

A description of the pragmatic function of *mas* and *aí* in Brazilian Portuguese: contrastive analysis on the functional equivalents of German Modal Particles

Descrição da função pragmática de mas e aí no português brasileiro: análise contrastiva dos equivalentes funcionais das partículas modais alemãs

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RESUMO

Este artigo apresenta uma descrição da função modal de *mas* e *aí* no português brasileiro. Com uma abordagem translinguística, propõe-se uma função pragmática desses itens, que podem ser vistos como equivalentes às Partículas Modais (PMs) de língua alemã (*aber* e *doch*), isto é, com função de ancorar o enunciado em um cenário dialógico assumido (DIEWALD et al. 2017). Exemplos de uma amostra em língua portuguesa (respostas a um questionário online) foram analisados dentro do esquema semântico de 3 formatos (DIEWALD; FISCHER, 1998) e, em um segundo momento, pelo Formato Descritivo esquemático (DIEWALD et al. 2017). Logo, esta proposta é original e inédita, visto que, além de analisar, sob uma perspectiva funcional, as PMs do Português Brasileiro, propõe, com uma abordagem translinguística, uma função pragmática de tais itens, de modo que podem ser vistos como equivalente às PMs de língua alemã. Os resultados indicam que é possível descrever funções pragmáticas e características formais para estas palavras no português, ressaltando a importância de tal descrição para a adequação da classificação gramatical desses elementos modais em outros idiomas além do alemão, bem como contribuir para o ensino e aprendizagem de tais fenômenos linguísticos em contextos plurilíngues.

Palavras-chave: Partículas modais. Modalidade em português. Análise contrastiva de equivalentes funcionais.

ABSTRACT

In this article, we introduce an investigation on the description of the modal function of *mas* and *aí* in Brazilian Portuguese. Using a cross-linguistic approach, we propose a shared pragmatic function of these items with German Modal Particles - MPs - (*aber* and *doch*), consisting in the discourse grammatical function of anchoring the utterance in an assumed dialogic setting (DIEWALD et al., 2017). Examples of an authentic corpus in Portuguese (from responses to an online questionnaire) were analyzed first within the 3-format semantic scheme (DIEWALD; FISCHER, 1998) and, secondly, within the Descriptive Format scheme (DIEWALD et al., 2017). Therefore, this proposal is original and unprecedented, since, in addition to analyzing, from a functional perspective, the particles of Brazilian Portuguese, it proposes, with a translinguistic approach, a pragmatic function of such items, so that they can be seen as equivalent to the German MPs. The results indicate that it is possible to describe a pragmatic function and formal characteristics of Modal Particles in Portuguese, emphasizing the importance of such description for the adequacy of the grammatical classification of modal elements in languages other than German, as well as a contribution for the learning and teaching of these linguistic phenomena in a plurilingual setting.

Keywords: Modal Particles. Modality in Portuguese. Contrastive analysis of functional equivalents.

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1 INTRODUÇÃO

Modal Particles (MP) are fundamental communicative markers for the domain of interpersonal cohesion (by introducing the type of social act performed). Similar to Diewald et al (2017) we define MPs as a "word class in which the speaker marks the very proposition of the utterance the MP is used in as something communicatively presupposed, and as a particular type of pragmatic presupposition", in which the presupposed proposition is a logical inference of the explicitly expressed utterance. The pragmatic pretext of a proposition with MP has three main characteristics (DIEWALD, 2013): (i) has a *propositional content* or *attitude*, which sometimes have illocutionary information; (ii) it is *pragmatically given* in the communicative situation; (iii) it can be a *potential text*, i.e., can be made explicit via a linguistically encoded proposition. Furthermore, in this work we investigate the meaning of MPs through a minimalist point of view (contrary to the maximalist approach), since we consider that each particle has a specific communicative function, which consists in anchoring the utterance in an assumed dialogic setting in a unique way.

The distinctive function of each MP can be noted by labels used for the description of other functional classes, e.g., concessive-adversative for *doch*, adversative for *aber*, affirmative for *ja* (KREŠIĆ; BATINIĆ, 2014, p. 40). The MP *aber* is adversative as it indicates an opposition between the state of affairs and the speaker's expectations, while *ja* is used to confirm or affirm the factuality of a given situation (DIEWALD et al., 2017). Particles have, therefore, very specific communicative functions (a highly structured internal paradigmatic organization) that are always present in all occurrences of each particle. However, to understand the particular meaning they convey, it is essential to analyze them within a specific context (AQUINO; ARANTES, 2020).

German encodes a defined word class of MPs, while in other languages there are only references to a variety of alternative linguistic devices to express a modal function. Some of these linguistic devices are: prosodic marking and grammatical means like tag questions, and pragmatic markers. In Brazilian Portuguese para-verbal equivalents can also be found, such as: gestures, intonation, prosody, repetition of words and diminutives (AQUINO; ARANTES, 2020). However, Franco (1991), Johnen (1997), Aquino and Arantes (2020), Aquino et al. (2021) and other authors argue that, although having a particular syntactic structure, linguistic elements with formal characteristics and pragmatic functions similar to the German MPs can also be found in Portuguese. Therefore, even with distinctions regarding their formal characteristics and lesser occurrence, it is possible to schematically describe equivalents in Romance languages that have communicative functions as relevant as the MPs in German.

