

## **Sociolinguistic Aspects of Forms of Address in Portugal and Brazil: TU or VOCÊ**

Ana Clotilde Thomé-Williams  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is not necessary to speak a language that is different from another person in order to understand how communication between two individuals can be rather ambiguous. Scholars have studied this natural linguistic ambiguity, including the ambiguity that exists between native speakers of the same language. Tannen (1986; 1990) observed how men and women of the same culture, even in the same family, frequently misunderstand each other because they assume that the other person shares their thoughts, only to find out that they do not. In intercultural communication, the range of this ambiguity is even more evident. Scollon and Scollon (1996) offer various examples of the problems of cross-cultural understanding when two people with different languages and cultures communicate with each other in a third common language.

### **THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM**

The question of the ambiguity in interpersonal relations can still have another perspective when two native speakers of the same language, but belonging from two different countries and cultures may carry on a dialogue. They may speak the same language and they may know how to communicate in the various levels of language, but when they meet face-to-face, they realize that their discourse may result in several problems of interpretation. They may differ in their use of words, grammars, intonational patterns, and especially in *how they address* each other. These differences may even impair their communication. These are the problems encountered between speakers of Brazilian and Continental Portuguese.

While languages such as English with its use of “You” may resolve the problem of addressing the second person with elegant simplicity, and while in French the problem of addressing one with “tu” or “vous” may account for the levels of intimacy between speakers, the problem in Portuguese remains rather complicated, giving rise to much ambiguity regarding the kind of relationship that one wants to maintain in speaking with others<sup>1</sup>.

There are various ways in which one can address another person. There are lexical choices, morphosyntactic selections and even intonational patterns that can be used to address another as an equal, a superior or an inferior. The use of *forms of address* in a language indicates the kinds of relationship that one wants to maintain, social distance or

---

<sup>1</sup> Nogueira (2000) wrote an interesting article on this aspect of address.

solidarity. In other words, when addressing a second person, what is the social position chosen by the speaker and where, socially, does he situate the listener?

### HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

In order to understand how communication between speakers of Brazilian and Continental Portuguese can result in miscommunication due to different semantic uses of forms of address, it is necessary to discuss certain cultural and historical aspects of the use of the Portuguese language in these two countries. We will consider the use of the pronouns of address in the second person and its evolution and then compare the kind of address forms that are used today in Brazil and in Portugal.

In Latin, there were two possibilities of addressing another person: **tu** (this form is characterized as a pronoun of solidarity and was used to address equals) and **vos** (this is the form of power and was used to denote differences in social status<sup>2</sup>).

Domingos (2001) analyzed the literary Portuguese of the popular theater during the Sixteenth century and documented the patterns in the use of “tu and “vós” in its various contexts. In order to portray the use of pronouns of the society of this time with sufficient faithfulness, the writers of this kind of literature, such as Gil Vicente, did well in describing the relationships between characters. The kind of influence that one character had over another is what determined the choice of pronouns of address. The pronouns of the second person were used for the following:

| The use of the Pronouns TU and VÓS during the Sixteenth Century in Portugal |  |   |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| TU  | <b>Proximity</b><br>(used with persons of the same social level) | <b>Intimacy</b><br>(used by lovers, but not married couples)            | <b>Family</b><br>(used to show affection between mother and children)                           | <b>Superiority</b><br>(used by a superior in addressing an inferior)    | <b>Insults</b><br>(used to devalue the person spoken to) |
| VÓS   | <b>Plurality</b><br>(used to address more than one person)       | <b>Intimacy</b><br>(used by married couples as a sign of social change) | <b>Politeness</b><br>(used to mark the superior status of another or to ask a favor to another) | <b>Inferiority</b><br>(used by an inferior while addressing a superior) | <b>Reverence</b><br>(used to address God or a saint)     |

In accordance with what Soto (1997) indicates, it is important to emphasize that at the end of the Middle Age, different nominal expressions for terms of address in Latin began to emerge. It was a system in which one made mention of the attribute of a person rather than the person himself, leaving the verb as a marker of the third person. As a result, the verb was no longer used as a marker of the second person. There are other languages derived from Latin that also show similar forms, but it is only in the Portuguese language that forms remain in the current language which one address the attribute of the person in power. Thus, speakers of Portuguese around the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries did not refer exactly to a person when using

<sup>2</sup> **Vos**, it should be noted, was also used as the form of the second person plural.

the forms **Vossa Majestade** (Your Majesty) **Vossa Alteza** (Your Highness), or **Vossa Mercê** (Your Mercy). Instead, they referred to his/her Majesty, his/her Highness, his/his Mercy, while using the verb in the third person singular.

