

LANGUAGE CONTACT NANOSYNTAX

NANOSSINTAXE DO CONTATO LINGUÍSTICO

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RESUMO: Este artigo apresenta um panorama descritivo das diferentes funções e sentidos que as preposições “em”/“en”, “a” e “para” possuem em distintas variedades do português e do espanhol. Para explicar como essas micro-variações estão sendo licenciadas, lançamos mão do arcabouço teórico nanossintático e exploramos a conjugação de duas f-seq: a hierarquia de Casos e a hierarquia Trajetória>Lugar. Tal amálgama nos permitirá desenhar uma imagem bastante clara de como a hierarquia funcional universal restringe as possíveis variações e mudanças que as línguas sofrem em situação de intenso contato linguístico. A análise se concentra, para tal, em contextos em que as preposições acima aparecem ou deveriam aparecer licenciando complementos direcionais, dativos/beneficiários e locativos. Os resultados da análise comparativa de diferentes variedades do português e do espanhol nos levam a concluir que toda a variação observada pode ser mais regular do que abordagens anteriores nos fizeram crer. Além disso, conjecturamos que, tendo levantado e explicitado os casos de variação já verificados nas línguas sob análise, poderemos tecer hipóteses mais acertadas sobre os fenômenos que são fruto exclusivo do *portunhol*.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *portunhol*, fronteira, nanossintaxe, contato entre línguas.

ABSTRACT: This article presents a descriptive overview of the different functions and meanings that the prepositions “em”/“en”, “a” and “para” have in different varieties of Portuguese and Spanish. To explain how these microvariations are being licensed, we use the nanosyntactic theoretical framework and explore the conjugation of two f-seq: the Case hierarchy and the Path>Place hierarchy. Such amalgamation will allow us to draw a very clear picture of how the universal functional hierarchy restricts the possible variations and changes that languages undergo in situations of intense language contact. For this purpose, the analysis focuses on contexts in which the above prepositions appear or should appear, licensing directional, dative/beneficiary and locative complements. The results of the comparative analysis of different varieties of Portuguese and Spanish lead us to conclude that all the observed variation may be more regular than previous approaches would have us believe. Furthermore, we hypothesize that, having raised and explained the cases of variation previously verified in the languages under analysis, we will be able to make more accurate hypotheses about the phenomena that are exclusive of *portunhol*.

KEYWORDS: *portunhol*, boarder, nanosyntax, language contact.

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... semo da fronteira,
neim daqui neim dali,
no es noso u suelo que pisamo
neim a lingua que falemo.²

INTRODUCTION

The experience of living on a border town involves many contacts: between individuals, between cultures, between languages and their varieties and so on. In this intense environment of exchanges and mixings, the eyes and ears of a linguist are naturally attracted to the different forms that contact between languages and multilingual communication can take. In a context in which the languages in contact are as close as Portuguese and Spanish, the new forms found may be even more enigmatic, considering that there is always a certain doubt about the possible explanation for the innovative structure: it can be both the result of the contact itself, and a simple manifestation of the variation observed in the general norm of one of the languages used.

In the excerpt from Fabián Severo's poem that we see in the above epigraph, we have the translation of the “border life” feeling: that of not being from here nor there, of not speaking this or that language. This intermediate space that represents living on a Brazilian border often materializes in a kind of interlanguage that we affectionately call “portunhol”. *Portunhol* is, therefore, the result of mixing Portuguese and Spanish, or at least an attempt to bring these languages closer together, which seems to be as diverse as the people or places where it is spoken.

Given the high variability and unpredictability of *Portunhol*, at first glance, we might have the impression that describing it could be an impossible task. In order to start trying to describe it, whether as a border or contact language, as an interlanguage or a form of translanguaging, we decided it was necessary to begin with defining what *Portunhol* is not. Much of what we thought to classify as *Portunhol*, at first, turned out to be a possibility of variation already attested in Spanish or Portuguese different varieties. Let's look at the examples³ below:

² Excerpt from the poem “Treis”, of writer Fabián Severo (Artigas, Uruguay): “We are from the border/Not from here, neither there/The land that we walk on is not ours/Neither is the language that we speak.” (Free translation by this paper's author).

³ Data collected from informal conversations and UNILA social media pages/Foz do Iguaçu/Brazil.

- (1) Quem (...) deseje mais informações pode **escrever ao número** de whatsapp.
 ...write.INF to the.PREP.ART.MASC number of.PREP whatsapp
 “...write to the whatsapp number”
- (2) Yo **dije para** la señora.
 I.1SG say.1PS.PAST.PERF to.PREP the.ART.FEM old lady
 “I said to the old lady”
- (3) **Vamos en** Ciudad del Este mañana?
 Go.1PL.PRES in.PREP Ciudad del Este tomorrow
 “Let’s go to Ciudad del Este tomorrow?”
- (4) O departamento fica **entre na** avenida Brasil e JK, tem perto lojas...
 The.ART.MASC department stay.3SG.PRES
 between.PREP in the.PREP.ART.FEM Avenue Brazil and JK...
 “The appartment is between avenues Brasil and JK...”
- (5) Para mais infos y encomendas, **liga nós** que a gente desenrola.
 ...call. 3SG.PRES we.1PL...
 ...“call us”...

As we will see in the next section, all the apparently unusual cases above, whether the deletion of a preposition, or even the directional use of “en”, are phenomena already described for both Brazilian Portuguese (BrP) and Paraguayan Spanish (PrS). Therefore, the task of defining what is not *Portunhol*, that is, what is not an exclusive phenomenon of contact between Portuguese and Spanish, seemed relatively more feasible at this first stage of the investigation, given the large number of empirical and descriptive work on different varieties of these languages in contact with other languages around the globe.

Thus, this article intends to present a descriptive overview of different functions and meanings that the prepositions “em”/“en”, “a” and “para” have in different varieties of Portuguese and Spanish in Africa and America. To do this, we will focus on contexts in which these prepositions appear or should appear to license directional, dative/beneficiary and locative complements.

As expected, the scenario that will be presented encompasses microvariations that expand along what Avelar (2017) classified as a *continuum* that goes from peninsular languages, which preserve the standard forms and traditional uses

historically associated with the propositions analyzed here, to varieties that present completely innovative uses for these items, or that completely delete them.

To explain these microvariations, we intend to analyze this apparently chaotic landscape with the theoretical tools provided by Nanosyntax. We wish to demonstrate that, with a few principles widely accepted in the literature and independently motivated, associated with a universal functional hierarchy (the f-seq) constructed from an ontology of empirically verified Jackendoffian conceptual primitive elements, it is possible to propose that the different interlanguages arising from language contact would be nothing more than our perception of the superficial mismatch between different grammars of Portuguese and Spanish.

