Languages in Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar). E-mail: <cleberconde2@gmail.com>.

** PhD Student in UFSCar. Master in Languages - Federal University of Paraná. E-mail: <edsleal79@gmail.com>.

*** PhD Student in UFSCar. Master in Linguistics - UFSCar. E-mail: <rograntunes@gmail.com>

propostas teóricas apresentadas por aqueles autores, tomamos como pressuposto justamente a Semântica denotacional verifuncional e a Pragmática de Atos de Fala para procurar mostrar uma possibilidade de interpretação das Imp em PB.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Imperativos. Modais. Verbo “poder”. Semântica. Pragmática.

RESUMEN: En este trabajo, propusimos una interpretación semántico-pragmática para sentencias imperativas (Imp.) en portugués brasileño (PB) utilizando el verbo modal "poder", de forma diferente a otras interpretaciones verificadas en la literatura especializada, que son: interpretaciones sintácticas de las Imp. o una semántica funcionalista. Además, trataremos de sugerir interpretaciones de las Imp., teniendo como fundamentación teórica las teorías Pragmáticas de Actos de Habla y un modelo bastante simplificado de Semántica Formal. La razón y el estímulo para tal fin provienen de las lecturas de Jary y Kissine (2014), un trabajo que busca precisamente interpretaciones semánticas y pragmáticas para Imp. Por lo tanto, a partir de las diversas propuestas teóricas presentadas por esos autores, asumimos como metodología la Semántica denotacional-verifuncional y los Actos del Habla para mostrar la posibilidad de interpretaciones de las Imp. en PB.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Imperativos. Modales. Verbo “poder”. Semántica. Pragmática.

1 INTRODUCTION

In the grammatical and even linguistic tradition, imperative sentences (Imp) are generally treated as a purely morphological or syntactic phenomenon. Imps are described as specialized verbal markings, specific syntactic constructs or, at most, prosodic accomplishments. It is known that the construction of imperative structures in Brazilian Portuguese (BP) differs from European Portuguese (EP) in several levels and linguistic forms (Scherre et al., 2007). However, at work, we try to make some tests and even comparisons between several sentences, prototypically imperative or not, to prove that the nature of impressions is not only a summary of morphosyntactic and geographic characteristics. Therefore, the morphosyntactic knowledge is not sufficient to satisfactorily describe the Imps.

According to electronic database of the World Atlas of Language Structures (WALS)¹, about 80% of the world languages described so far perform morphologically the imperative, i.e., they have one or more specific morphemes to perform sentences in the imperative mode. This seems to be the case of the Portuguese language, at least moderately. In addition to the prototypical Imperative sentences (we will call them ImpProt), the Imp can also manifest, for example, in the indicative mode, with a modal verb: "You can go now" (JARY; KISSINE, 2014, p.15). We will call these non-prototypical Imperative Sentences (-ImpProt). On the other hand, Sadock e Zwick (1985 apud JARY; KISSINE, 2014) find, through an atlas of more than 400 languages, that there are no records of languages lacking Imp, which leads us to believe that imperatives can present themselves in the most different ways, and not only by morphological markings, as taught by the normative grammars of the Portuguese language.

When we observe other languages around the world – again, with the help of the WALS -, we notice there are languages that do not even have morphologic particles to mark Imp, as in tonal languages, or even English. In such cases, and even in some cases of Portuguese (just the -ImpProt), other notions, apart from the morphosyntactic ones, would be very useful to describe imperative phenomenon. It is precisely what we will try to do here:

A direct statement of an imperative (I) expresses a certain content related to the future actions of the recipient; (II) conveys that the speaker wants the content to become a reality; and (III) acts as an incentive for the recipient to execute the content of the mandatory sentence (CONDORAVDI; LAUER, 2012, p.22).