### THE PRAGMATICS OF TERMS OF ADDRESS

Even today, in formal written language and in ceremonies, it is common to use different kinds of address according to the function or the authority of the person addressed. Grammatically, this is the correct way of addressing authorities or ceremonial representatives in social, political, and religious contexts, in Portugal or in Brazil.

| Form of Address  | Purpose   |
|--|---|
| Vossa Alteza<br>(Your Highness)                                    | Used to address princesses, archdukes, and dukes.   |
| Vossa Eminência<br>(Your Eminence)                                 | To address cardinals  |
| Vossa Excelência<br>(Your Excellency)                              | Used for government authorities or especially in Portugal to address whomever one wants to show special consideration |
| Vossa Magnificência<br>(Your Magnificence)                         | To address University Presidents and Provosts   |
| Vossa Majestade<br>(Your Majesty)                                  | To address kings and emperors   |
| Vossa Excelência Reverendíssima<br>(Your Most Reverend Excellency) | To address bishops and archbishops  |
| Vossa Paternidade<br>(Your Fatherhood)                             | To address abbots   |
| Vossa Santidade<br>(Your Saintness)                                | To address the Pope   |
| Vossa Senhoria   | To address any person to whom one needs to show more respect  |

The address of a king by “vós” was first followed by “Vossa Mercê.” With the vulgarization of this form of address, extended to include nobles and later a few urban bourgeoisie, other expressions that accentuated the politeness of a speaker or the honor of the person addressed were created. Thus, new forms such as Vossa Graça (Your Grace), Vossa Majestade (Your Majesty), Vossa Excelência (Your Excellency), etc., replaced the form Vossa Mercê.

Concomitant with the vulgarization of Vossa Mercê (Your Mercy) in the Portuguese Court, there was a disuse of “Vuesa Merced” in the Spanish Court. Another parallel can be found in the documentation of these forms in the work of Gil Vicente in Portuguese and Lope de Rueda in Spanish. Both provide clear examples of the vulgarization of terms of address used at this time.

“Querria suplicar a **vuesa merced** que **vuesa merced** mi hiciese **merced** de me hacer **merced** – pues estas **mercedes** se juntan como esotras **mercedes**

que **vuesa merced** suele hacer – me hiciese **merced** de prestarme dos reales<sup>3</sup>.” (El Deleitoso, satire de Lope de Rueda , Faraco, 1982)

## TERMS OF ADDRESS AND THEIR EVOLUTION

The form **Vossa Mercê** also went through a process of phonetic simplification. From **Vossa Mercê** one derives **vosmecê**, **vassuncê**, **mecê**, and **vancê**, forms that are still to be found among the Caipira speakers of Brazil<sup>4</sup>. It is interesting to note that the popular form of address **você** has simply been reduced to **cê** in the informal spoken language among Brazilians.

During the colonization of Brazil, **vós** was used for the second person singular as a form of ceremonial address. At this time, the form **vós** was already becoming archaic and replaced by **Vossa Mercê**, which was then simplified to **Você**. This simplification did not happen just phonetically, but also semantically: the form **você** did not strictly mean a form of address denoting respect, but one denoting familiarity. While the form **Vossa Mercê** ceased to exist, a new form **vossemecê** was created in its place, a form that is still in use in Portugal and in African Portuguese countries when one wants to accentuate the degree of respect.

The following table shows the evolution of the term of address from **Vossa Mercê** to **você**.

| The Evolution of <b>Vossa Mercê</b> to <b>você</b> .  |  |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|--|---|
| <b>Vossa Mercê</b><br>Ceremonial term of address used at the end of the Fifteenth Century principally in addressing the king and later in addressing the noble citizenry, and finally for the common citizen. | <b>Vossemecê</b><br>This is a variant of <b>Vossa Mercê</b> that is still used in some circles in Portugal and Portuguese Africa to demonstrate respect, esteem or friendship. | <b>Vosmecê</b><br>This form is used even now by several regional speakers in Brazil | <b>Voacê, Vomcê</b><br>These are forms that preceded the rise of the pronoun <b>você</b> . The use of these forms is not largely documented. The transition from <b>Vosmecê</b> to <b>Você</b> was rather rapid. | <b>Você</b><br>This form was documented for the first time in 1666 in the Feira de Anexins by Francisco Manuel Melo (cf. Soto, 1997). This is a familiar and common form of address used largely in Brazil. Its use in Portugal is minor. |

According to Teyssier (2001), in his book on the history of the Portuguese language, around the beginning of the Seventeenth Century there appeared various other kinds of forms of address in which the verb was always declined in the third person singular. For example, forms such as **o senhor** (Mr.), **a senhora** (Mrs.), **o senhor** followed by a title (as in *o senhor doutor vai ao trabalho hoje?* Is Mr. Doctor going to work today?), a title followed by a name (as in **o Maestro Silva**, **o Professor Antunes**), only the name followed by an article (A Rosa

<sup>3</sup> “I would like to request “your mercy” that “your mercy” might have the “mercy” of having “mercy” – then these “mercies” combine with other “mercies” that “your mercy” is accustomed to do – Could you have the “mercy” of lending me two reales.”

<sup>4</sup> *Caipira* is a Brazilian term to define the rustic or backwoodsman.

poderia ajudar-me? Could the Rosa help me?), even the simple use of the third person singular without an expressed subject (poderia ajudar-me? - Could (you) help me?) corresponded to a rather rigid social code during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries. At the present time in Brazil, people desire to simplify forms of address, however in Portugal the code of address is still rather complex. In order to avoid the problem of an inappropriate address, one introduces the name of the person with whom one is speaking as if that person were a third person. This form of address has caused some difficulty for students of language as well as for those speakers of Brazilian Portuguese who come into contact with speakers of Continental Portuguese.

When the Portuguese embarked on the colonization of Brazil, they encountered indigenous people there with their own languages and customs. Later, they imported slaves from Africa who also contributed to the creation of a Brazilian form of Portuguese with lexical, semantic, and phonetic differences that distinguished it from Continental Portuguese. The use of **você** can be traced to a small group of middle class Portuguese in Brazil colonial times. This form of address was adopted by the Brazilians and widely used by them.

