

## ATHEMATIC PARTICIPLES IN BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE: EVIDENCE FOR SYNCRETISM AS A PARADIGM-DRIVEN PROCESS

Past participles in Brazilian Portuguese (BP) are regularly formed on the thematic stem followed by the morpheme {-d-} and the gender morpheme. The plural morpheme may also be added at the end. The verbs *amar* ‘to love’, *querer* ‘to want’ and *sentir* ‘to feel’, for example, have the participles: *amado*, *querido* (always with an alternation in the theme vowel) and *sentido*.

This is not the only possible scheme for the formation of participles. There are a considerable number of verbs which form participles without a theme vowel or the participle morpheme -d-. An example of that is the verb *aceitar* ‘to accept’, which has the participle *aceito*, besides the regular *aceitado*. While this may still be considered an irregular type, its number has been on the increase, particularly in colloquial spoken BP.

BP does have the cross-linguistically extremely common tendency to regularize irregular verbs. So, irregular participles like *escrito* from *escrever* ‘to write’ may occasionally appear as *escrevido*. However, on the other hand, some regular participles have the opposite tendency to occur in an irregular pattern. For example, verbs like *chegar* ‘to arrive’, which has the regular participle *chegado*, not infrequently occurs in the form *chego*. This is the focus of the present paper.

A striking characteristic of this syncretism is that it must probably be analysed as an instance of directional syncretism in which the past participle mirrors the first person singular present indicative form of the verb. It is, therefore, an instance of the situation mentioned in Baerman (2005, 823), i.e., one which is “clearly systematic and that involve[s] morphosyntactic values so remote from each other that any account in terms of natural classes would void the notion of any explanatory value.” An analysis based on underspecification and defaults would also probably be unfeasible.

An important diachronic factor for the appearance of this kind of syncretism is the fact that participles have a mixed status. They are part of verbal paradigms but they are also adjectives. This fact makes it possible for them to lead a semi-independent life. Some verbs may fall into disuse and have their corresponding participles survive, either as participles or simply as adjectives. This is much less common or even very unusual for other verb forms.

The present paper tracks the diachronic developments that gave rise to this apparently increasing kind of participle in BP. Its ultimate diachronic roots lie in morphomic properties of Latin inflection and word formation (Aronoff 1994). A regular morphomic association between derivationally related forms gave rise to an accidental identity within an inflectional paradigm, which was then reinterpreted as systematic and is gradually being extended. Again, as Baerman (2005) claims, an indicator of systematicity is the diachronic extension of a syncretic pattern. I will show that this process is the result not of an accidental *phonological* homophony that was reinterpreted as systematically morphological. Instead, all the phases that have led to this state of affairs have been morphologically determined throughout its history.