

III - OUTROS TEMAS

User Variation in Lexical Transfers from English to European Portuguese

I Introduction

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In terms of a theoretical background to this micro-research, it falls under the auspices of "code-switching" to a certain extent in that there is one type of this phenomenon: "... which may be called insertional. In this type of switching, a content word (noun, verb, rarely an adjective) is inserted into a surrounding passage in the other language. ... Note that the insertion may be morphosyntactically fully integrated; or it may carry over grammatical elements into the receiving language" (AUER 1998: 5) But it is also possible to put this paper in another context: "However, there are relatively few data on which it (an equivalence constraint) has been independently tested, since most of the voluminous literature on code-switching, especially that on insertional switching, is based on data which, we would claim, represent lexical borrowing." (SANKOFF 1998: 17) Further potential perspectives could include the distinction between insertional switching and metaphorical switching, a term first coined by Blom and Gumperz (1972) to draw attention to the pragmatics of insertion in a study in Norway. However, rather than be drawn into the controversy of denominating the phenomenon in question, emphasis will be placed on a descriptive analysis of the current state of affairs related to the English language in contact with European Portuguese, a language variety which was not covered by recent works such as "English in Europe" edited by Gortlach (2002). This approach in this study has been guided by the observation that: "Many loanwords have long histories in the recipient language, are used by monolinguals (often with no consciousness of their foreign etymology), are widespread and are accepted by monolingual dictionaries and other linguistic arbiters." (SANKOFF 1998: 18). The discussion which follows aims to explore how accessible or available certain English origin items have become within a Portuguese macro-structure. The focus is not so much on the linguistic phenomenon of switching/borrowing but rather on differences in semantic range and the sociolinguistic aspect of user variation.

1.1 Following up on the monolingual dictionaries referred to above, the recent publication of *O Dicionário da Língua Portuguesa Contemporânea* (2000) has provided ample room for debate among specialists. This lexicographical vision of Portuguese today makes reference to approximately 4,000 foreign words ("estrangeirismos") which were collated from newspaper articles, of which about 70% are said to have their origin in the English language. One thousand of these items gained entry into the dictionary: 25% of these in their original form while the rest were "Portugueseified" to a greater or lesser extent.

With reference to the criteria used for this selection process: 1,000 out of the 4,000 were selected on the basis of a frequency count conducted in a local corpus: "Corpus de Referência de Português Contemporâneo". Some items remain unchanged (workshop, snack-bar, marketing) when they were adjudged to be widely accepted. Some spelling changes were introduced (lobby/lóbi, whisky/uísque) when no equivalent was available. Some inconsistencies remain unresolved by the criteria in widely used items (fax/faxe, stress/stesse) which are also modified while very similar items remain unchanged (hobby compared to lobby/lobi).

1.2 Taking up the other linguistic arbiters referred to above, newspaper editors and journalists may provide an example. A local exclusively sports newspaper contained the short article cited below. The text is a quotation from a Portuguese golf player, who cannot be considered a valid "linguistic arbiter", but nevertheless, the article was editorially approved for inclusion in the wider context of a publication whose Portuguese readership is primarily interested in football.

Campeonato da Europa Individual Amador.
Tiago Cruz: Muito Contente

"Fiquei muito contente com o resultado, porque depois de um longo período de bons desempenhos comecei a jogar mal de repente. No início do estágio de preparação para este torneio, estava abaixo do meu rendimento e isso deixou-me um pouco descrente. Hoje, os greens não estavam em boas condições e, como fui dos últimos a jogar, não tive grandes facilidades. Fiz um duplo bogey no buraco 5, porque meti, com um ferro um, a bola no rough da direita, depois,

com um ferro oito, coloquei a bola no bunker, terminando com um "chip" e dois "putts". Julgo que o meu score deve-se essencialmente aos bons "chips" e "putts". Nos últimos três buracos, que para mim foram o 7, 8 e 9 do campo, ainda tive hipóteses para "birdie", mas a bola não queria entrar."

O Jogo, 22.08.2002, p.36

[Author's gloss: "I was very happy with the result, because after a long period of good efforts I had started to play badly all of a sudden. At the beginning of the build-up preparations for this tournament, I was underperforming and this left me lacking confidence. Today, the greens weren't in good condition and, as I was one of the last to play, I didn't get any favours. I made a double bogey at hole five, because I put, with a one iron, the ball in the rough on the right, then, with an eight iron, I put the ball in a bunker, I finished with a chip and two putts. I reckon that my score results essentially from good chips and putts. On the last three holes, that for me were seven, eight and nine of the course, I still had chances to make birdies, but the ball didn't want to go in."]

