

Grammaticalization of the structure *ir* + *estar* + verb in the present participle in cultured Brazilian Portuguese.

Laura da Cunha de Assis Lopes (Universidade de São Paulo)

The aim of this study is to identify the process of grammaticalization of the verb structure formed by the verbs *ir* + **estar** (in the infinitive) + verb in the present participle (“gerúndio”), in cultured Brazilian Portuguese. This linguistic construction is commonly known as “gerundismo”, the use of which is subject to a certain degree of socio-linguistic stigmatization, despite being used by cultured speakers of Brazilian Portuguese. The indiscriminate use of the present participle, or “gerúndio”, is widely criticised, and there are controversies as to its origin. The communications media in Brazil have widely spread the idea that this type of construction comes from a mistranslation from English to Portuguese. However, there seems to be evidence that this structure comes from grammaticalization processes in force in Brazilian Portuguese, and not constituted under the influence of English. This needs to be studied, since there are no conclusive studies on this theme. There are at least two openings for a verticalized investigation of the theme. The first is the diachronic investigation which privileges real-time change by recovering recurrent contexts in historical documentation; the second is a detailed descriptive study of the structure as it is used by speakers in real situations. We believe that the best strategy would be first of all to document the present usage, for to use a diachronic approach without a previous description of the synchrony would be the same as to ignore the existence of real and continuous facts in the surrounding reality.

Moreover, diachrony requires greater scientific experience to deal with the language in other synchronies, which we will certainly gain if we start with a synchronic incursion.

Bearing in mind that the last to change are normally the so-called cultured ways of speaking, this study limits the proposed analysis to this dialect. For this, we will use a minimal sample of the Research Group “Grammatical Change”, that is: 10 interviews with cultured speakers from the city of São Paulo, with a total of 5 hours of interviews and five more samples of formal elocutions, recorded in public debates, lectures and classes. After identifying all the occurrences of structures *estar* + present participle, we will identify cases in which the situation of use required placing the verb *ir* before it, followed or not by locative information. From this data, we will carry out an exercise of inference of criteria which could be associated with these structures. In the third stage, we will identify a sample in which these uses are more recurrent in order to establish a counterpoint with the cases identified in the sample of cultured Portuguese. As a way of controlling and countersigning the stigmatization borne by the structures under analysis, we will then carry out a test with two distinct groups of informants: teachers of state schools at fundamental and high school level and non-teacher speakers of the Portuguese language.

The results of the preliminary studies suggest that there are germinal forms of this structure in Brazilian Portuguese and also that other processes of grammaticalization in force in the language have influenced the formation of this verbal structure .