With a cross-linguistic schematic form-meaning description we propose to investigate the formal features and the communicative function of MPs in Portuguese. To that end, we present an analysis of two candidates for MPs, *mas* and *aí*, which can be taken as a future model for description of new possible particles in other languages. The shared pragmatic function that we are looking for is based on a grammatical discourse feature which consists in anchoring the utterance in an assumed dialogic setting, i.e., the meaning of these words as MPs can be described in terms of the speaker's assumptions and the listeners' expectations about a state of affairs. Therefore, we intend to investigate whether occurrences of conjunction (*mas*) and adverb (*aí*) in Portuguese can be described within a scheme similar to MPs in German.

The format was based on the analysis of a corpus² from an online questionnaire with open questions answered by 252 Brazilian native speakers. With the main question "What would you say?", the questionnaire aimed to evaluate how participants would respond to different contexts of and whether these contexts allowed the use of such linguistic elements as Modal Particles. The occurrences of the modals *mas* and *aí* were first analyzed within the 3-format semantic scheme (DIEWALD; FISCHER, 1998) and finally in the Descriptive Format scheme, which introduces a schematic description on levels of phonology, syntax and pragmatics (DIWAKD, et al., 2017).

In the next section we describe the formal characteristics and the communicative functions of MPs in German and Portuguese, distinguishing these elements from their homonyms. In the third section the description scheme used in the analysis is presented, which will be developed in more detail in section 4. Finally, in section 5 we introduce a general discussion of the results, ending with the conclusions and future perspectives in section 6.

2 MODAL PARTICLES IN GERMAN AND PORTUGUESE

MPs are context-dependent by the virtue of their indexical function of connecting the utterance with the presumed state of affairs in its pragmatic context (DIEWALD, et al., 2017, p. 232). If inferred from a recoverable context, MPs can reproduce strong implicatures with reduced cognitive effort to achieve large contextual effects (AQUINO, 2020). To the Theory of Relevance (SPERBER; WILSON, 2005) they can be considered as procedural, as they are items that restrict the interpretation of the utterance to be processed, making it possible to co-construct a coherent mental representation of the discourse. According to the minimalist approach, each MP has a basic relational meaning determined by the way in which it connects the utterance to the pragmatic context and, unlike discourse markers – that operate on the level of discourse –, these elements have sentence scope. We argue that the exponents of the word category of MPs in German and Portuguese (even though there is still no delimited word class in Romantic languages) share some formal features with respect to phonology and syntax. But, mostly, they have a similar pragmatic function of anchoring the utterance in an assumed dialogic setting.

A unified consistent descriptive tool for systematic cross-linguistic analyses of MPs can be developed by taking into account (i) relatively well-researched and clearly defined German MPs as a starting point and (ii) a meaning and indexical/relational function of MPs as basis for the proposed method and as the *tertium comparationis*. Many comparative studies have pointed out that Portuguese (Brazilian and European) possesses linguistic means which can be considered as functional equivalents to German MPs (e.g., FRANCO, 1991; JOHNEN, 1997; AQUINO, 2020; AQUINO & ARANTES, 2020; AQUINO et al., 2021). Due to many shared communicative functions and some concomitant formal features, we propose that words like *mas* and *aí* have the distinctive characteristics to form a word class of MPs in Portuguese.

² Our research group at Universidade de São Paulo (USP) developed this questionnaire to verify whether MPs were recognized and used by Brazilians only from the input of specific communicative contexts. Such an investigation allowed delimiting the modal function of *mas* and *aí* (the most frequent MPs) differentiating them from their homonyms, in addition to showing that these elements are part of everyday communication in Portuguese. The collection was carried out in 2020, when USP still did not have the obligation that anonymous questionnaires be evaluated by the ethics committee.

To support these claims, we present some contrasting examples of uses of modal elements in German (*aber* and *doch*), Portuguese (*mas* and *aí*) and English (*but* and *already*):

1. German: Das Wasser ist *aber* warm! (AQUINO; ARANTES, 2020)
Portuguese: Mas a água está quente!
English: *But* the water is warm!
2. German: Sag *doch* was! (FRANCO, 1991)
Portuguese: Fala alguma coisa *aí*!
English: Say something *already*!

The MP *aber* marks an adverse relation between the pragmatic pretext and a situation in the communicative context (DIEWALD, 2007). Weydt (2010) argues that *aber* expresses astonishment at the extent (size and/or intensity) of the stated facts. In the example (1), the meaning could be associated with the surprise regarding how hot the water is. The meaning of (1) can also be associated with an adverse relation between the pragmatic pretext (e.g. the interlocutor argues that the water in a pool is too cold to swim in) and the situation in the context, as Diewald (2007) argues. A very similar communicative function can be found in the examples in Portuguese with *mas*, as well as *but* in English, as discussed in Waltereit (2001).

The second example (2) contains the MP *doch*, that marks a concessional-adversative relation between the pragmatic pretext and stresses the relevance of the expressed proposition, which is needed to be acknowledged by the addressee. A similar function can be found in Portuguese and English with *aí* and *already* (see FISCHER; HEIDE, 2018), which indicates or attenuates imperative sentences with the main objective of convincing the interlocutor to understand or perform a certain action, in this context: to say something.

