

(D)ONDE in the oral subcorpus of the Reference Corpus of Contemporary Portuguese

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(D)ONDE (where), in Portuguese, is a term that takes on different functions, presenting both morphosyntactic and semantic problems. It may appear with or without an antecedent or preceded, or not, by a preposition or an adverb. It is classified as an interrogative and pronominal adverb, a relative and adverbial pronoun and also as a conjunction.

To begin to answer questions related to this object of analysis, we propose the following problem: what are the morphological and syntactic characteristics of (D)ONDE in contemporary oral European Portuguese? The question hasn't been ignored by linguists, and there are several studies with different methodological frameworks, probably encouraged by the fact that traditional grammar disguises the problem.

According to Hadermann (1993), for example, whose analysis relating to OÙ can be applied to ONDE, it would be inappropriate to analyze it as an adverb, since the definition of adverb is not based on solid criteria. Moreover, an adverb always replaces a prepositional phrase, and always has a stable lexical content. This particle only partially obeys to the first part of the definition of the adverb, because it accepts prepositional roles. The second part, however, does not apply to ONDE, an indeterminate of place that seems to have an indefinite semantic content, to be completed by the context. ONDE also has a foricity that allows for reference to antecedents and answers. In interrogative sentences, ONDE refers to the subsequent statement, the answer, specifying a place. In questions, it is exoforic, since the interlocutor has the necessary knowledge to complete ONDE's "empty" value. In relatives, (D)ONDE is anaphoric, resuming the antecedente in the previous proposition it introduced.

Souza (2003), working with the oral language in the city of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, makes a detailed analysis of WHERE, separating the results obtained in spatial physical values (equivalent to EM QUE), time (QUANDO), notion (abstract space), ownership values (CUJO) and other semantically more abstract values. It also analyzes the foricity of the item, its reference and phrasal contexts (affirmative and interrogative sentences). The author observes that the semantic point of view, ONDE basically maintains its value of physical space. The time value, contrary to what was expected, showed a low percentage of occurrence.

Since there are still not enough studies on this particle in contemporary oral European Portuguese, we propose an analysis of (D)ONDE in the Reference Corpus of Contemporary Portuguese. The CRPC concerns national and regional varieties of Portuguese, and was organized by the Linguistics Center of the University of Lisbon. It is an electronic corpus that includes samples of written and oral discourse. The methodology selected for this work is that of corpus linguistics, represented by authors such as Kennedy (1998) and Sardinha (2004). It is characterized by the analysis with reliability of electronic corpora employing electronic tools. For this study, we collected and analyzed all instances of (D)ONDE (AONDE have not occurred), in 140 interviews made in the seventies. It consists of authentic data that allow generalizations about the functioning of (D)ONDE. For these reasons, it may be considered representative of contemporary European Portuguese.

Through this study, it will be possible in the future to compare European Portuguese with the Brazilian variant, which would result in information that can not be found when analyzing each of the variants individually. We hope to better understand polysemous and polyfunctional (D)ONDE, giving more precision and detail to it. In determining the nature of (D)ONDE, it is inevitable to reflect on subordination, relativization and spatio-temporal location. This research

is part of a larger work in progress, which is to build a framework for derivatives of UBI and UNDE in Romance languages in general.

References

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