

SOME REMARKS ON FORMS OF ADDRESS LOOKING AT *VÓS* AND *VOCÊS* PARADIGMS IN PORTUGUESE MUNICIPAL CAMPAIGN DOCUMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Forms of address are a complex subject in European Portuguese (EP) (Cintra 1972; Carreira 2001; Hammermüller 2004; Aguiar & Paiva 2017; Duarte & Marques 2019; Lara-Bermejo & Guilherme 2021 among others). Taking into account the division in Cintra (1972) – nominal, pronominal and verbal forms of address – we try to contribute to the discussion related to the contemporary productions of EP speakers, especially concerning the *vós* and *vocês* paradigms forms. In order to do that, we gathered some documents produced in the last municipal campaign. No explicit subjects (not only *vós* but also *vocês* – sometimes seen as a natural replacement) and a propensity to verbal forms and nominal forms (demonyms) stand out. Additionally, gender marks also stand out. We do not disregard the limitations caused by the *corpus*' shortness.

Keywords: Forms of Address; Municipal campaign documents; You (2PP) / You (3PP); Variation.

RESUMO

As formas de tratamento são uma área complexa no Português Europeu (PE) (Cintra 1972; Carreira 2001; Hammermüller 2004; Aguiar & Paiva 2017; Duarte & Marques 2019; Lara-Bermejo & Guilherme 2021 entre outros). Assumindo-se a divisão morfossintática presente em Cintra (1972) – nominais, pronominais e verbais –, procura-se aqui contribuir para a discussão sobre produções contemporâneas de falantes de PE, mais especificamente no que diz respeito ao uso de formas dos paradigmas *vós* e *vocês*. Para tal, reuniram-se documentos dirigidos aos eleitores da mais recente campanha autárquica. Destaca-se a ausência de sujeitos pronominais (não só do *vós* como também do *vocês* – por vezes indicado como uma espécie de substituto natural) e a preferência por formas de tratamento verbais ou de construções nominais com gentílicos. Além disto, nota-se a preocupação com a expressão da marcação de género. Não se negligencia que a curta dimensão da amostra não sustenta generalizações.

Palavras-chave: Formas de Tratamento; Documentos de Campanha Autárquica; *Vós*; *Vocês*; Variação.

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Introduction

Forms of address are a complex subject in European Portuguese (EP) (Cintra 1972: 9). That idea and that theme are also present in other studies, to which we are going to return in *Forms of Address in Portuguese – a few notes about *vós* and *vocês** section. This paper does not take an in-depth look into the historical path of pronouns of address in EP (cf. Lara-Bermejo & Guilherme 2021) but rather recalls what has been pointed out about the address to plural subjects in order to leave some proper framework.

Forms of address, based on the universal need to designate ourselves and others¹, are an interesting topic because, among other things (as, for instance, efficient identification of the subjects in the communication process), their adequate use allows us to preserve our and other's faces (Duarte & Marques 2019: 237) "They contribute to understanding how speakers regard their interlocutors, throughout the interaction, the place they are attributed and how they place themselves in comparison (Marques 2016, Marques, Duarte & Seara 2019)" (Duarte & Marques in press). Furthermore, "the forms of address in Portuguese society in the last few decades have changed dramatically"² (Duarte & Marques in press). So we believe they are indeed on the linguistic agenda for EP.

With that value and complexity in mind and aiming to contribute to the discussion about forms of address in Contemporary European Portuguese (CEP), we decided to gather some documents created to present the municipal candidates and their ideas to the electors of a council. We thought it interesting to analyse those documents as they are significant

¹ We remind here what is said by Carreira (2004): "La designation de l'autre et de soi-même se présente comme un inévitable linguistique quelle que soit la langue. Cette catégorie sémantico-conceptuelle à laquelle correspondent de multiples solutions linguistiques peut ainsi être envisagée comme un universel." (Carreira 2004: 1)