In Brazil, the form **você** contributed to the simplification of the use of terms of address in such a way that one can say that there exist only two forms of address: **você**, used as a sign of familiarity and equality among conversational partners and **o senhor, a senhora**, used as a marker of social distance or as a form of respect. In some Brazilian families, one finds that some children still address their parents as **você** while, in others, they are called **o senhor** and **a senhora**. Older persons, in general, prefer that younger people address them with deference. In the business world, the use of these terms of address varies. There is not any formal rule and each business establishment has its own rules in accordance with its product, its clientele, or situation. In the school system, the youth address their professors and staff by the terms **o senhor** or **a senhora**. However, at the university level, there is a relaxation of these forms of address and professors are commonly addressed by **você**, especially if they look young. On the other hand, there are some professors that address their students as **o senhor** or **a senhora** as a means of maintaining a relation of social distance with their students.

Even though the pronoun **você** continues to be the norm for addressing the second person in Brazil, according to Ilari et al. (1996), it is important to emphasize that the form **tu** also exists as a form of address in Brazil. For example, **tu** is used in the south and in some regions of the north of Brazil. At times, the pronoun **tu** differs semantically from the form **você** as evidenced by the work of Ramos (2002). In a study on the spoken language in Santa Catarina, the author observed that **tu** denotes greater familiarity while **você** connotes social distance. Also, it is common to find that the pronoun **tu** is used with the third person singular of verbs instead of the second person singular. This use of **tu** is found along the costal regions of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro or Pernambuco (**tu vai à praia?** instead of **tu vais à praia?** – Are you going to the beach?).

### MISUSED AGREEMENT

Brazilians use **você** and disregard the rules of subject verb agreement. At a great discomfort to Portuguese listeners, the Brazilians often mix these forms in colloquial speech and use the pronoun of the second person (**tu**) when they should be using the third person form (**você**). For example, it is common to hear in Brazil sentences such as **Você quer que eu te telefone?** – Do you want me to call you? If one followed the rules of grammar, this

construction would be correct only if it was expressed in the third person form (**Você quer que eu lhe telephone?**) or in the second person form (**Tu queres que eu te telephone?**).

Russo (2001) analyzed several texts used in advertising and concluded that this mixture of forms of address may harm verbal agreement, but it favors getting the message across to others. In an advertisement for the prevention of AIDS, for example, one finds the following expression: **Se você não se cuidar, a AIDS vai te pegar** - If you don't protect yourself against AIDS, it will get you. In Portugal, such an advertisement is taken as a serious grammatical error and it would never be placed in the media. In Brazil, on the other hand, it fits well with popular taste and produces a greater effect than if it were done in accordance with the normal rules of grammar.

But one can find some misuses of pronoun agreement in Portugal too. **O vós**, previously used for the second person plural, was substituted by the third person plural form of **vocês**. At the present time, in America as well as in Europe, **vocês** is used for two or more persons spoken to, even though the form **vós** is still found in some countrysides of Portugal. However, on the analogy with the forms of address that began with the pronoun **Vosso** and **Vossa**, it is possible to encounter in Portugal the use of the possessive **vosso** in false concord with the form **vocês** as in the following example: **Vocês trouxeram o vosso livro?** – Did you (plural) bring your book? The correct expression should be **Vocês trouxeram o seu livro?** Or, in a more archaic manner of expression, one could say: **Vós trouxestes o vosso livro?**

## INSIGHTS FROM REFERENCE GRAMMARS

What would one find in a reference grammar regarding these forms? The following table illustrates the correct forms of address with regard to the use of verbs and pronouns when addressing another person:

| Form of Address                           | Forms of the Verb  | Corresponding Pronouns   |
|---|--|--|
| <b>Tu</b><br>(you)                        | Second person singular<br><br>Examples: <b>tu és, tu vais, tu amas</b><br>(you are, you go, you love)  | Unstressed: <b>te</b><br>Example: eu te amo<br><br>Stressed: <b>ti, contigo</b><br>Example: <b>Isto é para ti. Irei contigo.</b><br>(this if for you, I will go with you)<br>Possessives: <b>teu, tua, teus, tuas</b><br>Example: <b>toma teu remédio.</b><br>(take your medication)   |
| <b>Você, o senhor, a senhora</b><br>(you) | Third person singular<br><br>Example: <b>Você vai. O senhor vai. A senhora vai. Você ama. O senhor ama. A senhora ama.</b><br>(you go, you love) | Unstressed: <b>se, o, a (lo, la after infinitives), lhe.</b><br><br>Examples: <b>Você (o senhor) já se aprontou? Espere-me, pois vou encontrá-lo (la) hoje à tarde. Eu lhe telefonarei.</b><br>(Have you dressed yourself up? Wait for me, cause I will meet you in the afternoon. I will call you.)<br>Stressed: <b>si, consigo</b> are used especially in Portugal. In Brazil the forms used are <b>você, o senhor</b> or <b>a senhora</b> , after preposition.<br><br>Examples: <b>Isto é para si. Irei consigo.</b> (Brazil: |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  | Isto é para o senhor. Irei com você.)<br>(This is for you, I will go with you)<br>Possessives: <b>seu, sua, seus, suas, do senhor, da senhora.</b><br><br>Example: <b>Tome seu remédio.</b><br>(Take your medication)  |
| <b>Vós</b><br>(you)<br>(restricted and archaic form used in Portugal)  | Second person plural.<br>Example: <b>Vós ides, vós sois, vós amais.</b><br>(you go, you love)            | Unstressed: <b>vos</b><br>Example: <b>eu vos escreverei assim que possível.</b><br>( I will write you as soon as possible)<br>Stressed: <b>vós, convosco.</b><br><b>Trouxe este livro para vós. Irei convosco.</b><br>(I brought this book for you. I will go with you).<br>Possessives: <b>vosso, vossa, vossos, vossas</b><br>Example: <b>Olhai os vossos filhos.</b><br>(Watch over your children). |
| <b>Vocês</b><br>(You plural)<br>(the plural form <b>os senhores, as senhoras</b> is only used in very formal contexts, found as forms of address.) | Third person plural.<br>Example: <b>Vocês vão. Vocês são. Vocês amam.</b><br>(you go, you are, you love) | Unstressed: <b>se, os, as (los, las after infinitives), lhes.</b><br><br>Stressed: <b>si, consigo</b> (used only in the singular).<br>The stressed form <b>com vocês</b> is used both in Brazil and in Portugal,<br><br>Possessives: <b>seu, sua, seus, suas.</b><br>Example: <b>Vieram com seu carro? Onde estão seus filhos?</b><br>Did you come in your car? Where are your children?               |

