

REVIEW

Socio-historical work in different genres

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ABSTRACT

The table of professor-researchers Célia Lopes, Rosane Berlinck and Huda Santiago, entitled *Sociolinguística histórica no brasil: caminhos e desafios*, was presented online to Abralín on 07/18/2020. The conference focused on the challenges and proposals of working with historical Sociolinguistics. Each of the teachers presented their views on the theme, highlighting some aspects, such as working with the genres closest to the vernacular, their gains, in addition to philological and methodological work with corpora and data. From personal letters, through theater plays, and reaching the socio-historical and stylistic profiles of the writers, the lecturers show in practice not only how this work is, but also research results, with real data of use. In addition, they show how these studies contribute to a historical variationist study of Brazilian Portuguese.



OPEN ACCESS

EDITED BY

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REVIEWED BY

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DATES

Received: 25/07/2020

Accepted: 12/10/2020

Published: 21/10/2020

HOW TO CITE

Peixoto, G. G. (2020). Socio-historical work in different genres. *Revista da Abralín*, v. 19, n. 2, p. 1-5, 2020.

RESUMO

A mesa das professoras-pesquisadoras Célia Lopes, Rosane Berlinck e Huda Santiago, intitulada *Sociolinguística histórica no Brasil: caminhos e desafios*, foi apresentada de forma *online* à Abralín no dia 18 de julho de 2020. A conferência focou nos desafios e nas propostas do trabalho com a Sociolinguística Histórica. Cada uma das professoras apresentou sua visão sobre o tema, destacando alguns aspectos, como o trabalho com os gêneros mais próximos ao vernáculo, seus ganhos, além dos trabalhos filológicos e metodológicos com os corpora e com os dados. Desde cartas pessoais, passando por peças de teatro, e chegando aos perfis sócio-históricos e estilísticos dos escritores, as conferencistas mostram na prática não só como é esse trabalho, mas também resultados de pesquisas, com dados reais de uso. Além disso, mostram de que forma tais estudos contribuem para um estudo variacionista histórico do Português Brasileiro.

KEYWORDS

Historical sociolinguistics. Personal letters. Theater performances.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Sociolinguística Histórica. Cartas pessoais. Peças de teatro.

The table entitled *Sociolinguística histórica no brasil: caminhos e desafios* had three speakers: Célia Lopes, Rosane Berlinck and Huda Santiago. It was presented online on Abralín's *YouTube* channel. The main theme was to provoke some reflections on the contributions of Historical Sociolinguistics in historical variationist studies in Brazil. The presentation was divided into four parts: between the teachers and another part of questions. Célia Lopes started, followed by Rosane Berlinck and Huda Santiago. The last part of the table was dedicated to questions from listeners.

Rosane Berlinck introduces the table, introducing the other speakers, in addition to making some considerations on the topic, addressing the history and the beginning of socio-historical studies. The proposal, then, is to discuss some challenges faced by researchers to achieve the goals in Historical Sociolinguistics, in addition to suggesting ways and solutions to meet those goals.

Lopes structures his presentation into five topics, which will be developed during his speech. They are: I - historical linguistics and Historical Sociolinguistics; II - synchronous sociolinguistics and historical sociolinguistics; III - autonomy of historical sociolinguistics; IV - paths and challenges: written materials; and V - the seven challenges of the discipline.

With that, she explains each of them, revealing their importance for the discipline. As the teacher works with letters - especially personal ones - in socio-historical study, these topics tend to use examples and applications within this type of corpus. Regarding the topics, Lopes explains that historical sociolinguistics arises from historical linguistics, with the principles and assumptions of variationist (or synchronic, or labovian) sociolinguistics in the study and interpretation of source materials for linguistic change. In this way, the discipline explains the processes of linguistic change based on the correlations between social and linguistic facts. Both historical and synchronic sociolinguistics share assumptions, such as ordered heterogeneity, variation due to linguistic and social conditions, change arising from variation, and the use of real interaction data.

However, being an independent branch, it has some differences in relation to synchronic Sociolinguistics. For example, on the material used, the latter works with speech data, while the former works with written data, which are few, irregular and fragmentary. Then, recalls Lopes, the history recovers data - scarce - from surviving texts. In addition, regarding the amplitude of the results, for the synchronic, this amplitude is unknown, limited, since there is no way to predict the "scope" of the change; for the historical, as the result of a change is already known, the opposite path can be taken and its causes returned.

To solve the problems of data and its relationship with vernacular production, from the speakers, Lopes proposes to search for more spontaneous textual genres, such as letters, diaries and plays, to control Discursive Traditions (KOCH, 2008), to investigate the sociocultural profile and stylistic of the author, reconstruct the social context of the time and use computational tools in the corpus. Based on that, she defends the use of personal letters as a way to recover the missivist's vernacular. Its justification relates the intimate or spontaneous theme of the letters with its external information, such as place, date, among others, in addition to the work with the Discursive Traditions.

