

The development of double past participle forms in Portuguese

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Double past participles are an intriguing phenomenon in Portuguese morphosyntax, also known under other names: abundant verbs, athematic participles, *participios duplos*, *participios trancos*.

Verbs in Romance and Germanic languages tend to use identical forms in two contexts: past active compound tenses and the passive, but some Portuguese verbs are an exception to this generalisation.

In morphological terms, the use of identical forms for these distinct functions can be seen as a morpheme ('purely morphological function') (Aronoff 1994, Maiden 2004, 2013).

English examples of the same form being used:

I have eaten the cakes	Active context
The cakes were eaten	Passive context

In Portuguese, most verbs use identical forms in these contexts, although note differences in agreement:

Active context; auxiliary *ter* 'have'

Tenho	comido	os	bolos
have.1SG	eat.PP	the.MPL	cake.MPL

I have been eating the cakes

Passive context; auxiliary *ser* 'be'; past participle agrees in number and gender (like an adjective)

Os	bolos	foram	comidos
the. MPL	cake. MPL	be.PAST.3PL	eat.PP.MPL

The cakes were eaten

Some Portuguese verbs use different past participle forms in the two contexts: (example: Maiden 2013:507)

Active context: Long form ('thematic') participle with no agreement

A	Maria tem	acendido	muitas	luzes
the.FSG	Maria have.3SG	light.PP	many.FPL	light.FPL

Maria has lit many lights

Passive context: Short form ('athematic') participle with number and gender agreement

Muitas	luzes	foram	acesas	pela	Maria
many.FPL	light.FPL	be.PAST.3SG	light.PP.FPL	by.the.FSG	Maria

Many lights were lit by Maria

This is an interesting exception to the morphomic pattern. Exceptions are sometimes claimed to exist in some English verbs: Alex has shaved his head vs. Alex's head was shaven. Not all speakers share this intuition. For those who agree, there may be a distinction in the forms used for more verbal versus more adjectival contexts.

The existence of two past participle forms can be seen as overabundance (two forms in the same paradigm cell). Previous research on the phenomenon in European Portuguese (e.g. Villalva & Almeida 2004) has focused on explaining the synchronic distribution of the two forms, with reference to their underlying structure, or to the prescriptive norm.

The aim of today's talk is to investigate the diachronic development of the different past participle forms across a sample of Portuguese verbs, using corpus data. I consider Latin sources and the different stages of Portuguese, and relate this historical development to patterns seen in modern European Portuguese. I investigate changes in the appearance of the short and long forms of the past participle across verbs and inflection classes.

I consider a sample of ten Portuguese verbs from the *-ar* and *-er* conjugations, chosen because they are relatively high frequency verbs, and there is no commonly used noun identical to the past participle form:

aceitar 'accept', *entregar* 'hand over', *gastar* 'spend', *limpar* 'clean', *matar* 'kill', *pagar* 'pay', *acender* 'light', *eleger* 'choose', *prender* 'arrest', *suspender* 'suspend'

Modern usage patterns (Figure 1)

Long past participle forms are generally dispreferred in the context where they are expected to occur (active periphrases with *ter* 'have'). Inflection class may play a role: the short form more dominant in *-ar* verbs, but the long form is more common in *-er* verbs. There is substantial variation from verb to verb. Source: *Corpus do Português* (Web/Dialects)

Distinct sources of past participle forms (Figure 2)

Some are from distinct Latin verbs (*aceite/aceitado*), while others were innovated at various stages in the history of Portuguese (short forms: *pago* and long forms: *suspendido*). Some verbs are back-formed from adjectives which are reinterpreted as past participles. For example, the Latin adjective *vastus* gives verb *vasto* > Portuguese *gastar* with long past participle *gastado* (distinct from *gasto*). It is hard to trace accurately the early history of the forms.

Some *-ar* verbs have past participles from different lexemes (highlighted in green), but there is no evidence for this in any of the *-er* verbs. Long forms of *-er* verbs are not attested in Latin (highlighted in blue).

Historical corpus data (Figure 3)

The origins of the forms are different across verbs, and the modern usage patterns are quite variable. Both seem to have some patterns along the lines of inflection class. So what happened between the early origins and the present day?

The graph shows the use of long and short past participle forms, in the active context with auxiliary *ter* 'have', in each century from 1200s to 1900s. Source: *Corpus do Português* (Historical/Genres)

The patterns are not straightforward. The number of tokens per verb is often small, especially *limpar* (maximum 4 tokens per century). There is some evidence of declining usage of long forms: *aceitar*, *gastar*. However, there is no straightforward replacement of long forms (although overall usage of long forms is lower now than in the past). There is considerable variation across verbs and across *-er* and *-ar* classes.

