

Cyclic language change from time to contrast in Brazilian Portuguese

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1. Introduction – the object of study

In this presentation, our main aim is to investigate the evolution of two relatively new contrast markers in Brazilian Portuguese, which follow diachronic trajectories that are similar to the one undergone by *while* in English. We suspect that these two markers develop in a cyclical fashion, contributing to the renewal of the meaning of contrast in Brazilian Portuguese.

(1) Osório atrairia logo para seu lado centenas de voluntários **enquanto** a ação dilatória de Caxias não lhe permite arranjar um só recruta. (20-2/21HGCB, 200)

[*Osório would attract hundreds of volunteers **while** Caxias' dilatory behaviour doesn't allow him to obtain not even one participant.*]

(2) Teu pae morreu na casa que fundou, **ao passo que** eu serei corrida deste canto da terra, separada das minhas lembranças. (20-1MLZT, 14)

[*Your father has died at the house he has built, **while** I will be expelled from this land, separated from my memories.*]

2. Objectives

The analysis of the supposed cycle will involve:

- (i) investigating the etymological sources of each marker and the source and target meanings in each trajectory;
- (ii) describing the contexts in which the new meaning is developed;
- (iii) comparing their evolution in an attempt to determine whether they develop in a cyclical fashion.



3. Theoretical Framework

- The Invited Inferencing Theory of Semantic Change (Traugott and Dasher, 2002)
- Stages and properties that characterize semantic-pragmatic cycles (Hansen, 2018, 2020; Pons Bordería and Llopis Cardona, 2020)



4. Material and Methodological Choices

- The selection of materials has prioritized strongly argumentative texts and texts produced in spontaneous interaction;
- Discourse traditions: historiographies, dissertations, essays, discourses, treaties, editorials, plays, novels and particular letters;
- Three main electronic databases:
 - *Acervo Digital da Biblioteca Brasileira Guita e José Mindlin* (<https://www.bbm.usp.br/>)
 - *Corpus do Projeto para a História do Português Brasileiro* (<https://sites.google.com/site/corporaphpb/>)
 - *Corpus do Projeto de História do Português Paulista* (<http://phpp.fflch.usp.br/>)
- Texts written by people who have born and died in Brazil;
- 600.000 words/time span (300.000 – spontaneous interaction, 300.000 – argumentative)



XVIII-1 (1701 – 1750)	XVIII-2 (1751 – 1800)	XIX-1 (1801 – 1850)	XIX-2 (1851 – 1900)	XX-1 (1901 – 1950)	XX-2/XXI (1951 – 2020)
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5. Etymological Sources: *enquanto*

Latin

Quanto → *quantus, a, um* ‘how big’ (Ernout and Meillet, 1951)

Archaic Portuguese (Machado Filho, 2013)

Quanto(s) → adjective/pronoun ‘quantity, intensity’

Quanto → adverb ‘how big, how intense’

Enquanto → connective ‘at the time when’

5. Etymological Sources: *enquanto*

(3) E fio de Deus que pelas sas orações nós dous compriremos quanto todos tres haviamos de fazer **em** tanto tempo **quanto** o compriramos se o outro hi andasse conosco. (14th century) (Longhin, 2016)

*[And I trust in God that through prayers both of us will accomplish how much all the three should do **in** as **much** time as we would accomplish if the other one walked with us].*

(4) (...) e çarrou Deus os ventres de todas as molheres de casa d'Abimelec, em guisa que non concebia nemhũa **em quanto** hi esteve Sara. (14th century) (Longhin, 2016)

*[(...) and God has made all the women in d'Abimelec's house infertile, in such a way that none of them was able to give birth **while** Sara was there].*

6. Etymological Sources: *passo*

Latin

Passus, us → noun ‘space between the legs’

(Nascentes, 1975; Houaiss, 2009)

Archaic Portuguese

Passo → noun ‘space between the legs’ (Machado Filho, 2013)

Passo → adverb ‘slowly’, used with the verb *go* (Magne, 1944)

6. Etymological Sources: *passo*

(5) Esto era bem mil **passos** da cela. (14th century) (Machado Filho, 2013)

[*That was exactly one thousand **steps** from the detention cell.*]

(6) Tristam ia **passo**. (14th century) (Magne, 1944)

[*Tristam was going **slowly**.*]