It is important to note that in Portuguese, it is possible to have a subject-dropping rule. The verbal ending, for example the morpheme ending –s in the present indicative, makes it clear that the subject is in the second or in the third person singular. The omission of the subject and just using the third person verbal form appears to be an interactive strategy for those who do not know how to address another person, as in the case of selecting from **você, o senhor, or a senhora** as a preferred form of address. For example, if one says: “Quer um cafezinho?” “(Do you) want some coffee?”, one cannot tell which form is implied.

Cunha and Cintra (1985) have documented the difference between the use of **tu** and **você** in Brazil and Portugal. When one is in intimate and familiar relationships or when one is addressing equals or when a superior addresses an inferior, it is preferable to use **você** in Brazil and **tu** in Portugal. In Europe, generally friends and couples use the familiar **tu** form among themselves. Older people use **tu** for their children, nephews, and grandchildren. In response, they address their parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts by **o senhor, a senhora** or, some times, by invoking some kind of relationship that acts as a form of address as in **O pai está cansado?** – Is father tired? **A mãe quer uma ajuda?** – Does mother need help? The authors (1985) explain that the pronoun **você** is used in Portugal when one addresses someone as an equal or when a superior addresses someone who is inferior in age, social class or social status. In other words, one does not use **você** to indicate intimacy. Older people prefer to be addressed as **o senhor or a senhora**; Children are addressed by **tu**.

## THE USE OF “VOCÊ” IN PORTUGAL

If “você” does not indicate intimacy in Portugal, as it does in Brazil, when is it used? And how? In order to find some examples of its use, and the most common forms of address in this country, one can refer to dialogues in a modern novel.

The Nobel winning novel by Saramago (2000), **A caverna** (The cavern) contains numerous examples of contemporary forms of address. For example, the character Marta, does not address her father as **tu** or **o senhor** but prefers to address him as **o pai** (father) while using the third person singular form of the verb. For example, the daughter says “**Não se zangue, pai, estamos só a conversar, como queria o pai que achasse mal uma coisa tão simples como dar um cântaro?**” (Don’t get irritated, father, we are only conversing. How could father find difficulty in something so simple as giving a water pitcher?) But, her father, Cipriano (the protagonist of the novel), always addressed her as **tu**. He is a potter, trying to sell his ceramic pottery in the commercial Center. Frustrated about the poor outcome of his trials, he said to his daughter “**Tu e Marçal não terão esse problema**” (You and Marçal will not have that problem). The couple, Marta and Marçal, addresses each other as **tu**. Marta, once says to her husband “**Tua mulher não te conheces**” (Your wife does not know you).” And, Marçal responds: “**Não é verdade. Tu conheces-me. Ninguém me conhece melhor do que tu.**” (It is not true. You know me. No one knows me better than you do). When Cipriano goes to town to sell his ceramic pottery, he addresses the Sales Manager as **o senhor**. When talking to Isadora Estudiosa, a lady, widow as he is, he addresses her by **a senhora**, no matter how deep his feelings are for her. There are different characters in this novel; they share multiple relationships of many kinds, as parents, neighbors, functionaries, friends, and even acquaintances. But there is not even one example of the use of the pronoun **voçê** in the novel by Saramago.

Where is it possible to find documentation that proves how the pronoun **voçê** is used in Portugal? If the use of **tu**, **o senhor**, **a senhora** and many other forms of addressing another by the third person is indicative of social distance, closeness, respect and even resentment, then how does one account for the use of **voçê**? What practical example one can have? Who uses this form of address and under what conditions?

The website <http://ciberduvidas.sapo.br>, was created by Portuguese linguists and it is dedicated to clarifying issues relating to the Portuguese language. One may readily notice that among the questions concerning the use of the word **voçê**, even the speakers of Portuguese in Portugal are not sure about how it is used as a pronoun, even though they should. How does one account for this?

