

First person plural concord in central Brazil: Local identification

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Standard usage of spoken Brazilian Portuguese in urban areas generally exhibits subject/verb concord of first-person plural subject *nós* 'we' with affixed *-mos*. Absence of concord is evaluated negatively in large urban areas and is associated with rural or backwoods country culture. It is considered a linguistic deformation despite the fact that variation is tightly embedded in the system (Naro, Gorski & Fernandes, 1999). This study, carried out in Goiás (Center-West region), with speakers who have attended school measures the effect of social variable such as age, sex/gender and level of education. Our results indicate strengthening of local community identification.

The sample consists of the speech of 28 women and 27 men from the urban area, between 18 and 86 years of age, and 10 or more years of schooling. Although these speakers reside in an urban area, their community has a strong rural background that comes out in their cultural activities and events (Chaul, 2002; Mattos, 2013).

Based on the Theory of Variation and Linguistic Change, and using GoldVarb X, we analyzed variable data such as:

- (1) *Quando surgiu esse assunto na iscola, nós falamos* 'When this subject came up in school, we said'
- (2) *Nós falaØ errado porque nós querØ* 'We speak wrong because we want to'
- (3) *Nós somos um ano de diferença um do outro* 'We are one year older than the other'
- (4) *Nós falavaØ aqui* 'We used to say here'

Our results exhibit decreased concord in the following groups: the youngest speakers (16-24 years); women; and speakers with up to 11 years of schooling.

More usage of non-agreeing forms among young people (0,82) and women (0,69) does not reveal stigmatization, but rather constitutes a sign of belonging to the community, whose rural heritage is evaluated positively at the present time. Constructions such as *depois nois conversa* 'we'll talk later' are not stigmatized among local speakers, even those with a college education, despite the fact that lack of concord is favored by speakers with less than 11 years of schooling (0,80).

In spite of urban expansion accelerated by the economic, social, and cultural consequences of the foundation of Brasília – the capital of Brazil - within its territory in 1960, the prestige of country culture has not declined in Goiás, as shown by many sociocultural and economic events in the fields of agriculture and cattle raising.

References

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