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Modelling linguistic change The past and the present of the future in Brazilian Portuguese

Shana Poplack & Elisabete Malvar
University of Ottawa

Abstract: Examining an apparently abrupt change in the expression of future temporal reference in Brazilian Portuguese, we trace the trajectory of its exponents over five centuries of development. Focusing specifically on the variability inherent in the system, we document the means by which the incoming form gradually expropriates the preferred contexts of the older variants, prior to ousting them from the sector. We thus confirm that the transition period in linguistic change is not abrupt. Rather, change proceeds as a series of small adjustments, as incoming and outgoing variants accommodate each other in the system. As a variant recedes, constraints on its selection do not remain constant, though the distinctions it conveyed may be transferred to another exponent. These findings challenge some widely-held assumptions about the nature of linguistic change.

1. Introduction*

In this paper we revisit a fundamental question first raised by Weinreich et al. (1968:100) in their seminal work on language change: If a language must be structured to function efficiently, what happens to its functions as structure changes? In contrast to accounts which construe change as *abrupt*, and therefore unobservable during its course, we focus on the *process* of replacement, exemplifying with a spectacular change in the expression of future time in Brazilian Portuguese which took over five centuries to achieve completion. In so doing, we shed light on two of the key problems in the study of linguistic change: the ‘transition’ problem, i.e. the means by which a language moves from state to state, and the “embedding” problem, i.e. the effects of this process on the surrounding system of linguistic relations (Weinreich et al. 1968, Labov 1982).¹ Because future temporal reference was variable from its earliest attestations, we

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¹ Both problems obviously include a social dimension, which will not be the focus here.

make use of variationist methodology to trace over time the trajectory of its competing expressions across the functions and contexts constituting this domain. Claims in the prescriptive and descriptive literature about which conditions favored the choice of one variant over another at each stage are operationalized as factors and tested against contemporaneous usage. The diagnostic is the *constraint hierarchy*, construed as the grammar giving rise to variant selection. Independent multivariate analyses of the contribution of these factors in each time period reveal how the labor of expressing future temporal reference is divided. Comparison of significant effects across variants and over time enables us to trace the progress of the change in considerable detail, charting the behavior of variant forms as they accommodate to incoming and outgoing counterparts, and thereby bringing new data to bear on the transition and embedding of linguistic change.

In this paper we first sketch out the facts of future expression in Portuguese (Sections 2 and 3), then describe a method for studying language change capable of accounting for rampant variability over long periods of time (Section 4). In so doing, we develop novel uses of traditional data sources, and an analysis that confronts standard accounts of these phenomena with the facts of actual usage. Section 5 presents the results of these analyses century by century. In Section 6 we offer some conclusions on the nature of the transition and embedding of linguistic change.

1.1 Future temporal reference in Portuguese

The lexico-grammatical apparatus associated with the future is never limited to a single exponent, and nowhere is this more evident than in Portuguese. Most accounts identify four variant expressions: the synthetic future (SF), as in (1), the *haver-* (lit. “have to”) periphrasis (HP), as in (2); the futurate present (P; (3)) and the *ir-* (“go”) periphrasis (IR; (4)). The synthetic future (1) appears in conjugation tables, and is typically identified as the “default” form conveying primary future meaning; the other variants are associated with a wide array of modalities (e.g. certainty, doubt, resolution, necessity, probability) and/or contexts of use (e.g. affirmative sentences, monosyllabic verbs, proximity in the future).

- (1) Senhor, eu o *servirei* (SF) e não quero outro senhor. (Vicente 1526/1975. Ourives:83)²
“Sir, I *will serve* you and I do not wish another master”.
- (2) Pois aonde o *hei de pôr* (HP)? (Silva 1737/1980. Semicúpio:54)
“Well, where *shall I put* it?”
- (3) São nove horas e o ofício de ramos *principia* (P) às dez e meia. (Pena 1853/1972. Ambrósio:12)
“It’s nine o’clock and the Palm procession *begins* at ten-thirty.”

² Codes in parentheses indicate the source of the example: Playwright, year of publication, character and page number in the *Corpus of popular Portuguese plays* (Malvar 2003); speaker, counter number and date of recording in the *Corpus of vernacular Brazilian Portuguese* (ibid.).

- (4) Ano que vem eu *vou tirar* (IR) a Cleide dessa escola e colocar na escola pública. (Vânia/B:30/1992)
 “Next year I’m *going to take* Cleide out of this school and put her in a public school.”

Analysis of a large corpus of 20th-century Brazilian Portuguese (Malvar 2003), however, revealed almost no variation at all. On the contrary, nearly all references to future time were expressed by the *ir*-periphrasis (4). The synthetic future (1) is vanishingly rare, the futurate present (3) at best a minor contender, and the *haver*-periphrasis (2) is virtually non-existent. How can these contradictory accounts be reconciled? Are they due to abrupt linguistic change? The gulf between prescription and usage? Divergence between speech and writing? To answer these questions, we investigate how future temporal reference was expressed at earlier stages of the language.

1.2 A method for studying language change

The empirical study of linguistic change has always represented one of the linguist’s greatest challenges. Though this is sometimes overlooked, a basic requirement is that the outcome be compared with an initial (or at least a prior) stage, but locating the relevant diachronic evidence is no easy matter. Since most putative changes originate in spoken vernaculars, the most appropriate comparison point would logically be a precursor to those vernaculars. Written documents, even the most ‘speech-like’, often turn out to be poor approximations of speech, either because they lag far behind or fail to represent it at all (e.g. van Herk & Poplack 2001).³

Data representing both an “earlier” stage *and* vernacular speech necessarily offer a time depth too shallow to assess the full course of change. Thus most available materials are not pertinent to the goal of tracing variable usage over long periods of time. In this paper we describe the methods we have been experimenting with at the University of Ottawa Sociolinguistics Laboratory to make the best of the “poor data” (Labov 1994) of language history. We show that access to sufficient time depth, coupled with the tools of variation theory, reveal unexpected facts about the transition period in linguistic change.

2. Data

Our confrontation of the present with the past is based on three complementary sources of data, diachronic and synchronic, prescribed and used, spoken and modeled after speech. Assessment of the normative treatment of future temporal reference is based on a corpus of grammars published between the 16th and 21st

³ This problem is exacerbated in colonial situations. In Brazil, for example, only European Portuguese was recognized for literary and official purposes until the early 19th century. As a result, the first bona fide Brazilian plays and grammars (i.e. written by a Brazilian and written, published and/or produced in Brazil) date only from that time.

centuries (Malvar 2003; Poplack & Malvar in press), details of the contemporaneous spoken vernaculars are inferred from analysis of a corpus of popular theatre, and both of these are validated through comparison with data on late 20th-century spoken Brazilian Portuguese. Though none of these data sets in and of itself is ideally suited to address the questions we raised in the introduction to this paper, comparison amongst them validates each as a valuable source of information on language variation and change.

2.1 Diachronic data

2.1.1 Popular theatre

To tap into the spoken Portuguese of earlier centuries, we compiled a corpus of 22 comedies, farces and satires, published between 1509 and 1999, specifically intended for popular consumption. We sampled the *oeuvre* of (largely social realist) playwrights like Gil Vicente, Martins Pena and França Júnior, among others, reputed for their ability to represent the everyday speech of their lower- and working-class characters (e.g. Entwistle 1973:351-352, Hamilton-Faria 1976:75-96, Sletsjøe 1965:13, Ferraz 1980:29-30, Veríssimo 1998:361-362, Prado 1999:56-59). But the main criterion for retention in our corpus was explicit linguistic evidence in the dialogue of the social origins of the character. Much of this involved non-standard lexical or phonological features, as in (5) and (6) respectively. Particularly revealing were the (relatively rarer) morphosyntactic features, like lack of pronominal infixation with SF, as in (7), or nonstandard preposition usage, as in (8). Among the well-documented nonstandard morphosyntactic features of 20th-century vernacular Brazilian Portuguese, we find lack of subject-verb agreement (9), nonstandard pronoun placement (10), and 3rd person subject/object pronoun alternation (11).