It is worthwhile recalling that the Imp has no pronounced subject, with no position of phonetic realization, being in the position that is not fulfilled. However, there is a listener in any world (w @) presupposed actancial in at least one world, then in "pode tirar o cartão", it is possible to have the pronunciation of the pronoun in a position before the verb - "você pode tirar o cartão". In these

¹ <<http://wals.info/>>

cases, a pronounced subject is not necessarily there, but there is a semantic and pragmatic subject, at least from a perspective of intentional models. Even in languages such as English, where this phrase seems to be mandatory in declarative sentences, the Imp does not require it. What exist are people who passively participate in verbal action, and may or may not be represented by some kind of linguistic markup. In this way, we perceive that the imperative phenomenon is, in fact, a disambiguous phenomenon through the bias of the semantic-pragmatic analysis.

Among many examples of Imp in BP, we chose the ones that are headed by the modal operator "poder"². The reasons include several factors. One of them is because, even though there is a great description of the verb called "modal", or even "modal assistant", its description used in Imp was not carried out in the same way that we propose herein, i.e., a semantic-pragmatic description. In addition, the verb "poder" in Portuguese is semantically rich in its uses and corresponding meanings. Polysemous by nature, its various functions have not yet been properly described - precisely the case of Imp.

Among the imperative constructions with the verb "poder", it is possible to frequently observe the following occurrences:

1. *Pode parar de p.*
You can stop p.
*Can stop of p³.
2. *Pode fazer a lição agora.*
You can do the lesson now.
*Can to do the lesson now.
3. *Agora pode fazer a lição.*
Now you can do the lesson.
*Now can to do the lesson.
4. *Pode retirar o cartão.*
You can withdraw your card.
Take the card, please.
Could remove your card.
*Can withdraw the card.
5. *Pode pegar 1kg de carne moída para mim?*
Can you get 1kg of ground beef for me?
*Can to take 1kg of ground beef for me?
6. *A gente pode elaborar o texto juntos.*
We can write the text together.
*We can elaborate the text together.
7. *Podem abrir os cadernos!*
You can open the notebooks!
*Can to open the notebooks.

² In English, it could be translated as *can* or *may*.

³ As, obviously, there are no perfect correspondences, we tried to translate the sentences word by word, so that the reader can understand how difficult it is dealing with the verb "poder" in Portuguese - which, in English, has several meanings: "can", "could", "would", "should", etc. We left out example 8 because we think it is not necessary, since there are alternative translations. Still, we indicate any cases of ungrammaticality with an asterisk.

8. a) *Coma tudo!*
 (you) Eat all!
 b)* *Pode coma tudo.*
 * Should eat (imperative declination of Portuguese on 2nd person pronoun) all.
- c) *Pode comer tudo!*
 (you) can eat all.

At first sight, it is possible to intuitively see that the same lexical item “pode” does not mean the same in every sentence. At least it does not seem to perform the same Act of Speech. Another justification for choosing such sentences with the verb “poder” is the abundance of occurrences in BP - as we can see in Resende (2006) and Silva (2012).

In (1), there is noticeably an “order”, typical of Imp, except for its structure: ¬ImpProt. In sentences (2) and (3), there is an adverb displacement, which should generate different interpretations. In sentence (5), there is a very common request in contexts of purchase, and in (6) and (7), attempts to test the imperative with “poder” in the plural form.

Sentence (4), in particular, is interesting for at least two reasons: first, because it is a ¬ImpProt, i.e., formed by a verb in the indicative mode along with a “main” verb in its infinitive form. Second, it is pronounced in very specific usage situations, as in trades, whose politeness situation is required. In this sense, the “order” characteristic of the Imp would be somewhat attenuated in the form of a request or permission (depending on the context). Something similar happens to the other sentences given here as examples.

Regarding examples (8a-c), we observe that it is not possible to accumulate the verbal morphological imperative along with the modal verb “poder”. This is shown by its ungrammaticality in (8b).