Brequez (1998) argued that nowadays because of the Brazilian soap operas displayed on the Portuguese Prime Time television, the Portuguese have adopted behaviors, manners of thinking and acting that were only known in the South America. Because of the soap operas and Brazilian songs, the Continental Portuguese speakers are familiar with the forms of address used in Brazil and they have come to accept them and even use them.

In the aforementioned website, it is explained that one does not substitute **vós** for **voçê**, being that **vós** is indicative of more than one person. Furthermore, the **vós** that is associated with the term of address in the third person is not used at the same time with the plural form of **vós**, a term of address that is rather limited to Portugal. They explain that **voçê** should be used only to address people of the same age, someone with whom one shares self-disclosure. One should not address elders by **tu**: parents and grand parents should be addressed as **o senhor** or **a senhora**.

In spite of the rule of addressing others, often these relationships are not clear. When should **tu** be used in place of **você** or **você** in place of **o senhor**? Even without taking into account the plural forms of **vocês**, **os senhores** and **as senhoras**, there still remains a problem. As noted earlier, the strategy is often to merely omit the subject pronoun and use the third person singular form of the verb. This ambiguity allows the other person to interpret the correct form of address, substituting the form that should be used.

In order to illustrate the forms of address used by Brazilian and Continental Portuguese speakers, especially the occurrence of **você** it would be interesting to compare the Brazilian and the Portuguese translations from the famous French comic book “Astérix”, written by the French duo of Goscinny and Uderzo. Comic books always tend to mirror the common spoken language into the written language. So, a comic book that tells the same story in both dialects of Portuguese, the Continental and the Brazilian one, would be a useful example to consider the actual use of forms of address in both countries.

The following examples were taken from the book “Asterix and Cleopatra”.

### THE RELATIONSHIP OF A SUPERIOR ADDRESSING AN INFERIOR

| Cesar, the Roman emperor, addresses one of his servants, after hearing his report about the construction of Cleopatra’s palace. |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   | Brazilian Version  | Portuguese Version   |
| Inferior says (Ginfis)  | <b>Ó César, vi coisas prodigiosas no local da construção. Os operários bebem uma poção mágica que lhes dá uma força enorme e desse modo conseguem levantar as cargas mais pesadas. Eu tomei essa poção!</b>  | <b>Ó César! Vi coisas prodigiosas naquela obra! Os operários bebem uma poção mágica que lhes dá uma força enorme e permite-lhes levantar cargas muito pesadas. Eu bebi dessa poção!</b>            |
| Cesar speaks  | <b>Estou achando, Ginfis, que não foi exatamente uma poção o que <i>você</i> andou bebendo..</b>   | <b>Pergunto-me se não <i>terás</i> bebido outra coisa em vez da poção, Ginfis...</b>   |
| Translations  | Oh, Cesar, I saw prodigious things at the construction site. The workers drink a magical potion that gives them huge strength, this way, they are able to lift the heaviest loads. I have drunk this potion. | Oh, Cesar, I saw prodigious things at that construction. The workers drink a magical potion that gives them huge strength and allows them to lift very heavy loads. I have drunk from this potion. |
|   | I think, Ginfis, that it was not exactly a potion that you have been drinking.   | I wonder if you might have drunk something else than the potion, Ginfis.   |
| Commentary  | The Emperor addresses his inferior by the use of the form “ <i>você</i> ”.   | The Emperor addresses his inferior by the use of the form “ <i>tu</i> ”, as noted in the verbal form “ <i>terás</i> ”. ( <i>tu</i> <i>terás</i> )  |

Caesar, the Roman emperor, addresses his servant by **você** in the Brazilian version and by **tu** in the Portuguese version. One would conclude from this that the pronouns **tu** and **você** are equivalent in addressing people who are socially inferior.

The same type of example is found in the following frame:

| Timetamon (Amonbófis in the Portuguese version) gives an order to his servant, Perbis |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   | Brazilian Version  | Portuguese Version   |
| Timetamon speaks  | <b>Perbis!</b>   | <b>Perbis!</b>   |
| Inferior answers  | <b>Timetamon, meu patrão?</b>  | <b>Amonbófis, meu senhor?</b>  |
| Timetamon replys  | <b>Sei que Numeróbis espera pedras que vão chegar do sul, pelo Nilo. Temos que evitar que elas cheguem. Tome esse ouro e trate de dar um jeito nisso!</b>                  | <b>Sei que Numérobis está à espera de pedras que vêm do sul, pelo Nilo. Essas pedras não devem chegar à obra... Toma lá ouro para tratares do assunto!</b>                                 |
| Translation.  | Perbis!  | Perbis!  |
|   | Timetamon, my patron.  | Amonbófis, my Lord.  |
|   | I know that Numeróbis is waiting for the boulders that are coming from the south by way of the Nile. We have to prevent their arrival. Take this gold and fix the problem! | I know that Numerobis is waiting for the boulders that are coming from the south by way of the Nile. These boulders should not arrive to the site... Take this gold to deal with the task. |
| Commentary  | The imperative form of the verb “tomar”, as in “tome” indicates the third person singular, corresponding to the use of <b>você</b> .                                       | The imperative form of the verb “tomar”, as in “toma” indicates the second person singular, corresponding to the use of <b>tu</b> .  |

