

## The system of pronouns of address in Madeira

### O sistema dos pronomes de tratamento em Madeira

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#### Abstract

The system of forms and pronouns of address in European Portuguese presents great variation throughout the entire country. Although a tripartite and a bipartite paradigm exists in singular and plural, respectively, the dialect reality provides a more complex system that depends on geo and socio-linguistic factors. Despite the most recent studies on this phenomenon, there is little information about the actual usage of pronouns of address in the archipelagos. In this paper, I aim to pinpoint the current paradigm of pronouns of address in Madeira, by also establishing its geolinguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic and grammatical constraints, thanks to a quantitative corpus stemming from specific fieldwork. The main results show the elimination of *vós* as plural, the extension of *vocês* and its 3pl agreement pattern, as well as various pragmatic changes in progress regarding the conception of family and the spread of pragmatic solidarity.

**Keywords:** European Portuguese; Madeira; pronouns of address; dialectology; politeness.

#### Resumo

O sistema de formas de tratamento em português europeu apresenta uma grande variação por todo o país. Embora exista um paradigma tripartito em singular e um bipartito em plural, a realidade dialetal fornece um sistema mais complexo que depende de fatores geolinguísticos e sociolinguísticos. Apesar dos estudos mais recentes sobre este fenómeno, carecemos de informação acerca do uso real dos pronomes de tratamento nos arquipélagos. Neste artigo, pretendo estabelecer o paradigma atual de pronomes de tratamento na Madeira, determinando igualmente as restrições geolinguísticas, sociolinguísticas, pragmáticas e gramaticais, graças a um corpus quantitativo que provém de levantamento de dados. Os resultados mostram a eliminação de *vós* plural, a extensão de *vocês* e a concordância de 3pl, além de várias mudanças pragmáticas em curso que afetam a conceção da família e a difusão da solidariedade pragmática.

**Palavras-chave:** Português europeu; Madeira; pronomes de tratamento; dialetologia; cortesia.



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## 1. THE SYSTEM OF CONTINENTAL PORTUGAL

The system of pronouns of address in Portuguese is known because of its complexity. Apart from the differences among dialect varieties, we lack empirical data with respect to some. Specifically, European Portuguese exhibits a system that, according to [Cunha & Cintra \(1992\)](#), [Mira Mateus et al. \(2006\)](#), [Raposo et al. \(2020\)](#) and [Lara Bermejo \(in press\)](#), opposes a tripartite paradigm in singular to a bipartite one in plural, except in the northernmost areas of Portugal ([Table 1](#)).

**Table 1. Current system of address in European Portuguese**

	T	N	V
Singular	Tu + 2sg	Você + 3sg	O senhor / a senhora
		Null subject + 3sg	+ 3sg
		Noun phrase + 3sg	Noun phrase + 3sg
Plural	Vós + 2pl (north)	Vocês + 2pl / 3pl	Os senhores / as
	Vocês + 2pl / 3pl		senhoras + 3pl

Based on [Table 1](#), *tu* plus 2sg inflections are used for intimate contexts, while *o senhor / a senhora* plus 3sg is resorted to for formal situations, though it can also be followed by a noun phrase, such as professional status. In the middle of both, there emerge the so-called N contexts ([Cook 2019](#)), which are conceived as those informal or semi-formal situations, but in which a T form is extremely impolite and a formal one is too courteous. This in-between degree swings among a number of possibilities, such as the pronoun *você* plus 3sg as well as the strategy of using null subject plus 3sg or resorting to noun phrases plus 3sg, among which proper names and professional statuses stand out.

However, the plural is more syncretic, for it envisages *os senhores / as senhoras* plus 3pl for V contexts and gathers in *vocês* for other diaphasic situations. Only the northernmost districts in Portugal still present *vós* plus 2pl for T contexts. In addition, *vós* can also appear throughout Portugal in a number of specific reverential and stereotyped contexts: church, army and parliament. Moreover, it is necessary to make clear that *vocês* induces a double agreement pattern, since by depending on the syntactic elements that anchor it, it can prompt 2pl and 3pl inflections. Based on the standard, the 3pl appears in verbs and reflexives whereas the 2pl is established in objects and possessives.

The paradigm depicted in [Table 1](#) is the standard and prestigious model in modern-day Portugal. Nevertheless, [Lara Bermejo \(2018a, 2020a\)](#) and [Lara Bermejo & Guilherme \(2021\)](#) demonstrate that, from a variationist perspective, this country envisages further alternatives for formality. Rural and isolated areas in the interior and southern districts of continental Portugal are characterised by also relying on archaic forms, such as *vossemecê(s)* or *vomecê(s)*, to address somebody politely. This resource is limited to people from low educational backgrounds and, mainly, the elderly. As a matter of fact, this strategy has been in increasing disuse since the late 1900s, by favouring the employment of the standard *o(s) senhor(es)* and their corresponding alternatives based on gender.