The utterance without MP represents an unmodalized statement that is independent of, or neutral to, its communicative context. On the other hand, utterances with MPs designate the speaker's attitude in regards to the referred proposition (adversity, surprise, impatience). Thus, MPs have a special function of pointing backwards from the linguistic unit in which it appears by relating the utterance to a proposition, which the speaker regards as relevant to the success of the communication. This 'referring back' to something that is treated as pragmatically given, albeit unexpressed, is a central common function of all MPs. Therefore, by using a specific MP the speaker purports that there has been some pragmatically shared common ground to which this utterance connects to (DIEWALD et al., 2017, p. 237). Consequently, it is very difficult to conceive that the communicative functions of MPs are restricted to languages in particular (WALTEREIT, 2001). We argue thereby that such linguistic elements used to negotiate meaning between interlocutors, anchoring the information shared pragmatically with the common ground, can also be found in a variety of other languages. For a proper classification, however, it is important to contract such modal words with the homonyms from which they are derived.

2.1 homonyms

The majority of MPs have homonyms in other word classes, such as conjunctions (*aber*, *doch*, *denn*), adverbs (*schon*, *auch*, *mal*), discourse markers (*ja*), adjectives (*eben*, *bloß*, *wohl*). Distinguishing a MP from its homonym represents a challenge in particular for

language teaching. To argue in favor of the existence of functional equivalents of MPs in Portuguese, we introduce a contrastive homonym analysis, based on examples of *mas* and *aber*. Such a comparison helps understanding the difference between the communicative functions of MPs and their non-modal homonyms. First let's look at the examples of *aber* and *mas* as conjunctions:

3. Ellen ist klein, *aber* stark (HENTSCHEL; WEYDT, 2013)
4. Ellen é pequena, *mas* forte (AQUINO, 2020)

According to the rules of standard grammar, both in German and Portuguese, the conjunction is separated by a comma and works as an opposition of information indicated by a contrast between two (or more) linguistic elements that are found in the sentence. The two items (*aber* and *mas*) analyzed in (3) and (4) have therefore the main function of demonstrating a contrast and opposition at the sentence level, here indicated by the adjectives *small* and *strong*. The following examples illustrate the uses of *aber* and *mas* with a pragmatic function:

5. Ihr seid *aber* groß geworden! (HENTSCHEL; WEYDT, 2013)
6. *Mas* como vocês cresceram! (AQUINO, 2020)

In the examples (5) and (6), *aber* and *mas* have a completely different function, namely a pragmatic one, of Modal Particle. In German the MPs occur most in the Middle Field position, however in Portuguese, contrary to its homonym, *mas* has an initial position in the sentence. In both languages, these two modal items are not separated by a comma, as it is the case with conjunctions. Another feature that occurs in both languages, and a distinctive one from MPs in general, is that the MPs have sentence scope. Since MPs anchor the utterance in a pragmatically given common ground, in contrast to conjunctions, they do not connect the utterance directly to a prior discourse (DIEWALD, 2007). Therefore, it is important to understand what kind of common ground is alluded to with the use of a specific MP and whether the particle affirms or rejects the pragmatically given unit. In contrast to their homonym (here, the conjunction), the MPs represent a more complex communication tool that goes beyond the sentence and requires a negotiation of the meaning within the context (AQUINO, forthcoming).

As discussed above, MPs have clear semantic and grammatical characteristics that differentiate them from their homonyms. One of the most important features to differentiate the modal function is the scope. MPs refer to the total phrasal content and indicate a relation of meaning with the context. Therefore, the MP *mas* and *aber* differs from its homonyms, the conjunctions, by not relating or contrasting two elements at the sentence level, but by linking the current utterance to a common ground (AQUINO et al., 2021). In the next section we will detail the function of *mas* and *aí* as modal words in contrast to their German equivalents (*aber* and *doch*).

2 The MPs *mas* and *aí*

The MP *aber* marks an adversative relation between the pragmatic pretext and the relevant situation. This relation happens on the propositional level, thus *aber* as an MP provides a reference to the negated variant of the uttered proposition. Weydt (2010) argues that this MP expresses astonishment regarding the facts described, as having a qualifying

meaning, i.e., it is not astonishing in itself, but rather because of the size or intensity of the situation described in the communicative interaction (HELBIG, 1998). In view of these descriptions, we consider that the MP *aber* is a marker of an adversative relation between the pragmatic pretext and the relevant situation, and this adversity represents an astonishment or surprise (to the extent of the facts) in the speaker's cognitive environment, i.e., the reality is different from what was expected.

Some authors (FRANCO, 1991; AQUINO et al., 2021) argue that *mas* can have a specific pragmatic function in Portuguese, differentiating it from its homonym (adversative conjunction). In one example analyzed in Aquino and Arantes (2020), two people are leaving the house when the speaker realizes that the interlocutor is going out with a very dirty coat and says, "Mas o seu casaco está todo sujo!". *Mas* has the function not only of indicating a surprise regarding the appearance of the coat, but also of anticipating a propositional content that the interlocutors (are supposed to) share. In other words, the use of the MP *mas* has the function to indicate that the speaker believes that the assumption (one cannot leave the house with such dirty clothes) is shared with the interlocutor. In this case, this meaning is implicit in the unspoken proposition (it is not socially acceptable to go out with a very dirty coat) and it can be assumed by the context (the moment when someone puts on the dirty coat and goes towards the door).

