

VIRTUAL PRESENTATION

Forms of address and the Portuguese presence in Santos, Brazil

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The coastal city of Santos, in Brazil, is the only location in the state of São Paulo where the variation between personal pronouns "tu" and "você" (similar to the French "tu" and "vous", to the Spanish "tu", "usted" and "vos", or to the German "du" and "Sie") is documented (Modesto, 2006). Such phenomenon is often linked, by its inhabitants, to the big number of Portuguese immigrants who came to the city around the 1900's (Guidi, 1985). Comparative research within historical sociolinguistics has been employed here to check the variation in forms of address. Lopes et al. (2018) data show that Brazilians in the state of São Paulo barely use "tu", preferring "você". This differs from the Portuguese in Europe (based on data we gathered from personal letters of the "Forgotten Letters" archive, from the University of Lisbon). An overview of 130 letters from Portuguese immigrants (Immigration Museum of the state of São Paulo, 2019) who came to the state of São Paulo back then show that forms of address are very sensitive to the relationship between sender and receiver for those letters. These three sets of data (Brazilians, the Portuguese immigrants, and the Portuguese in Europe) allowed us to better spot differences in forms of address and to understand how they were established between authors.

The usage of "tu" was more perceived in situations in which speakers presented symmetry of power between them (e.g. a friend writing to another friend, but not a son/daughter writing to their parents) - similar to what is described by Brown and Gilman (1960) regarding the use of pronouns in relation to power and solidarity. As two varieties of the Portuguese language were in contact in Santos, Language Contact theories may shed some light on how the spreading of "tu" may have taken place (and has been maintained until modern days).

Britain (2013) defends that the geographical space and mobility of a community are important characteristics for uncovering linguistic change and variation, as it may explain language contact possibilities and the how often and intense they took place. Demographic studies show that, in Santos, Portuguese immigrants were the majority of the city's harbor's workers and lived mainly by the shore of the city. In the meantime, the Brazilians who had resources for moving to other areas moved to the south part of the city. Portuguese immigrants started occupying different territories in Santos and were also the head of many important social and Union movements in the city (Maram, 1979). Demography, mobility and their roles within the community of Santos point to a scenario in which the pronoun "tu", used by the Portuguese immigrants, spread from one territory to another slowly, similar to the Cultural Hearth diffusion model proposed by Britain (2013). Such spreading was only possible due to the Portuguese immigrants' role within the community of Santos, a social position that matches Eckert and Wenger's (2005) description of "legitimacy", which may be a key factor for linguistic variation and change.

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