Both *Portunhol* and peripheral varieties of Portuguese and Spanish can be explained by the same nanosyntactic principle: different languages associate match parts of a universal f-seq to different lexical items. To illustrate, let's compare two imaginary languages that encode in different lexical items the sequence of semantic-conceptual features WXYZ:

(6)	LANGUAGE 1	LANGUAGE 2
	item A: YZ	item A: XYZ
	item B: WX	item B: W

Considering, now, that syntax (the generative module) creates structures respecting the f-seq, both fictional languages above would use two items to lexicalize the structure below. These items, in turn, could be considered good translations/versions of each other in both languages:

(7)	Syntax: [W[X[Y[Z]]]]	
(8)	LANGUAGE 1	LANGUAGE 2
	[B _{wx} [A _{yz}]]	[B _w [A _{xyz}]]

At the same time, however, if the syntax builds the structure with only three features, XYZ, we will have a slightly different surface configuration: language 1 will continue to use two lexical items to lexicalize the created structure, while language 2 will only need one. We see this scenario below:

- (9) Syntax: [X[Y[Z]]]
- (10) LANGUAGE 1 LANGUAGE 2
 [B_x[A_{yz}]] [A_{xyz}]

If we assume that syntax operates on elements that are more fine-grained than morphemes and words, it becomes possible to describe more clearly, therefore, the many microvariations observed within the same language and also crosslinguistically. This proposal, moreover, allows us to conjecture with more refinement about the code-mixing that we observe in interlanguages such as *Portunhol*.

From this perspective, our hypothesis would be that the apparently mixed structures (such as “vamos en CdE”/‘let's go in CdE’⁴) would still have to respect f-seq. Therefore, it would be possible to predict which forms the interlanguage structures could present: i) from the nanosyntactic structures that the lexical items of the two substrates carry in their lexical entries; and ii) from the restrictions that f-seq imposes on the variation in these structures form and order.

Our premise is, therefore, that Nanosyntax provides us with better tools to describe the formal and semantic similarities and differences that involve the variation of “em”/“en”, “a” and “para”, which will allow us to formulate better hypotheses on the grammars of linguistic contact and, in the future, of *Portunhol*.

This article is organized as follows. In the first section, we present a descriptive overview of the prepositions “a”, “em”/“en” and “para”, in Portuguese and Spanish varieties from Africa, America and Europe. In section 2, we review some of the main proposals of Nanosyntax for the decomposition of the categories P (Preposition) and K (Case), in addition to the analysis that have already been made for these prepositions in Brazilian Portuguese (BrP) and European Spanish (ES). In section 3, we deploy these analysis in an attempt to explain some microvariations observed in the scenario outlined in the first section. Finally, we end the article by weaving some hypotheses about the use of prepositions in *Portunhol*.

⁴ We'll use single quotes ‘...’ when presenting what would be a literal translation of Portuguese, Spanish or *Portunhol* sentences.

1 THE PREPOSITIONS SPECTACLE ON THE PORTUGUESE AND SPANISH LANDSCAPE

Before entering the anarchic field of Portuguese and Spanish prepositions, we will briefly justify the choice of this category and these items for investigating language contact. When we look at language contact literature, we see two broad lines of inquiry; on the one hand, a great deal of research is dedicated to understanding the confluences and blends that occur in the lexical scope, and on the other, there is a series of studies that focus on the possible changes that contact causes in grammars of the languages involved.

As already mentioned, we are interested in observing the microvariations and microchanges that linguistic contact causes in grammars. For this reason, we advocated above that Nanosyntax is the best analysis tool. Given that in Nanosyntax the elements on which syntax operates are conceptual primitive features, it is important to remember that, according to the theory of Conceptual Semantics (Jackendoff, 1983, 1990, 1997, and later work), our Conceptual Structure is built on cognitive principles encoding spatial notions in language. Consequently, for this theory, the decomposition of lexical items conceptual features that encode spatial notions is central.

Furthermore, it seems interesting to observe the variation between “a”, “em”/“en” and “para”, considering that, depending on the variety of Portuguese or Spanish observed, they present interesting syncretism that is sometimes difficult to explain with tools from other theories. Therefore, in the remainder of this section, we will review some of the major work recently published on variation between the prepositions above in Portuguese and Spanish.

1.1 FROM THE BORDER TO THE WORLD

The first variety of Spanish that we are interested in observing is the one spoken in Paraguay (PrS). Although describing this language in detail is beyond the scope of this article, we believe that this work will eventually allow us to better understand the Portuguese spoken on Brazil-Paraguay border. Many papers have already been dedicated to the description of the PrS, considering its intense contact with Guarani and possible influences of its grammar. Few, however, describe the prepositions in PrS. Special attention should be given to a recent article by Azucena

Palacios (2019), which describes the innovative use of the prepositions “en” (and “por”) with motion verbs (the following data are from Palacios (2019: 240)):

- (11) a. “Que dicen **me voy en** Caacupe”
...me.1SG.ACC go. 1SG.PRES in.PREP Caacupe.
“...I go to Caacupe”
b. “...y entonces tuvieron que **venir** también **acá en** Asunción.”
...come.INF too here in.PREP Asunción.
“...come to Asunción”

According to Palacios, the innovative use of "en" tends to be explained in the literature as a "semantic copy" of the locative particles "-pe/-me" from Guarani into the preposition "en":

- (12) Oho Asunción-**pe**
 (“va a Asunción”/“go to Asunción”)
(13) Omba’apó Asunción-**pe**
 (“trabaja en Asunción”/“work in Asunción”)

However, in the first place, Palacios argues that “a quick look at the history of Spanish shows that “a” and “en” were in variation since ancient times” with motion verbs: “Dize la historia que cuando Palomades fue en la ciudad de Cornualla ... (Anónimo (1501))” (data from Palacios, 2019: 241)

According to the author, this variation continues to be attested in contemporary Spanish, especially when comparing European and American varieties. Heredia (2012), for example, compares “entrar en” (‘enter in’) and “entrar a” (‘enter to/at’) in three American Spanish varieties (from Argentina, Venezuela and Mexico) against their uses in the European grammar. The result complements Palacios’ observations, that is, in the European variety, there is an absolute preference for the use of “entrar en” (94% of occurrences), while in America this trend has decreased to an equitable distribution (Argentina: “en” 82%; Venezuela: “en” 63%; and Mexico: “en” 56%).

In any case, Palacios emphasizes that, although cases of variation between prepositions “a” and “en” are attested even in the peninsular variety, “this alternation

situation becomes especially sensitive in contexts of intense historical bilingualism (...). That is, although the contact itself is not the only one responsible for creating the innovative uses in variation, the grammar of the contact language can influence lexical item choices available in one direction or the other.

One of the problems observed in the analysis by Palacios (2019), however, is related to the classification of “a” as a directional/path preposition. We explain why this classification is problematic in section 3, when we explore proposals in Nanosyntax for decomposing these items. However, it is necessary to mention, at this point, that the possibility of using the preposition “en” as the complement of a directional verb (“me voy en Caacupe”) has much more to do with its locative property and the compositional interpretation of the sentence meaning than with the features of Guaraní particles. In our analysis, we will discuss this false syncretism.