² About these changes, see, for instance, Gouveia (2008) "Efetivamente, em razão das rápidas transformações que o mundo sofre, Portugal incluído, e das políticas de globalização, muitas das formações sociais dadas como definitivas têm sido quebradas e alteradas." (Gouveia 2008: 92) e Faraco ([1996] 2017) "se uma sociedade passou ou está passando por rápidas mudanças que se refletem nas relações interpessoais possíveis, pode-se esperar que mudanças lingüísticas na área do tratamento venham a ocorrer, com possíveis consequências para outros aspectos da estrutura da língua." (Faraco [1996] 2017: 117). About the relation between social changes and language see Bakhtin & Voloshinov (1973: 19), mentioned by Faraco ([1996] 2017: 117), and also studies as Oliveira (1996), where the author presents a reflection about the FA produced by students from two different but geographically close universities, one in Portugal other in Spain.

samples of a typically addressed discourse. In *Methodology*, we explain the selection and collection process. In *Results and Discussion*, we analyse the collected data (not only in search of a possible geographic view but also in search of a generic reflection about the current production of elements from *vós* and *vocês* paradigms), on the path of empirical studies. In the *Conclusion* section, we outline some considerations we think are adequate, and we present some ideas as an open door for further papers.

1. Forms of Address in Portuguese – a few notes about *vós* and *vocês*

Using acceptable forms of address is very important to save face (Brown & Levinson 1987) in a social interaction (cf. Duarte & Marques 2019: 237), so we look at the forms selected by speakers, where it is possible to make an interpretation related, for instance, to politeness (Leech 1983) or power and solidarity (Brown & Gilman 1960). As pointed out by Hajek, Kretzenbacher & Lagerberg (2013: 1), “The choice of address forms is a way of positioning both speaker and addressee in their mutual social field of interaction (cf. Carbaugh 1996: 143; Svennevig 1999: 19), thus making a specific social distance between the interlocutors”. In this paper, we will not try to cover all Forms of Address in Portuguese – as it would be a challenging job for a small paper (if we consider the number of possibilities in nominal forms, for instance) nor study the types of Forms of Address in this kind of campaign documents and its pragmatic interpretations. We will attempt to look specifically at the problematic related to the production of Forms of Address with elements from *vós* and *vocês* paradigms. Therefore, we recall here some thoughts made by different authors in this regard, and we set aside the problematic of choosing the most adequate form of address according to the communication purposes.

The pronoun *vós*, almost inexistent in standard EP, with some oratorical exceptions (Cintra 1972: 67), is nowadays seen, in a sense, “with some vitality” (Duarte & Marques in press) and not vanished, as someone might think looking at Portuguese for Foreigners’ books published in Portugal – an observation made by Manole (2021: 131).¹ Duarte & Marques (in press) say that “the uses of *vós* are not limited to dialectal uses” and that “to explain and

¹ These observations take only the plural perspective; that is to say, we will not look here to the use of *vós* as a possible form for the second person singular. More about *vós* as the second person singular can be found in, among others, Cintra (1972), Cook (2001), Poutain (2003).

understand the uses of *vós*, we must take into account dialectal influences, language registers, the status of the interlocutors, the discourse genres, and the degree of formality” (Duarte & Marques in press). So it is not, therefore, difficult to understand that the discourse genre might influence, in part, the forms selected. In that way, it is expected that forms of address in texts produced in political campaigns show a balanced level of proximity and deference since candidates are trying to get the electors’ sympathy and show closeness with them. Despite the observations about the vitality of *vós*, other authors point out that it is used in EP only in the north (cf. Aguiar & Paiva 2017; Lara-Bermejo & Guilherme 2021). At this point, it is essential to note that both authors – the ones saying that *vós* has some vitality and the other ones saying that it only exists in northern regions – are specifically expressing observations about the pronoun *vós* in its subject position, not about the other elements from its paradigm. With this in mind, we underline here the crucial notion of the diversity concerning syntactic position: subject position and complement position, for instance, influence the production of different elements from different paradigms (cf. Aguiar & Paiva 2017: 149; Lara-Bermejo & Guilherme 2021: 57) so looking at forms of address is not a straightforward thing. One thing is to speak about the elements from the paradigms corresponding to subject forms, and another, quite different, is to speak about complement forms of the same paradigm. In papers such as, for instance, Aguiar & Paiva (2017), we see that sometimes mixed productions happen, and that works as evidence of a change in progress.