This work is structured as follows: in the first two sections we explain the nature of the imperatives and the modal verb operator “poder”. In section 3, we present our theoretical assumptions. In section 4, we proceed to the pragmatic and semantic tests of sentences proposed herein, and constructed with the verb “poder” in infinitive sentences. In section 5, we comment on the test results. Finally, in the last section, we give a general overview of the results obtained with this work.

2 DEONTIC MODAL VERB

When we look up in any Portuguese dictionary, we can see that the entry “poder” is highly polysemous. In other words, several directions are attributed to its meaning: to have the faculty of; occasion or possibility of; to be subject to; to have physical or moral ability or strength; to have authority to; to have permission or permission to; to have reason, the right or reason to.⁴ It seems that the last three cases are more important to our purposes here.

According to the specialized literature, the verb “poder”, whose constructs are part of our object of analysis (examples 1-8), is a modal verb and has as its discursive function the so-called deontic effect. We will delineate such notions below.

As stated by Neves (2002), the *modo* in Portuguese can be manifested in sentences that make statements about things in the world - *modo indicativo* -; or in sentences expressing doubtful or uncertain statements - *modo subjuntivo* -; or in those sentences that express order or orders - *modo imperativo*. The types of information conveyed in these sentences in a discursive plan (dictum), can be expressed as follows: (i) althetic modalities: related to the true value of the state of things; (ii) deontic modalities: related to the axis of

⁴ Translated from Portuguese “ter a faculdade de; ter ocasião ou possibilidade de; estar sujeito a; ter capacidade ou força física ou moral; ter autoridade para; ter autorização ou permissão para; ter razão, direito ou motivo para;”. We extracted these definitions from the Priberam electronic dictionary <<https://www.priberam.pt/dlpo/poder>>. However, in other dictionaries, the definitions are not very different.

conduct, which shelters prohibition, permission, and obligation; (iii) epistemic modalities: they refer to our knowledge or belief in the state of things.

According to this classification, therefore, the verb “poder”, in the examples used, would be classified as of being from the deontic modality. That is, the one whose main characteristics would be to impose order, warning or advice: “The deontic modality is related to the values of permission, obligation and volition; it is, on the one hand, conditioned by specific lexical traits linked to the speaker ([+ control]) and, on the other, it implies that the enunciator accepts the true value of the statement, to execute it. (NEVES, 2002, p.180).”⁵

Also, according to Neves (2002), it is worth remembering that the *modo* is not manifested exclusively in verbs, but also in other categories, such as adverbs and adjectives; it can also manifest itself throughout the sentence or even at a discursive level. Such classification of the modal verb is not definitive. Bridges (1973 apud Brunelli & Bastos, 2011) even suggests that modals are not auxiliary verbs, as they are traditionally classified.

Given these clarifications, we briefly present our theoretical basis.

3 THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

The theoretical basis for this paper is basically constituted by the assumptions of Jary & Kissine (2014). As in the authors' work the number of theoretical suggestions is quite wide, we chose to make our interpretation of Imp with the modal verb “poder” at the semantic and pragmatic levels.

For semantics, we adopt some referential or compositional notions, the notion of “true value” to attest the veracity of sentences in possible worlds. According to this notion, we should obey the principle of compositionality, which says that the meaning of a sentence is derived from the meaning of the lexical items that compose it, and the specific way that these items are grouped in sentences. Thus, the basic rule of a compositional semantic theory can be given by: (i) lexicon: list with the meanings of each word; and (ii) compositional rules: how to get meaning from constituents by the meaning of their immediate constituents. In this way, true values would be obtained in possible worlds, such as: being a sentence *S* any true, if and only if the content expressed in *p* is also true, being *p* what describes certain aspects in the world (BORGES NETO, 2003). Therefore, $[[S]] = 1$, iff *p*, whose 1 is the truth value, and 0 is the false value of a sentence (CHIERCHIA, 2008). In this sense, we adopt some rather simplified tests, which even dismiss such formalizations, as proposed by Ilari & Basso (2008), below.