- (5) Se o doente estivesse em tuas mãos, já há muito que tinha *espichado a canela*. (Pena 1844/1968. Cautério:271)
 “If the patient had been in your hands, he would have *croaked* a long time ago.”
- (6) Ou você consegue um lugar *num* [< em um] desses prédios da Coorporação. *pra* [< para] essa gente se abrigar ou eles vão morrer de frio, de fome. (Labaki 1999/2000. Verônica:55)
 “Either you find shelter in one of the Corporation buildings for those people, or they’re going to die of cold, of starvation.”
- (7) *Dará-se* [< dar-se-á] caso que eu tenha dito alguma asneira?! (França Júnior 1870/1980. Matias:115)
 “Will anyone notice that I said something stupid?”
- (8) Chega *na* [< à] porta e acena com lenço. (Pena 1837/1968. Narrator:39)
 “Come into [to] the door and wave with a handkerchief.”
- (9) Olha, Tião, são dois anos que *tu não acerta* [< tu acertas] as contas comigo. (Buarque 1978. Max:57)
 “Look Tião, you haven’t paid me back for two years.”

- (10) *Me deixa* [*< deixa-me*], Cipriano! E fica sabendo, não vou a passeata nenhuma!
 (Guarnieri 1961. Américo:71)
 “*Me leave* [*leave me*] alone, Cipriano! I’m not going to any protest, and that’s that!”
- (11) Olha, lá, tá sangrando! Vamos tirar *ele* [*< tirá-lo*] de lá.
 (Guarnieri 1961. Américo:76)
 “Look, he’s bleeding! Let’s take *he* out of there.”

To what extent, if any, does the language contained in these plays represent the vernacular(s) spoken at the time they were written and/or performed? A reasonable working hypothesis, based on the facts that the plays targeted popular audiences, featured characters from the same social classes and the non-standard linguistic forms associated with them, is that the language of the performers bore at least some resemblance to that of the intended audience. As we show in Section 5.4, explicit comparison of 20th-century popular theatre with 20th-century popular speech supports this assumption.

2.1.2 Normative discourse

A second window on the past comes from a meta-analysis of the evolution of normative discourse on the expression of the future, culled from a corpus of 41 Portuguese grammars and usage manuals published between 1536 and 2005. We use this material to: 1) infer the existence of prior variability (from citations of alternative forms), 2) trace the evolution of grammatical dictates associated with each, and perhaps most revealing, 3) discern hints of the linguistic conditions contributing to their selection. In the case at hand, for example, in addition to the plethora of semantic readings assigned to each of the future temporal reference variants, we learn that grammarians have at one time or another associated SF with monosyllabic verbs, HP with relative clauses, and P with disambiguating temporal adverbs. We can incorporate these conditions as factors in a multivariate analysis of variable usage over time, and use them not only to test whether older constraints remain operative in contemporary varieties (i.e. whether change has taken place), but equally instructive for present purposes, to elucidate the transition from one stage to the next.

2.2 Synchronic data

As a check on both of these diachronic data sources, 20th-century spontaneous speech data were collected from 34 urban working-class residents of Brasília, the capital of Brazil, using standard sociolinguistic techniques (Malvar 2003). Built as recently as the 1960s and settled by immigrants from various parts of the country, the speech of the capital is often regarded as a microcosm of Brazilian Portuguese (Bortoni-Ricardo 1991).⁴ Detailed comparison of constraint hierarchies enables us

⁴ Our references to these data in what follows as 20th-century speech are meant to distinguish them from the writings of previous centuries. However, to the best of our knowledge, the only

to validate the diachronic data as representations of contemporaneous spoken vernaculars.

3. The trajectory of the future variants throughout the Portuguese grammatical tradition

Our meta-analysis (Poplack and Malvar in press) of the treatment of the variants throughout the Portuguese normative tradition confirms that alternate expressions of the future have been attested in grammars since the earliest times. But beyond acknowledging the variant forms, grammarians never explicitly identify them as alternate expressions of the same referential meaning. On the contrary, by ascribing to each a specific nuance or context of occurrence, they effectively rule out the possibility of variability. Thus SF has always been viewed as the basic exponent of futurity, while the other variants are prescribed to convey secondary readings, which only parenthetically occur in future time.

The temporal category of future is traditionally associated with a variety of irrealis or nonfactive modalities (Fleischman 1982: 14, Poplack & Turpin 1999), so it is not coincidental that many of the readings invoked refer to the speaker's psychological state at the time of the utterance. This of course cannot be tested, let alone confirmed. This indeterminacy explains the persistent lack of agreement over which forms convey which readings. Each of SF, HP and P has been assigned the reading of probability. HP, P and IR have all been assigned readings of proximity/imminence and necessity. All four of the variants have been associated with certainty and intention. Why is there so little agreement on what these readings are, and which forms convey them, whether from one period to the next or even within the same period (or occasionally, grammarian)? All of these facts, taken together, suggest the existence of prior variability, whether acknowledged or not.

4. A variationist perspective on the alternation among SF, HP, P and IR

Even if the different readings played a role in variant selection, the distinctions they imply need not be operative every time one of the variant forms is used. Indeed, the hypothesis underlying the study of morphosyntactic variability within the variationist framework is that "for certain identifiable sets of alternations, these distinctions come into play neither in the intentions of the speaker nor in the interpretation of the interlocutor" (Sankoff 1988:153). This is because distinctions in referential value or grammatical function among different surface forms can be neutralized in discourse. Such neutralization is the fundamental mechanism of variation and change.

After a brief discussion of a number of methodological considerations regarding the variable context (Section 4.1), we introduce competing hypotheses

substantive differences with respect to the expression of future temporal reference in Brazilian Portuguese are register, rather than dialect, differences.

about variant selection (Section 4.2), and test them (Section 5) by means of systematic analysis of the distribution and conditioning of SF, HP, P and IR in Portuguese, diachronic and synchronic, written and spoken. We will demonstrate that within the specific domain of future temporal reference, they function as classical variants of a linguistic variable. These variants gradually enter and exit the sector, assuming the functions of their erstwhile counterparts in the process, or abandoning them altogether. As in other well-documented situations of variability, at no time during the development of the Portuguese future temporal reference system was variant selection free or idiosyncratic; on the contrary, each was regularly conditioned by elements of its preferred context(s) of occurrence. Nearly all of these have now been colonized by IR, which represents the new, though largely unacknowledged, default future.

4.1 Circumscribing the variable context

The systematic study of inherent variability requires that not only the variant forms, but also the contexts in which differences among them are neutralized, be identified. Our analysis takes as its point of departure, not the forms themselves, but rather the future temporal reference sector *per se*. By examining the distribution and use of forms across the different configurations of contexts constituting this sector, we can ascertain not only which of the variants are used preferentially in each, but also the nature of the factors promoting or inhibiting their selection. This requires that the locus of variation be carefully defined. We thus begin by circumscribing the variable context (i.e. the context(s) in which all variants may co-occur): any and all unambiguous reference to a state or event occurring posterior to speech time.

This entails excluding from the quantitative portion of the analysis false futures (which may feature future morphology, but do not refer to future time), as well as true future contexts which admit no variation. False futures include imperatives, hypothetical questions, and use of *ir* + infinitive to indicate movement in space or to denote habitual actions or general truths, in the 1st p. pl. present (*vamos*), corresponding to English adhortative “let’s”, and in protases of hypothetical *se* (“if”) complexes (where future subjunctive is prescribed). Such uses were not considered here. Non-productive uses of future morphology, e.g. in frozen expressions, proverbs and quotations from or allusions to the Bible, were also not considered in the quantitative analysis. Retained for this study were a total of 2365 tokens of verbs making unambiguous reference to future time via one of the four morphological forms exemplified in (1-4).