Regarding *vocês*, it is important to note that a total established acceptance/use of that form is not unanimous (cf. Lara-Bermejo & Guilherme 2021; Duarte & Marques 2021)¹, contradicting the inflated assumption that *vós* is simply being replaced by *vocês*. Beyond that consideration about the pronoun in subject position, it is essential, as above, to retain that it is not the same to speak about the acceptance of the element *vocês* and the other elements from his paradigm – for instance, *lhes*, in complement position. We leave here some examples to illustrate our words:

Table 1. Examples of productions related to both paradigms.

¹ In Duarte e Marques (2021: 22) we can find a speaker’s Facebook post where, funnily, is mentioned a social movement called “Movimento Recuperativo da Segunda Pessoa do Plural” – Movement to recover the 2PP and to defend the refusal of *você*s. We do not develop an analysis over *você*, but its acceptance is not consensual, as works like Hammermüller (1980) show.

Examples of possible productions	Vós paradigm	Vocês paradigm
<i>Vós sabeis</i> o que quero. (You know what I want.)	X	
<i>Sabeis</i> o que quero. ([You] know what I want.)	X	
Vou dizer- <i>vos</i> o que quero. (I will tell you what I want.)	X	
Vou <i>convosco</i> . (I will go with you.)	X	
<i>Vocês sabem</i> o que quero. (You know what I want.)		X
<i>Sabem</i> o que quero. ([You/They] know what I want.)		X
Vou dizer- <i>lhes</i> o que quero. (I will tell them what I want.)		X
Vou <i>com vocês</i> . (I will go with you.)		X

In the type of texts analysed here, inside the spectrum of documents produced to present political candidates and their ideas to electors, we expect to find essentially three things – designation of the allocutary, mechanisms to induce proximity and empathy and a claim for the addressee’s vote. Taking the previous said into account we will analyse the data bearing in mind Cintra (1972) big division inside the Forms of Address theme: nominal forms (example: – E como faço isso? – *O senhor* sabe muito bem como fazer.), verbal forms (examples: *Sabeis* bem o que fazer. *Sabem* bem o que fazer. *Sabes* bem o que fazer. *Sabe* bem o que fazer.) and pronominal forms (examples: *Vós* sabeis bem o que fazer. *Vocês* sabem bem o que fazer. *Tu* sabes bem o que fazer. *Você* sabe bem o que fazer.) (Cintra 1972: 12)¹ Moreover, the observations in Carreira (2002) about the three major types to designate someone linguistically: elocutive (EU-I; WE-NÓS); allocutives (TU/VOCÊ-YOU; VÓS/VOCÊS-YOU) and delocutives (ELE/ELA-HE/SHE; ELES/ELAS-THEY). Of course, we do not forget the intersections and possible overlaps between the two classifications, given some characteristics of the language here in analysis – for instance, the possibility of null subjects, which can create doubts about an allocutive or delocutive intention.

¹ In that same work, Cintra (1972) also reminds us that the pronominal and verbal do not tell us anything specific about the subject, whilst nominal forms always show something characteristic (gender, social status, for instance) (Cintra 1972: 12-13).

2. Methodology

As we wished to collect the documents sent, in 2021, by the two most voted parties in the 2017 municipal elections in every council district capital, we have sent an email to the respective parties sections asking for the documents mentioned above. We were forced to search the parties' sites due to bureaucratic delays beyond our control (that took us longer than expected). As we searched, we understood that it would be a fruitless job because many parties do not show the documents sent/delivered to electors on their sites. Thereby, short on time, we have decided to collect the documents related to only ten city councils (from north and central north of the country)¹. On the whole, we were able to gather a corpus of 28 documents. In the following table, we show the type of documents gathered. Besides, we also add some marks on the presence (Y – yes) or lack (N – no) of each element from the *vós* or *vocês* paradigms. Every time we found no data related to what we were explicitly searching for, we left some generic remarks about things we think are relevant (those remarks are also displayed in the *Results and Discussion* section).

