

Collocation of the adjective in Portuguese nominal syntagmata

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What is the problem?

- pre-nominal vs. post-nominal position of the adjective
 - quente sol / sol quente
 - pobres órfãos / órfãos pobres
- pre-nominal generally considered marked
- simplifying approaches adopted by major grammars
- significant problem in language acquisition
- → quantitative corpus research!

Used corpus

- Corpus do Português
 - <http://www.corpusdoportugues.org>
 - derived from „Corpus del Español“
- created by Mark Davies (Brigham Young University) and Michael J. Ferreira (Georgetown University)
- supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)
- 45 millions of words, 57.000 texts

Grammar analysis

- pre-research phase
- recognition of approaches
 - enumerative approach
 - semantic approach
 - idiomatic approach
 - **phonetic approach**

Enumerative approach

- Example: (Hampl, 1972)
 - These adjectives usually appear in pre-nominal position: bom, chamado, delicado, devido, eminente, enorme, excelente, **expressivo**, famoso, **igual**, ilustre, inúmero, ligeiro, longo, mau, numeroso, pequeno, presente, **saudoso**, semelhante, último, **útil**, velho.
- Falsification:

| Adjective | Pre-nominal | Post-nominal |
|------------|-------------|--------------|
| Expressivo | 13 | 24 |
| Igual | 116 | 138 |
| Útil | 6 | 35 |
| Saudoso | 34 | 20 |

Semantic approach

- as in GLP (2003):

| Class | Pre-nominal p. | Post-nominal p. | Gradable | Predicative pos. |
|---|----------------|-----------------|----------|------------------|
| qualificative adj. | possible | usual | yes | yes |
| relational adj. | impossible | always | no | no |
| adj. modifying intensity or signification | usual | exceptional | no | no |
| negative and conjectural adj. | usual | exceptional | no | no |
| modal, temporal and aspectual adj. | usual | possible | yes | yes |

- Problem1: if a collocation is semantically 'possible' or 'exceptional', when and why exactly is it preferred and applied?
- Problem 2: changing signification (and class) of some adjectives according to the position

Idiomatic approach

- as in Vázquez Cuesta (1989): „grupos fraseológicos tópicos“
- typical combinations of adjective+noun, which always appear in this order:
 - **simples** facto, **simples** palavra, **simples** razão
 - **triste** fim, **fresca** data, **legítima** defesa

Phonetic approach

- suggested by Bechara (2001)
- Does the pronunciation of the adjective somehow play a role in the collocation process?
 - accent position
 - number of syllables
 - initial / final sounds

Corpus research of adjective collocations in Portuguese

- noun vs. adjective – which is which?
 - the problem of „bela virgem“
- post-nominal position vs. coincidental juxtaposition
 - „Assumia a **menina** | **outra vez** a fina têmpera de seu caráter ativo e inflexível.“
 - „Se na Madeira, onde era também **produzido** | **açúcar** de cana, [...]“
- adjectives vs. determinants, quantifiers, participles
- → human revision of results is not avoidable

Mathematical apparatus

- How to express the predominance of one or the other collocation?
- simple division:
 - 100 pre-nominal / 1 post-nominal \rightarrow 100
 - 1 pre-nominal / 100 post-nominal \rightarrow 0,01
- logarithmized quotient:
 - 100 pre-nominal / 1 post-nominal \rightarrow 2
 - 1 pre-nominal / 100 post-nominal \rightarrow -2

Semantic approach – verification

- 10 adjectives among the most used of each class

| Class | Pre-nominal p. | Post-nominal p. | Mean of $\log_{10}(a/p)$ | Deviation of $\log_{10}(a/p)$ |
|---|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| qualificative adj. | possible | usual | 0,16 | 0,13 |
| strong modification of signification in pre-nominal position | | | 0,36 | 0,06 |
| relational adj. | impossible | always | -1,88 | 0,36 |
| adj. modifying intensity or signification | usual | exceptional | 0,29 | 0,93 |
| negative and conjectural adj. | usual | exceptional | 0,75 | 0,82 |
| modal, temporal and aspectual adj. | usual | possible | -0,19 | 0,12 |

Idiomatic approach

- some nouns are very frequently preceded by a certain adjective
 - *baixo ventre, *ventre baixo*
 - *doce paz, *paz doce*
 - *plenos pulmões, *pulmões plenos*
 - *puro engano, *engano puro*
- plurals are mostly not allowed
 - *plenos pulmões, *pleno pulmão*
 - *fresca data, *frescas datas*