4.2 Operationalizing motivations for variant choice

As noted earlier, study of the evolution of the prescriptive treatment of the variants revealed that the lion’s share of variant choice is ascribed to subtle semantic or pragmatic distinctions in the message the speaker wishes to convey. As already observed by Poplack & Turpin (1999) with regard to an analogous situation in French, however, such distinctions are difficult, if not impossible, to

operationalize: psychological notions like ‘intention’, ‘certainty’, ‘probability’ and ‘doubt’ cannot be identified in the absence of some overt contextual clue. Distinctions that *can* be operationalized are those based not on the meaning said to be embodied by a variant (which would be circular), but on supporting contextual indicators of that meaning, where present. Thus for example, notions like agentivity, subjectivity and volition, often associated with selection of future variant, can be captured by factors like grammatical person and animacy.

Accordingly, the linguistic hypotheses we investigate instantiate a number of lexico-semantic and morphosyntactic properties of the contexts in which the variants appear. Some relate to the verb (lexical identity, stativity, number of syllables); others to the subject (grammatical person and number, animacy). At the syntactic level, we investigate type of sentence (declarative, interrogative, negative), type of clause (main, subordinate, relative). At a broader semantic/discourse level, we examine the temporal distance between speech time and the event predicated (distal, proximal), contingency of the future eventuality (contingent, assumed), polarity (negative vs. affirmative), and presence and type of disambiguating adverbial specification (specific vs. non-specific). Each of these has been claimed, historically, synchronically or both, to affect variant choice, as explained below.

4.2.1 *Factors relating to the subject.*

Each of HP, IR and P has been associated with readings of certainty, conviction, intention and volition.⁵ Certainty has also been cited as a reading of SF.⁶ Assuming that these are related to agentivity, one way of operationalizing these notions is by distinguishing subjects according to animacy. Human subjects exercise the highest degree of agentivity, and could thus be expected to favor the variants associated with these attitudes.

Likewise, to the extent that variant choice is related to speaker intent, grammatical person/number of the subject should also play a role, with 1st p. subjects favoring the relevant variants (as found by Baleeiro (1988) and Santos (1997) for formal Brazilian Portuguese). We tested these hypotheses by distinguishing, for each subject of a verb referring to future time, humanness, animacy, number (singular, plural) and grammatical person (first, second, third). Because there is so much overlap amongst these factors (virtually all 1st and 2nd persons are human; inanimates occur only in 3rd p.), we collapsed them into 1st p. animate (12), 2nd p. animate (13), 3rd p. animate (14), and 3rd p. inanimate (15).

- (12) Quando eu for em Petrópolis, eu vou gostar (IR). (Cláudio/A:02/1992)
 “When I go to Petrópolis, I’m going to like it.”

⁵ Arruda (2000), Bechara (1968), Cipro Neto & Infante (2004), Corrêa (1964), Cunha & Cintra (1984/1999), Kury (1989), Lapa (1968), Mateus et al. (1983), Said Ali (1964), Sardinha & Ramos (2000), Soares Barboza (1852), Thomas (1969), van Achter et al. (1996).

⁶ Azeredo (2000:130), Cipro Neto & Infante (2004), Cunha & Cintra (1984/1999), Kury (1989).

- (13) Mas já que sua filha casou mesmo, você não *vai dar* (IR) um presentinho? (Buarque 1978. Geni:39)
 “But since your daughter did get married, aren’t you *going to give* her a little gift?”
- (14) O presidente lançou um comunicado lá dizendo que [ele] não *vai reclassificar* (IR) ninguém. (Alessandra/A:04/1992)
 “The president sent a memo saying that [he] *is not going to promote* anybody.”
- (15) Se eu fizer isso, a notícia *vai se espalhar* (IR) e em menos de uma semana vai ter uma multidão querendo entrar aqui. (Labaki 1999/2000. Ricardo:58)
 “If I do that, the news *is going to spread*, and in less than a week, there’s going to be a mob trying to get in here.”

4.2.2 Factors relating to the verb.

Because even forms that are not otherwise productive may persist in specific types of lexical hosts,⁷ we pursued this possibility in three ways. We first noted the lexical identity of each verb separately to determine whether there were associations between specific verbs and variants. Perhaps the best known lexical effect in the future temporal reference sector involves avoidance of the *go*-future with verbs of motion until the former has been bleached of its original semantic content of movement toward a goal, and grammaticized as a future marker. If, as some grammarians (e.g. Bechara 1968, Said Ali 1969, Thomas 1969) claim, the Portuguese IR-periphrasis retains its original meaning of movement, it should be less likely to occur with other verbs of motion (see Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001 for such a finding in Early African American English). We therefore distinguished verbs of motion, as in (16), from other verbs, as in (17):

- (16) *Vão vir* (IR) agora em abril pra nos visitar, devem passar um mês, um mês e meio, entendeu? (Rodrigo/B:185/2003)
 “[They] *are going to come* in April to see us, [they] are supposed to stay a month, a month and a half, see?”
- (17) Só que tem muita gente que *vai reprovar* (IR), por causa de bagunça e de nota. (Priscila/A:14/1992)
 “But there are a lot of people that *are going to fail*, because of behavior and grades.”

4.2.3 Syntactic factors

Sentence type has also been considered relevant to the selection of the future forms: SF is said to express uncertainty, doubt, and politeness in questions (e.g. Amaral 1920; Said Ali 1964). Soares Barboza (1852) ascribed an affirmative

⁷ Two well-documented examples are the retention of French subjunctive morphology (Poplack 1992) and English irregular past-tense morphology (Bybee et al. 1994, Poplack & Tagliamonte 2001) with a small set of verbs.

reading to SF. Poplack & Turpin (1999) found that the single strongest predictor of SF in Canadian French was negative polarity. Accordingly, we distinguished each token according to whether it occurred in an affirmative declarative sentence, as in (18), an interrogative (19), or a negative (declarative or interrogative) sentence (20).

- (18) Marido, *sairei* (SF) eu agora/ que há muito que não saí.
(Vicente 1523/1998. Inês:226)
“Husband, I *will go out* now/ because I haven’t been out for a long time.”
- (19) E eu como é que fico? *Vou virar* (IR) Teresinha Pinto? Deus me livre!
(Buarque 1978. Teresinha:58)
“And what about me? I’m *gonna turn into* Teresinha Pinto? God forbid!”
- (20) Daqui a dois dias não *sabe* (P) mais falar Português.
(Pena 1842/2000. Clemência:47)
“In another two days he *doesn’t* [won’t] know how to speak Portuguese anymore.”

Though ‘type of clause’ in which the future forms appear is not typically considered relevant by grammarians to variant selection, HP was originally said to be used to translate the Latin active future participle (e.g. Barros 1540/1971: 93-94; Leão 1608/1983: 298), corresponding to a relative clause in Portuguese. Tokens were distinguished according to whether they occurred in a main (21), subordinate (22) or relative (23) clause.

- (21) Eu *salvarei* (SF), mas debaixo de certas condições. (Pena 1853/1972. Carlos:96)
“I *will save* [you], but only on certain conditions.”
- (22) Então diga ao teu marido que nós não *vamos precisar* (IR) do dinheiro dele, não. (Buarque 1978. Terezinha: 74)
“Then tell your husband that we’re not *going to need* his money.”
- (23) Tolerância demais das autoridades que *vão permitir* (IR) essa imoralidade. (Gomes 1963/1990. Padre:446)
“Too much lenience from the authorities who *are going to allow* this immorality.”