Table 2. Type of collected documents and presence/lack of elements from *vós* or *vocês* paradigms

Winning Party/ Movement in the 2017 election	City Council	2nd place Party /Movement in the 2017 election
-- ¹	Aveiro	Electoral program (N) Team's presentation (N)
Electoral program (N)	Braga	Candidate's message (Y)
Candidate's message (Y)	Bragança	Infomail (Y) Infomail (Y)
Candidate's message / program (Y)	Castelo Branco	Personal presentation letter / Candidate's message(Y)
Infomail (Y) Electoral program(N)	Coimbra	Electoral program (N) Presentation of the election manifesto speech (Y)
Electoral program (N) Electoral manifesto (N)	Guarda	Electoral program (N) Personal presentation letter (Y)

¹ We will try to show the other 10 in future work.

Electoral manifesto (N)	Porto	Candidate's message (N) Candidate's message with the electoral program (N)
Electoral program (N)	Viana do Castelo	Electoral program (N) Candidacy presentation speech (Y)
Electoral manifesto (N)	Vila Real	Candidate's message (N)
Personal presentation letter (Y) Electoral program (N)	Viseu	Electoral program (Y)

3. Results and discussion

Firstly, we present in the following table a generic view of the collected data:

Table 3. Collected data.

City	Forms of the <i>vós</i> and <i>vocês</i> paradigms								Obs.	
	Yes							No		
	Subject		Object		Verb		Poss. Pron./Det.			
	Vós	Vocês	vos	lhes	2PP	3PP	2PP			3PP
Aveiro (1)										-
Aveiro (2)									X	3PS ² 2PS ³
Braga (1)									X	3PS ⁴ 2PS ⁵
Braga (2)			5 ⁶			2 ⁷				3PS e 2PP/3PP ⁸ 2PP
Bragança (1)							1 ⁹			2PP 2PP/3PP ¹⁰
Bragança (2)						1 ¹¹				2PP/3PP ¹² 3PS ¹³ 2PS ¹⁴
C a s t e l o Branco (1)									X	2PP/3PP ¹⁵ 3PS ¹⁶
C a s t e l o Branco (2)			2 ¹⁷				1 ¹⁸			2PP/3PP ¹⁹ 2PP
Coimbra (1)							1 ²⁰			2PP 2PS ²¹ 3PS ²² 2PP/3PP ²³
Coimbra (2)							1 ²⁴			2PP

Guarda (1)									X	3PS ²⁵
Guarda (2)						4 ²⁶				3PP ²⁷
Porto (1)									X	3PS ²⁸
Porto (2)									X	3PS ²⁹
Viana do Castelo (1)									X	2PS ³⁰
Viana do Castelo (2)			1 ³¹				1 ³²			2PP 3PS ³³
Vila Real (1)									X	2PP/3PP ³⁴
Vila Real (2)									X	3PS ³⁵
Viseu (1)									X	2PP/3PP ³⁶ 2PS ³⁷
Viseu (2)									X	3PS ³⁸

Now, a specific view:

We see that there are no productions of *vós* or *vocês*. The explicit subject with one of these pronouns is inexistent in the *corpus*. Instead of “Vós + 2PP Verb” or “Vocês + 3PP Verb” (both grammatical in PEC), we can observe productions like “[–] + 3PP Verb” (cf. footnote 17). Looking at the data, we can see a clear choice to use demonyms as forms of address (especially with the well-known form *caro/cara/caros/caras* – *dear*). Knowing the type of text we selected, this is not a surprise. However, we think a point should not be ignored: traditionally, demonyms are used as the initial form of address and then, in the body text, pronouns take place. In contrast, most of the texts of this *corpus* have no pronominal choices but have the selection of the demonyms throughout the message (cf., for instance, footnotes 40 and 42). That is to say, the authors preferred to choose nominal forms of address to retake the allocutionary notion throughout the text.

In relation to the object position (*-vos* or *-lhes*), we can see that, although, with poor representation (explained by the use of the formula “DET+ demonyms” mentioned above), the element from *the vós* paradigm prevails over *-lhes*, and there is a similar *vós* paradigm choice scenario when it comes to possessive pronouns and/or determiners. On the contrary, in the verbal forms of address, we see the growth of the elements from *the vocês* paradigm.