Mas as an MP occurs in directive speech acts within declarative sentences (*Mas que boa notícia! What good news!*) and interrogative ones (*Mas o que é isso?, But what is this?*). The following is a comparative example with the uses of *aber* and *mas* as MPs, as well as a proposal for an interpretation into English with *but* (see WALTERHEIT, 2001):

7. German: Das ist *aber* ein Auto! (FRANCO, 1991)

Portuguese: Mas isso sim é um carro!

English: That is *but* a car!

One of the most frequent German MPs, *doch* marks a concessional relation between the pragmatic pretext and the situation presented in the utterance. With *doch* the speaker refers to a pragmatically presupposed unit, which consists of a sequence of the presupposed proposition *p* and the alternative $\neg p$, which has also been considered (BRÜNJES, 2014). According to Diewald (2007, p. 132), *doch* marks a concession between a presupposed information and the given situation. In contrast to the purely adversative MP *aber*, where *doch* alternatives are allowed, i.e., while *aber* marks an adverse relation between a pragmatically presupposed unit and the relevant situation without recognizing alternatives (Das ist *aber* ein Auto!), the MP *doch* deliberate choice between two alternative propositions (Das ist *doch* ein Auto!: this is a car or this is not a car). Even with the possibility of choices, the utterance with *doch* confirms a specific alternative as a result of deliberating upon the two (Das ist *doch* ein Auto!: that is a car).

Even with a more concessional meaning, the MP *doch* has also the function to indicate some kind of adversativity, as it shows that the pragmatically presupposed unit should be available as part of the common knowledge shared by the interlocutors, reminding them of what is relevant for communication in a certain context. Hence, imperatives with the MP *doch* are very frequent, especially in spoken language, and they have the function to indicate an advice or invitations, or just impatient or excited accusations (SCHOONJANS, 2018, p. 42). According to Diewald et al. (2017), in imperative sentences the MP *doch* stresses the necessity of urgency of the expressed proposition, which

is supposed to be already acknowledged by the addressee, as the example:

8. Lassen Sie mich *doch* kurz erzählen - Let me tell you this: Let me speak.

In declarative sentences the MP *doch* emphasizes that the speaker adheres to his/her opinion despite possible contrary views. The concessive-adversative function expressed by the MP *doch* in a declarative sentence can be exemplified in sentences such as:

9. Das sagt *doch* keiner, dass die Ausländer rausgeschmissen werden - But nobody is saying that foreigners will be kicked out: I know what I'm saying to you, please don't argue.

With regards to *aí*, Johnen (1997) argues that one of the first indications to recognize the modal function of *aí* is through a test with the question "where?". If the sentence with *aí* could be answered with *where*, then this item is an adverb: "O arroz está *aí* na mesa - Onde está o arroz? - *Aí* na mesa". However, in a sentence like, "Pensa *aí* o que você quer fazer", *aí* does not indicate a location, the meaning has nothing to do with where the action of thinking has taken place, but instead it has a modal function of request or persuasion, depending on the context. Thus, unlike its non-modal homonym, the MP *aí* has a specific communicative function and occurs in imperative (*Chora aí! Cry already!*) and declarative sentence (*aí sim! That's good!*). According to the author, *aí* as an MP is used to intensify or attenuate imperative sentences with the main objective of convincing the listener to perform a certain action. To better illustrate the discussion, we present examples with *doch* and *aí* as MPs, as well as an interpretation into English with *already*:

10. German: Warte *doch*! (AQUINO, 2020)
Portuguese: Espera *aí*!
English: Wait *already*!

Based on these assumptions, we propose in the next section a format for the description of the dialogic function which these elements share, taking the German MPs as a starting point.

3 THE DESCRIPTION SCHEME

Diewald and Fischer (1998) present a semantic schema that suggests a three-part relation that comprises: (i) a pragmatically given unit, a non-verbalized proposition which is, in most cases, a logical variant of the host utterance; (ii) the current situation, the speaker's attitude towards this pragmatically given unit (what the speaker wants to express); (iii) the host utterance using the MP. What the speaker wants to express (ii) represents the relation between the pragmatically given proposition (i) and his/hers attitude towards this given proposition. This connection is what determines the choice of a specific MP (iii), and consequently, the choice of MP indicates the pragmatically given unit (FISCHER; HEIDE, 2018, p. 512). The pragmatically given unit (i) comprises sociocultural facts and a given situation, shared and not shared perception about something, as well as the discourse record and all the other aspects of common ground. Some MPs evoke a communicative function of agreement (*ja*) with the pragmatically given unit, in which case

the host utterance is identical with the pragmatically given unit, which is then strengthened by the MP. The semantic three-part schema can be exemplified with the MP *ja*:

- 11. Pragmatically given unit: You have a new car
- current situation: You have a new car
- utterance: Du hast ja ein neues Auto!