It is also worth remembering that the notion of “true value” seems to be out of place in sentences such as imperatives, since they express order or request and, therefore, would not need the criteria of such notions. It is not the opinion, however, of Chierchia (2008), for whom the Imp's values of truth would be due to whether they were feasible or not, capable of being executed or not. In addition, “the use of the verb's different *modos* is precisely one of the many ways of alerting our interlocutors to the fact that in our statements we are taking into consideration worlds other than the real one”⁶ (ILARI; BASSO, 2008, p.315). This discussion arises due to the apparatus of the semantic tool that we propose to use. It is necessary to pass through this filter, since the imperative can point out to other possible worlds. In this way, this work is part of an intentional model of analysis.

For Pragmatics, we adopt some notions of the Acts of Speech, initially proposed by Austin (1962), and developed by Searle (1981 [1975]). For this theoretical model, language is not only developed to communicate, but when we pronounce any sentences, we are

⁵ Translated from Portuguese: “A modalização deontica está relacionada aos valores de permissão, obrigação e volição; está, de um lado, condicionada por traços lexicais específicos ligados ao enunciador ([+ controle]) e, de outro, implica que o enunciatário aceite o valor de verdade do enunciado, para executá-lo.”

⁶ Translated from Portuguese: “o uso dos diferentes modos do verbo é precisamente uma das tantas maneiras de alertar nossos interlocutores para o fato de que, em nossas afirmações, estamos levando em consideração outros mundos além do real”.

also performing actions, including declarative sentences. This is what happens to the so-called Illocutionary Acts, such as orders, obviously given in specific contexts, as for example the arrest warrants issued by police officers. In analogous situations, it is “[...] the act of making a statement, offer, promise, etc. in enunciating a sentence, by virtue of the conventional force associated with it” (LEVINSON, 2007, p.300). The notion that most interests us in the Acts of Speech is, in the words of Searle (1981), that “speaking a language is to perform acts of speech, acts like making affirmations, giving orders, asking questions, making promises, etc. [...]” (SEARLE, 1981, p.26).

According to Searle (1976 apud LEVINSON, 2008, p.305), there are some basic types of action that someone can perform in speech. The directive enunciation is associated with the speaker while causing the recipient to do something when is being asked to. The commitment enunciation refers to the commitment of the speaker with the course of a future action. With this, the pretension we have is that the Acts of Speech theory, especially what is related to the illocutionary acts, helps us punctuate a place of Imp in everyday discourse, in its use.

However, for Borges Neto (2003), a type of referential semantics would be opposite to the notions proposed by the Acts of Speech theory, precisely because semantics is concerned with the interpretation of sentences without dealing with their contexts, as done in pragmatics.

Pragmatics, as well as semantics, focuses on the study of the meanings of sentences, in other words, focuses on the search for the linguistic expression of an operation for a mental representation of reality, but adds contextual reservations, derived from semantic layers of analysis. Basso and Oliveira (2007, 2014) explore the convergence between these two research areas, which often have the same variables. According to them, the propositions understood by semantics have their interpretation in isolation, without the situational variables that are added in the course of the study of pragmatics.

According to Basso and Oliveira (2007, p.18-19), the semantic study, although dependent on judgment in context (because the characterization of the proposition is only possible from it), is given in its independence, since its object of study is a proposition characterized not only by bearing information about the conditions of truth, but also about the conditions of admissibility (on the context in which it is successful). In the same sense, Cherchia (2008, p.223) states that “imperatives in particular can be analyzed in terms of the truth conditions of propositions that describe the proper execution of the order they express.”

It is noteworthy that prosody plays an important role when it comes to the appropriate pragmatic particles of imperatives. However, given the limits of this work and its theoretical clipping that focuses on semantic and pragmatic theories, we will not deal with prosodic problems. In this way, we will follow the precepts prompted by Jary & Kissine (2014), that suggest analysis based on these two theoretical tools for the imperatives.