What if the superior addresses more than one inferior at once? Let us consider the following example:

| Cleopatra is addressing her inferiors, the visitors Obelix and Asterix |   |   |
|--|---|---|
|  | Brazilian Version   | Portuguese Version  |
| Cleopatra speaks   | <b>Ah, Gaulenses! Vocês tentaram me envenenar com este bolo. Mas pagarão com a vida!</b>            | <b>Ah, Gaulenses! Vocês tentaram me envenenar com este bolo. Vão pagá-lo com a vida!</b>                              |
| Inferiors respond  | <b>Bolo? Que bolo?</b>  | <b>Bolo? Que bolo?</b>  |
| Translation  | Ah, people of Gaul! You tried to poison me with this cake. You will pay with your life!             | Ah, people of Gaul. You tried to poison me with this cake. You will pay for it with your life.                        |
|  | Cake? What cake?  | Cake? What cake?  |
| Commentary   | Cleopatra uses the plural form of “você”, <b>vocês</b> , to address her inferiors at the same time. | Cleopatra uses the plural form of “você”, <b>vocês</b> , and not the plural of “tu” (“vós”) to address her inferiors. |

From the example above, one could conclude that when a superior addresses his or her inferiors at the same time, the preferred form is **vocês**, both in Brazil and in Portugal. The form **vós** is not commonly used, as the second person plural.

## THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE INFERIOR ADDRESSING A SUPERIOR

The use of the pronoun **você** in addressing a superior may be considered offensive. If one wishes to convey respect to a person of higher social status, this pronoun should be avoided. This type of example does not occur in this story. However, there are two examples of the use of pronouns, one in the third person singular and the other, in the plural that merits comment.

| The Queen Cleopatra is addressing Asterix |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   | Brazilian Version  | Portuguese Version  |
| Cleopatra speaks                          | <b>Dezejavas ver-me, ó gaulês?</b>   | <b>Pediste para me ver, ó gaulês?</b>   |
| Inferior answer                           | <b>Sim, ó Cleopatra. Meu cãozinho lhe traz uma mensagem.</b>   | <b>Sim, ó Cleopatra. O meu cãozinho tem uma mensagem para vós.</b>  |
| Translation                               | Did you want to see me Gaul?   | Did you request to see me Gaul?   |
|   | Yes, Oh Cleopatra. My puppy dog brings you a message   | Yes, Oh Cleopatra. My puppy dog has a message for Thee.   |
| Commentary                                | Cleopatra uses <b>tu</b> to address her inferior. She is the only one who uses <b>tu</b> in the Brazilian translation. Asterix uses the pronoun “ <b>lhe</b> ”, when addressing the queen. | Cleopatra uses <b>tu</b> , as any other character of the story. Asterix uses the archaic form <b>vós</b> when addressing the Queen. |

As the pronoun **tu** is not the norm in Brazil, one should consider the choice of translations for this pronoun. It serves to differentiate the Queen’s form of address from the other characters in the story. She is the only one who uses **tu** in the Brazilian text and she does so in addressing her inferiors. Asterix stresses a relation of respect and/or distance when he uses the pronoun **lhe**, when addressing the Queen, because the verb is in the third person singular. This pronoun does not identify her with an exalted form of address, as one has with the form **vós** in the Portuguese version. It refers to her as a third person, but it is certain that it does not refer to the form **você**, which would concur with the use of **te** in colloquial Brazilian Portuguese. One did not use **vós** in the Brazilian version because that form is not used in Brazil whatever social level may be involved. In the Portuguese text, Asterix addresses her by **vós**, an archaic form of the second person plural that is hardly used, but still remains in use in various regions of Portugal as a form of respect.

| The Queen’s servant addressing the Queen’s guests, Asterix and Obelix |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|   | Brazilian Version  | Portuguese Version  |
| Queen’s servant   | <b>Ei, vocês, muito obrigado! Esse emprego de provador era um provação para mim. Eu levava uma vida podre.</b> | <b>Quero agradecer-lhes! A profissão já me desgostava ... envenava-me vida.</b>             |
| Translation   | Hey, you! Thanks so much! This job of taster was a big trial for me. I had a rotten life.                      | I wish to thank you. The profession of taster was upsetting me... it was poisoning my life. |
| Commentary  | The pronoun <b>vocês</b> is explicit in the text.  | Instead of <b>vocês</b> , the pronoun <b>lhes</b> indicates a certain distance.             |

The pronoun **vocês** when used in the plural by a servant of the Queen has been reserved for the heroes of the history in Brazilian Portuguese but it is an odd use for speakers of Continental Portuguese in the same situation. It is possible in Brazil for inferiors to use **vocês** in addressing superiors in the plural form when placed in situations of informality. The Portuguese version of the comic strip avoids this use of **vocês** as it could signal familiarity and so the decision was made on choosing the pronoun **lhes**, that indicates the use of any form of address that takes the verb to the third person plural.

