

## *Preposition-determiner contractions in European Portuguese*

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In European Portuguese (EP), the prepositions *a* ‘to’, *em* ‘in’, *de* ‘of’ and *por* ‘by’ contract non-optionally with a wide range of determiners:

- Definite determiners: *o* (masc sg), *a* (fem sg), *os* (masc pl), *as* (fem pl)
- Indefinite determiners: *um* (masc sg), *uma* (fem sg), *uns* (masc pl), *umas* (fem pl)
- Demonstrative determiners:
  - proximal: *este* (masc sg), *esta* (fem sg), *estes* (masc pl), *estas* (fem pl)
  - medial: *esse* (masc sg), *essa* (fem sg), *esses* (masc pl), *essas* (fem pl)
  - distal: *aquele* (masc sg), *aquela* (fem sg), *aqueles* (masc pl), *aquelas* (fem pl)

While the contracted preposition-determiner forms in EP include a more diverse range of determiners than in other Romance languages (Napoli&Nevis 1987), there are also combinatorial restrictions. As shown in Table 1, whereas definite determiners attach to any of the four prepositions, indefinite and demonstrative determiners only combine fully with *em* and *de*, and only partly with *a*. Note that these combinations, like French *au* and *du*, do not exhibit a non-contracted preposition-determiner counterpart (Miller 1992, Abeillé et al 2006; Cabredo Hofherr 2012).

		PREPOSITIONS			
		<i>a</i> ‘to’	<i>em</i> ‘in’	<i>de</i> ‘of’	<i>por</i> ‘by’
DEFINITE DETERMINERS	<i>o/s</i>	<i>ao/s</i>	<i>no/s</i>	<i>do/s</i>	<i>po/s</i>
	<i>a/s</i>	<i>à/s</i>	<i>na/s</i>	<i>da/s</i>	<i>pa/s</i>
INDEFINITE DETERMINERS	<i>um, uns</i>	-	<i>num, nuns</i>	-	-
	<i>uma/s</i>		<i>numa/s</i>		
DEMONSTRATIVE DETERMINERS	<i>este/s</i>	-	<i>neste/s</i>	<i>deste/s</i>	-
	<i>esta/s</i>		<i>nesta/s</i>	<i>desta/s</i>	
	<i>esse/s</i>	-	<i>nesse/s</i>	<i>desse/s</i>	-
	<i>essa/s</i>		<i>nessa/s</i>	<i>desa/s</i>	
	<i>aquele/s</i>	<i>àquele/s</i>	<i>naquele/s</i>	<i>daquele/s</i>	-
	<i>aquela/s</i>	<i>àquela/s</i>	<i>naquela/s</i>	<i>daquela/s</i>	

Table 1 Non-optional preposition-determiner combinations in EP

In this presentation we show that there is empirical evidence strongly suggesting that the preposition-determiner contractions in Table 1 are not derived through a phonological (postlexical) rule.

a) The fused forms do not follow from productive rules of phonology, as there is no phonological rule in contemporary EP which would produce the changes observed with the preposition ‘em’: *em + o > no* (but *sem + o* ‘without + DET’ > *sem o*).

b) The linear adjacency between a preposition and a determiner is insufficient for contraction to apply. If the preposition is followed by an NP complement, contraction is obligatory (1a). If the preposition is followed by subject NP of an infinitival clause (1b), the string cannot contract:

- (1) a. *A Maria tem medo **da** escuridão.*  
*the Mary has fear **of-the** dark*  
*Maria is afraid of the dark.*  
 b. *A Maria tem medo **de a** luz se apagar.*  
*the Mary has fear **of the** lights refl turn-off*  
*Maria is afraid that the lights will turn off.*

Evidence that the preposition-determiner string in (1b) constitutes a non-contracted sequence is provided by the rule of glide insertion, which applies optionally between the preposition and the determiner in (2b) but not within (2a) (Vigário 2003).

- (2) a. *A Maria tem medo **d\*[j]a** escuridão.*  
 b. *A Maria tem medo **de [j] a** luz se apagar.*

c) Non-contracted prepositions *a*, *de*, *em* and *por* can take wide scope over coordinated NPs (3a-4a), unlike contracted preposition-determiner which cannot (3b-4b) (Ximenes&Nunes 2009):

- (3) a. *Todos gostamos **de** baunilha e (de) chocolate.*  
*all like **of** vanilla and chocolate*  
*We all like vanilla and chocolate.*  
 b. *\*Todos gostamos **do** Natal e **o** Carnaval.*  
*all like **of-the** Christmas and **the** Carnival*  
*We all like Christmas and Carnival.*
- (4) a. *Ela acredita **em** fadas e (em) unicórnios.*  
*she believes **in** fairies and unicorns*  
*She believes in fairies and in unicorns.*  
 b. *\*Ela acredita na Fada **dos** Dentes e **o** Pai Natal.*  
*she believes **in-the** Tooth Fairy and **the** Santa Claus*  
*She believes in the Tooth Fairy and in Santa Claus*

To account for the facts presented so far, we put forward the view that the preposition-determiner contractions in Table 1 are best analysed as special word units (i.e., prepositions): a) they are Ps that introduce an N' complement rather than an NP and b) they realize the syntactic and semantic properties of the determiners (Hinrichs 1986, Napoli&Nevis 1987, Abeillé et al 2006). We will also attempt to address a new question namely whether special prepositions differ cross-linguistically with respect to the opacity/transparency of their morphophonological structure, which would suggest that some (though not necessarily all) might effectively constitute inflected prepositions.

#### References:

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