Infixation of clitic pronouns with SF is a distinctive feature of Portuguese (cf. Cunha & Cintra 1984/1999, Figueiredo 1941, Huber 1933, Melo 1957, Machado Filho 1938, Williams 1944, 1968). Prescriptive grammar dictates that clitic pronouns be inserted between verb stem and SF inflection in some contexts (e.g. *dar-lhe-ei*, literally “give -to you - I will”). But as this construction is viewed as pompous and artificial (e.g. Nunes 1910), we test the hypothesis that SF might in fact be avoided here. Accordingly, we distinguished among tokens occurring with direct object clitics, as in (24); indirect object clitics, as in (25); neither, as in (26); both, as in (27), and reflexive or passive pronouns, as in (28):

- (24) Mais quero eu quem me adore/ que quem faça com que chore./ *Chamá-lo-ei* (SF), Inês. (Vicente 1523/1998. Leonor:189)
 “I prefer someone who adores me/ to someone who makes me cry./ I *will call him*, Inês.”
- (25) Ela *lhe dará* (SF) o recado. (Silva 1737/1980. Periandro:34)
 “She *will give you* the message.”
- (26) Eu que falo com ela, e muito, sei que ela não *há de aceitar* (HP) proposta de casamento sem estar muito bem coberta. (Buarque 1978. Vitória:32)
 “Since I talk to her a lot, I know she *won’t accept* a marriage proposal without guarantees.”
- (27) Não *yo-lo hei de negar* (HP): fazei-me uma petição. (Vicente 1526/1975. Fidalgo:176)
 “I *won’t deny it to you*: make your request.”
- (28) Ora, faça-me um favor! Então esse pessoal que já enfrentou metralhadora *vai se assustar* (IR) por causa de cinco tiras! (Guarnieri 1961. Agileu:28)
 “Oh, please! Guys who’ve stood up to machine-guns *are going to be scared* of five cops?!”

4.2.4 Semantic/discourse factors

One of the most persistent readings of both *go*-periphrases and the futurate present is that of proximity in the future.⁸ To test these claims, we distinguish proximal events and states (here defined as those predicated to occur within the same day of the utterance), as in (29), from distal events and states (occurring thereafter), as in (30):

- (29) Aí agora, eu num sei *hoje*, né, não, porque *hoje* eu num *vou* (i) pra escola. *Vou fazer* (IR) o exame no ouvido. (Ana/A:13/1991)
 “Well, *today* I don’t know, no, because *today* I’m *not going* to school. [I’m] *going to have* an ear exam.”
- (30) *Ano que vem* eu *vou tirar* (IR) a Cleide dessa escola e colocar na escola pública, do governo. (Vânia/B:30/1992)
 “*Next year*, I’m *going to take* Cleide out of this school and put her in a public school, a government school.”

Future variants are often associated with different degrees of specificity. Soares Barboza (1852) ascribes to SF a reading of indeterminacy. Thomas (1969, 1974), Cunha & Cintra (1984/1999), Mateus et al. (1983) and van Achter et al. (1996) claim that P conveys specific future time when accompanied by a temporal adverb. If this is the case, specific adverbs could be expected to favour selection of P, and non-specific (or no) adverbs should favour SF. To test this hypothesis,

⁸ E.g. Arruda (2000), Cegalla (2005), Cipro Neto & Infante (2004), Cunha & Cintra, (1984/1999), Kury (1986), Said Ali (1969), Silva Junior (1887), Silveira Bueno (1968), and Thomas (1969) for Portuguese; Bentivoglio and Sedano (1992) for Spanish; Poplack & Turpin (1999) for French; Poplack & Tagliamonte (2001) for English.

we coded for type of adverbial specification, distinguishing among specific, non-specific and no modification, as in (31) - (33) respectively.

- (31) Tá certo. Hoje eu faço vista grossa, mas amanhã eu te *caço* (P), viu?
(Buarque 1978. Max:57)
“OK, today I’m letting it go, but tomorrow I *catch* you, see?”
- (32) Periandro, logo *falaremos* (SF), não te ausentes.
(Silva 1737/1980. Filena:39)
“Periandro, [we] *will talk soon*. Don’t leave.”
- (33) Não tou pagando nada, então não *vou estudar* (IR) não. Num precisa.
(Salvador/A:24/1992)
“I’m not paying anything, so no way I’m *going to study*. I don’t have to.”

It has often been noted that SF expresses notions of doubt, probability and possibility,⁹ readings which have also been assigned to HP (Barreto 1944, Thomas 1969). In addition, Thomas (1969) claims that P conveys the sense of promise in future contexts (e.g. *se você me ajudar, eu lhe pago bem* “If you help me, I’ll pay you well”). We may capture these observations by distinguishing events assumed to have a high likelihood of occurring from those whose occurrence is contingent on other events. Following Fleischman (1982) and Poplack & Turpin (1999), we coded as contingent events whose realization is dependent upon the fulfillment of a condition, as in (34), in contrast to those whose realization is assumed, as in (35):

- (34) Se eu fugir, eles me *alcançam* (P) em dois tempos.
(Labaki 1999/2000. Ricardo:65)
“If I run away, they’ll *get* me in a minute”.
- (35) Ninguém *vai saber* (IR). Você sabe. A imprensa só publica o que deixam publicar. (Labaki 1999/2000. Verônica:59).
“Nobody *is going to know*. You know. The press only publishes what they let them publish.”

4.2.5 Medium

In addition, where possible (i.e. in the 20th century), we examine the contribution of the extralinguistic factor of medium (spoken vs. written). According to Santos (1997), SF is the preferred variant in formal written Brazilian Portuguese. If the (written) plays retained for this study are representative of the spoken language, their use of the variants should reflect that of speech. We test this hypothesis statistically by comparing rates and conditioning of variant selection in theatre

⁹ E.g. Amaral (1920), Arruda (2000), Azeredo (2000), Bechara (1968), Cegalla (2005), Cipro Neto & Infante (2004), Cunha & Cintra, (1984/(1999), Kury (1989), Rossi (1945), Said Ali (1969), van Achter et al. (1996).

and speech of the 20th century, the only century for which spoken data is available.

Each of the 2365 tokens retained for analysis was coded for each of the factors introduced in Sections 4.2.1 through 4.2.5. In this way we test claims about the uses of the exponents of future temporal reference against the way they are actually employed unreflectingly by speakers.

4.3 Coding and analysis

The coding system described above represents a series of hypotheses, relating mainly to the meaning and/or function of specific variants, about the choice mechanism. To determine which of these factors contribute a statistically significant effect to variant choice when all are considered simultaneously, we analyzed the materials using Goldvarb 2.0 (Rand & Sankoff 1990), a variable-rule application for the Macintosh. Variable rule analysis helps determine how the choice process is influenced by the factors constituting the environment in which the variant form occurs. We adduce two lines of evidence deriving from variable rule analysis in interpreting the results: statistical significance (at the .05 level) of the effect, and constraint hierarchy, or direction of effect, as inferred from the ordering of factor weights within a factor group. We interpret the detailed picture afforded by variable rule analysis as a snapshot of the way the variants divide up the labor of expressing the future at a particular stage in the course of the development of this grammatical sector. Comparison of these snapshots reveals the movements of the variants both over time and across the contexts constituting the future temporal reference domain. In ensuing sections, we review the results of these analyses.

5. Results

Table 1 displays the distribution of the future temporal reference variants by century.

Table 1: *Distribution of future temporal reference variants by century*

Century	Synthetic future		<i>Haver</i> - periphrasis		<i>Present</i>		<i>Ir</i> - periphrasis		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%		
16 th	198	66	91	30	10	3	3	1	302	
18 th	169	57	103	35	19	6	5	2	296	
19 th	276	53	104	20	66	13	72	14	518	
20 th	Plays	46	9	5	1	93	18	384	73	528
	Speech	4	1	--	--	104	14	613	85	721
Total	693	30	303	13	292	12	1077	45	2365	

In contrast to what could be inferred from grammarians' characterizations, Table 1 shows that at any given period, most reference to the future is made by only two variants, one analytic and one synthetic. During the 16th and 18th centuries, these are SF and HP, which represent over 90% of the data in each period. They continue to predominate throughout the 19th century, though by this point IR has infiltrated the system, and together with P, now accounts for nearly a third of the temporal reference contexts. The 20th century sees an abrupt reversal: IR has virtually replaced the older variants, with P continuing to play the same (minor) role as in the previous century, returning full circle to a two-variant system. Comparison of 20th-century popular plays with speech confirms that this dramatic change cannot be attributed solely to differences in medium. Although the older variants still persist in the plays, albeit at very low rates, variant proportions follow those of speech remarkably closely. This is a first suggestion that the dialogues in our popular theatre corpus do in fact represent contemporaneous speech, despite the lag in rate of the incoming variant.