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EQUALS

| Asterix is talking to his friend Obelix, who was hiding his puppy dog in a bag. |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|   | Brazilian Version   | Portuguese Version  |
| Obelix  | <b>Fui eu que latí. Já que não tenho o direito de falar, resolvi latir.</b>       | <b>Fui eu que ladrou! Já que não tenho o direito de falar, ladro!</b>           |
| Asterix   | <b>Está bem, seu teimoso, você ganhou. Pode deixar ele sair de saco!</b>          | <b>Vá meu grande teimoso ganhaste deixa-o sair do saco.</b>                     |
| Translation   | It was I who barked. Now that I do not have the right to speak, I decided to bark | I was the one who barked. Since I do not have the right to speak, I bark.       |
|   | It is okay. Your obstinate one. You won. Let him go out of the bag.               | Go my big obstinate one. You won. Let him go out of the bag.                    |
| Commentary  | Explicit use of <b>você</b> in Brazilian Portuguese                               | Use of <b>tu</b> in Portugal, as one can see by the verb form <b>ganhaste</b> . |

Obelix and Asterix are friends who maintain a relationship of equality among themselves, addressing each other by **você** in Brazil and by **tu** in Portugal.

| Two peers in a ship wreck |  |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|
|                           | Brazilian Version  | Portuguese Version   |
| First Speaker             | <b>Você tinha razão agora podemos mostrar com quantos paus se faz uma canoa.</b> | <b>E então? Dizias que nós íamos desferrar e estamos desferrados.</b>  |
| Second person             | <b>Mais um pio e eu faço você engolir essa perna de pau!!!</b>                   | <b>Mais uma palavra e faço-te comer a perna de pau!!</b>   |
| Translation               | You were right. Now we are able to show how much wood is needed to make a canoe. | And then? You said that we were taking revenge and we were revenged.   |
|                           | Another chirp and I will make you swallow this wooden leg.                       | One more word and I will make you eat this wooden leg.   |
| Commentary                | Both address each other by <b>você</b> in the Brazilian translation.             | Both address each other by <b>tu</b> in the Portuguese translation, as one can see by the verb form ( <b>dizias</b> ) and the pronoun ( <b>te</b> ). |

The characters in the comic strip (supra) share the same kind of relationship and for this reason they address each other by **você** and **tu** respectively in Brazil and Portugal. The fact that the one of them is annoyed with his friend highlights even more the use of pronouns that reveal the simplicity and the objectivity of this communicative situation.

| Timetamon's servant captures Obelix and Asterix |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   | Brazilian Version  | Portuguese Version   |
| Distant Voice                                   | <b>Nunca sairão daí, estrangeiros”!<br/>Este túmulo será o seu túmulo!</b>   | <b>Nunca mais sairão daí, estrangeiros!<br/>Este túmulo será o vosso túmulo!</b>   |
| Translation                                     | You will never leave from here, strangers! This tomb will be your tomb.  | Never more you will leave from here, strangers! This tomb will be thy tomb.  |
| Commentary                                      | The form of address <b>vocês</b> is implicit by the verbal form <b>sairão</b> . The possessive <b>seu</b> agrees with the subject pronoun <b>vocês</b> . | The form of address <b>vocês</b> is implicit by the verbal form <b>sairão</b> . The possessive <b>vosso</b> is in general used in agreement with the subject <b>vocês</b> in Portugal. |

In the comic strips, in which the servant of Timetamon takes the Gauls into a pyramid, one observes the use of the pronoun subject, **vocês**, which is hidden in the Brazilian and Portuguese versions, but which can be identified by the use of the third person form of the verb **sair**. The Portuguese text carries the possessive **vosso**, a form of agreement that is not grammatically correct, but is customary in the language of Portugal. The servant does not find himself in an inferior position with respect to the Gauls. In a situation of power, those who were captured address themselves as equals.

It is possible to find the plural form **vocês**, both in Brazilian and in Continental Portuguese, in the relation of equals or superior to inferior, but there could be no one that would be able to address his friend, or his inferior by **você**, singular form, in Continental Portuguese translations. The only form of **você** that is found in the Portuguese version was mentioned in a commercial advertising, as selected below:

|             | Portuguese Version   |
|-------------|--|
| Older man   | <b>E como é que se é escriba?</b>  |
| Younger man | <b>Aprendi por correspondência .. uma escola muito boa.... cuja publicidade diz .. se você sabe desenhar, você sabe escrever</b> |
| Translation | And how does someone become a scribe?  |
|             | I learned it through a course by mail. A very good school... whose publicity says that if you can draw, you can write.           |

The use of the pronoun **você** in Portuguese advertisements is well known. One does not often use the second person singular form **tu** in order to sell products through print, unless the product is strictly directed to the youth, adolescents or children. The third person singular along with the pronoun **você**, either explicit or implied, is a form of address that is most used to address others in the general public. Perhaps, the form **você** is, in essence, fitting to whoever reads it. The use of **tu** could certainly be over the threshold of intimacy. **Você** is

most generic. In Brazil, one always uses and only uses **você** as an expression of print culture, in advertisements. The same thing occurs in Portugal.

In ads as “**A vida muda de um dia para o outro. Não deixe para o outro dia o seu seguro de vida**” (Life changes from one day to the other. Do not leave your security for another day) or “**Loteria do fim do ano. Compre já a sua sorte**” (the final lottery this year. Buy your last lucky chance) can be found in Portuguese and in Brazilian magazines. The verb is an imperative, the pronoun **você** is the one implicit. However, note that in Portuguese ads, **você** is unnecessarily omitted when the verb is in another tense or aspect. That is what happens in advertisements as “**\_\_\_vai perder a sua aula de ginástica por causa de uma constipação?**” (Are you going to miss your gym class because of constipation?), or “**Se \_\_\_ procura informação, vá às Página Amarelas. \_\_\_Só tem a ganhar. \_\_\_Vai encontrar tudo o que procura e muitos prêmios**” (If you need information, go to the Yellow Pages. You will only have advantages. You will find everything that you need and many prizes).