7. The evolution of *enquanto (que)* from time to contrast

Table 1. The uses of *enquanto (que)* diachronically

	18-1	18-2	19-1	19-2	20-1	20-2/21
Time	47 (95,9%)	54 (84,4%)	48 (78,7%)	66 (71%)	114 (78,1%)	176 (83,4%)
Time/Contrast	2 (4,1%)	10 (15,6%)	13 (21,3%)	26 28%	32 (21,9%)	30 (14,2%)
Contrast	0	0	0	1 (1%)	0	5 (2,4%)
Total	49 (100%)	64 (100%)	61 (100%)	93 (100%)	146 (100%)	211 (100%)

8. The set of uses of *enquanto (que)*

TIME

(7) **Em quanto** se detinha naquele porto, pediu licença ao Governador o Capitão da nao Santiago, para ir à Ilha da Palma. (18-1HAPO, 19)

[*While he was in that seaport, he asked the Governor, the captain of the ship Santiago, for permission to go to Palma Island.*]

- Temporal connection
- Simultaneity between two states-of-affairs (SoAs)
- Tendency towards pre-positioning

CONTRAST

(8) Osório atrairia logo para seu lado centenas de voluntários **enquanto** a ação dilatória de Caxias não lhe permite arranjar um só recruta. (20-2/21HGCB, 200)

[*Osório would attract hundreds of volunteers while Caxias' dilatory behaviour doesn't allow him to obtain not even one participant.*]

- The temporal source meaning is blocked
- Typical contrastive meaning: opposition (antonymic relation between two SoAs)
- Temporal sequentiality of the SoAs as a key factor to support the contrast relation
- Semantic and syntactic parallelism

TIME/CONTRAST

(9) E, **emquanto** os homens guardavam a entrada do capinzal e sustentavam de costas o portão da frente, as mulheres, em desordem, (...) arrastavam carroças, restos de colchões e sacos de cal, formando às pressas uma barricada. (19-2OCOR, 85)

*[And, **while** the men kept the entrance of the capinzal and sustained on their back the front gate, the women, in a state of disarray, (...) pushed carriages, rest of mattresses and bags of whitewash, forming a barricade in a rush.]*

(10) Às vezes Augusto olhava para seus companheiros, e os via alegremente praticando com as bellas senhoras, que abrilhantavam a sala, **emquanto** elle se via obrigado a ouvir a mais insuportável de todas as historias. (19-1MORE, 24)

*[Sometimes Augusto looked at his partners and saw them happily talking to the beautiful ladies, who brightened the room, **while** he was obliged to hear the more intolerable story.]*

- Relation of simultaneity is still available
- Symmetric constructions in terms of tense and mood
- Subjects as contrastive topics
- Antonymic semantics of the linked SoAs, especially derived from pragmatic context
- Prepositioning and postposition, the last one associated with a more salient conflict, related to subjective attitudes and social practices

9. The evolution of *(ao) passo (que)* from time to contrast

Table 2. The uses of *(ao) passo (que)* diachronically

	18-1	18-2	19-1	19-2	20-1	20-2/21
Space	8 (100%)	17 (63%)	87 (85,3%)	97 (67,4%)	128 (83,7%)	85 (81,7%)
Time	0	6 (22,2%)	5 (4,9%)	5 (3,5%)	4 (2,6%)	1 (1%)
Time/Contrast	0	4 (14,8%)	5 (4,9%)	35 (24,3%)	16 (10,4%)	10 (9,6%)
Contrast	0	0	5 (4,9%)	7 (4,8%)	5 (3,3%)	8 (7,7%)
Total	8 (100%)	27 (100%)	102 (100%)	144 (100%)	153 (100%)	104 (100%)

10. The set of uses of *(ao) passo (que)*

TIME

(11) Lança-se o succo esprimido em grandes caldeiras, nas quaes se lhe faz hum fogo vivo; e **ao passo que** este Assucar se evapora, se lhe ajunta novo, até que se faça vermelho, e espesso. (18-2FBI2, 3)

*[You throw the squeezed juice in large boilers, in which you ignite an open fire; and **while** this sugar evaporates, new sugar joints, until it is red and thick.]*

- Temporal connection
- Simultaneity between two states-of-affairs (SoAs), combined with a proportional relation
- Tendency towards pre-positioning

CONTRAST

(12) Seguramente o dono da sege, por muito tarde que chegasse a casa, não morria de fome, **ao passo que** a boa senhora morreu de verdade, e para sempre. (19-2QUBO, 61)

*[Certainly the owner of the carriage, even if he arrived late at home, didn't starve, **while** the good lady died in fact, and Forever.]*

- The temporal source meaning is blocked
- Typical contrastive meaning: opposition (antonymic relation between two SoAs)
- A contrast relation can be expressed without a temporal sequentiality
- Stronger evidence of conventionalization