Idiomatic approach – verification

| Adjective | Noun | Pre-nominal p. | Post-nominal p. |
|-----------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|
| VELHO | TEMPOS | 97 | 0 |
| | AMIGOS | 13 | 3 |
| GRANDE | PARTE | 91 | 0 |
| | OLHOS | 76 | 35 |
| | SILÊNCIO | 49 | 5 |
| NOVO | VIDA | 32 | 46 |
| | MUNDO | 24 | 26 |
| | DIA | 23 | 2 |
| ALTO | NOITE | 39 | 29 |
| | HORAS | 37 | 2 |
| | SOCIEDADE | 9 | 0 |
| PEQUENO | COISAS | 22 | 2 |
| | MESA | 19 | 4 |
| | NADAS | 16 | 0 |
| CLARO | SOL | 5 | 3 |
| | LUZ | 5 | 16 |
| POBRE | DIABO | 27 | 0 |
| | ALMA | 11 | 0 |
| | COITADO | 8 | 0 |

| Adjective | Noun | Pre-nominal p. | Post-nominal p. |
|-----------|-----------|----------------|-----------------|
| PRECISO | MOMENTO | 6 | 5 |
| | INSTANTE | 6 | 3 |
| FORTE | CHEIRO | 6 | 19 |
| | IMPRESSÃO | 5 | 0 |
| | DOR | 3 | 1 |
| LONGO | TEMPO | 59 | 4 |
| | VIAGEM | 16 | 3 |
| | CONVERSA | 10 | 1 |
| BAIXO | PREÇO | 5 | 2 |
| | VENTRE | 3 | 1 |
| MAU | HUMOR | 50 | 0 |
| | VONTADE | 45 | 0 |
| | GOSTO | 42 | 0 |
| ESTRANHO | CASO | 9 | 4 |
| | SENSAÇÃO | 7 | 5 |
| | MORTE | 4 | 0 |
| TRISTE | FIM | 7 | 0 |
| | FIGURA | 7 | 0 |
| | NOTÍCIA | 4 | 0 |

Idiomatic approach

- a valid approach
- 'signifiant' causes the fixation in the pre-nominal position, not 'signifié'
 - doce paz ≈ paz solene
 - puro engano ≈ engano profundo, engano fatal
- generally only non-relational adjectives were observed in the fixed expressions
- compliant with GLP semantic classification

Phonetic approach

Confirmed theses:

- the position of the stressed syllable affects the collocation
- only non-relational adjectives are subject to phonetic influence on their position

Attention: we are working with a written corpus!

Phonetic approach – verification

- stressed syllables repel each other regardless of the collocation pattern

| always | (almost) never |
|--|--|
| <i>fácil execução, fácil compreensão, fácil utilização</i> | <i>execução fácil, compreensão fácil, utilização fácil</i> |
| <i>guerra atroz, crime atroz</i> | <i>atroz guerra, atroz crime</i> |
| <i>cão fiel, cópia fiel, público fiel</i> | <i>fiel cão, fiel cópia, fiel público</i> |
| <i>trémulo pé, trémulo pudim, trémulo coração</i> | <i>pé trémulo, pudim trémulo, coração trémulo</i> |
| <i>íntima comoção, íntima conexão</i> | <i>comoção íntima, conexão íntima</i> |
| <i>gente folgazã</i> | <i>folgazã gente</i> |

| always | (almost) never |
|---|--|
| <i>sã razão, sã lição</i> | <i>razão sã, lição sã</i> |
| <i>carne sã, arte sã, alma sã</i> | <i>sã carne, sã alma, sã arte</i> |
| <i>vão amor, vão desdém</i> | <i>amor vão, desdém vão</i> |
| <i>coisas vãs, almas vãs, arte vã, pressa vã, luta vã</i> | <i>vãs coisas, vãs almas, vã luta</i> |
| <i>mundo vil, homem vil, sangue vil, alma vil, carne vil, peito vil</i> | <i>vil mundo, vil homem, vil peito</i> |
| <i>vil animal, vil metal, vil mulher</i> | <i>animal vil, metal vil, mulher vil</i> |