1.2 AFRO-VARIETIES OF SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE

Avelar (2017: 17) presents an extensive “descriptive overview of directional complementation strategies in some Afro-varieties of Portuguese and Spanish in Africa and Latin America”. According to the author, the analyzed varieties realize the directional complement of a movement verb in five ways:

- (i) directional complements introduced by *a* (...);
- (ii) directional complements introduced by *para* (and its variants *pra* and *pa*) (...);
- (iii) directional complements introduced by *em/en* (...);
- (iv) directional complements introduced by *para* and *em* (...), previously presented in Gonçalves (2010);
- and (v) directional complements without preposition (...).⁵ (Avelar, 2017: 20)

The following examples are reproduced from Avelar (2017: 20-21):

- (14) a. “já fui a Ponta Negra” (Cabinda, C318)
‘I already went at Ponta Negra’⁶
- b. “me llevaron a casa de una curandera” (Cuba, López 1998:193)
‘they took me at house of a healer woman’

⁵ All quotes were translated from Portuguese by the author.

⁶ Remind that we use single quotes ‘...’ when presenting what would be a literal translation of Portuguese, Spanish or *Portunhol*.

- (15) a. “já fui pra Luanda” (Cabinda, C201)
 ‘I already went to Luanda’
 b. “nojotro ibamo pa Arapata” (Bolivia, Lipski 2005: 206)
 ‘we went to Arapata’
- (16) a. “eu fui no dotô” (Moquém, F4)
 ‘I went in the doctor’
 b. “fui en el ayuntamiento” (Guiné Equatorial, Q&CF 1995:492)
 ‘I went in the city’
- (17) a. “eu vou para no rio pescar” (Maputo, Gonçalves 2010:158)
 ‘I’m going to in the river to fish’
- (18) a. “a primeira vez que fui o médico” (Helvécia, Informante 04)
 ‘the first time I went the doctor’
 b. “hai que í la cementerio recogé huesito” (Bolivia, Lipski 2005:204)
 ‘have to go the cemetery recognize little bone’

Although Avelar’s (2017) work does not intend to explain this variation, she shares some considerations about the possible reasons for the existence of structures as innovative as the sentences without preposition, found in Maputo Portuguese and Afro-Bolivian Spanish, or for the extensive use of the preposition “em”/“en” in directional complements in BrP, Angolan Portuguese (AnP) and Spanish spoken in Equatorial Guinea.

Gonçalves (2010) suggests that the innovative uses of the preposition "em", both as a complement of directional verbs, and as a locative morpheme within noun phrases are a consequence of the reanalysis of "em" as a locative index, resulting from the transfer of grammatical properties of the suffix “-eni” present in Bantu languages. Thus, for both authors, as the directional sense would already be encoded within the Bantu family motion verbs, sentences with such verbs could present either a nominal complement (NP) headed by the locative marker "em", or completely eliminate the need for the complement N to be marked by “em”.

For Avelar and Galves (2014) and Avelar (2017: 35), however,

to explain the changes triggered by contact between the directional complements[,] one cannot rule out the possibility that such changes are the result not of the transference of Bantu languages properties, but of the difficulty, on the part of Portuguese as L2 learners, to assimilate properties related to directional complementation, especially with regard to the choice of the preposition introducing the complements.

Oliveira (2005), similarly, suggests that in Mozambican Portuguese spoken as L2, the preposition “em” is a “locative case marker”, that is, a nominal category, and not a head of PP. Therefore, it can disappear completely in contexts with motion verbs or appear inside other PPs (the data below is from Oliveira (2005: 07):

- (19) **Na minha mãe** era fértil.
‘In the my mother was fertile’
- (20) Levaram lá a igreja.
‘They took there the church’
- (21) Voltou **para em** casa.
‘She came back to in home.’
- (22) Está a sair **de no** estúdio.
‘Is leaving from in the studio’

Rita Gonçalves (2012), who investigates the Portuguese variety spoken as first and second language in São Tomé e Príncipe, also presents speech data with preposition deletion. Although the author observes that this deletion is more frequent among younger speakers (18-34 years old) who, for the most part, already speak Portuguese as their first language, the *Forro*, a Portuguese-based creole language, is still the main language spoken in the Island.

It is possible to see, therefore, that both the transference and reanalysis hypothesis and the imperfect acquisition hypothesis may be related to the observed variation. We will try to argue, in this article, that, regardless of the reason behind all these changes, variation is still subordinated to a universal hierarchy of semantic-functional features and to the principles of Nanosyntax. From this perspective, therefore, it would be possible not only to explain such data, but also to make more accurate predictions about the possible and impossible paths that change and variation can take in linguistic contact.

1.3 BETWEEN AMERICA AND THE OLD CONTINENT

Back in Brazil, we find an extensive range of research dedicated to the apparent free variation between the prepositions "para", "em" and "a" in BrP, both in

the complementation of motion verbs, as well as in their locative and stative uses (Rammé, 2017a; Ferreira, 2020; Ferreira e Basso, 2019, 2020, among many others).

In general, the research on the meanings of these items suggests that while the preposition "a" is disappearing or specializing in +functional contexts, the preposition "em" is taking its place both in the expression of location and in the directional sense, a context in which it competes with the preposition "para" for the complementation of motion verbs.

When comparing BrP with European Portuguese (EP), Farias (2006: 213-214) proposes that these three items would have the functions that can be summarized in the following table:

Preposition	EP	BrP
a	Locative, directional, temporal, beneficial, dative, prepositioned accusative, etc.	It tends to be replaced by "em"/"para" in locative and directional contexts; its use in prepositioned accusative contexts is rare; in dative contexts it tends to be replaced by "para".
para	It governs goal DPs of motion verbs	It governs complement DPs of motion verbs and benefactive complements
em	It is categorically used for the marking location in space.	It marks location in space and appears as motion verb complements

Table 1: Meanings of "em", "a" and "para" in BrP and EP according to Farias (2006)

Farias then discusses whether these prepositions should be categorized as + or -lexical, as this feature would differentiate functional prepositions from predicative ones. This distinction is important for the author because functional prepositions would be dummy markers, which would only perform the Case assigned by the verb, not changing the thematic role of DP. Lexical prepositions, on the other hand, would be those that "they alone are responsible for assigning the Case and the θ -Marking to the DP complement of P" (Farias, 2006: 216).

However, considering the sometimes functional and sometimes lexical behavior of "a", "em" and "para", Farias suggests that "there is a gradation regarding the preposition category + or -lexical feature (...), the more dependent on the verb, the more functional the preposition is". Therefore, there would be a category of "half way" prepositions: "those that attribute Case to their complement DP and that, along

with the verb, are auxiliary predicators in the attribution of the thematic role to the DP” (Farias, 2006: 216), as is the case of prepositions that introduce the complement of motion verbs.

