

Constraints on the use of subjunctive in Brazilian Portuguese: a production study

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Much literature has reported that in Brazilian Portuguese (**BP**) indicative verbs forms may be used in a sentence where one would expect the subjunctive (cf. Albuquerque and Farias 2017, Marques & de Oliveira 2016). Contexts where subjunctive is expected include complement clauses of (cf. Marques 2013): i) non-epistemic implicative verbs (such as *conseguir* ‘manage’, *lamentar* ‘regret’); ii) non-epistemic non-implicative verbs (volition verbs such as *querer* ‘want’ and directive verbs such as *mandar* ‘order’) and weak epistemic verbs (low degree of belief, *duvidar* ‘doubt’). In European Portuguese (**EP**), previous studies (Jesus 2014) have shown that indicatives are favored in [+epistemic, +veridical] contexts, whereas the subjunctive is selected in [-epistemic] contexts (both in implicative [+veridical] and non-implicative [-veridical]) and in [+epistemic, -veridical] contexts (Table 1, EP column). The goal of this paper is to determine what triggers the use of subjunctive in BP, namely whether BP speakers are sensitive to both epistemicity and veridicality in the distribution of subjunctive; also, we investigate whether education has an impact in the production of subjunctives in BP. **Study** 40 Brazilian Portuguese speakers participated in this task (adults with higher education (**HE**): 20 participants; adults with primary education (**PE**): 20 participants). The task consisted of a production task where the participants heard four stories (supported by pictures) and had to complete some of the sentences in the story. Example: Experimenter: (...) But the cat did not give up and so he wanted to try again. He said – “Throw it again, this time I will catch the ball.” And the dog answered – “I doubt it!”; Stimulus sentence: O cão duvidava que . . . ‘The dog doubted that . . .’; Expected answer: . . . (que) o gato apanhasse a bola. that the cat catch^{SUBJ} the ball ‘. . . (that) the cat would catch the ball.’. A total of six conditions were manipulated: three where the subjunctive was expected (Table 1: A, B, C), one where subjunctive or indicative were possible [depending on discourse context] (Table 1, D) and two where the indicative was expected (Table 1, E (strong epistemic verbs) and F (fiction verbs)). Each participant answered 2 training items, 24 test items and 12 fillers. **Results (higher education group)** in comparison to the EP speakers, BP speakers presented lower ratings of subjunctives, particularly for weak epistemic contexts. **Results (primary school group)** lower numbers of subjunctive production were observed in comparison with the EP and the higher education groups in all conditions in particular for weak epistemic (C) and non-epistemic implicative verbs (B). **Conclusion** the results suggest that both education and properties of the context impact the use of subjunctive forms. [-epistemic, -veridical] contexts are more likely to trigger subjunctive in all groups, even among the primary education BP speakers. Acquisition studies with L1 and heritage speakers also suggest that this condition elicit more subjunctives than the other conditions where subjunctives are expected (Flores et al. 2017, Jesus 2014). As such, it seems that some of the grammatical conditions that trigger subjunctives will be impacted by input or level of education (B, C, D) while others won’t (A). **Table 1.** Percentage of ‘Subjunctive’ responses (columns with two numbers = two different verbs presented different patterns).

Condition	Expected answer	EP	BP (HE)	BP (PE)
- epistemic – veridical (A)	Subjunctive	100%	90% - 100%	65% - 90%
- epistemic + veridical (B)	Subjunctive	100%	70% - 90%	50% - 65%
+ epistemic - veridical (C)	Subjunctive	95% - 100%	60% - 80%	38% - 49%
+ epistemic, ± veridical (D)	Subjunctive/Indicative	55%	30%	20%
+epistemic, +veridical (E)	Indicative	0%	3% - 10%	3%
+epistemic, + veridical (F)	Indicative	0%	0%	0%

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