There are also a few cases of elements from the singular paradigm

production, for example, in footnotes 8, 34 and 36, but that would be analysed inside the duality addressee singular-plural and the pragmatic implications of that choice, that we do not specifically take here.¹ However, we do not hide some curiosity finding the duality present in some of the analysed documents: “*Vota X*” (2PS verbal) and “*Conheça as nossas propostas*” (3PS verbal) are written in the same document, so the addressee is faced either as the second person either as the third person. Notwithstanding this duality, we should emphasise that every time this occurs, the second person comes in the imperative key-phrase “*Vota X*” (instead of *Vote X* – 3PS)” and the 3PS in the body text “*Conheça as nossas propostas*” (instead of “*Conhece as nossas propostas*” -2PS). This alternation is probably chosen to catch the attention of electors from a broader spectrum (older and younger, we might say).²

Another issue not related to the *vós-vocês* confrontation is the gender question, which is visible across almost all the documents (we request some attention to the bizarre production of “C@ro amig@” where the first “@” is misplaced). Furthermore, if we look closely, we will notice that the majority of the gender tags (6 out of 9) firstly refer to the feminine form: Estimada e estimado; Caras amigas e caros amigos, etc., when the form “Caros Amigos” used to be undoubtedly (and peacefully) acceptable to embrace all electors.

Conclusions

We believe the collected data only allows us to do some limited comments and no extrapolations. The inexistence of explicit subjects appears to be hand in hand with the idea present in Aguiar & Paiva (2017: 137) about the propensity to produce null subjects in CEP. We think we might also speak about a tendency to use demonyms to take – if we want to get back to Carreira’s (2002) division: elocutives, delocutives and alocutives – a typical delocutive form “they” with an allocutive feature. Of course, speaking about the particular case of this kind of text, headed to electors of a specific council. In general cases, we would only underline the confirmation of the idea of the propensity of null subjects, reminding here the zero degree of deference dimension in Carreira (2002: 175) and also the Hammermüller’s

¹ It would take two parts: first, if it is chosen a singular or a plural addressee, and second, if it is singular, 2PS or 3PS, that is to say “*Vota*” or “*Vote*”.

² We only underline the presence of both 2PS and 3PS in the same text. However, with a lot more data, it would be interesting to see if the 2PS is always used by the same party, reminding here the considerations left in the section “Group style with the pronouns of address” in Brown & Gilman (1960).

reflection on “L’adresse verbale comme instrument formel d’évitement” (Hammermüller 2004: 7). We should also note that there is no production of null subjects with 2PP verbs, giving someplace for the decay of the fifth person idea. Conversely, in relation to the object position (*-vos* or *-lhes*), we can see that, although, with poor representation, the element from the *vós* paradigm prevails over *-lhes*, which reminds us of what is also written in Aguiar & Paiva (2017:149) and also in Duarte & Marques (2019:246) where the authors underline the differences of production depending on the syntactic position and the maintenance of the elements from *vós* paradigm.

We think it is not possible to draw any conclusions about a geographic reading with the collected data (we would need more and broader data). Nevertheless, we think it is curious to observe the presence of elements from the *vós* paradigm in Castelo Branco (although – we are aware – in the object position, considered the most resistant form of the *vós* paradigm nowadays (cf. Aguiar & Paiva 2017: 149)) and elements from the *vocês* in Braga and Bragança, as this could be seen as a tiny clash with the traditional idea that the *vós* paradigm only endures in the northern regions (in particular in Braga and Bragança). Nevertheless, we once more emphasise the scarcity of the data and the consequent impossibility of taking the points above as substantial. In fact, we find that the collected data did not really work as assertive evidence to this or that in the specific confrontation *vós-vocês* unless in a way we might linguistically translate like this: speakers do not express “*vós*” but at the same time did not replace it by “*vocês*”; they found other constructions (namely the demononyms in allocutive use) to head electors, so something is not pacific regarding that alleged natural replacement, and it should be better documented.

Despite the scarcity aforesaid, we believe the data told us something about gender questions that we think are going to be more and more prominent in the following times in texts like those we analysed due to the changes taking place in Portuguese society (following here the observations mentioned on our second footnote).