Diewald and Kresić (2010) introduced a reformulated schema to describe specific particle meanings drawing on a corpus. The new schema aims to facilitate the understanding and teaching of MPs in German and Croatian. The scheme distinguishes particle meanings with respect to sentence types and meaning. At the bottom of the scheme (see Table 1) the utterance containing the MP is entered, and above it is the basic dialogue grammatical meaning of all MPs, that marks the utterance as non-initial in the communicative interaction. The row above contains the mental representation of the speaker (speaker thinks: *xy*). The top field contains the abstract and lexeme specifications of the reference type to the pragmatic context, i.e., the mental representation of the interlocutors (speaker and hearer), which, in the example with the MP *ja* in Table 1, is affirmative:

Table 1: Two-field-scheme describing *ja* (in an affirmative sentence)

lexeme specific relation to the communicative context	affirmative reference to a (presumably) shared thought
relevant situation = speaker thinks:	I know and you know: <i>Morgen regnet es.</i>
basic meaning of MPs utterance containing MP = speaker says:	MP - utterance - not at the beginning of the communication <i>Morgen regnet es ja.</i>

Source: Diewald and Kresić (2010)

The descriptive format carried out in the present article for MPs in Portuguese was adapted from a contrastive lexicon of German and Croatian MPs (see Table 2) by Diewald et al. (2017). The main goal of the analysis is to comprise the relevant formal and functional features of MPs and functional equivalents in a way that is suitable for the teaching of these elements in both languages. Although the meaning of MPs is sentence and context sensitive, they have a basic core function (in accordance with the minimalistic approach), which is very efficient for language teaching, as clearly presented in the schematic format. In the first section of the descriptive format (Table 2), the lemma (*bloß*) and the sentence type in which it occurs (*wh-sentence, directive speech act*) is specified. After the lemma, the relational meaning (*focusing*) is indicated, that is, the meaning shared by all variants of the particle. Below, the heteronyms are listed (*focus particle, adjective, discourse marker, adverb*). In the next row, we find the word category or type of construction and its syntactic position (*Modal Particle, Middle Field*). The context is described in the next field, which represents the core function of the MP, here *bloß* describes that the speaker's interest is focused on the real or presumed state of affairs. The meaning paraphrase, in the row below, corresponds to the speaker's intention in that specific context of communication, here: the speaker is astonished by what she/he is asking and she/he is interested to know the answer (how the person stays so calm). This paraphrased meaning can, however, vary depending on the type of sentence and context, but the core function stays the same. The last field of

the descriptive format contains examples taken from a corpus and, in the bottom, the partial or full synonyms (if applicable) of the analyzed MP are listed.

Table 2: Description of *bloß* in a wh-question

Bloß <i>Focusing</i>	Wh-question, directive speech act heteronym: focus particle, adjective, discourse marker, adverb
Syntactic properties	Modal Particle, Middle Field
Context	The interest of the speaker is focused on the real or presumed state of affairs
Meaning, paraphrase:	I am astonished by what I am asking about, which is why I am very eager to find out the answer
Usage example:	(Und immer habe ich beruhigend auf sie gesprochen, bis das Fürchterliche vorüber war. Dann sagten die Menschen, sie haben heute uns viel geholfen) Wo nehmen Sie bloß die große Ruhe her? (Und ich habe gesagt, na, es ist ja alles gut, wir sind ja drüber weggekommen) [DGD: 4050.192, 1]

Source: Diewald et al. (2017, p. 246)

With successful research conducted in German and Croatian, we consider the presented format is suitable for the description of the MPs in Portuguese.

4 THE DESCRIPTIVE FORMAT OF *MAS* AND *AÍ*

The examples for the descriptive format are taken from a corpus with written responses by 252 Brazilian native speakers to open questions.³ The main characteristics of the respondents' profile are shown in the table:

Table 3: profile of questionnaire respondents

Age	Education	Language related profession
10 - 20: 10,2%	high school: 21,8%	31,7%
21 - 25: 33,2%	college degree: 51,2%	
26 - 30: 18,8%	graduate degree: 27%	
31 - 35: 12,1%		Profession not related to language
36 - 40: 8,6%		68,3%
41 - 45: 2,7%		
46 - 50: 1,6%		
over 50: 12,9%		

Source: Prepared by the author

³ 250 represents the number of responses in total. In addition to *mas* and *aí*, the MPs *então* and *bem (que)* appeared in the responses, although in less frequency.

The questionnaire aimed to evaluate how participants would linguistically react to different contexts within everyday situations and whether these communication contexts allowed the usage of pragmatic elements for the current investigation focused on MPs in Portuguese, we selected four from contexts (two for each particle) from the corpus in which the use of MPs *mas* and *ai* were more recurrent in the responses. Among these occurrences in the four contexts, we selected the most frequent answer with each MP, that is, the most repeated sentences that contained the MPs. The selected four occurrences are first analyzed within the 3-format semantic scheme with the pragmatically given unit, the current situation and the utterance with a MP (DIEWALD; FISCHER, 1998). After identifying the MPs functions within the 3-format semantic scheme, we carry on a more detailed classification within the Descriptive Format, an adaptation of the 2-field scheme based on levels of phonology, syntax and pragmatics (DIEWALD et al., 2017).