4 PRAGMATICS AND SEMANTICS OF “PODER”

In this section, we will try to make the proper interpretation of sentences (1-8) according to our theoretical models. We will start with a Pragmatic interpretation (4.1). Then (4.2), we will proceed to the syntactic tests. Notwithstanding, however, that semantic analysis is the “meaning of sentences”, taking into account the fact that “[...] meaning is a kind of relationship, not an entity [...] the meaning of an expression is the relation that is established between an expression and something non-linguistic” (BORGES NETO, 2003, p.10). On the other hand, to Pragmatics, it is necessary to analyze the relation of the sentences with their contexts of use.

4.1 PRAGMATICS OF “PODER”

When we apply the Acts of Speech theory’s precepts as proposed by Searle (1981), we notice that, hypothetically contextualized sentences from (1) to (8), we have the following interpretation:

1. “*Pode parar*” – In the illocutionary act, the directive speech is verified by the verbal phrase “pode parar” in a given utterance of order or even a polite request, in which to the alocutor the execution of the order given by the proposer of the action whose act is rendered seems possible or feasible.

1st hypothetical context: a speaker interpellates the language course of a speaker abruptly: order. The expected result would be for the speaker to interrupt his\her speech or action.

2nd hypothetical context: a speaker suggests his\her interlocutor to stop an action being taken at that moment: polite request or advice. The expected result would be for the interlocutor to stop.

2. “*Pode fazer a lição agora*” – In the illocutionary act, the directive speech is verified by the verbal phrase “pode fazer” in a given utterance of order or even a polite request in which to the alocutor the execution of the order given by the proposer of the action whose act is rendered seems possible or feasible.

Hypothetical Context: a teacher annoyed by the delay of the student's tasks.

3. “*Agora pode fazer a lição*” – In the illocutionary act, the directive speech is verified by the verbal phrase “pode fazer” in a given utterance of order or even a polite request in which to the alocutor the execution of the order given by the proposer of the action whose act is rendered seems possible or feasible.

Hypothetical context: a teacher communicates or suggests the possibility of the execution of an act by a student.

4. “*Pode retirar o cartão*” – In the illocutionary act, the directive speech is verified by the verbal phrase “pode retirar” in a given context of a polite request in which to the alocutor the execution of the order given by the proposer of the action whose act is rendered seems possible or feasible.

Hypothetical context: a purchase in which the buyer chooses to pay with credit card, and after the financial transaction is completed, an employee requests that the card is removed from the machine.

5. “*Pode pegar 1kg de carne moída para mim?*” – In the illocutionary act, the directive speech is verified by the verbal phrase “pode pegar”, in a given polite request context in which to the alocutor the execution of the order given by the proposer of the action whose act is rendered seems possible or feasible.

Hypothetical context: at a butcher shop, a customer places an order for an employee.⁷

6. “*A gente pode elaborar o texto junto*” – In this case, there is a commissive illocutionary act represented by the verbal phrase “pode elaborar” with the pronoun “a gente”, in a given request context in which the alocutor has as feasible the execution of the request made by the proposer of the action when the speaker is also inserted and agrees to be in action.

Hypothetical context: when, among students or writers, someone proposes to write a co-authored text.

7. “*Podem abrir os cadernos!*” – In the illocutionary act, the directive speech is verified by the verbal phrase “pode abrir” in a given utterance of order in which to the alocutor the execution of the order given by the proposer of the action whose act is rendered seems possible or feasible.

Hypothetical context: a teacher in front of the students in a classroom context.

8. a) “*Coma tudo!*” – In the illocutionary act, the directive speech is verified by the verbal conjugation “coma”, in a given utterance of order in which to the alocutor only has as feasible the execution of the request made by the proponent of the action whose act is rendered.