Farias (2006) needs to make use of the notion of a ”half-way” preposition because the theory for his analysis does not take into account that both categories V and P can be decomposed into finer grained elements, which would allow us to see more clearly this division of labor between V and P. Rammé (2017b), for example, discusses how Nanosyntax allows us to understand the complex distinction between complements and adjuncts of motion verbs without the need for an intermediate category of prepositions.

Furthermore, Rammé (2017a) suggests that “a” and “para” encode features from both case hierarchy (Caha, 2009) and Path hierarchy (Pantcheva, 2011). Finally, in opposition to the widely spread image that the preposition “em” would carry features/meanings of a path preposition, Rammé (2017a) suggests that “em” is a purely locative preposition. The Goal or directionality reading commonly associated with it would in fact be provided by the conceptual-functional structure carried by the motion verbs with which “em” is combined.

Likewise, contrary to the proposal that the preposition “a” in Spanish is a path preposition, Fábregas (2007) and Romeu (2014) argue that the preposition “a” is a purely locative item and that the meaning of directionality is also provided by some feature carried by the verb. As these works fit into the theoretical framework of Nanosyntax, we will summarize their argumentation in the next section.

To conclude this section, we reproduce below the *continuum* proposed by Avelar (2017: 31) for Portuguese varying grammars. We consider that this *continuum* can be seen as strong evidence for the defense that a conceptual-functional hierarchy is restricting the observed variation, given that no Portuguese variety uses completely unpredictable strategies for encoding the meanings/functions associated with items "a", " para" and "em":

Prepositions in the complement position of directional motion verbs:			
EUROPEAN PORTUGUESE	BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE	AFRO-BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE	HELVÉCIA AFRO-BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE
V _{DIR} a NP V _{DIR} para NP	V _{DIR} a NP V _{DIR} para NP V _{DIR} em NP	V _{DIR} para NP V _{DIR} em NP	V _{DIR} para NP V _{DIR} em NP V _{DIR} NP

Table 2: *Continuum* of Portuguese varieties according to Avelar (2017)

As we can see, at one end of the *continuum*, the EP variety has two items of the P category that share meanings compatible with directional contexts. At the other extreme, we have other P items that seem to share such meanings, one of which is also locative, and even a context in which such items seem to share features with a V or N category. To understand this complex scenario, we will review the work of Pantcheva (2009, 2010, 2011), Svenonius (2006a, 2010) and Caha (2009, 2010), concluding with the proposals by Fábregas (2007) for European Spanish and Rammé (2017a), Ferreira (2020), Basso and Ferreira (2019) and Ferreira and Basso (2020) for BrP.

2 NANOSYNTAX OF P

As mentioned before, the strongest premise of Nanosyntax is the postulation of a universal hierarchy (f-seq) that organizes semantic-functional primitive concepts and restricts the order in which these concepts are lexicalized/encoded into lexical items (Starke, 2010), based on a few widely accepted principles in the literature. Languages thus vary insofar as different parts of this hierarchy are associated with different lexical items.

In the spatial domain, different authors have already proposed different f-seq for the P and K domains, associated with the P category (Svenonius, 2006a; Caha, 2009; Pantcheva, 2011; Romeu, 2014; Basso and Ferreira, 2019). Most studies assume Jackendoff's (1983, 1990) proposal that the lexical items that encode spatial meanings could be decomposed into a hierarchy of features such as Via (Route), Path and Place. The hierarchy for the organization of these concepts is based on the observation that cognitively more complex concepts, such as Paths, are built on/from

simpler concepts, such as Location. The Location/Place feature would thus be at the bottom of a spatial hierarchy.

Before discussing the different hierarchies proposed within Nanosyntax for category P, however, it is important to register a central methodological observation. Nanosyntax stands as a cartographic theory and, therefore, is guided by crosslinguistic description. The principle that drives any nanosyntactic thesis is, therefore, the requirement that the proposal be strongly based on the observation of empirical data, considering, at the same time, the need to justify both morphosyntactically and semantically every new feature/head proposed.

2.1 DECOMPOSITION OF P IN NANOSYNTAX

The first hierarchy proposed for category P appears in Svenonius (2006). For the author, the extended projections of P could include the features Path, Loc (decomposed into Place and AxPart) and K. According to Rammé (2018), in BrP, an item such as "debaixo de" would carry this entire structure:

(23) Joana saiu/entrou **debaixo da mesa**.

Path(de)>Place(de)>AxPart(baixo)>K(de)>DP(the table)

...Joana leave.3SG.PRET/enter.3SG.PRET from under the table

“Joana came out from/entered under the table”

Pantcheva (2009, 2010, 2011), in turn, proposes that the concept of Path be decomposed into the features Route, Source, Goal and Place. Both proposals by Pantcheva (2011) and Svenonius (2006a) present empirical evidence of languages that have specialized morphemes in some of the features/concepts above. Pantcheva (2011) explores how the semantic value of each feature would be compositionally constructed from its relationship with the lowest feature. Thus, the Goal projection would carry a sense of transition, from one region to another, based on the concept of Place. The Source feature, in turn, would contribute to the inversion of Goal semantics. Route, finally, would have a bitransitional meaning, compositionally constructed from the meanings of lower features.

Therefore, these proposals are not only semantically motivated, but are also built from the observation of a wide range of languages that have specialized

morphemes in each of the features proposed. This means that there are languages in which the morphemes associated with a higher feature, such as Goal, encompass the lowest feature/morpheme, Place. In the example below, reproduced from Pantcheva (2009: 06), we can observe how the Goal (-l-le) and Source (-l-t) morphemes, in Estonian⁷, are compositionally built on the Place morpheme (-l Place):

- (24) jala-l
foot-on ‘on the foot’
- (25) jala-l-le
foot-on-to ‘onto the foot’
- (26) jala-l-t
foot-on-from ‘off the foot’

Pantcheva then concludes that “directional expressions are built on top of locative expressions by adding to the locative structure the directional head Path” (Pantcheva, 2010: 6-7). Besides, Pantcheva also observes that languages vary insofar as the same morpheme encodes or not more than one feature of the Path>Place hierarchy. This f-seq, moreover, allows us to predict which types of syncretism would not be possible, like, for example, a language in which the same morpheme A encodes Place and Source, but has a distinct morpheme B to encode Goal, an intermediate feature. In the syncretism patterns presented by Pantcheva (2009: 13), which range from the most crosslinguistically frequent to the least frequent, we observe that, in fact, *ABA morphemes are not attested.

To end this section, we will discuss Caha's (2009, 2010) proposals for a Case system hierarchy that can be combined with spatial hierarchy. We consider this proposal especially interesting, considering that, as observed in the data from different varieties of Portuguese and Spanish, the prepositions “a”, “para” and “em”/“en” tend to be associated not only with meanings/functions of the spatial domain, but also the K domain. A central problem, as observed in Farias (2006), is to understand how, in some contexts, a preposition can assign Case, while in other contexts it is assigning a Locative or Goal thematic role to the NP complements of motion verbs.