How was this change implemented? To answer this question we examine the state of the future temporal reference sector period by period, performing independent multivariate analyses of the factors contributing to variant selection in each. Comparison across periods yields a graphic view of the role of each variant over the course of the change. We make use of this information to determine the trajectory by which the incoming variants infiltrated the system, eventually to oust their older counterparts. In each of Tables 2-6, the higher the figure, the greater the probability the variant in question will be selected in the environment under consideration.

5.1 Period I: 16th and 18th centuries

Table 2 shows the results of three independent variable rule analyses of the contribution of linguistic factors selected as significant to choice of SF, HP, and P in the 16th and 18th centuries. 17th-century plays are not included here because 1) during the Spanish rule of Portugal (1580-1640) most Portuguese literature was written in Spanish or Latin (Rebello 1989), 2) few comedies corresponding to our criteria were produced in Portugal (*ibid.*) and 3) there is no record of play production or performance in Brazil during this period (Prado 1999). We note first that of the nine linguistic factors originally investigated, only two or three were found to be significant to the choice of each variant.¹⁰

¹⁰ The factor lexical identity was investigated independently; the outcomes are not presented here. Two factors, *type of clause* and *presence of clitics*, were not selected as significant to the choice of any variant at any time period.

Table 2: Variable rule analyses of the contribution of factors selected as significant to variant choice: 16th/18th centuries¹¹

	SF	HP	P	IR
<i>Total N:</i>	367	194	29	8
<i>Corrected mean:</i>	.63	.32	.05	-
Sentence Type				
Declarative	.55	.44	[]	-
Negative	.37	.62	[]	-
Interrogative	.31	.70	[]	-
Contingency				
Contingent	.68	.30	[]	-
Assumed	.48	.52	[]	-
Verb Type				
Non-motion	.54	[]	.37	-
Motion	.35	[]	.88	-
Temporal Distance				
Distal	[]	[]	.36	-
Proximal	[]	[]	.71	-
Grammatical Person/Animacy				
1 st Animate	[]	[]	.70	-
2 nd Animate	[]	[]	.21	-
3 rd Animate	[]	[]	.39	-
3 rd Inanimate	[]	[]	.58	-
Adverbial Specification				
Non-Specific	[]	[]	[]	-
No Adverbial	[]	[]	[]	-
Specific	[]	[]	[]	-
Type of Clause				
Subordinate	[]	[]	[]	-
Main	[]	[]	[]	-
Presence of Clitics				
No clitic	[]	[]	[]	-
Object clitic	[]	[]	[]	-
Reflexive/passive clitic	[]	[]	[]	-
Factors not selected as significant				
Sentence Type			X	-
Contingency			X	-
Verb Type		X		-
Temporal Distance	X	X		-
Grammatical Person/Animacy	X	X		-
Adverbial Specification	X	X	X	-
Type of Clause	X	X	X	-
Presence of Clitics	X	X	X	-

Comparison of factor weights across analyses confirms that in Period I, the task of expressing future temporal reference is largely divided between SF and HP. With a corrected mean (or overall tendency of occurrence) of .63, at this stage SF does in fact appear to be the default variant it has been characterized as for so long.

¹¹ For the statistical analyses in this and ensuing tables, the 16th and 18th centuries are treated together, as are reflexives and passives (due to sparse data).

Consistent with this role, it is preferred in frequent, neutral or unmarked contexts, such as declarative sentences (probability .55) and with most lexical verbs (.54). But SF is also clearly favoured in contingent contexts, as in (36), while HP is favored in assumed contexts, as in (37), as well as in negative (38) and interrogative (39) sentences.

- (36) Não senhora; eu *virei* (SF) logo nessora, se m'eu lá não detiver.
(Vicente 1509/1975. Moça:382)
“No mother; if I don't have to stay there, I *will come* right at that time.”
- (37) Aqui te *hei de fazer* (HP) em picado com os dentes.
(Silva 1734/1957. Eurípedes:61)
“Here [I] *will tear* you to shreds with my teeth.”
- (38) Porém não *hei de casar* (HP)/ senão com homem avisado;/ ainda que pobre e pelado,/ seja discreto em falar. (Vicente 1523/1998. Inês:186)
“But I *will not get married*/ except to an educated man;/ even if poor and naked,/ as long as he is discreet.”
- (39) Pois aonde o *hei de pôr* (HP)? (Silva 1737/1980. Semicúpio:54)
“Well, where *shall I put* it?”

P is very rare in the early popular plays we have studied, accounting for no more than 6% of all future temporal reference throughout the 18th century (cf. Table 1). Despite its rarity, however, it can be seen from Table 2 to have already staked out its preferred loci of occurrence. The most important factor conditioning its selection is verb type: motion verbs favor P highly, with a probability of .88. (Indeed, well over half the verbs instantiated as P correspond to main verb *ir* “to go”, a harbinger of what would develop into a categorical association between verb and variant.) Proximal future contexts, traditionally associated with futurate presents, and 1st (animate) and 3rd person inanimate subjects (not so associated) also favor P. The example in (40) illustrates the basic future temporal reference uses of P until the 19th century. At this stage, the *ir*-periphrasis was barely incipient (N=8), and so does not figure in the quantitative portion of the analysis. One of the few examples of IR in this period is reproduced in (41).

- (40) Vai tu, filho Joane, e dize que logo vou (P), que não faz tempo que cá estou.
(Vicente 1512/1998. Velho:83)
“Go, my son Joane, and say that I go soon, because I haven't been here long.”
- (41) Deixe-o enforcar, que eu também *vou fazer* (IR) o mesmo.
(Silva 1734/1957. Esopo:132)
“Let him hang himself, for I am also *going to do* the same thing.”

5.2 Period II: 19th century

We now examine the variable expression of future temporal reference in the 19th century (the first period in which specifically Brazilian Portuguese is represented

in popular theatre). Recall from Table 1 that while SF and HP continue to predominate, all four variants are clearly in competition at this time. Note that IR, only incipient in previous centuries, has undergone a substantial rate increase, and together with P now accounts for nearly a third of the future temporal reference data.

Table 3, which displays four independent variable rule analyses of the factors selected as significant to variant choice in the 19th century, reveals the first subtle shifts the future temporal reference sector underwent to accommodate the new variant. The factors examined are the same as for previous centuries.

Focusing first on the emergent variant, we see that like other *go*-periphrases, IR also entered the system via proximate future contexts, as in (42). In Period I, these were the domain of P; with a probability of .79, selection of IR is now strongly favored here.

- (42) Aí a mãe dela falou assim, “pois agora você *vai levar* (IR) uma surra, menina; porque eu não disse que não era pra você sair?!”
(Tiago/B:189/1991)
“Then her mother said, “now you’re going to get it, girl, because didn’t I tell you not to go out?!””

Though IR accounts for less than 15% of the data at this time, it is noteworthy that proximity in the future represents the only ‘specialized’ context of occurrence for this variant. Elsewhere, the distribution of IR foreshadows its eventual role as default future marker: it is preferred in the more frequent, less marked contexts of declarative affirmative sentences (the former domain of SF), as well as those with no adverbial specification. These are exemplified in (43).

- (43) *Vou transmitir* (IR) essa ordem ao porteiro porque eu posso não estar na ocasião. (Azevedo 1897/1965. Gerente:23)
“*I’m going to give* this order to the doorman, because I may not be here for the occasion.”

How did P react to the incursion of IR? Although the two variants are now quantitatively on par, comparison of their variable conditioning reveals that the former remains more structurally restricted than its emergent counterpart. The fact that P is heavily constrained to co-occur with specific adverbs (probability .89), as in (44), suggests that it is still necessary to disambiguate its temporal reference.

- (44) O livro que te prometi, *mando* (P) amanhã. (Pena 1842/2000. Cecília:50)
“The book I promised you, I *send tomorrow*.”