The text contains 12 specific items related to golf: 4 are translated into Portuguese, 3 are given inverted commas and 5 are not graphically highlighted in any way. Here also there seems to be little consistency in the way the items are presented to the reader. For example, both *bogey* and *birdie* are ways to express the number of shots taken per hole but *birdie* is given inverted commas while *bogey* is not. Three of the items which are translated into Portuguese could be said to have associations with other sports which are more fully integrated into the local cultural and linguistic environment and as such perhaps no longer carry such a strong Anglo-Saxon association, but, the same could be said of the item *score*, which is not translated or given inverted commas.

2 **The collection of data.** It is difficult to speculate as to the extent to which English lexical transfers might be present in Portuguese beyond the context of this micro-research: there is virtually no background literature available concerning the Portuguese context. However, it may be rational to suppose that the more contact/use a Portuguese speaker has with English in their daily life then the greater their productivity with lexical insertions will be. In this light, a questionnaire was administered to three different groups asking them to create sentences in Portuguese, following this translated rubric: "Please write

one sentence in Portuguese for each of the five words given below. Each of your sentences should make clear what you understand the meaning and use of the word is in a Portuguese context." The five items under investigation were: feeling, shopping, performance, know how and background. The questionnaire was anonymous and it was made clear that if the respondent could not provide a sentence it was acceptable to leave the item blank. The rubric, translated, was "If any of the words has no meaning for you, it is not necessary to write anything, you may leave a blank space." The three groups were: Group T, secondary school teachers of English attending an in-service language refresher course (10 respondents): this group were all experienced teachers in their mid-30s or 40s; Group S, first year students of English at the Faculty of Letters in Porto (13 respondents): these were all young people in their teens at the start of their undergraduate careers; and Group V, sales people working for a local Citroen car dealership (7 respondents): these were all males in their late 20s or 30s. The choice of these three groups was motivated by the idea of having one group (Group V) which had no regular contact with or use for English to contrast with a group which has limited contact/use (Group S) in an instructional context and a further group (Group T) which has very frequent contact/use. The time frame for answering the questionnaire was determined by the dynamics of the individual groups.

An analysis of the results obtained from the questionnaire was carried out working within the semantic framework provided by the dictionary entries for the items: in Portuguese, from *O Dicionário da Língua Portuguesa Contemporânea* (2000) (henceforth DLPC) and in English, from *The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* (2000) (henceforth OALD).

3 A general overview of the results obtained.

In terms of answers NOT provided: blanks

A total of 20 blanks out of 150 potential sentences:
5 by Group V (salesmen) 15 by Group S (students) 0 by Group T (teachers)

Group V= 3 for "background", 2 for "know how"

Group S= 5 "background", 8 "know how", 1 "performance"

"Background" and "know how" were left blank more often than the other items implying that they are less available when writing in Portuguese. Alternatively, the items may have presented a degree of semantic or conceptual complexity which discouraged respondents from providing example sentences.

In term of contexts produced: word count

All groups:

Feeling :	total word count: 343
Shopping	308
Performance	303
Know how	297
Background	259

In terms of contexts produced: by group

Group S (13 students)	477 words = 36.7 per respondent
Group V (7 salesmen)	344 words = 49.1 per respondent
Group T (10 teachers)	689 words = 68.9 per respondent

Sentence length (established by word count) could be said to provide an indication of being "at ease" with the process with integrating English lexical items. This sense of being "at ease" could also be extended to include the notion of creativity.

However, a note of caution needs to be introduced as it is possible to argue that a smaller number of words could indicate greater integration since the respondents do not have to use a lot of words to produce explicit, feasible contexts and that a greater number of words may suggest a greater effort and therefore less integration. Here, perhaps, a survey of attitudes or opinions, regarding the production process, conducted with the respondents might have revealed more information.

3.1 Detailed discussion of the data.

If each item is considered individually it is possible to detect a sort of hierarchy of integration and highlight significant contrasts in semantic range.

3.1.1 the item "feeling"

Feeling (DPLC)

1.percepção
(*entry refers to mental impression through the senses or intuition*)

Feeling (OALD)

- 1.something that you feel/sense
- 2.an idea or belief
- 3.an attitude or opinion
- 4.an emotion
- 5.strong emotion
- 6.ability to understand/be sensitive
- 7.sympathy/love for somebody/something
- 8.physically feel
- 9.atmosphere

All respondents produced a sentence (30 sentences). Twenty-eight of the sentences were concerned with a prediction or hunch about the future outcome of an event. This conforms very much with the second option provided at "percepção" to do with intuition in the DPLC. V.4 produced a sentence focussed on the idea of a physical sensation (*O C2 transmite todo o feeling essencial num carro desportivo./The Citroen C2 transmits all the essential feeling in a sports car*) and V.6 produced a sentence concerned with an opinion about a client (*O meu feeling relativo a este cliente é que o mesmo não tem possibilidade de pagar esta mensalidade/My feeling about this customer is that he doesn't have a chance of paying this monthly installment*). As such, there seems to be a close fit of Portuguese with main English meaning but there are fewer possibilities available than in the range of meanings available to English: there is a very delimited notion of the meaning in Portuguese, which is exploited successfully by most users.