⁷ Data from Viitso (1998) according to Pantcheva.

Caha (2009, 2010) also analyzes an extensive number of languages to arrive at the proposal of a hierarchy of cases that we reproduce below. According to the author, while some languages express the concepts of Case system through a set of morphemes, others encode the same concepts in prepositions or postpositions. Thus, Caha (2009) proposes the following Case Sequence: NOM – ACC – GEN – DAT – INS – COM⁸.

As it was possible to see in the proposals of Pantcheva and Svenonius, both consider the existence of a projection/feature K at the bottom of the spatial hierarchy. This feature is usually placed there because of its strong relationship with the nominal category N. However, a simple K feature does not seem to account for the diversity of meanings/functions that Case morphemes carry. There are, in fact, Cases that are closer to N, such as Accusative and Nominative, and can thus be considered as features of the extended projection of a DP or NP. Other Cases, however, such as Dative, Locative, Ablative, etc., seem to be closer to the category P and, therefore, could be considered extended projections of P rather than N.

The decomposition of K is therefore important for us to understand how each of these meanings relates to different categories and to each other. Caha thus discusses how the Case hierarchy would be related to the spatial hierarchy in languages such as Dutch and German, in which the work of marking locative and directional meanings is divided into morphological cases. In such languages, these meanings manifest themselves in the determinants and spatial prepositions/pospositions, which encode senses of direction and location. His proposal can be seen below (Caha, 2010: 182):

(27) [C-dir [Deix-dir [Asp-dir [P-dir [C-loc [Deix-loc [Asp-loc [P-loc [DP...

This hierarchy suggests that in the extended projection of a locative (P-loc or Place) or directional (P-dir or Path) preposition we will have three features: an aspect feature associated with case hierarchy (Dat for Asp-loc and Acc for Asp-dir), a deictic feature (Deix) above it and a maximum complementing feature (C). Caha proposes that the feature K be differentiated from the structural cases (Acc and Nom) that would be found in the extended DP projection. Thus, based on the hierarchy of Bayer et al. (2001), Caha (2010: 205) proposes the following decomposition:

⁸ Case Sequence: Nominative - Accusative - Genitive - Dative - Instrumental - Comitative.

- (28) a. Accusative: [F [DP]]⁹
 b. Dative: [K [F [DP]]

Note that, in this representation, Caha assumes that the Accusative (F) is what is traditionally called a structural case, that is, a feature found in the extended projection of the DP. At the same time, Dative would be an oblique case and would be “built on top of the accusative by the addition of a feature (K)”. Thus, we can predict how the division of labor between Case prepositions and suffixes would occur in languages such as Bulgarian (which only has the Accusative morpheme, Dative being encoded in the preposition) and German (which also has a specialized Dative morpheme K). The difference between the two languages would then be in the maximal position to which the noun can move in the hierarchy (reproduced from Caha, 2010: 207):

- (29) The division of labor between prepositions and case suffixes
 a. B: [K=na [DP=profesor- [F=a t-DP]]]
 b. G: [DP=Brüder- [K=-n [F=Ø t-DP]]]

Before moving on to the analysis of the Spanish and Portuguese data, it is important to review what work on Nanosyntax has already been proposed for these languages specifically. We'll do that in the next subsection.

2.2 NANOSYNTAX OF P IN SPANISH

Fábregas (2007) proposes that the prepositions “en” and “a” are exclusively locative, that is, they would only encode the feature Place. For the author, the Path meaning commonly associated with these prepositions would be a case of False Syncretism (Pantcheva, 2011). In other words, the Path feature associated with “a” would not be encoded by the preposition, but in the verbs with which the preposition in general cooccurs. To support his thesis, Fábregas adopts Ramchand's (2008) proposal that the category V can be decomposed into finer lines, namely, Initiator (Init), Process (Proc), Path (Path) and Result (Res).

⁹ F represents the structural Cases and K the oblique ones.

In this hierarchy, Path is a complement of Proc. Thus, verbs that have the structure Proc>Path will take as their arguments (whether they are NPs or PPs), elements that contribute to the sense of determining the event's trajectory. Fábregas' analysis is interesting because it considers the division of labor between V and P in the expression of the meanings of Path and Location, explaining why the preposition “a” can be combined both with exclusively locative verbs, as in “Juan permaneció a la puerta” (‘Juan stayed at the door’), and with motion verbs “Juan subió a mi casa” (‘Juan went up to my house’). However, his analysis fails to explain the subtle differences in the use of “en” and “a”, the former having, according to the author, much more locative restrictions than the latter.

According to Fábregas, the difference between “a” and “en” would be in the encyclopedic sense associated with each preposition: “...*en* expresses a locative relation where the Figure is contained in the Ground or is supported by it. Instead, *a* denotes a locative relation in which the Figure is in contact with (at least) a part of the edge of the Ground” (Fábregas 2007: 178). The choice of one or the other would then come down to conceptual restrictions imposed by each verb.

Romeu (2014), in turn, proposes a different hierarchy from those presented so far and suggests that the Place/Loc feature be decomposed into two other features, Rel (Relational) and Mod (Modifier). Thus, “en” would have in its lexical entry the structure [MOD_Con-junto[Rel]] and “a” would have [MOD_Dis-junto[Rel]]. These features would then guarantee the distribution of “en” and “a” with movement verbs (ROMEU, 2014: 253). His analysis, however, does not explain why “a” can be used with some movement verbs such as “run”, but it seems to be blocked by verbs of the same class, such as “dancing”. Its solution, like Fábregas (2007), is to leave the restriction to the encyclopedic-conceptual content.

In the research presented here, we believe that, with sufficient analysis and observation of empirical data, we can arrive at a f-seq that includes these linguistic patterns that do not seem in any way accidental. Fariña and Rammé (2019), in this sense, when analyzing the connection of the preposition “a” with the phenomena of Differential Object Marking (DOM), *leísmo* and null object licensing in PrE speech data, propose that in addition to a possible locative feature, the item “a” is also associated with the structure [Dat[Acc2-DEF]], following Amélie Rocquet (2013). The Acc2-DEF feature is proposed by Rocquet (2013) and would be associated with the semantic concepts of +definite and +human/+animate that are distributed

complementary in morphemes of the verbal and nominal domain in Hungarian. This feature would be responsible, therefore, for licensing the use of DOM “a” against simple NPs in Spanish. It is also possible that the features of Dative and Acc2-DEF in combination with the feature Loc are the reason for such a wide use of “a”.