Table 3: Variable rule analyses of the contribution of factors selected as significant to variant choice: 19th century

	SF	HP	P	IR
<i>Total N:</i>	268	104	48	72
<i>Corrected mean:</i>	.55	.21	.10	.15
Sentence Type				
Declarative	[]	[]	[]	.59
Negative	[]	[]	[]	.10
Interrogative	[]	[]	[]	.31
Contingency				
Contingent	[]	.26	.85	[]
Assumed	[]	.52	.47	[]
Verb Type				
Non-motion	.52	[]	.44	[]
Motion	.31	[]	.87	[]
Temporal Distance				
Distal	.56	.54	[]	.36
Proximal	.38	.40	[]	.79
Grammatical Person/Animacy				
1 st Animate	[]	[]	[]	[]
2 nd Animate	[]	[]	[]	[]
3 rd Animate	[]	[]	[]	[]
3 rd Inanimate	[]	[]	[]	[]
Adverbial Specification				
Non-Specific	.70	[]	.46	.15
No Adverbial	.46	[]	.45	.62
Specific	.43	[]	.89	.27
Type of Clause				
Subordinate	[]	[]	[]	[]
Main	[]	[]	[]	[]
Presence of Clitics				
No clitic	[]	[]	[]	[]
Object clitic	[]	[]	[]	[]
Reflexive/passive clitic	[]	[]	[]	[]
Factors not selected as significant				
Sentence Type	X	X	X	
Contingency	X			X
Verb Type		X		X
Temporal Distance			X	
Grammatical Person/Animacy	X	X	X	X
Adverbial Specification		X		
Type of Clause	X	X	X	X
Presence of Clitics	X	X	X	X

Moreover, in addition to co-occurring almost categorically with main verb *ir*,¹² as in example (40) above, it continues to entertain a strong association with other motion verbs, as in (45). Finally, it appears to have inherited from the receding SF

¹² It was therefore excluded from the calculations in Table 4.

the role of expressing contingent events (as in example (34)), in contrast with HP, which continues to be the variant of choice in assumed/certain contexts.

- (45) Se fô possível, muito que bem, se não fô, paciência; a gente arruma as mala e amanhã memo volta(P) pra fazenda. (Azevedo 1897/1965. Eusébio:94)
 “If it’s possible, fine, if not, so be it; we pack our bags and tomorrow we return to the farm.”

Summarizing, rates of P have doubled since the 16/18th centuries, but rather than spreading across the future temporal reference domain, the use of this variant has become more entrenched in the relatively infrequent, more specialized contexts of motion verbs, contingent contexts and disambiguating adverbs. As for the older exponents of future temporal reference, with one exception each (non-motion verbs in the case of SF, and assumed contexts in the case of HP), as SF and HP recede from the sector, their erstwhile preferred domains either disappear, are transferred to another variant, or are replaced by new domains. Sentence type, which distinguished between SF and HP in the 16/18th centuries, no longer plays a role in their selection. Contingent predications, formerly the domain of SF, have now been transferred to P. Incursion of P and IR into contexts with specific (44, 45) and no adverbial (43) modification respectively, relegated SF to the remaining contexts, those modified by non-specific adverbs (46). Likewise, the novel but strong association of IR with proximal eventualities left both SF and HP to express distal states and events.

- (46) Que impertinência! Logo *conversaremos* (SF) (Pena 1842/2000. Mariquinha:25)
 “What nerve! We’ll talk later.”

Only one relationship, the propensity of P to co-occur with motion verbs, and the resulting (weak) association of SF with the remaining verbs, has remained unchanged since preceding centuries. The future temporal reference system of the 19th century is one in which the variants are in opposition in almost all contexts. They are not necessarily the same variants as those competing in these very contexts in previous centuries, but the constraints on their selection remain in place.

5.3 Period III: 20th-century theatre

Table 4 compares the results of three independent variable rule analyses of the contribution of the same factors to variant selection in 20th-century popular plays. These results, when compared with those of Table 1, illustrate the trajectory by which the expression of future temporal reference resolved itself in contemporary usage.

Table 4: *Independent variable rule analyses of the contribution of factors to the probability that SF, P and IR will be selected in future temporal reference contexts in 20th-century popular plays.*

	SF	HP	P	IR
<i>Total N:</i>	35	5	61	373
<i>Corrected mean:</i>	.08	-	.13	.81
Sentence Type				
Declarative	[]	-	[]	[]
Negative	[]	-	[]	[]
Interrogative	[]	-	[]	[]
Contingency				
Contingent	[]	-	.73	.27
Assumed	[]	-	.48	.52
Verb Type				
Non-motion	[]	-	.47	.52
Motion	[]	-	.78	.29
Temporal Distance				
Distal	[]	-	[]	[]
Proximal	[]	-	[]	[]
Grammatical Person/Animacy				
1 st Animate	[]	-	.65	.39
2 nd Animate	[]	-	.14	.72
3 rd Animate	[]	-	.46	.54
3 rd Inanimate	[]	-	.51	.50
Adverbial Specification				
Non-Specific	.70	-	.61	.33
No Adverbial	.48	-	.45	.55
Specific	.30	-	.70	.33
Type of Clause				
Subordinate	[]	-	[]	[]
Main	[]	-	[]	[]
Presence of Clitics				
No clitic	[]	-	[]	[]
Object clitic	[]	-	[]	[]
Reflexive/passive clitic	-	-	-----*	-----*
Factors not selected as significant				
Sentence Type	X	-	X	X
Contingency	X	-		
Verb Type	X	-		
Temporal Distance	X	-	X	X
Grammatical Person/Animacy	X	-		
Adverbial Specification		-		
Type of Clause	X	-	X	X
Presence of Clitics	X	-	X	X

* no data

Of the outgoing variants, HP has disappeared altogether. The use of SF, now very rare, is also highly constrained. First, the 19th-century association of SF with distal future has disappeared, as inferred from the result that temporal distance is not a

statistically significant predictor of variant choice (itself a likely consequence of the fact that P is no longer associated with proximity). Likewise, the longstanding association of SF with non-motion verbs, dating back to its earliest (16th century) uses, is no longer operative either. Only the propensity of SF to occur with non-specific adverbs remains. Thus, as SF nears extinction in the 20th century, it is relegated (in popular plays) to only one of its former preferred contexts, those with non-specific adverbial modification. Closer inspection of the data (not shown here) suggests that SF also tends to occur in *be*-passive constructions, as in (47), which are rare in speech.

- (47) a. Isso *será esclarecido* (SF) no decorrer da nossa estória. (Gomes 1963/1990. Malta: 382)
 “This *will be clarified* as our story plays out.”
 b. Me liberte e todos os seus pecados *serão perdoados*. (Labaki 1999/2000. Ricardo: 68)
 “Free me and all your sins *shall be pardoned*”.

By way of contrast, despite little more than a marginal rate increase over the centuries, P not only retains all of its earlier associations (i.e. with motion verbs, contingent predications and specific adverbs), it is now also associated with the non-specific adverbs formerly the domain of SF. In addition, P now displays the same distinct tendency to co-occur with 1st p. subjects (and an even stronger avoidance of 2nd p. subjects) that was last seen to be operative in the 16/18th centuries (Table 2). It disappeared in the interim, only to reemerge now, for reasons which are unclear. IR occurs everywhere else.

5.4 Period III: 20th-century speech

Having reviewed the constraints on variant selection in 20th-century plays, we are now in a position to validate them with 20th-century speech, the first period for which we have access to such data (Table 5).