Hypothetical context: a father in front of his son during a meal.

⁷ This sentence is valid in Brazilian Portuguese.

b) “*Pode comer tudo!*” – In the illocutionary act, the directive speech is verified by the verbal phrase “pode comer” in a given utterance of order or even a permission in which to the alocutor the execution of the order given by the proposer of the action whose act is rendered seems possible or feasible.

1st hypothetical context: a father in front of his son during a meal.

2nd hypothetical context: an answer granting permission to eat some food.

Once the tests with their hypothetical contexts have been made, it is important to note that conjectures would generate absurd pragmatic interpretations - as occurs, in particular, in sentence (4). By imagining “You can withdraw the card” issued as an order in a similar context (a store or supermarket), it would result in a weird speech, at the very least, done by a salesperson to a customer. It would sound like lack of politeness.

In plural cases, the modal can still be analyzed and used as an order (7) and / or polished request. It is interesting to notice that, when the speaker is included, there is no introduction of a directive illocutionary act, but rather a committed illocutionary act (6), because in the imperative sentence of the first plural person, the commitment of the speaker and the speakers to the others is required.

Although all the illocutionary acts observed here result in a directing force, not every illocutionary act is obviously the result of it. Not even the Imps are all categorically ruled by it, having seen the commercials (JARY; KISSINE, 2014, p.63), which, although imperative, do not express order. Thus, it seems that even directive force is not a possible trait to describe the universality of imperatives.

It should also be noted that “[...] every act of speech is always an operation on some propositional content [...] [and] an operation on worlds [...]” (ILARI; BASSO, 2008, p.333-334)”. That is, an act of speech is concretized on properly contextualized linguistic contents, whose function is always performed on a propositional content by the speaker and, in the case of the Imp, generally accepted by the interlocutor.

This is because there are always two dimensions of significance: a dimension of meaning, and a dimension of action. Thus, it is not possible for the speakers to communicate only the action without the conveyance of a meaning, in the same way that the mere conveyance of a meaning is, in a way, a conveyance of action.

4.2 SEMANTICS OF “PODER”

According to the lambda (λ) calculation model, for the imperatives \neg ImpProt, formed with the modal operator “poder”, it is possible to reach the follow intentional formalization:

$$\begin{aligned} [[\textit{pode}]]^{\text{Imp}} &= \lambda f \in D_{(e,t,w)} [\lambda x [\lambda p [x = \textit{destinatário que realiza p em w}]]] \\ [[\textit{may/should/can}]]^{\text{Imp}} &= \lambda f \in D_{(e,t,w)} [\lambda x [\lambda p [x = \textit{recipient that accomplishes p in w}]]] \end{aligned}$$

Yet, in this line of reasoning, and based on Portner (2004), many of the ImpProt can be formalized in the following way:

$$\begin{aligned} [[\textit{saia!}]]^{w^c} &= \lambda w \lambda x [x = \textit{destinatário} (c) . x \textit{ sai em w}] \\ [[\textit{get out!}]]^{w^c} &= \lambda w \lambda x [x = \textit{recipient} (c) . x \textit{ leaves in w}] \end{aligned}$$

Next, we will proceed to the semantic test proposed by Ilari and Basso (2008):

- Basic scheme for the interpretation of modal statements:
(i) Basic rule: modal operator (proposition or dictum);

(ii) 1st interpretation rule: to understand the proposition as the description of the state of things, and the operator as an instruction for a search that begins in the real world, and continues in other worlds to which we have access;

(iii) 2nd interpretation rule: according to the operator used, the sentence analyzed will mean that the state of things described in the proposition is valid in at least one of these worlds, or in all of them.

