

Social motivation on grammatical change: second person pronouns in Brazilian Portuguese

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Our objective in this paper is to show evidences of reversion in linguistic change in the use of second person pronouns, specifically, the use of *você/cê/ocê* variants in Brazilian Portuguese, as spoken in Vitória, capital of Espírito Santo. We will discuss the effect of age variable involved in this process. The observed reversion is similar, in interpretative terms, to Labov's *Martha's Vineyard* results (1975: 19-62). Labov found change reversion in the rise of centralization on the first element of the diphthongs /ay/ and /aw/. This change is due to the high number of tourists that visit the island in the summer.

In this work, we adopted the principles of linguistic variation and change theory (Labov, 1975) and we used the Goldvarb X Program for statistically analysis (Sankoff, Tagliamonte & Smith, 2005). Our analysis is based on a random sample of 24 speakers recorded in 2000's in Vitoria, from a random sample constituted by 46 speakers (the PORTVIX corpus). We also analyze another sample of casual speech, as control sample. In PORTVIX random sample, there are 1836 data: 73,5% of *você* variant; 25,5 of *cê* variant; and only 1% of *ocê* variant. On casual speech, there are 227 data: 48,9 % of *você*; 51,1% of *cê*; and no case of *ocê*. We saw that the use of *você* in the casual speech was less than in PORTVIX *corpus*, but it was greater than what was found in Belo Horizonte/MG random sample: 33% of *você*; 55% of *cê*; e 13% of *ocê* (Ramos, 1997).

Besides pointing to a high use of *você*, the data presented by the PORTVIX corpus shows statistical significance for the age variable, which presents a reversion change curve: the age group over 49 strongly favors *você* (0,823); from ages 26-49 *você* is also strongly less favored (0,164), a change in the direction of the pronoun *cê*; from ages 15-25 there is a beginning of change reversion (0,310 for *você*) and the age group from 7-14 shows a rise in reversion (0,547 for *você*). A very impressive additional fact is the distribution of the only 17 *ocê* pronoun cases: 15 are from the 26-49 age group, which has indicated change in direction to *cê* variant; the other two cases were found in the 15-25 age group. The older and younger age groups - who clearly favor *você* - DO NOT present *ocê* variant.

How do we interpret these facts? The flow of tourists and immigrants from the State of Minas Gerais is a well known fact. Our hypothesis is that speakers from Espírito Santo, the *capixabas*, without any awareness, try to distinguish themselves from those from Minas Gerais, the *mineiros*, with whom they set huge and clear barriers. So to mark identity, one of the linguistic mechanisms the *capixaba* speakers resort to is the reversion of *cê* to *você*. The other mechanism is the clear rejection on the use of *ocê* variant, a huge feature of *mineiros* speech. Thus, we have the *Martha's Vineyard* effect replicated in Southeast of Brazil.