Table 5: *Variable rule analyses of the contribution of factors selected as significant to variant choice: 20th century speech*

	SF	HP	P	IR
<i>Total N:</i>	4	0	47	611
<i>Corrected mean:</i>	-	-	.07	.93
Sentence Type				
Declarative	-	-	[]	[]
Negative	-	-	[]	[]
Interrogative	-	-	[]	[]
Contingency				
Contingent	-	-	.87	.13
Assumed	-	-	.45	.55
Verb Type				
Non-motion	-	-	[]	[]
Motion	-	-	[]	[]
Temporal Distance				
Distal	-	-	[]	[]
Proximal	-	-	[]	[]
Grammatical Person/Animacy				
1 st Animate	-	-	[]	[]
2 nd Animate	-	-	[]	[]
3 rd Animate	-	-	[]	[]
3 rd Inanimate	-	-	[]	[]
Adverbial Specification				
Non-Specific	-	-	.57	.43
No Adverbial	-	-	.42	.58
Specific	-	-	.80	.20
Type of Clause				
Subordinate	-	-	[]	[]
Main	-	-	[]	[]
Presence of Clitics				
No clitic	-	-	[]	[]
Object clitic	-	-	[]	[]
Reflexive/passive clitic	-	-	-----	-----
Factors not selected as significant				
Sentence Type	-	-	X	X
Contingency	-	-		
Verb Type	-	-	X	X
Temporal Distance	-	-	X	X
Grammatical Person/Animacy	-	-	X	X
Adverbial Specification	-	-		
Type of Clause	-	-	X	X
Presence of Clitics	-	-	X	X

Comparison of Tables 1 and 5 shows that of the outgoing variants, HP has disappeared from speech as well, and at 1% of the data, SF is vanishingly rare. With few exceptions, the expression of future temporal reference has by now basically been assumed by IR, which has infiltrated all the contexts formerly dominated by other variants. As a result, most of the factors once implicated in variant selection no longer contribute statistically significant effects to variant

choice. The only two barriers to the colonization by IR of the entire future sector are those in which P has become entrenched: contingent contexts, and those modified by specific adverbials, as exemplified in (41), (42) and (43). Contingent contexts, once the domain of SF, were transferred to P in the 19th century. Those modified by specific adverbs have been associated with P since then as well. The strong preference for P with motion verbs, dating back to its earliest (16th century) uses, has now resolved itself in a near-categorical association with main verb *ir*, as illustrated in Figure 1.

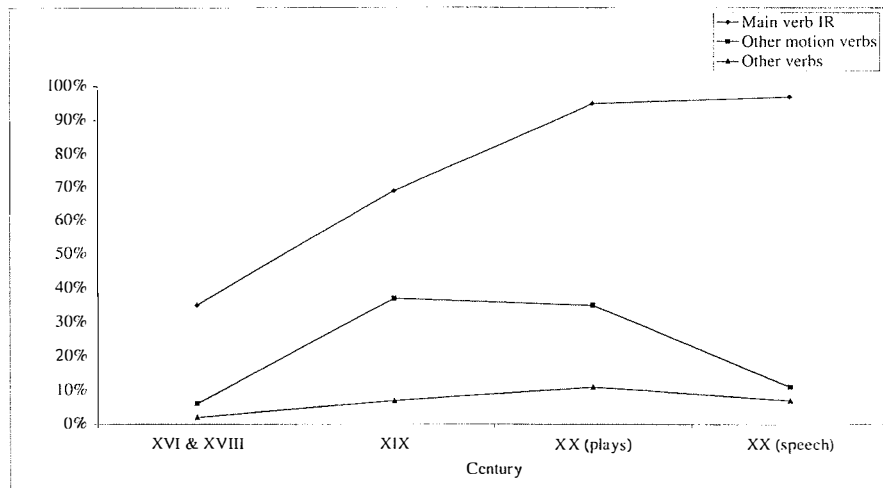


Figure 1: Association of lexical verbs with P

Though all other motion verbs can occur freely with the IR-periphrasis in contemporary Brazilian Portuguese, as can be seen in (48a) and (48b), there remains a widespread, albeit informal, constraint against collocating main verb *ir* with the IR-periphrasis (“go_{fin} (to) go”). Such constructions are heavily stigmatized and overtly corrected. The utterance in (49), of a 10-year old boy, is the only such example in more than 650 references to the future in 20th-century speech.

- (48) a. Isso é um pesadelo. Eu *vou correr* (IR) aqui e vou ver até onde vou (Eduardo/B:39/1992)
 “This is a nightmare. I’m going to *run* and [I’m] going to see how far I get.”
- b. Você não pensa muito assim: ah, eu *vou sair* (IR) na rua. Não *vou sair* (IR) com roupa de marca porque se não ali na esquina vão me roubar (IR). (Érica/A:27/1992)
 “You don’t really think: oh, I’m going to *go out*, but I’m not *going to go out* in designer clothes because if I do, [they’re] going to rob me, right on the corner.”

- (49) *Aí, agora, a gente vai ir (IR) agora é num do bombeiro. Conhecer lá uns negócios que o bombeiro usa pra apagar o fogo. (Tiago/A:67/1991)*
 “Now where we’re *going to go* now is to the fire station. See the stuff the fireman uses to put out the fire.”

In view of the assumption by the IR-periphrasis of virtually all the contexts and functions of its erstwhile competitors, its aversion to main verb *ir* is curious at best. *Go*-futures tend not to co-occur with motion verbs early in the grammaticization process (Bybee et al. 1994), while lexical identity of the verb has little effect on variant selection at later stages (Poplack & Tagliamonte, 1999). There can be little doubt that IR has now grammaticized into the major (and for many speakers, virtually the *only*) exponent of future temporal reference, and our analyses reveal no constraint against its co-occurrence with other motion verbs. Yet in contrast to French, where the periphrastic *go*-future is also on the rise (Poplack & Turpin 1999), and even English, where its use is far more moderate (Poplack & Tagliamonte 1999; Poplack, Walker & Malcolmson in press), the Portuguese IR-periphrasis is still avoided in conjunction with main verb *ir*.

5.5 Speech and the representation of speech

We may now ask what relationship, if any, spoken Brazilian Portuguese entertains with the facsimiles of speech instantiated by dialogues of popular plays written in the same century. Table 1 shows remarkable parallels in rates of variant use (despite some overrepresentation of the outgoing variants and concomitant underrepresentation of the emergent variant). The variable rule analysis in Table 6 reveals that there are also remarkable parallels in conditioning of variant selection. This emerges from comparing, across media, the hierarchy of constraints, which reveals the underlying structure of the variability, even when the factor is not statistically significant.¹³ Note the remarkable parallels between the patterning of variation in the plays and speech. The only discrepancy involves the effect of grammatical person/animacy, noted in Section 5.3. This effect, manifested as a strong aversion to P in 2nd p. animate contexts (*você(s)*), is not relevant to speech; it neither constrains variant selection nor shows consistent effects. The fact that IR has advanced further in actual usage than in the dialogue of the plays explains why variant choice is less constrained in the former.

¹³ Weights for non-significant factor groups are derived from an analysis in which all factors are included in the regression (the first ‘stepdown’ run in Goldvarb 2.0), not shown here.

Table 6: *Variable rule analyses of the contribution of factors selected as significant to variant choice: 20th-century plays vs. speech*

	P		IR	
	Plays	Speech	Plays	Speech
Total N:	61	47	373	611
Corrected mean:	.13	.07	.81	.93
Sentence Type				
Declarative	[]	[]	[]	[]
Negative	[]	[]	[]	[]
Interrogative	[]	[]	[]	[]
Contingency				
Contingent	.73	.87	.27	.13
Assumed	.48	.45	.52	.55
Verb Type				
Non-motion	.47	[.48]	.52	[.52]
Motion	.78	[.62]	.29	[.38]
Temporal Distance				
Distal	[]	[]	[]	[]
Proximal	[]	[]	[]	[]
Grammatical Person/Animacy				
1st Animate	.65	[.44]	.39	[.56]
2nd Animate	.14	[.56]	.72	[.44]
3rd Animate	.46	[.46]	.54	[.54]
3rd Inanimate	.51	[.69]	.50	[.31]
Adverbial Specification				
Non-Specific	.61	.57	.33	.43
No Adverbial	.45	.42	.55	.58
Specific	.76	.80	.33	.20
Type of Clause				
Subordinate	[]	[]	[]	[]
Main	[]	[]	[]	[]
Presence of Clitics				
No clitic	[]	[]	[]	[]
Object clitic	[]	[]	[]	[]
Reflexive/passive clitic	-----	-----	-----	-----
Factors not selected as significant				
Sentence Type	X	X	X	X
Contingency				
Verb Type		X		X
Temporal Distance	X	X	X	X
Grammatical Person/Animacy		X		X
Adverbial Specification				
Type of Clause	X	X	X	X
Presence of Clitics	X	X	X	X

6. The transition period in language change

Examining an apparently abrupt change in the expression of future temporal reference, we traced the trajectory of its exponents over five centuries of development. We documented a system which was overwhelmingly dominated by

SF and HP until the 19th century, at which time the emergent IR began infiltrating the sector, predictably, via proximate future contexts. Although accounting for no more than 15% of the data at that time, IR had also already established a foothold in unmarked affirmative and adverbially unspecified contexts. By the 20th century, it had expanded into *all* of the contexts formerly associated with the older and far more robust variants, effectively ousting them from this domain. We showed how this change was driven by the gradual expropriation of the preferred contexts of the older variants by the incoming IR, and how it culminated in the contemporary situation in which the latter has become the default choice everywhere but in the few remaining bastions of the (rare but incredibly tenacious) P: contingent and adverbially specified contexts and the lexical verb *ir* “to go”.