(ILARI & BASSO, 2008, p.327).⁸

1. “Pode parar”

(i) *Basic rule*: modal operator: pode [poder]; *dictum*: “pode parar”;

(ii) *1st interpretation rule*: the sentence launches an order from the speaker to its interlocutor, ordering in some way to “stop” any action or “stop” speaking. Deontic;

(iii) *2nd interpretation rule*: the state of things ordered in the dictum is plausible in the opinion of the speaker and, thus, likely to be performed in most possible worlds by the receiver of the sentence.

2. “Pode fazer a lição agora”

(i) *Basic rule*: modal operator: pode; *dictum*: “Pode fazer X agora”;

(ii) *1st interpretation rule*: the sentence launches an order from the speaker to its interlocutor, requesting in some way that this one executes the requested act. Deontic;

(iii) *2nd interpretation rule*: the state of things ordered in the dictum is plausible in the opinion of the speaker and, thus, likely to be performed in most possible worlds by the receiver of the sentence.

3. “Agora pode fazer a lição”

(i) *Basic rule*: modal operator: pode; *dictum*: “Agora pode fazer X”;

(ii) *1st interpretation rule*: the sentence launches an order of the speaker to its interlocutor, requesting in some way that this one executes the requested act. Deontic;

(iii) *2nd interpretation rule*: the state of things ordered in the dictum is plausible in the opinion of the speaker and, thus, likely to be performed in most possible worlds by the receiver of the sentence.

4. “Pode retirar o cartão”

(i) *Basic rule*: modal operator: pode; *dictum*: “Pode retirar X”;

(ii) *1st interpretation rule*: the sentence launches a polished request from the speaker to its interlocutor, requesting in some way that this one executes the requested act. Deontic;

(iii) *2nd interpretation rule*: the state of things ordered in the dictum is plausible in the opinion of the speaker and, thus, likely to be performed in most possible worlds by the receiver of the sentence.

5. “Pode pegar 1kg de carne moída para mim?”

(i) *Basic rule*: modal operator: pode; *dictum*: “Pode pegar X”;

(ii) *1st interpretation rule*: the sentence launches a polished request from the speaker to its interlocutor, requesting in some way that this one executes the requested act. Deontic;

(iii) *2nd interpretation rule*: the state of things ordered in the dictum is plausible in the opinion of the speaker and, thus, likely to be performed in most possible worlds by the receiver of the sentence.

6. “A gente pode elaborar o texto juntos”

(i) *Basic rule*: modal operator: pode; *dictum*: “Pode elaborar X”;

⁸ Translated from Portuguese: “Esquema básico para a interpretação dos enunciados modais:

(i) Regra básica: operador modal (proposição ou dictum);

(ii) Regra de interpretação 1: entende a proposição como a descrição de um estado de coisas, e o operador como uma instrução para uma busca que começa no mundo real, e continua em outros mundos aos quais temos acesso;

(iii) Regra de interpretação 2: conforme o operador utilizado, a sentença analisada significará que o estado de coisas descrito na proposição é válido em pelo menos um desses mundos, ou em todos eles.”

(ii) *1st interpretation rule*: the sentence launches a commissive request from the speaker to its interlocutor, requesting in some way that this one executes the requested act. Deontic;

(iii) *2nd interpretation rule*: the state of things ordered in the dictum is plausible in the opinion of the speaker and, thus, likely to be performed in most possible worlds by the receiver of the sentence.

7. “*Podem abrir os cadernos!*”

(i) *Basic rule*: modal operator: *pode*; *dictum*: “*Pode abrir X*”;

(ii) *1st interpretation rule*: the sentence launches an order from the speaker to its interlocutors, requesting in some way that these ones execute the requested act. Deontic;

(iii) *2nd interpretation rule*: the state of things ordered in the dictum is plausible in the opinion of the speaker and, thus, likely to be performed in most possible worlds by the receiver of the sentence.