We think the collection of documents from every parish would be even more interesting (because it would be more extensive and closer to the speakers’ real *corpus*) than the work done here; however, it was impossible to do in our time window. We underpin that idea on the fact that, in many cases, the linguistic information contained in those texts is less standardised and closer to the actual speakers’ production.

As we have mentioned above, this work is just a tiny sample of a possible

search for the production of the elements from *vós* and *vocês* paradigms in CEP, and it should be seen like that and nothing more.

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Tables footnotes

¹ We tried to get in touch with the contact person several times (calls and emails), but we received no answer.

² “Preocupamo-nos com a sua felicidade, com o seu bem-estar e com a sua qualidade de vida. **Junte-se a nós e venha** fazer parte deste projeto!”

³ “**Vota X**”.

⁴ “**Caro(a)Bracarense,**

Ao longo dos últimos anos e, em concreto, nos dois atos eleitorais em que merecemos a confiança dos Bracarenses para a condução dos destinos do Nosso Concelho, apresentámos aos Bracarenses um conjunto de propostas, ambiciosas, mas realistas; abrangentes, mas concretas em todas as áreas da governação municipal; ajustadas às necessidades do dia-a-dia, mas alicerçadas numa visão de longo prazo, construída num profícuo diálogo com cidadãos e instituições.”

⁵ “Vota X”

⁶ “É neste contexto que vos quero dizer (...)”; “(...) motivo por que vos escrevo (...)”; “(...) para vos dizer (...)”; “(...) para vos dar (...)” e “(...) dizer-vos (...)”.

⁷ “(...) mas deixem-me (...)”; “(...) quero muito que venham comigo (...)”.

⁸ “**C@ro [sic] amig@ e camaradas**”

⁹ “Sei que com o vosso apoio vamos (...)”.

¹⁰ “**Caras amigas, Caros amigos**”

¹¹ “**Podem** contar comigo (...)”.

¹² “**Caras Amigas e Caros Amigos**” e “**Caros e Caras Brigantinos**”.

¹³ “**Vote X**”.

¹⁴ “(...) não **fique** em casa. (...) Sem receios, não **faça** parte da abstenção, **venha** votar (...). **Junte-se** a este projeto (...). (...). **Acredite**, é possível (...)”.

¹⁵ “**Estimad@s** Albicastrenses”.

¹⁶ “**Vote X**”.

¹⁷ “(...) para vos ouvir e vos fazer acreditar.”

¹⁸ “Contamos **convosco**.”

¹⁹ “**Caros amigos**”.

²⁰ “(...)para isso apelo à vossa participação, (...)”.

²¹ “**Vota X**”.

²² “**Vote X**”.

²³ “**Caras e Caros concidadãos**”.

²⁴ “(...) obrigado a todos e a todas pela vossa presença (...)”

²⁵ “**Vote X**”.

²⁶ “**Contem** com a minha ambição. **Contem** com a minha determinação. **Contem** com a minha audácia. **Contem** com a minha capacidade de diálogo.”

²⁷ “**Aos Guardenses**”.

²⁸ “(...) contamos com o **seu** voto”.

²⁹ “**Caro/a** Portuense”; “**Caro (a)** Portuense”; “**Pode** consultá-las”; “(...) a decisão é **sua**. Não **desista** do Porto. O Porto precisa de **si**.” e “conto **consigo**”.

³⁰ “O **teu** voto. A **tua** voz. Acredita no teu voto”, “**Vota X**”.

³¹ “(...) quero lançar-vos o desafio (...)”.

³² “(...) estarei ao vosso lado (...)”.

³³ “Vote X”.

³⁴ “**Caras amigas e caros amigos**” “Convidamos os **vila-realenses** a conhecerem (...)”.

³⁵ “**Cara(o) amiga(o)**”.

³⁶ “**Caras e caros** Viseenses: É com enorme honra que nos dirigimos a todos os **Viseenses**”.

³⁷ “**Receba caro Concidadão** os mais sinceros cumprimentos, saudações amigas e a consideração pessoal, com a confiança que nos **irá** ajudar, como sempre, a fazer crescer, harmoniosamente, Viseu”.

³⁸ “**Estimada e Estimado** Viseense”; “**Vote X**”.