It is also worth noting that both Fábregas and Romeu, when analyzing European Spanish, state that sentences with the preposition “en” in the position of complement of directional motion verbs (such as “fue en la tienda”/‘went at the store’) are ungrammatical. In fact, this combination may be ungrammatical in the European variety, however, it is widely observed in other varieties of Spanish and both analysis end up failing to explain these occurrences. We will try to elucidate this and other microvariations in Spanish in the next section. Before that, however, we will briefly review the proposals for nanosyntactic analysis previously presented for the BrP prepositions.

2.3 NANOSYNAX OF P IN BRP

Following Pantcheva (2011), Caha (2009) and Fábregas (2007), Rammé (2017a) also proposes that, in BrP, the preposition “em” is a purely locative item. In addition, for the author, the lexical item “a” would encode the K>Path-Goal structure and, due to a process of linguistic change by reanalysis, this item would have completely lost its Place feature and would now carry, in the grammar of many Brazilian speakers, only K. At the same time, “para” would have the structure K>Goal>Place.

Rammé (2017a), like Fábregas, suggests that the division of labor between verbs and prepositions is happening through the item that is selected to combine with the Path feature constructed by syntax. Hence, verbs with the Proc-Path-Res configuration can be combined both with purely locative prepositions, such as “em”, and with path prepositions, such as “a” and “para”, considering that the Res feature in the complement position of Path already provides a stative result interpretation for the trajectory, which, for motion verbs, is necessarily a location.

Ferreira's works, in turn, take Pantcheva's (2011) proposal and explore the semantic motivations for the introduction of Scale and Bound features in the nanostructures of certain VPs and PPs. Thus, Ferreira (2020), Basso and Ferreira (2019) and Ferreira and Basso (2020) present new proposals for the decomposition

of P and discuss the role of GOAL prepositions and the Bound feature in the construction of telicity. According to Basso and Ferreira (2019), thus, the preposition “para” in BrP would carry the nanostructure Scale>Goal>Place.

For these authors, “semantically, [Scale] cuts out just one piece of path as being relevant to interpretation, excluding transition” (Basso; Ferreira, 2019, p. 58). Thus, although “para” is used to introduce the goal of motion verbs, it cannot be guaranteed that there will be a change in the location of the Figure from a space A to a complementary domain $\sim A$. That is why, as Ferreira (2020) and Basso and Ferreira (2019) exemplify, the use of “para” allows for the trajectory target to be canceled without generating a contradiction, as in “Ana foi para o trabalho, mas voltou para casa no meio do caminho” (‘Ana went to work, but went back home midway’). Although they present a comprehensive overview of the typology of GOAL prepositions and their semantic values, the studies above, however, do not discuss the uses of “para” in dative contexts or even the variation between “para”, “em” and “a” in locative and trajectory contexts.

As we can see, no analysis, so far, has come to provide a definitive answer to the complex range of meanings that are associated with the prepositions “a”, “para” and “em”/“en” or for the even more complex relationship of these items with VPs and NPs crosslinguistically. In the next section, although we do not intend to present a definitive analysis either, we will explore some possible paths that the proposals reviewed here present to us for the understanding of the (micro-)variation observed in Portuguese and Spanish.

3. LANGUAGE CONTACT NANOSYNTAX

In section 2, we discussed the different hierarchies previously proposed within the framework of Nanosyntax for domains P and K. In (30), we summarize the main f-seq proposals for these domains:

- (30) P and K f-seqs
a. Svenonius (2006a) : decomposition of Path
Path > Place > AxPart > K > DP

b. Caha (2009) : decomposition of K (Case)

Com > Inst > Dat > Gen > Acc > Nom

Oblique > Structural > DP

c. Pantcheva (2011) : decomposition of Path

Scale/Bound > Route > Source > Goal > Place > DP

d. Rocquet (2013) : decomposition of K

Com > Inst > Dat > Gen > Acc2-DEF > Acc1 > Nom

Besides, we saw that, based on these f-seq, different researches suggested that the items “a”, “para” and “em”/“en” would be encoding the following features in their lexical entries:

	Spanish		Portuguese	
“a”:	Place	Dat>Acc2	K>Goal>(Place)	x
“em”:	Place	x	Place	Place
“para”:	x	x	K>Goal> Place	Scale>Goal> Place
	(Fábregas)	(Fariña & Rammé)	(Rammé)	(Ferreira & Basso)

Table 3: Nanostructures of “a”, “para” and “em”/“en”

Although, at first sight, the above analyzes seem conflicting, we believe that, with the necessary adjustments, they can be combined to complement each other. Thus, we have organized this section as follows: first, we will discuss a proposal for combination of the hierarchies in (30) above, and then we will look at data from Portuguese, Spanish and *Portunhol*.

The first adjustment considered, therefore, was the exclusion of the f-seq by Romeu (2014). We did it because, as already mentioned, it seems to us that proposing a feature such as Con/Dis-junto for a specific preposition has the same result as leaving the idiosyncratic differences between "a" and "en" to the conceptual tier of their lexical entries. Consequently, Rel semantics is forcibly imprecise, being present in any item that relates an object to a place, precisely what the Place feature does in other hierarchies.

As we return, then, to the f-seq in (30)a-d above, we believe that the second important issue to look at is Caha's (2010) hierarchy. This author suggests that the Case features would be interacting with the spatial hierarchy through a case marking defined in the Spec position of P. This marking, however, as the author notes, seems

to infringe the Case Hierarchy itself, since Spec of Asp-Dir is set to Accusative, while Asp-loc, below Asp-Dir, assigns the Dative case. Caha explains this apparent infringement of f-seq using the sub-extraction operation.

However, based on the hypothesis put forward by Svenonius (2006b), that, in Nanosyntax, all cases of verbal arguments are structural, that is, they project their own heads in the structure, we believe that it is not necessary to resort to a device such as sub-extraction if we combine the different hierarchies already proposed for domain P as follows:

- (31) Matching of Case and Spatial Hierarchies
 ... Scale > Path-Goal > Dat > Gen > Loc > Acc2 > Acc1 > Nom > DP...

Note that this proposal is based on the hypothesis that, like “other atoms of Nanosyntax, case layers are the mapping of semantic features onto syntax” in an orderly manner. In the case of Case and Trajectory hierarchies, this mapping takes place, in turn, as “the function of the theta-role of the argument over which the KP is merged” (Rocquet, 2013: 29).

We assume this way that in Nanosyntax each structural case maps onto a theta-role. Semantically, this implies recognizing that the thematic roles assigned to the arguments of an event are organized hierarchically and, in fact, the proposal of a hierarchy of theta-roles is not something new in the literature of the area. The unprecedented proposal that we are defending in this paper is, however, the unification of different f-seq already consistently discussed in Nanosyntax, in a way that the hierarchy itself is able to explain the variation observed in the uses of spatial prepositions in Portuguese and Spanish.