4.1 The MP *mas*

The first example had the occurrence of the MP *mas* in the given context: *Your roommate tells you she's going to the supermarket. But you don't need anything, and she has already been to the supermarket four times this week. What would you say?* The most frequent sentence with the MP *mas* in the first context was: "Mas de novo!" Regarding the profile of the respondents who used the MP *mas* in this context - 22.2% or 56 participants - most of them (45.5%) were between 21 - 25 years old and 59.1% had a language related profession (teaching, translation or research). With regard to education, 23.8% completed high school, 57.1% had a college degree and 19% had a graduate degree. The results from the first context indicate that age (between 21 and 25 years old), a higher education (college degree) and language-related professions could be influencing factors for the frequency of occurrence of the MP *mas* in the corpus. The most frequent answer with the MP *mas* within this context is first described with the model of the 3-format semantic scheme:

12. Pragmatically given unit: You are going to the supermarket again.

Current situation: I wonder why you are going to the supermarket for the fifth time this week if we don't need anything.

Utterance: *Mas de novo!* (você vai ao supermercado)

Both MPs *aber* and *mas* in declarative sentences present the current utterance as following from a common ground and thus as communicatively given. We thus take the function of *aber* and *mas* in the examples above to indicate that the unexpected situation was pragmatically given (it's weird to go to the supermarket so many times in one week) and thus justified to have the reaction of astonishment to the extent of the state of affairs (four times in one week). The grammatical function of MPs in the Diewald and Fischer (1998) model is to anchor the current utterance in argumentative common ground, i.e., to evoke a pragmatically given unit to which the current utterance responds. The pragmatic effects (certain attitude, like annoyance or happiness) are secondary to the primary main grammatical function (FISCHER; HEIDE, 2018). The MPs *mas* and *aber* indicate that the speaker's reaction follows a common ground, since we take the two particles to present the current utterance as a logical conclusion from prior discourse or common knowledge and therefore to be pragmatically given.

The sentence without the MP leads to a relatively neutral statement (You are going to the supermarket again). However, with the MP, the sentence contains a reference to a contrary expectation on the part of the speaker (I did not expect you to go to the

supermarket again). By using the MPs *mas* and *aber* the speaker creates a reference to his own contrary assumptions. The quantifying meaning component assumed by Weydt (2010: 14), i.e., that the MP *aber* expresses astonishment at the extent of the facts described, is definitely present, so the statement can be interpreted as: The person is making many more trips to the supermarket than would be expected in the present situation: I wonder what the reason is, so I express the proposition.

The second example with most uses of the MP *mas* is: *You're late for work and can't find your keys. This is really weird, because your keys are always in the same place. How would you react?* The most frequent sentence with MP *mas* was: "Mas onde é que eu enfiei o diabo dessas chaves?" Regarding the profile of respondents who used the MP *mas* - 20.3% or 51 participants - most of them (39.1%) were between 21 - 25 years old. Concerning the profession, 54,5% had professions with no relation to language teaching, translation or research. With regards to education, 22,7% completed high school, 40,9% had a college degree and 36,4% had graduate degrees. These results betray that age (between 21 and 25 years old) can again be a determining factor for the use of the MP *mas*, as well as a higher education (college and graduation degree), whereas language related professions could be not as influential. The most frequent answer with MP *mas* within the second context is first described with the model of the 3-format semantic scheme:

13. Pragmatically given unit: I can't find my keys and I'm late.
Current situation: I wonder why my keys are not in the usual place.
Utterance: *Mas onde é que eu enfiei o diabo dessas chaves?*

While the MP *mas*, just like *aber*, connects the current utterance as following a common ground in declarative sentences, in questions the MP *mas* has the function to indicate that the question is motivated by something that is pragmatically given (my keys are always in the same place). The MP *mas* indicates that the question/assertion follows logically from the interlocutors' assumed dialogic setting, thus they are pragmatically given (It astonishes me that I can't find my keys, so I ask myself where they could be). Aquino and Arantes (2020) argues that *mas* is a possible equivalent for the German MP *aber* when it refers back to an interlocutor's statement or action that provides the reason for the speaker's astonishment. In both examples, and in all of the corpus, the use of modal *mas* occurred in declaratives and interrogative sentences, and it was positioned in the beginning of the sentence. Even though the German MP *aber* does not occur in interrogative sentences, the question with *mas* can be interpreted as a reflection, not as a question that needs an answer. Just like the MPs in German, in Portuguese they are especially present in spoken discourse (as opposed to focus and scalar particles), thus intonation has an important role to the comprehension of MPs, but we will not investigate the prosodic aspect in this article.