3.1.2 the item "shopping"

Shopping (DLPC)

1.centro comercial
(*as in a shopping mall or large grouping together of stores*)

Shopping (OALD)

- 1.the activity of purchasing goods
- 2.the goods you have bought

All respondents produced a sentence (30 sentences). Twenty-eight of the sentences were concerned with a place to buy things or see films or eat. V.5 produced a sentence with the sense of

investigating (author uncertain of interpretation/translation) a rival firm (*Este mês vou fazer shopping junto da minha concorrência/This month I'm going to do shopping next to my rival*) and V.7 produced a sentence with the sense of the activity of buying goods (*Amanhã vou fazer shopping/Tomorrow I'm going to do some shopping*). The Portuguese users displayed a unified range of meaning BUT one denoting a place NOT an activity. This is an indication of an operational, non-foreign quality of this item, given that even Group T made no reference back to the donor language meaning. Here then is perhaps an example of full integration following conversion, both in terms of form (truncated) and meaning. This uniformity of sentences produced perhaps corresponds to the magnetic role of the item in the everyday life of the respondents. The multi-purpose nature of modern shopping centres is evident in the diversity of activities associated with the location by Portuguese users.

3.1.3 the item "performance"

Performance (DLPC)

1. resultado de uma actividade
= desempenho, realização
(*associated particularly with sports events and cars*)
2. acto grandioso/digno
= feito, proeza
3. actos de fala em linguística

Performance (OALD)

1. of a play, concert, entertainment
2. the way 1. is performed
3. how well something is done/works
4. an action
5. the effort or trouble involved in an action

All respondents produced a sentence except one (S.10). In V.Group, only two different contexts were offered: to accomplish an aim/objective (3/7) and referring to a car's capacity to work well (4/7). In S.Group, there was more variety apparent: a car's capacity to work well (4/13), sports (4/13), in a meeting/at work (1/13), in linguistics (1/13), or not clearly defined (2/13) or left blank (1/13). In T.Group, much the same pattern emerged although with less uncertainty: a car's capacity to work well (1/10), in sports (3/10), in the arts (4/10) or in a meeting/at school (2/10) In Portuguese there is a well-established sense of meaning referring to cars, sports and the arts. There is also some form of residual meaning associated with an individual ability to perform at work, school, etc. No sentences were produced referring the second Portuguese possibility associated with grandness of achievement. There appears to be not a great deal of difference in range of meaning exploited compared to English.

3.1.4 the item "know how"

Know how (DLPC)
 1. saber-fazer
 (the ability to achieve practical results
 or to execute intellectual/artistic
 activities or an accumulation of
 knowledge)

Know how (OALD)
 1. the knowledge of how to do
 something and the experience
 in doing it.

Twenty sentences were provided as were 10 blanks. This 33% zero production was restricted to Group V (2) and Group S (8), the teachers were all able to produce a sentence. The item seems to have its strongest association with a general synonym of acquired knowledge: the third DLPC possibility: for Group V = 3/4 (+ 2 blanks), for Group S = 4/5 (+ 8 blanks) and for Group T = 8/10. In addition, V.3 produced a sentence with the idea of marketplace image or product development (author uncertain of interpretation/translation) (*O know how do produto Citroen podia ser melhor/The know how of Citroen products could be better*) and V.6 provided an idea of facilities at the workplace (author uncertain of interpretation/translation) (*O know how do meu local de trabalho é muito pequeno/The know ay my place of work is very small*). These two Group V respondents seem to have a specific or individual (inappropriate?) idea of the denotation. The high proportion of blanks in Group S perhaps indicates that the item has stronger associations with a world outside their experience, perhaps the world of work. Otherwise, there was a generally unified delimitation of meaning but not making specific reference to the experience or practice of the knowledge, which is explicit in the English entry, with the exception of T.7 (*Apesar do curso superior adequado, o candidato ao emprego não provou ter o "know how" necessário/Despite having a relevant further education qualification, the candidate for the vacancy proved not to have the necessary know how.*) and T.8 (*Aquele rapaz pode não ter muitos conhecimentos técnicos sobre a sua profissão mas tem um know how nesta área./That boy might not have much technical knowledge about his profession but he has know how in the area*).