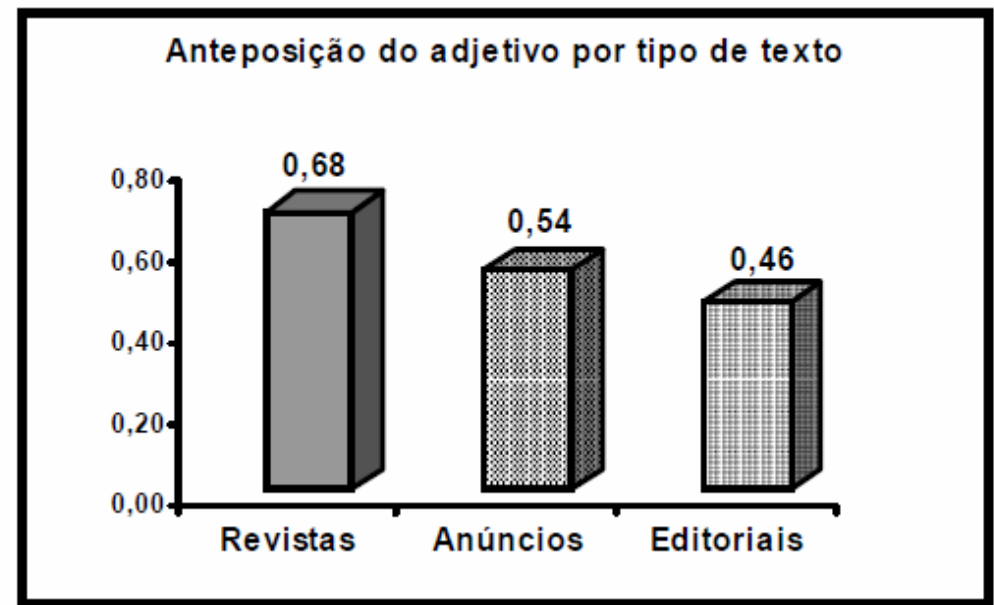
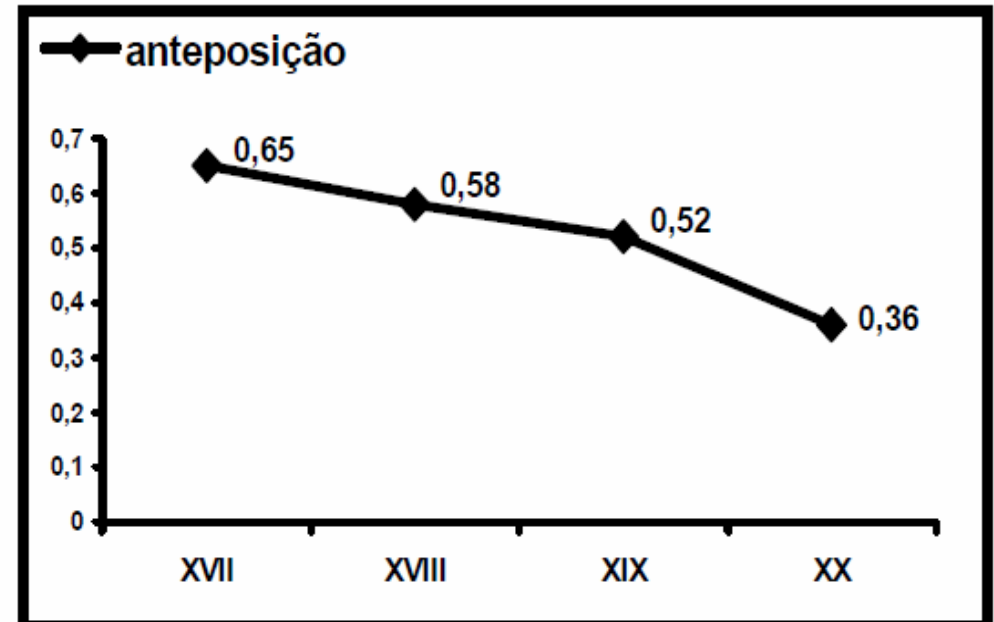
- no influence when stressed syllables are enclosed (not initial and not final)

Subjectivity as a factor in the collocation process

- present and hardly traceable
- occasional findings of specific idioms (Almeida Garrett):
 - *[...] este digno filho de Apollo se abaixa á vil prosa, [...]* (Lírica, 1829)
 - *Mas emfim é vil prosa, indigna do sesquipedal imitador de Stacio,[...]* (Lírica, 1829)
 - *Mas..mas passemos á vil prosa dos interêsses materiaes do paiz, se é preciso. (Falar verdade a mentir, 1845) [...]*
 - *[...] no mais acrisolado affecto do homem que não é poeta, entra sempre o seu tanto da vil prosa humana: [...]* (Viagens na minha terra, 1846)
- an interesting topic for further research on particular authors

Historical and stylistical aspects

- research by Callou(2002)
- pre-nominal position in decline
- the position is stylistically dependent



Summary

- relational adjectives proved to appear strictly in post-nominal position
- other classes of adjectives can appear in pre-nominal positions:
 - to invoke marked perception
 - in an idiomatic group
 - to avoid juxtaposition of stressed syllables
 - as a result of a subjective decision
 - among other reasons...

Thanks for attention!

- Questions?