The Gerund in Angolan, Mozambican, and São Toméan Portuguese: Influence of European Portuguese and Patterns of Variation

varieties of Portuguese; gerund; gerundive constructions; corpus linguistics

Portuguese is undergoing an accelerated process of nativization in three African varieties (AVPs): Angola (AP), Mozambique (MP), and São Tomé and Príncipe (STP). Studies have accompanied this evolution of these AVPs that focus on language acquisition, variation, and linguistic change, particularly emphasizing syntactic aspects. These studies aim to highlight the distinctions between these varieties and the standard European Portuguese (EP), as well as to assess the influence of the contact between AVPs and local creoles and Bantu languages.

Recent studies (e.g. Hagemeijer et al., 2022a) suggest that AVPs exhibit characteristics that are only partially distinct from EP, which contrasts with earlier research based on older data (e.g. Chavagne, 2005). Additionally, each variety of AVPs appears to possess specific peculiarities, indicating that AVPs should not be regarded as homogeneous (Gonçalves, 2013).

This study seeks to address some gaps found in previous research on APVs while also contributing to a broader theoretical discussion on converbs (cf. Haspelmath, 1995). We aim to characterize the grammatical constructions in which gerundive forms are utilized in AVPs.

The corpus we analyzed was collected from the PALMA project corpora (http://gamma.clul.ul.pt/CQPweb/; Hagemeijer et al., 2022b) and includes data from AP, MP, and STP. Our analysis aimed to: (i) identify the contexts in which gerundive forms occur (Lobo, 2003, 2006, 2013); (ii) pinpoint critical areas of the AVPs where divergence exists when compared to standard EP; and (iii) characterize these critical areas from both a syntactic and semantic perspective.

A preliminary analysis was conducted on 120 examples from each variety (refer to Table 1 for the number of informants and their first language). This analysis reveals that gerundive forms are utilized in constructions also found in EP. Most commonly, these include adjunct clauses, verbal complexes, gerunds of enunciation, and predicative gerunds (cf. Table 2 and (1)-(4)). In our sample, we observed a correlation between the number of L1 speakers and the use of gerunds in ways similar to EP. For instance, the variety with the fewest L1 speakers, MP (12 speakers), shows the least number of constructions at 45.8%. In contrast, STP, which has the highest number of L1 speakers at 27, exhibits the largest proportion of constructions at 77.5%, while AP falls in between. These findings support the idea that, as the nativization of AVPs progresses, these varieties are becoming more aligned with EP.

Some instances of divergence from EP (and Brazilian Portuguese) have been identified, with 26 cases in AP, 33 cases in MP, and 10 cases in STP. Notably, we found several instances where infinitive forms were replaced by gerund forms, particularly in complementation contexts (see (5)) or within verbal complexes (see (6)). There were also occasional cases of participle replacement (see (7)). This variation exists not only between different language varieties but also among individual speakers within the same variety (microvariation), highlighting the importance of conducting a case-by-case analysis of the corpus data.

variety (inform.)	AP (26)	MP (25)	STP (27)
	Portuguese (18); Quimbundo (6); Umbundo (1); n/a (1)	Portuguese (8); Changana (5); Changana+Portuguese (4); Changana+Ronga (1); Chope (3); Quitonga (1); Ronga (1)	Portuguese (26); Portuguese+Cape-verdean. (1)

Table 1: informants L1

Similarity to EP (total)	AP: 60% (72)	MP: 45,8% (55)	STP: 77,5% (93)
verbal complex	45,8% (33)	36,4% (20)	48,4% (45)
adjunct clause	30,5% (22)	34,5% (19)	29% (27)
enunciation gerund	15,3% (11)	18,9% (10)	9,7% (9)
predicative gerund	7% (5)	3,6% (2)	9,7% (9)

Table 2: **main** contexts of gerund forms in AVPs

Examples

(1) **foi-se encontrando** várias coisas que nunca se viu no mundo (AP) (verbal complex)
'We were finding many things that had never been seen in the world'

(2) **mesmo pegando reembolso**, acho que há taxa de cancelamento (STP) (adjunct clause)
'Even if you get a refund, I think there is a cancellation fee'

(3) **falando do alambamento como um valor cultural em Luanda**,… (AP) enunciation gerund)
'talking about alambamento *as a cultural value in Luanda'*

(4) pessoa **jogando bisca** (STP) (predicative gerund)
'people playing cards'

(5) um curso que eu **queria tirando** era medicina (AP) (cf. "eu queria tirar")
'a course I wanted to take was medicine'

(6) **vou falando** um bocadinho do coiso (MP) (cf. "vou falar")
'I'll talk a little about the thing'

(7) também **tem dando** um grande contributo para o desenvolvimento (AP) (cf. "tem dado")
'it has also made a great contribution to the development'

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