3.1.5 the item "background"

Background (DLPC)	Background (OALD)
1.pano de fundo (<i>in the theatre or in photography or for an evolving situation</i>)	1.family/education
2.formação de base (<i>intellectual or moral education</i>)	2.explanatory circumstances or events
	3.of a picture/photo
	4.less important position
	5.colour under something

Of 30 sentences possible, 9 blanks were provided. These were restricted to Group V (3) and Group S (6), the teachers were all able to produce a sentence. However, once again, Group V showed greater diversity of response: 4 different meanings offered: V.1 = sense of research/effort, V.4 = idea of support/foundations, as well as 2 non-corresponding or perhaps inappropriate sentences from V.6 and V.7 whose meaning is not discernable. These results imply difficulty in exploiting the item: almost 50% of Group S was unable to produce a sentence. Otherwise the sentences provided correspond largely to the Portuguese dictionary definition: specifying educational (in its broadest cultural sense) and/or personal background: 4 out of 7 who answered from Group S, 7 out of 10 who answered from Group T or with a more general idea of foundations/basis: 3 out of 7 who answered from Group S and 3 out of 10 who answered from Group T.

4 Conclusion. *It seems clear that within the context of this micro-research a continuum of availability for these items exists for these users of Portuguese.*

4.1 By item

Feeling: The item is readily available but with a severely limited denotation associated with making predictions or having a hunch about a future outcome. Far from the range available to speakers of English.

Shopping: The item is easily available to Portuguese speakers with its meaning clearly established as the place where goods and entertainment services may be purchased. No operational awareness of the item being a truncated derivation is displayed. Distinctly different from the English emphasis on the activity.

Performance: The item is available but largely limited to the domains of sports and the arts. The results may well be skewed by Group V being car salesmen and therefore more likely to produce car related sentences.

Know how: This is a more difficult item. Group V may here have produced a greater range of responses compared to other items because of the technical associations of the item which relates to the product they sell. This factor may have encouraged this group to make more of an effort to respond and hence confirm what they expected they themselves should know. Portuguese seems to lack the added connotation of knowledge which has been put into practice.

Background: This is the most problematic item. Where available the item corresponds largely to the Portuguese dictionary definition but a good deal of confusion/uncertainty as to making use of the item in an appropriate context.

4.2 By group

Group T: These are professional users of the English language. They provided more complex context sentences (motivated by more personal linkage to the questionnaire?) 100% responses, providing a wider range of contexts within Portuguese parameters. This may indicate that a social sector exists which "leads the way" by dint of their special knowledge and other sectors may take up the process at a later date.

Group S: These with 7/8 years of English. They were able to produce at the more accommodated end of the scale but very weak at the more obscure end. Narrow range of meaning applied in sentences provided. Perhaps the group which was least likely to be at ease with "mixing" the two language resources, having just emerged from a language teaching context which insists on a clear-cut separation of L1 and L2.

Group V: Similar pattern to Group S in terms of "availability" but with perhaps added input from the work specific associations able to be called upon. More likely to have an ill-defined conception (lost somewhere between Portuguese and English?) leading to responses which conform less to the range of meaning made explicit by the DLPC and/or the other groups. They may have been more concerned to "finish" the questionnaire than Group S, for example.

Here no reference has been made to differences in users' speech, but it seems clear that despite the apparent orthographic similarities between the lexical items in English and Portuguese there is considerable divergence in the way the items are used. This being the case, it seems inappropriate to label the items as "English loan words" since some are clearly no longer distinctively English and have become separated from their etymological origin to the extent

that the broader term "neologism" might be considered less loaded and not imply any exclusion from the possibility of integration. Reference can be made here also to other European contexts: German: the often quoted example of the item "handy" which means a mobile phone or Italian where "spot" is used as an equivalent of advert or more generally, the use of "smoking" to mean dinner jacket. This position may be supported by the lack of equivalence in terms of cultural associations: the item as used in Portuguese may carry a different cultural weight or value from that in English.

Furthermore, it is the cultural and economic supremacy exercised by English language world powers that dictates responses which conform to those cultural and economic frameworks and mindsets. Thus, we may be putting the cart (the language) before the horse (the economy/culture) in any attempt to lay the "blame" for a notional dilution of Portuguese linguistic purity at the feet of the English language. This line of thinking is explored more fully by O'Driscoll (2002) which deals with a similar language contact context in Dutch-speaking Flanders.

5 Closing remarks. The words of a Nobel Prize winning author may add some finer shading to the discussion:

One of my maternal uncles used to visit me at that time. Twice or thrice a week. He was absolutely poor, but he used to take me to a hotel. The word "hotel", as used by Mr Roate, and pronounced ho-tal, was more of a Marathi or Hindi word than an English word, and meant a restaurant, usually a simple sort.

(NAIPAUL 1990: 50)

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