With the data from the 3-format scheme, we propose a Descriptive Format of MP *mas*:

Table 4: Description of *mas* in interrogatives and declarative sentences

Mas Astonishment	Interrogative and Declarative, directive speech act Heteronym: conjunction
Syntactic properties	Modal Particle, Initial sentence position
Context	Astonishment regarding the size and/or intensity of the state of affairs
Meaning, paraphrase:	I am astonished by what is happening, the situation is surprising or confusing to me
Usage example:	(Bernardo and Luísa are watching "The Queen's Gambit". Luísa is surprised when she realizes that they finished the last episode) <i>Mas já acabou?</i> (Catarina receives an unexpected compliment) <i>Mas que gentil!</i>

Source: Prepared by the author

4.2 *Aí*

The first example with MP *aí* is from the given context: *Your co-worker has returned from a trip abroad. She says something incredible happened on the trip, but doesn't tell what. You are very curious. What would you say?* The most frequent sentence in the first context with the MP *aí* was: "Conta *aí*!" Regarding the profile of the respondents who used the MP *aí* in this context - 25% or 63 participants - 42.1% were between 21 - 25 years old and 52.6% had jobs with no relation to language teaching, translation or research. With respect to education, 10.5% completed high school, 52.6% had a college degree and 36.8% had a graduate degree. We identified that age (between 21 and 25 years old) and education (college degree) may be conditions for the use of the MP, but language-related professions were not conclusive. The most frequent answer with the MP *aí* within this context is described with the model of the 3-format semantic scheme:

14. Pragmatically given unit: There is information I want to know.
Current situation: I have to convince you to tell me something.
Utterance: Conta *aí*!

As well as its German counterpart, *aí* marks an adversative relation between the pragmatic pretext (something happened on the trip) and the relevant situation (You are not telling me the information I want to know). In imperative sentences the MP *doch*, as well as *aí*, stresses the necessity of the expressed proposition (Tell me this information), which is supposed to be already acknowledged by the addressee (You should know I would be curious after you told me something incredible happened). Just like the MP *doch*, *aí* occurs mostly in imperative sentences and it also has the function of indicating that the interlocutor needs to notice or consider something that is relevant for the communication and take some kind of action, in this context it is about convincing the addressee that the information about the events described should be shared in more details with the communicative partner. Therefore, *aí* as an MP has the function of intensifying or attenuating an imperative sentence to convince the listener to perform an action.

The second example with MP *aí* is based on the following context: *Your friend's car has a flat tire and he doesn't know how to change it. He's scared and calls you. You're on your way and try to calm him down. What would you say?* The most frequent sentence with

MP *aí* was: "Calma *aí*!" Regarding the profile of participants who used the MP *aí* - 14.6% or 37 - most respondents (35%) were between 21 and 25 years old. Concerning the profession, 70% had jobs not related to language teaching, translation or research. About education, 25% completed high school, 40% had a college degree, and 35% had a graduate degree. Therefore, age (21 and 25 years old) and a higher education (college and graduate degree) may be attributes that influence the results, while profession in the language field was not a determining factor. The most frequent answer containing the MP *aí* within the second context is first described with the model of the 3-format semantic scheme:

15. Pragmatically given unit: You are very stressed about this situation.
 Current situation: I want to help you and calm you down.
 Utterance: Calma *aí*! (Vai dar tudo certo, Eu estou chegando!)

In declarative sentences the use of *aí* is similar to its German counterpart, *doch*, both emphasizes that the speaker adheres to his/her opinion even with a contrary reaction (the interlocutor may not calm down). In (15), it is possible to recognize that, just like *doch*, *aí* can occur in a declarative sentence with an adversative function. In this context the speaker uses *aí* to show that the addressee needs to perform a certain action: You have to/should calm down so I can help you. In both examples, the MP *aí* was positioned at the sentence end and unlike its homonym, *aí* has a specific communicative function of request or persuasion, depending on the context and type of sentence. With the data from the analysis within the 3-format semantic scheme, we propose a categorization within the Descriptive Format scheme:

Table 5: Description of *aí* in imperative and declarative sentences

Aí Adversity	Imperative, Declarative, directive speech act Heteronym: adverb
Syntactic properties	Modal Particle, Final sentence position
Context	Marks an adversative relation between a pragmatic presupposed unity and the relevant situation.
Meaning, paraphrase: Usage example:	I want or need to advise or invite someone to notice or do something. (Leo and Malu are walking. Malu walks too fast and Leo is left behind. He asks her to wait for him) <i>Espera aí.</i> (Sofia is with her friend Valentina in a store. Valentina is taking a long time to choose what she wants. Sofia tries to hurry her up) <i>Escolhe aí!</i>

Source: Prepared by the author

5 GENERAL DISCUSSION

Similar to the findings of Fischer and Heide (2018) through a cross-linguistic comparison of German and English, we were able to identify that item in different positions (initial and final sentence position) may fulfill MP functions in Portuguese and thus, the function cannot be uniquely assigned to a grammatical position. The two MPs candidates investigated in this article occur predominantly in positions that favor sentence scope

readings, occurring in an utterance's initial or final position. The conjunctions (*mas*) and adverbs (*ai*) in Portuguese are mainly positioned within the sentence, since the former establishes an adversative relationship between two or more items or sentences and the latter precedes the term they modify. That means to grammatically develop an MP function, it is likely that they may gain different semantic and pragmatic functions in other positions, and that these positions have scope over the whole clause.