Besides, following Caha’s (2009: 142) argument, we understand that “the number of case layers entering the composition of a KP is a function of the theta-role of the argument over which the KP is merged.” This means that in a very straightforward way a DP will be interpreted as carrying the thematic role that is associated with the highest Case phrase on its extended projections. Conversely, a DP associated with a thematic role such as Possessor, for example, which is associated with the Genitive case, will be at the bottom of a structure of (at least) three case heads: Gen > Acc > Nom > DP.

According to Caha (2009) and Rocquet (2013: 30), it is also understood that “this concomitant meaning and form differences are two sides of the same coin”. For example, “assuming that possession is mapped onto syntax by merging a genitive KP, the expression of change of possession is mapped by adding a dative case layer on top of the genitive KP”.

As we’ve already mentioned, the construction of a more complex meaning on top of hierarchically simpler/lower meanings is also one of the central proposals of Jackendoff’s Conceptual Semantics. Nanosyntax, however, allows for an implementation of this Jackendoffian semantics that is more directly related with syntax, without the need to resort to theoretical tools such as the notion of tiers and an independent module that brings together linking rules between morphology, syntax and semantics.

To illustrate it, let us briefly discuss a question raised by Jackendoff (1990, p. 199). When presenting the class of ditransitive verbs that license dative alternation, the author comments that the only difference in meaning between the ditransitive constructions would be that “in the ditransitive form, the Goal is easier to construe as Beneficiary”. In nanosyntactic terms, we can verify that this slight distinction occurs precisely because of the features Path-Goal>Dat encoded in the preposition “to”, which means that the feature Path-Goal is absent in the ditransitive structures. According to Rammé (to appear in print), such a configuration allows us to explain quite simply why ditransitive constructions tend to block the Goal reading and why, with some verbs, the alternation with “to” constructions seems to change the meaning of sentence (“The secretary wrote the boss_(Beneficiary) a letter/a letter to the boss_(Goal)”).

As we can see, by associating the nanosyntactic f-seq to a small set of principles, it is possible to explain microvariations that relate form and meaning in a very predictable way. Thus, in the next subsection, we will turn to Spanish and Portuguese contact data.

3.1 THE NANOSYNTAX OF SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE IN CONTACT

Let's begin by analyzing the hierarchy proposed here for the general norm of Brazilian Portuguese and European Spanish:

(32) K and P Hierarchy

...Scale > Path-Goal > Dat > Gen > Loc > Acc2 > Acc1 > Nom > DP...

As already mentioned, both Portuguese and Spanish do not have Case morphological markings in N or D, with the exception of pronominal paradigm. So, a first prediction we can make is that the nouns of both languages carry at least the features Nom and Acc in their extended projection Acc1>Nom>DP/NP.

Spanish, however, unlike Brazilian Portuguese, has a morpheme, “a”, for marking Acc2-DEF. Considering that, in BrP, this marking disappeared, we can conjecture a small difference between nominals in Spanish and in BrP. In Spanish they are specified for the structure Acc1>Nom>DP/NP, whereas in BrP they carry the features Acc2> Acc1>Nom>DP/NP.

As already mentioned, we know that both “en” and “em” are purely locative prepositions, so they only encode the Place/Loc feature. However, unlike what was proposed by Fábregas, we know that “a” is widely used in Spanish genitive and dative contexts. Therefore, it is likely that this item also carries such features, and therefore its structure would be: Dat>Gen>Loc>Acc2.

Finally, although we have not found studies that identify spatial uses of “para” in Spanish, in BrP this item tends to be found in dative and goal of motion contexts, as discussed in the previous sections. Thus, we propose that “para” carries the structure Scale>Goal>Dat>Gen>Loc. This complex arrangement of features can explain, in our view, the productivity of “para” in BrP, as opposed to “em” and “a”.

One last observation is necessary. As already mentioned, we are working with the hypothesis that the meaning of the higher features is compositionally construed from the meanings of lower features in the f-seq. Hence, the meaning of Path-Goal is compositional, in the Jackendoffian sense: directionality is the computation of a spatial Goal built on a meaning related to change (Dative), culminating in a spatial location (Loc) (which does not necessarily need to be reached in presence of the Scale feature (cf. Basso and Ferreira, 2019; Ferreira, 2020)).

At the same time, when the Goal feature of a certain item is underassociated in Dative contexts, it is possible to conjecture that the Loc feature is interpreted as an abstract, non-spatial location. Although this hypothesis also needs to be deepened, it seems to indicate a way out to understand the intimate relationship between

possessors and locations widely discussed in the literature. So, we can summarize the description above in the following tables:

	P domain					N domain		
Contexts:	Scale>	Goal>	Dat>	Gen>	Loc>	Acc2-DEF>	Acc1>	Nom>DP
Dir/Dat/Loc			a				Names	
Dir/Loc					en		Names	

Table 4: Decomposition of P in Spanish.

	P domain					N domain		
Contexts:	Scale>	Goal>	Dat>	Gen>	Loc>	Acc2-DEF>	Acc1>	Nom>DP
Dat/Loc			A				Names	
Dir/Dat	para					Names		
Dir/Loc					em	Names		

Table 5: Decomposition of P in BrP.

With this picture in mind, let us now return to the analysis of variation data for Spanish and Portuguese in contact with other languages. We will concentrate on the varying cases, leaving aside the analysis of the more traditional interpretations and those that have already been discussed in this work. We organize the analysis according to each observed variation. Let's start close to the border, reviewing the use of the preposition “en” in directional contexts in Paraguayan Spanish.

3.1.1 THE DIRECTIONAL “EN”

As previously discussed, different studies in the scope of Nanosyntax have already demonstrated that the apparent syncretism between the directional and location senses associated with the prepositions “en”/“em” is a mistake. Following Rammé's (2017a) argumentation for BrP, we believe that, in contexts where the preposition “en” seems directional, it is always possible to identify a motion verb that would, in fact, contribute with such a meaning to the structure. See examples of Guinean-Equatorial Spanish, reproduced from Avelar (2017: 37):

- (33) a. “te leva en una curandera de essas”
 ‘takes you in a healer woman of these’
 b. “tendremos que volver en Annobón”
 ‘we will have to go back in Annobón’

All the other cases in which “em” or “en” license motion verbs arguments, both in Portuguese and in Spanish, are configurations of the same phenomenon. Their specification for the introduction of locative arguments seems to guarantee, in this way, the productivity of this phenomenon in different varieties of these languages.

3.1.2 THE NOMINAL “EM”

Moving a little away from the border, we find another rather curious and innovative use of the prepositions “en” and “em”: the appearance of these items in exclusively nominal contexts or in the position of introducing the complement of another path preposition, such as “para”. For these cases, we believe that the explanation is due to a change in the structure associated with these items, which now also include the features below Loc: Acc2, Acc1 and Nom. Thus, in Mozambican, Angolan, São Tomé and Afro-Brazilian varieties of Portuguese, the structure encoded by “em” seems to be Loc>Acc2>Acc1>Nom.