Historical corpus data backs up the claim that the long form is being lost: at least for *aceitar*, *gastar*, *limpar*, *pagar*

What could be causing this?

This looks like change by analogy with other verbs which only have one past participle. One analysis is that more verbs are conforming to the usual morphomic pattern: two cells that have past participle function are filled by the same form. Or this can be seen as a reduction of overabundance: two forms in one cell → one cell, one form.

Conclusions

What appears to be a regular, well-understood pattern in synchrony, particularly according to prescriptive accounts, has a complex past. Differing diachronic trajectories provide some motivation for apparent synchronic irregularity. The continued existence of two past participle forms seems to be a quirk of European Portuguese grammar – a persistent trait in the morphology .

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Abbreviations

F=feminine, M=masculine, SG=singular, PL=plural, 1=first person, 3=third person, Adj=adjective, IND=indicative, PP=past participle, V=verb

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Figure 1. Use of long and short past participle forms in active context: modern data

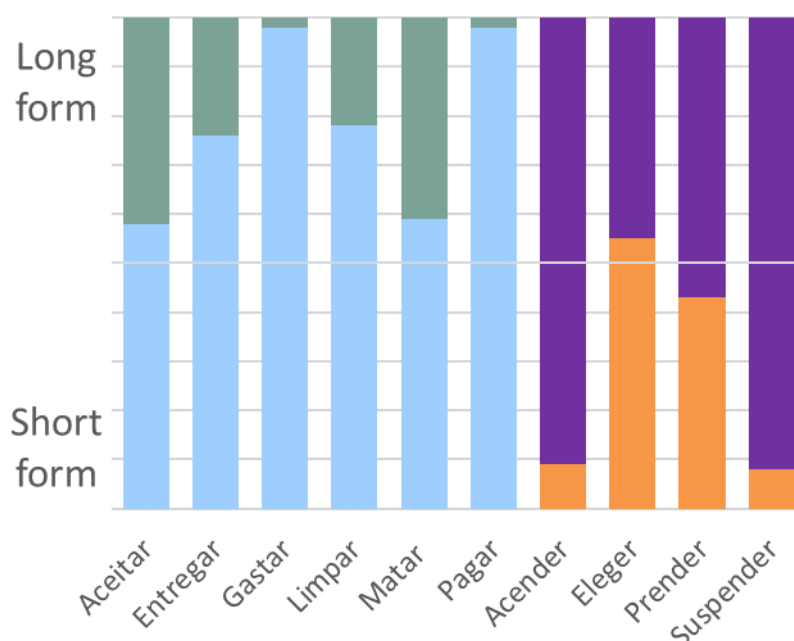


Figure 2. Distinct sources of past participle forms

Portuguese Infinitive	Possible derivation Latin verbs given in 1SG.PR.IND	Long PP form	Possible derivation	Short PP form	Derivation
-ar verbs					
<i>aceitar</i>	< accepto (V) Frequentative form of accipio 'accept'	aceitado	< acceptatus (PP of accepto)	aceite/aceito	< acceptus (PP of accipio)
<i>entregar</i>	? < integro (V) 'renew, restore'	entregado	? < integratus	entregue	? < integer (Adj) 'complete, whole'
<i>gastar</i>	< vasto (V) 'lay waste'	gastado	< vastatus (PP of vasto)	gasto	< vastus (Adj) 'empty' V vasto was originally derived from this Adj
<i>limpar</i>	< limpido (V) 'clean'	limpado	? < limpidatus (PP of limpido)	limpo	< limpidus (Adj) 'clear' V limpido was originally derived from this Adj
<i>matar</i>	? < mactare (V) 'slaughter'	matado	< mactatus (PP of mactare)	morto	< mortuus (perfect active participle of morior 'die')
<i>pagar</i>	< paco (V) 'make peaceful'	pagado	< pacatus (PP of paco)	pago	?
-er verbs					
<i>acender</i>	< accendo (V) 'kindle'	acendido	?	aceso	< accensus (PP of accendo)
<i>eleger</i>	< eligo (V) 'choose'	elegido	?	eleito	? < electus (PP of eligo)
<i>prender</i>	< prendo (V): variant of prehendo 'take'	prendido	?	preso	< prensus (PP of prendo: variant of prehensus)
<i>suspender</i>	< suspendo (V) 'suspend'	suspendido	?	suspenso	< suspensus (PP of suspendo)