Therefore, it is clear that German and Portuguese MPs differ with respect to formal properties, while MPs in German occur exclusively in the middle field V2-sentence, Portuguese MPs display a greater variability in their syntactic distribution. But in order to specify the position of each MP in Portuguese, a larger corpus study needs to be conducted to assert whether these are the positions of these MPs and whether the patterns in their distribution reflects the topological restrictions of the word categories from which these modal elements originate from. In Croatian, for instance, MPs that are derived from conjunctions always take the initial position in the sentence and others are dependent on sentence type (DIEWALD et al., 2017).

The minimalist approach considers that each particle displays a specific nuclear communicative function by which it forms oppositions to other members of the class. In both languages the MPs work as a connector, anchoring the utterance with the state of affairs in the pragmatic context, in which the MPs *aber* and *mas* have the particular core meaning of adversity and astonishment, and the MPs *doch* and *ai* of adversative with a specific state of affair. By using an MP, the speaker relates through the utterance these core functions to a certain state of affairs in the context of the communication (DIEWALD; KRESIĆ, 2010). We argue that the state of affairs, i.e., the way in which the facts and conditions relevant for the communication are set up are perceived by the speaker using a particular MP, and therefore can be described as the main goal of the indexical relation of MPs in German and Portuguese.

With this analysis it was possible to identify some shared functional features of German and Portuguese MPs: *synsemantic*, they have a core communicative functional, i.e., a specific pragmatic meaning; they have a *relational meaning* and *discourse grammatical function*, marking the utterance as non-initial; they have a cross-linguistically relevant *discourse connective function*; they *relate propositions to the discursive-pragmatic context*, that represent the verbalized or un verbalized interlocutors assumptions and expectation about a state of affairs in the communicative context; they also have *sentence scope*", i.e., MPs modify the whole sentence, they have, therefore, sentential or speech act scope (HENTSCHEL; WEYDT, 2013).

Finally, even though not the main focus of this research, the corpus - the written answers by 252 Brazilian native speakers to an online questionnaire - provided very interesting indications regarding the profile of the participants that used MPs to react to given situations. The most prominent feature was the age factor, since in all four contexts participants between 20 and 25 years old were the ones that most used MPs in their answers, while in much younger (10 - 20) or older participants (41 - 50) we found a low occurrence of particle use. Two other factors that drew attention were language-related professions and education. In most cases (three out of four contexts) the participants who used MPs in their answers to open questions had non-language-related professions (i.e., language teaching, translation and language search), which was surprising given that it was expected that language professionals were more inclined to recognize the communicative functions of MPs. Regarding the education factor, most participants who used the MPs had a college

degree, and those who least used MPs had a high school degree, which is in agreement with the age data. These socio-cultural data points (in addition to intonation) can be fundamental to better understand their use in different contexts as to categorize the pragmatic and grammatical function of these modal elements in Portuguese.

6 CONCLUSIONS

We propose an investigation on the modal function of *mas* and *ái* in Brazilian Portuguese, to which we argue that the modal use of these elements share similarities with German MPs, particularly regarding the discourse function of anchoring the utterance in an assumed dialogic setting. The corpus, with occurrences of *mas* and *ái* as MPs, was carried out based on the 3-format semantic scheme (DIEWALD; FISCHER, 1998) and the Descriptive Format scheme (DIEWALD et al., 2017), which introduces a description on phonology, syntax and pragmatics level. The results of this cross-linguistic research indicate that *mas* and *ái* have specific pragmatic functions in Portuguese, that, just like in German, differs from their non-modal homonyms.

Despite the potential lack of a category of MPs in Portuguese, the underlying inferential processes involved in the use of these elements in interaction, i.e., the function of negotiating meaning in a pragmatically shared common ground, are quite similar to those in German. The MPs *mas* and *ái* makes it possible to recognize the speaker's attitude and intention and the listener's expectations about a state of affairs in the context of communication. Some of the similarities they share with MPs in German are: they are monosyllabic and disyllabic; they connect the current utterance to a common ground; they have a nuclear pragmatic function, in which the MP *mas* has the particular core meaning of astonishment while the MP *ái* stands for adversative; they occur in fixed positions in the sentence (*mas* in initial and *ái* in final sentence position); they differ from their homonyms in their grammatical structures and communicative functions.

In addition to establishing the formal and pragmatic features of modal words in Portuguese, this study has possible contributions for German as an additional language (GAL). Regarding their modal characteristics and dependence on the context, MPs can be complex elements to work with in GAL classes, especially with beginners. Due to its objectivity, the Descriptive Format can be a relevant tool to teach MPs in a plurilingual setting. Aquino (2023), uses the Format with inputs taken from the Netflix series *Queer Eye Germany* to develop a didactic model for teaching the MPs *ja* and *denn* to Brazilian university students.

For future works, it would be interesting to expand the corpus of analysis, taking into account the spoken language. Furthermore, the data could be related to socio-cultural aspects, such as the profile of speakers (age, education, profession), as well as the specific communicative situation and the speech acts to which they refer to. It would be also insightful to investigate the relation between sentence types and meaning of MPs, i.e., to study the grammaticalization patterns with respect to the function they take over in a specific sentence type. Finally, an important goal is to conduct further studies of MPs in other languages, as well as to investigate the teaching of these linguistic elements in a broad plurilingual setting.

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