8. a) “*Coma tudo!*”

(i) *Basic rule*: modal operator: *coma*; *dictum*: “*comer X*”;

(ii) *1st interpretation rule*: the sentence launches an order from the speaker to its interlocutor, requesting in some way that this one executes the requested act. Deontic;

(iii) *2nd interpretation rule*: the state of things ordered in the dictum is plausible in the opinion of the speaker and, thus, likely to be performed in most possible worlds by the receiver of the sentence.

c) “*Pode comer tudo!*”

(i) *Basic rule*: modal operator: *pode*; *dictum*: “*Pode comer tudo*”;

(ii) *1st interpretation rule*: the sentence launches an order from the speaker to its interlocutor, requesting in some way that this one executes the requested act. Deontic;

(iii) *2nd interpretation rule*: the state of things ordered in the dictum is plausible in the opinion of the speaker and, thus, likely to be performed in most possible worlds by the receiver of the sentence.

Once the tests were completed, it is important to note that Interpretation Rule 2 confirmed what we said in section 3 about the assignment of “true values” to Imp. This inconceivable phenomenon was possible, in this section, due to the description of the sentences’ dictum, that is, precisely through its propositional-informative content.

5 SOME NOTES ABOUT THE TESTS PERFORMED

One of the central questions in this work is whether the sentences analyzed are, indeed, imperative. Given the notions of an imperative sentence (section 1), and given the tests made in sections 4.1 and 4.2, we can see that the sentences analyzed are imperative. Contrary to some traditional notions, however, (1) to (7), and (8c) are \neg ImpProt, that is, they are constructs whose verbs are not, strictly speaking, concordant to the second grammatical person, *tu*. On the other hand, unlike ImpProt, as we know, for the second person in contemporary BP, most of the dialects use *você* instead of *tu*. And even in many regions where *tu* is still used as a form of second-person treatment, diachronic research reveals that the two imperative forms coexist: ImprProt and \neg ImprProt (FAVARO, 2015).

It is worthwhile to pay special attention to sentences (3) and (4), in which the displacement of the temporal adjunct “now” implies different semantic and even pragmatic interpretations. Given the hypothetical contexts in section 4.1, we notice that there is an “attenuation” in the discursive course in (4), which does not seem to occur in (3). As we also pointed out, there is still the possibility that (4) is the continuation of another sentence or, pragmatically, of an action previously performed.

It is interesting to reflect that there is, in (6), besides the directive illocutionary act, a compromising act, since the speaker undertakes to carry out the action along with the alocutor - a partner. This happens in all imperative first-person plural constructions.

Another important finding is that the verb "poder" presents different interpretations. In (1), (2) and (7), it seems to mean a kind of "force" of the speaker facing the interlocutor, an explicit order; in (3), (4) and (6), on the contrary, it expresses possibility, attenuating the deontic dictum proper of the imperatives. Thus, we could say that the lexical item "poder" is reinterpreted by different manifestations of meaning, bringing it closer to the coetaneous (but not necessarily translatable) forms of the English expressions "should", "could" and "would", which may mean, respectively, advice, possibility and attenuation of order or asking.

6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Given the procedure of the tests, adding to the preliminary discussions, it is verified that (i) the Imp requires much more than morphosyntactic interpretations for its description; (ii) the verb deontic modal operator "poder" is highly polysemic, not only in the use of Imp, but in other situations; (iii) the possibility of \neg ImpPro in BP is remarkable. We would possibly be undergoing an on-going change to this paradigm, in which we have competing forms, at least with regards to verbal morphology devoted to imperatives.

Obviously, even though it is only a proposal, our model presents problems. It would be desirable for an analysis to account the description of a linguistic phenomenon, as is the case with imperatives. However, the sentences analyzed here could yield more interpretations, since, even though we used the same verb, the possible interpretations were many. We find valid the suggestion to analyze Imp on the semantic-pragmatic bias, at least in a formal way, especially since it is a work that, apparently, has not yet been done for the Portuguese language.

We hope to have raised pertinent gaps and contributed to the semantic and pragmatic discussions about Imp in BP.

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