Thus, in nominative and accusative contexts, as in (34), “em” will be used in view of the Underassociation Principle, according to which the highest features can be left out of the computation, as long as the Anchor Condition is respected (Data from Mozambican Portuguese (Oliveira, 2005: 07)):

- (34) a. **Na minha mãe** era fértil. b. Conheci **nesse livro**.
 ‘In my mother it was fertile.’ ‘I met in this book.’

At the same time, the same structure will allow for “em” to be used to introduce the argument of another preposition, as long as it is a Path>Dat>Gen preposition that takes Loc as its complement:

- (35) a. Voltou **para em** casa. b. Está a sair **de no** estúdio.
 ‘He returned to at home.’ ‘Is coming out from in the studio.’

3.1.3 MOTION VERBS COMPLEMENTS WITH NO PREPOSITIONS

Both Portuguese and Spanish have varieties in which the prepositions “a”, “em” and “para” are deleted. Let’s look at the data from São Tomé Portuguese (36), reproduced from Gonçalves (2012: 420-421) and from Afro-Bolivian Spanish (37), adapted from Avelar (2017: 38):

- (36) a. Tem que apanhar carro para chegar Porto Alegre.
‘Have to take car to arrive Porto Alegre.’
b. Entrou pensão onde nós estávamos.
‘Entered pension where we were.’
c. Entrega senhor uma cerveja.
‘Deliver sir a beer.’
- (37) a. Nació Murarata.
‘Born Murarata.’
b. En este tempo di cosecha siempre nojotro va trabajo.
‘At this time of harvesting always we go work.’
c. Los patrón vivían La Paz.
‘The bosses lived La Paz.’

Although the examples above bring deletion of these items in broader contexts, we will focus our analysis on path, dative and locative contexts. Considering that verbs and prepositions can share features, it is possible to conjecture that, in addition to their respective Init, Proc or Res features, the verbs “arrive” and “enter” in the above varieties carry the features Goal>Dat> Gen>Loc. At the same time, the verb “deliver” seems to be encoding a subset of these features, namely Dat>Gen>Loc.

Furthermore, in Afro-Bolivian Spanish, it is reasonable to propose that locative verbs like “nacer”(‘be born’) and “viver” (‘live’) encode as the lowest heads of their structures the feature Loc, while a verb like “ir” (‘go’) is also encoding ...Goal>Dat>Gen>Loc. Considering that the Anchor Condition prevents these lower features from being underassociated, it is an obvious conclusion that their complements are not prepositioned.

3.1.4 ONE LAST STOP BEFORE OUR FINAL DESTINATION

Before closing out with some considerations about the Portuguese spoken on the trinational border, it is necessary to review the logic that guided the analysis proposed here. As we could see, the postulation of a universal f-seq combining syntactic and semantic-conceptual features, associated with a few widely accepted and independently motivated principles, was enough to make a very clear picture of the microvariations found in many varieties of Portuguese and Spanish, especially in situations of intense linguistic contact.

It is important to emphasize, furthermore, that it was not necessary, at any time, to resort to idiosyncratic explanations or to leave to conceptual content the reason behind the different meanings that verbs and prepositions involved in the expression of movement/transfer/change assume in these languages. What this analysis shows is that if we stick to a rigid hierarchy of concepts on which syntax operates, it is possible to take a glimpse of the possible paths that variation and change can take.

Thus the words and morphemes of a given language can gain or lose features depending on their contact situation or other external phenomena, as long as the accumulating or losing features are contiguous concepts in the universal hierarchy. To explore how this constraints code-mixing or the interlanguages that emerge from multilingual communication in contexts of intense linguistic contact, let us weave some initial hypotheses about *Portunhol* in our not-so-final considerations.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this article, we saw that the great variation observed in Portuguese and Spanish varieties, despite being favored by linguistic contact, is not the result of chance, but rigidly respects a universal hierarchy of syntactic-semantic concepts, as proposed within the framework of Nanosyntax. Therefore, if we return to Table 2, for example, in which Avelar (2017) presents the grammatical *continuum* of different strategies that Portuguese¹⁰ varieties use to lexicalize directional events, we can now

¹⁰ It was not possible to propose the same analysis for Spanish, as the work of Avelar (2017) did not manage to raise enough descriptive data for its American and African varieties, so that the same panorama could be accurately traced. As several authors have already pointed out, non-European.

complement it with hypotheses about the functional-conceptual structure associated with the prepositions of each variety:

Prepositions in the complement position of directional movement verbs:			
EUROPEAN PORTUGUESE	BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE	AFRO-BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE	HELVÉCIA AFRO-BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE
V _{DIR} a NP V _{DIR} para NP	V _{DIR} a NP V _{DIR} para NP V _{DIR} em NP	V _{DIR} para NP V _{DIR} em NP	V _{DIR} para NP V _{DIR} em NP V _{DIR} NP
a : [Dat[Gen[Loc]]] para : [Goal[Dat[Gen[Loc]]]]	a : [Dat[Gen[Loc]]] para : [Goal[Dat[Gen[Loc]]] em: [Loc]	para : [Goal[Dat[Gen[Loc]]] em: [Loc]	para : [Goal[Dat[Gen[Loc]]] em: [Loc[Acc2[Acc1[Nom]]]] +verbs encoding Loc

Table 6: Continuum of nanosyntactic structures encoded by Portuguese prepositions

With this in mind, when we turn to *Portunhol* data presented at the beginning of this paper, we will see that, just as Portuguese and Spanish languages in contact with other languages have their variation and change restricted by a universal f-seq, the *Portunhol* that arises as a result of contact, whether it is an interlanguage, a pidgin or a case of code-mixing, has the same characteristics:

- (38) Quem (...) deseje mais informações pode escrever ao número de whatsapp.
- (39) Yo dije para la señora.
- (40) Vamos en Ciudad del Este mañana?
- (41) O departamento fica entre na avenida Brasil e JK, tem perto lojas...
- (42) Para mais infos y encomendas, liga nós que a gente desenrola.

Either in the Portuguese (39 and 40) or Spanish (38, 41 and 42) based *Portunhol*, we can observe that all the phenomena described in this article manifest themselves in the same way: in a more standard use of the preposition “a”, not expected in informal BrP contexts (38); in the exchange between “a” and “para” in the Dative marking (39); in the use of “em” as a locative complement of a directional verb (40); in the use of “em” in the complement position of another preposition (41); or even in the deletion of the preposition “para” in a typical Dative context (42)¹¹.

Spanish varieties still lack a more comprehensive and detailed description. We are committed to this task in relation to Paraguayan Spanish.

This observation leads us to conclude that interlanguages, pidgins or code-mixing phenomena may be more regular than previous approaches have led us to believe. What differentiates the treatment exposed in this paper from previous work is that, in this theoretical framework, we have finer tools of analysis that allow us to look more precisely at the subtle movements that forms and meanings undertake in this constant dance between morphology, syntax and semantics. We end this brief essay excited to continue exploring the nanosyntactic path.

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