

Agreement in Brazilian Portuguese: A case of Register Variation

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The goal of this talk is to explain the properties of the first-person plural pronoun *a gente* in Brazilian Portuguese (cf. (1)). We argue that previous approaches, which assume an impoverished theory of features, make wrong predictions about how different types of agreement with *a gente* work in different environments, for instance in cases of subject–verb or binding mismatches (cf. Menuzzi 2000; Taylor 2009; Costa and Pereira 2013; Marcotulio et al. 2013).

- (1) A gente toca jazz.
a gente play.3SG jazz
‘The people play jazz.’ or ‘We play jazz.’

In order to remedy these defects, we propose an HPSG account, which allows semantic, syntactic and pragmatic features to be simultaneously represented and constrained. Particularly important is the distinction between INDEX agreement and CONCORD (Kathol 1999; Wechsler and Zlatić 2003). We propose that *a gente* has 1.PL value for the former and a 3.SG value for the latter and that both features can be targeted by agreement constraints, yielding local agreement mismatches.

Apparent counter examples follow from a theory of register (Wilcock 1999; Paolillo 2000; Bender 2007; Asadpour et al. 2022; Machicao y Priemer et al. 2022). We propose a model that integrates register-driven variation into the grammatical component associating probabilistic situational factors, that are external to the grammatical component, with social meanings that can be attached to different types of constraints within the grammar, e.g. to words, lexical rules, syntactic constraints (Varaschin and Machicao y Priemer 2022).

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