Finally, Lopes lists and discusses the seven challenges of Historical Sociolinguistics. The first, representativeness, deals with irregular data due to the preservation of texts. The second, empirical validity, refers to texts whose dimensions are inevitably limited, which leaves limitations in the results of quantitative analysis. Invariably, the researcher deals with written texts, which are more conservative and formal than the oral record, which, in principle, restricts the probability of variation. The fourth, authenticity, questions the authenticity of linguistic data, since the speech communities are subject to a mixture of dialects, hypercorrections, among others. About authorship, the researcher must assess whether the letters, for example, are autographs or apographs (copied or dictated). As little is known, many times, about the social position of the writer and the structure of society, historical and social validity refers to the recovery of social information for the interpretation of patterns of writing variation. Regarding standard ideology, the researcher must know the standardized form of a given language, as well as know about the interference of non-standard dialects, which may appear in writing. Lopes, then, says that the philological experience is important for the discipline, as well as the textual genre that is more conducive to the appearance of a given phenomenon, in addition to check the material available. Afterwards, Rosane Berlinck starts her speech.

Berlinck, unlike Lopes, uses plays as corpus in the search for vernacular. He argues that pieces of a popular character, such as comedies, give the author more freedom to portray the language of the time, to bring a less formal reproduction of the spoken, oral language. Berlinck argues that they can be used, because they represent usage patterns and values associated with the idea of speech representation, in addition to the fact that literary and non-literary language / language are both “manifestations of language embodied in the same medium”.

In addition, he continues, one must look at the constitution of the genre, such as compositional construction, thematic content and verbal style. In the case of the dramatic text, there is a dialogue between the characters, the rubrics and the organization of the scenes, as well as how to interpret the lines. In this way, it is possible to obtain the socio-historical background of the various characters in relation to the narrated situations. Finally, it is still necessary to look at the historical period in which the play was written.

To exemplify the importance of this intra and extra-textual information, Berlinck reanalyses data on the null direct object, by Cyrino (1997), which were taken from pieces. The data for the pronounced tonic as an anaphoric resumption of third person in *O demônio familiar* (1857) are all from a black boy, a slave. In *O Tribofe* (1892), the tonic pronoun data appears in the speech of members of a family from the interior that goes to Rio de Janeiro. Speech data, who produced them was a specific

type of character: popular or belonging to social strata of lesser or no prestige. This suggests the social assessment that focused on these forms. This is an important finding to understand the path of the forms in variation that can only be learned by looking at the social profile of the characters.

Finishing his speech and continuing Huda Santiago's speech, Berlinck reaffirms the plural use of the pieces, highlighting the historical and social knowledge of the time studied. Santiago, complementing the table, reflects on the inability to write in diachronic corpora. She argues that written sources that have traces of orality can be related to the inability or ignorance of textual formulas, either by the asymmetric relationship between the participants, or by the intimate character of the theme.

Therefore, the researcher must research what was informal at the time, since only the current standard of what is formal is known. This requires a methodological challenge (BARBOSA, 2006), which is based on drawing a socio-historical profile of the author if possible, examining grammars of the time and seeing philologically clues of disability in grammatical levels that point to uses of orality. Linked to this, Santiago quotes Marquilhas (2000), who proposes the observation of "physical appearance, consisting of hand calligraphy and particularities of the support". All this for the recognition of "unskilled hands".

His proposal, then, for the identification of marks of disability in alphabetical writing has criteria of various authorship. A continuum, by dimensions, in combined levels: scripturality and phonetic writing; the score; repetition of words; motor skill and graphic segmentation. After that, the teacher presents some works on the theme.

At the end of the conference, the questions are opened. Most of it is about the use of each corpus. In general, corpora are welcome according to the objectives, which can be from transposing speech to writing, implementation, among others. Questions about proximity to the vernacular and also about the interference of gender patterns and formality in the data were also raised.

The table, in general, maintained a coherent theme, in a well structured and divided way. The authors, each with their specific objective, developed their arguments about one or the other genre as a corpus, but without denying the importance and validity of the others. Going from the general to the more specific, the table counted on the history of Historical Sociolinguistics until the methodological procedures of working with corpora and data.

The conference presented not only theoretical assumptions, but also examples and works that relate to the theme and the discussion. This shows that the researcher's practice presents interesting results on the linguistic study, either on a phenomenon or on the work with corpus.

Socio-historical work, therefore, is not limited to itself. It can be a source of other studies, from the most formal to the most functional. Studying, then, the socio-historical profile of authors, characters and works, is not only using other sciences, but also contributing to the establishment of a vernacular closer to the real, using texts that survive time and oblivion.

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