TIME/CONTRAST

(13) As relações mercantis com o Oriente tinham-se dissipado. No anno de 1789, **ao passo que** no porto de Lisbôa entravam somente quatro navios chegados da índia, fundeavam cento e quinze procedentes do Brazil. (19-2ALCB, 127)

*[The trading relations with the East had faded. In 1789, **while** in Lisboa only four ships which had arrived from India entered, one hundred and fifteen which had come from Brazil anchored.]*

(14) Nos primeiros dias de agosto, (...) publicava o *Jornal do Commercio* do Rio de Janeiro, (...) que apenas um jornal na Corte, (...) e dois nas Províncias, (...) se batiam contra a dita reforma, **ao passo que** todos os maiores órgãos de imprensa, do Pará ao Rio Grande do Sul, se pronunciavam calorosamente por ela. (20-2/21HGCB, 81)

*[In the beginning of August, (...) the Journal do Commercio from Rio de Janeiro published (...) that only one newspaper in the court (...) and two in the provinces, (...) were against the reform in question, **while** all the biggest press organizations, from Pará to Rio Grande do Sul, were favourable to it.]*

- Relation of simultaneity is still available
- Symmetric constructions in terms of tense and mood
- Subjects as contrastive topics
- Antonymic semantics of the linked SoAs, especially derived from pragmatic context
- Prepositioning and postposition, the last one associated with a more salient conflict, related to subjective attitudes and social practices

11. Evidence of onomasiological cyclicity

- At the current stage of the research, our data show evidence that *enquanto (que)* and *(ao) passo (que)* have been developing in a cyclical fashion.
- *Enquanto (que)* has been following the path from time to contrast for centuries: it was already used as a temporal connective in Archaic Portuguese and, according to our data, it has been used in contexts which trigger inferences of contrast since the 18th century at least.
- The contrastive uses of *enquanto (que)* are considerably recent in Portuguese, which suggests a process of conventionalization that has not finished yet. These uses coexist with the temporal and the temporal/contrastive ones (layering) and are spreading broadly in Brazilian Portuguese: *enquanto (que)* is used in different diaphasic varieties.
- *(Ao) passo (que)*, on the other hand, seems to have followed the same path of change as *enquanto (que)*, but in a *different pace*. Its temporal uses are documented in our data only from the second half of the 18th century on. At the same period, there were uses in which the temporal meaning was enriched with inferences of contrast. In the 19th century, it has developed contrastive uses, which have been increasingly specializing in formal registers, showing a tendency to disappear. This trajectory suggests a shorter process of conventionalization, which, in contrast to the trajectory undergone by *enquanto (que)*, results in the loss of the temporal meaning.

12. Preliminary conclusions

- There is evidence that *enquanto (que)* and *(ao) passo (que)* develop in a cyclical fashion, considering relevant criteria to analyse semantic-pragmatic cycles (Hansen, 2018, 2020; Bordería and Llopis Cardona, 2020):
 - Similar source meaning, sources etimologically unrelated
 - Repetition of a linguistic change: similar source meaning > similar pragmatic extension (simultaneity > opposition)
 - Gradual acquisition
 - Specialization of the contrastive constructions with *ao passo que*
 - Different time spans
 - The same (or close) diatopic, diastratic and diaphasic varieties (the specialization to a specific register is a result of the meaning change)

12. Preliminary conclusions

- The assumed cyclical development of *enquanto (que)* and *(ao) passo (que)* presents evidence that **temporality** may be a semantic domain predisposed to semantic-pragmatic cyclicity, in accordance with Hansen (2014, 2018, 2020), Fedriani and Molinelli (2020), Ghezzi and Molinelli (2020) and Scivoletto (2020). This strengthens the already widely known productivity of time as a source for language change in general (Kortmann, 1997; Traugott and Dasher, 2002; Mauri and Auwera, 2012).
- In the developments of *enquanto (que)* and *(ao) passo (que)*, in particular, the specific meaning of **simultaneity** is decisive, being a temporal value particularly prone to trajectories towards contrast, which results from human beings sharing common systems of perception and thought, such as the interpretation that there is a conflict between things that happen at the same time and are different.
- Pragmatic inferencing plays a key role in triggering the assumed cycle between *enquanto (que)* and *(ao) passo (que)*: two etymologically unrelated forms express very similar temporal meanings, which are prone to the development of contrast in languages because they favour **similar types of inferences** (Traugott and Dasher, 2002; Hansen, 2018, 2020).

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