Our focus on the variability inherent in the system confirms that the transition period in linguistic change is not abrupt, as most generative (and some historical) accounts portray it to be. Rather, change proceeds as a series of small adjustments, as incoming and outgoing variants jockey for position in the system. In support of this claim, we summarize the trajectory of the outgoing variants from Period I, when they accounted for nearly all (95%) of the data, through their disappearance in Period III (Tables 2-5).

SF, initially favored in contingent constructions and affirmative declarative sentences, had by Period II lost both effects (transferring the first to P, and the second to IR). Despite substantial reduction in frequency, SF was still the majority variant at this time; this may explain why it also acquired new constraints: an aversion to proximate contexts, (now transferred to IR from P), and an association with non-specific adverbials. As we suggested earlier, however, SF was more likely simply relegated to the residual contexts created once the other variants had staked out their respective niches (IR with proximity; P with motion verbs). Its novel association with non-specific adverbs now places it in opposition to the other two variants in this context. Thus, over the duration of the change, SF lost, transferred, and acquired constraints, the latter mostly as a reaction to the activity in the remainder of the future temporal reference system. By Period III, it had disappeared.

HP followed a similar trajectory. In Period I, it was favored in assumed and negative/interrogative contexts. As it receded (Period II), it lost the latter, but acquired a novel association with distal future (likely, as with SF, in response to the strong propensity of the incoming IR to occur in proximal contexts). By Period III, HP too was lost. The proximity distinction, formerly captured by the opposition between SF and HP (expressing distal future) on the one hand, and IR (proximal future) on the other, had no further *raison d'être* once the variants associated with one pole of the opposition had disappeared. In Period III, IR does basically all the work of future temporal reference, except in the two contexts in which P has remained entrenched: overt adverbials and contingent contexts.

A widely documented characteristic of the development of the Romance languages is the replacement of Classical Latin synthetic structures with analytic structures. The developments detailed above shed light on how this came about.

The change from synthetic to analytic was not abrupt. Setting aside P, the only variant to have persisted over the duration, the competition may be seen to occur between the analytic forms, with the emergent IR driving out its older counterpart, HP. SF, the older synthetic form, disappears thereafter. As a result, the Portuguese future temporal reference sector, initially constituted of a synthetic and analytic form, has come full circle, with variant proportions now reversed. Only the exponents are not the same!¹⁴

Such accommodations to variant movements over time do not exhibit the Constant Rate Effect (Kroch 1989, 2001). According to the latter account of the transition between language states in linguistic change, when one variant replaces a competitor across a set of linguistic contexts, the rate of replacement is the same in all. Some contexts may favor the incoming form over its competitors; others disfavor, but they all acquire it at the same time (albeit at different initial frequencies), and crucially, they maintain the same pattern of favoring and disfavoring effects as the change proceeds. Thus, “a constant rate of change across contexts is mathematically equivalent to fixity of contextual effects, in direction and size, across time periods” (Kroch 1989: 206).

The trajectory of change presented here is at odds with this view. Contextual effects on variant choice, as expressed by the constraint hierarchies associated with each variant and context in the multivariate analyses we have presented, rarely remain constant across time. And this result is not merely an effect of loss of statistical significance; even when factors no longer significant are “forced” into the regression, they do not display the same constraint hierarchies as previously, tending instead toward .5, or reversing direction altogether. Rather, four variants, each with its own characteristic propensity of occurrence, enter and exit the system at different periods and different speeds (as measured by the increase, from one period to the next, in the corrected means, or overall rates of variant use, in Tables 2-5). As a variant disappears, the constraints on its selection (whether assessed by statistical significance or factor values after they have lost significance) do not remain the same. Nonetheless, the important distinctions conveyed by a factor group by and large perdure, though they may eventually come to be expressed by different variants, or as is presumably the case for IR, by the same one.

The Constant Rate Effect is an outgrowth of the general principle that contextual effects are independent. Whether or not this is true of the two-variant situations generally adduced in its support (e.g. Kroch 1989, Santorini 1993, Taylor 1994, Shi 1989), it cannot be projected onto the complex multi-variant case we have examined. Here the binary system is perturbed each time a variant appears or disappears. And since such cases are far from uncommon — TMA distinctions, for example, are frequently expressed by three or more competing variants — the applicability of the Constant Rate Effect must be restricted to periods in which the repertoire of variants remains stable, i.e. periods which

¹⁴ We are grateful to Mary Kato for calling this pattern to our attention.

feature neither incipient nor moribund forms. To generalize to the multi-variant situation studied here, the requirement that constraint remain associated with variant would have to be relaxed, and transfer of constraints from outgoing to incoming variants be permitted.

Kroch (1989: 237) further invokes the Constant Rate Effect to reject the (widely accepted) idea that language change proceeds context by context, with new forms appearing first in a restricted context and spreading to others only later. Instead, Kroch claims, all contexts acquire the new form at the same rate, favoring ones as well as disfavoring ones, albeit at lower initial frequencies in the latter case. Our results contradict this claim. They show that forms *do* appear first in restricted contexts. They may proceed to spread to others, as eventually happened with IR, or they may remain entrenched in their restricted contexts (as occurred with P). Indeed, this study suggests that the type of contexts associated with a variant can provide valuable information about their trajectory. For example, the fact that IR entered via (or quickly infiltrated) unmarked contexts was a harbinger of its eventual assumption of the role of default future marker. P, on the other hand, has remained entrenched in the same restricted contexts for over five centuries! Two other related assumptions of the Constant Rate Effect will need to be reconsidered in light of the findings presented here. One is the claim that grammar remains homogeneous during the course of change. It may contain a variable structure (as instantiated by the constraint hierarchy of favoring and disfavoring factors), but this structure remains constant, because the factor weights remain the same. We have shown that constraints on variant selection do not remain fixed as the repertoire of competing forms changes. This is of course not visible in the cases studied by Kroch and associates, precisely because the repertoire consists of the same two variants at all times. And contrary to the claim that only when one form displaces the others *entirely* will there be a reorganization of the grammar (Kroch 1989: 133), we have seen that in fact, the grammar continues to reconfigure each time a variant enters or exits the system. To the objection that the replacements we have documented are not properly syntactic changes, we would counter that removing such a spectacular change such as this, involving the total disappearance of forms, from the purview of the Constant Rate Effect would be like throwing out the baby with the bath water.

These results suggest that if the grammar does remain fixed (in Kroch's sense) over the course of change, it is only while the set of variants remains stable. Nonetheless, it is clear that reference to the future has been made in essentially the same way over the duration: the major distinctions (semantic, contextual) continue to be expressed, albeit by different exponents! This is evidenced by the transfer of constraints amongst variants in successive centuries. Thus, in response to Weinreich et al. (1968)'s question posed at the outset regarding the effects on linguistic structure of language change, we can confirm that there is nothing dysfunctional about the process.

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in Europe (ICLaVE 3), Amsterdam, June 2005

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