In Brazilian advertisements, the pronoun **você** is before the verb. This is evident from the following examples: “**Você prefere ir de táxi só para não deixar o carro na rua? Seguro auto unibanco.Você despreocupado.**” - Do you prefer to go by taxi because you don’t want to leave your car on the street? Unibanco car insurance. You without a worry. Or: “**Conte para seu amigo que você viu o site dele na TV.**” - Tell your friend that you saw his website on the television. Or even: **Você não precisa ser bonito assim para acessar nosso site**” - You don’t have to be this beautiful in order to access our site.

## CONCLUSION

In spite of the pronoun of address **você** be well known in the spoken language in Portugal, there is a certain fear or avoidance in addressing someone by **você**. This person should not be familiar and should not be a superior in hierarchy or be older than the speaker. In Portugal, this pronoun is used to equalize persons, without showing intimacy. Speakers are able to feel comfortable by its use or will be in a situation of extreme discomfort, according to his age or social status. It appears to be risky to use this form of address in some circumstances. It is even disappearing from public texts where it could be most explicit, as it is the case of some advertising ads. In Brazil, the use of **você** does not have the same impact. It is largely used in all walks of life, social classes, and professions. When one wants to maintain respect or social distance, he simply uses **o senhor** (for a sir) or **a senhora** (for a lady). So, the problem that a Brazilian or a student of Brazilian Portuguese may have in Portugal is how to “avoid” the use of **você** in certain situations. And a Portuguese or a Continental Portuguese student in Brazil will as well, face this ambiguity: when should one use **você** in Brazil?

A Brazilian will tend to address his Portuguese companions by **você** as that is what he would normally do in Brazil. With this use of forms of address, Portuguese youth will feel themselves possibly distant, as they prefer the use of **tu**. An older person will feel offended by such a term, requesting the respect attributed to **o senhor** and **a senhora**. How does one resolve this question? There are two solutions. The first is to adopt the linguistic and cultural schemas of the new country. The second is to explain that by being a Brazilian, one is accustomed to addressing others as **você**, a term that does not really, in the common use, carry lack of familiarity or, on the other hand, disrespect. It is certain that to avoid frustration in the interactions between the speakers, it is better to select the first option.

The Portuguese who visit Brazil do not have the same sociolinguistic problem. Why? Brazilians are familiar with the fact that **tu** is basically used as **você**. Therefore, they do not find it offensive if the Portuguese prefer to address them by **você** as this is how others around him speak.

Pedagogically, it is up to linguistic professors of Portuguese to address these linguistic and cultural questions to their students, making them aware of the different uses of the forms of address in Portugal and in Brazil.

## REFERENCES

- Breguez, Sebastião Geraldo (1998). “A telenovela brasileira e sua influência na cultura portuguesa – de colonizado a colonizador, Brasil invade Portugal com a mídia eletrônica”. Trabalho apresentado no *Congresso ibero-americano de Ciências da Comunicação*, em novembro de 1998, Porto, Portugal.
- Cunha, Celso et Cintra, Lindley (1985). *Nova gramática do português contemporâneo*. 2a edição, Rio de Janeiro, Nova Fronteira.
- Domingos, Tânia Regina E. (2001) “Para uma história do português no Brasil: uso dos pronomes de tratamento nos personagens do teatro de cordel português do século XVI” in *Actas del I Congreso de la Asociación de Lingüística y filología da América Latina*. Volumen 1B.
- Faracco, C. A. (1982) *The imperative sentence in Portuguese: a semantic and historical discussion*. University of Salford. PhD Dissertation.
- Gosciny, R et Uderzo (2002), A. *Asterix e Cleópatra*. Tradução de Paulo Madeira Rodrigues, São Paulo, Record.
- Gosciny, R et Uderzo, A. (2002). *Astérix e Cleópatra*. Meribérica/Liber Editores, Lisboa.
- Ilari, R et alii (1996) “Os pronomes pessoais do português falado: roteiro para análise”. In: Castilho, A e Basílio, M. (Orgs.) *Gramática do Português Falado. Volume IV: estudos descritivos*. Campinas, Unicamp/Fapesp, pp 79-166.
- Nogueira, Danilo (2000) “what is the word for “you” in portuguese?” In: <http://accurapid.com/journa:/13port.htm>
- Ramos, Myriam P. B. (2002) “formas de tratamento no sul do brasil: coocorrência de tu e você em florianópolis”. Universidade federal de santa catarina, mimeo.
- Russo, Ricardo (2001) “os escravos e a caixa econômica federal” in: <http://www.russo.pro.br>
- Saramago, JOSÉ. (2000) *a caverna*. Lisboa, caminho.
- Scollon, R. & Scollon S. (1996) *Intercultural Communication* blackwell, oxford.
- Soto, Ucy (1997) “De “Vossa Mercê” a “você”: um percurso de mudanças no tratamento da 2a. pessoa” In *Atas do I Congresso Nacional da Abralin, edição 21, junho de 1997*.
- Tannen, Deborah (1990) *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. New York, William Morrow
- Tannen, Deborah (1986) *Conversational Style: Analyzing Talk among Friends*. Norwood, NJ.
- Teysier, Paul (2001). *História da língua portuguesa*. Martins Fontes, São Paulo.