There is even an ulterior feature that is worthy of mention: the inadequacy of *você* as a singular pronoun. According to [Faria \(2009\)](#) and [Lara Bermejo & Guilherme \(2018\)](#), the usage of *você* is avoided because it can be evaluated as formal (V), informal (T), neutral (N), and to some extent, offensive. Fear of committing a face-threatening act (one that is impolite or contradictory to the one expected in a given situation) on the part of the addresser leads to its elimination and to resort to the so-called null subject plus 3sg. This alternative is, in the view

of [Carreira \(2003\)](#), the most extended form of addressing someone in a neutral context. Nonetheless, when a subject needs to be made explicit, speakers tend to produce an array of noun phrases, such as the profession (*professor, engineer...*) or proper name of the addressee.

The greatest change in progress that occurs in plural concerns the pronoun *vocês*. Despite the fact that *vós* plus 2pl was useful for centuries to address a group of people in an informal or intimate context, there has been an expansion of *vocês* to the detriment of *vós* for this same type of situation. However, *vocês* is syntactically 3pl and, depending on the region within Portugal, induces 2pl in part of its inflectional elements. The study carried out by [Lara Bermejo \(2020a\)](#) determines that, when *vocês* ousts *vós* as a stressed pronoun, its 3pl inflection starts spreading throughout the paradigm in a gradual way, adhering to the following hierarchy: subject > reflexive / verb > accusative > dative > possessive. The emergence of the 3pl with reference to *vocês* is at a different stage of this continuum and has now completed the hierarchy in the south-easternmost area, in the Alentejo and Algarve zone that borders Spain. Nowadays, *vocês* has not ruled out the usage of *vós* in the northernmost districts of continental Portugal, where the latter form is a valid pronoun for T plural ([Aguiar & Paiva 2017](#), [Lara Bermejo 2022a](#)).

In contrast to the extensive data we have at our disposal regarding continental Portugal, the reality of the two archipelagos is less researched and, although they are expected to follow the southern patterns (which are standard), there is little information about the actual situation on the islands. As a result, the purpose of this article is to partly fill this gap by pinpointing the current pronominal paradigm of politeness in Madeira, and comparing it to the rest of the country as well as to cross-linguistic tendencies. The paper is divided as follows: in 2, I will briefly discuss the data available regarding the latest variations in the politeness system within Madeira; in 3, I will explain the theoretical framework, corpus and methodology I have applied; in 4, I will describe the data I have collected; in 5, I will analyse the results based on several factors: their geolinguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatic behaviour and grammatical patterns; in 6, I will show the conclusions and, in 7, I will list the references I have consulted throughout.

## 2. THE SYSTEM OF MADEIRA

As for the archipelagos, we only rely on the research carried out by [Bazenga \(2019 and 2022\)](#) in Madeira. According to this author, the Madeira society resembles that of continental Portugal, except in the family context. While *tu* is the T pronoun and *o senhor / a senhora* is the formal one, *você*, the null subject strategy and the array of multiple noun phrases are utilised in N situations, with a clear avoidance in the case of *você*. Nonetheless, in Madeira, parents can still be addressed by means of non-T pronouns and strategies, such as (1-2), taken from [Bazenga \(2019\)](#), reflect.

(1)

A	senhora	já	comprou	o	passé?
The	madam	already	buy.3SG.PST.	the	pass

'Did you, madam, already buy the pass?'

(2)

O	pai	já	comprou	o	passé?
The	father	already	buy.3SG.PST.	the	pass

'Did you, father, already buy the pass?'

This divergence with respect to the rest of Portugal (we lack information about the Azores) is relevant, because it highlights that the family can still be considered a hierarchical entity, unlike in the continent, where this consideration stopped being so in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (Lara Bermejo & Guilherme 2021). In any case, the conception of family as a solidary institution in Portugal occurred more than a century and a half later than elsewhere in western Europe, such as France and Spain (Lara Bermejo 2020b, Lara Bermejo & Guilherme 2021). Additionally, Bazenga (2019) suggests that in Madeira explicit subjects are preferred even in N contexts, in contrast to the preference for null subjects in continental Portugal, according to Carreira (2003) and Lara Bermejo & Guilherme (2018). Nevertheless, this tendency towards an explicit subject in sensitive contexts does not entail the usage of *você*, which is omitted, as occurs in continental Portugal. For Bazenga (2019, 2022), *você* mainly arose to address neighbours.

Moreover, the differences remarked upon by Bazenga (2019, 2022) must also be constrained to sociolinguistic parameters, since age and educational background have been crucial in this sense. Her investigations highlight that the older the speakers are, the likelier it is for them to conceive the family as a hierarchical institution and, therefore, to use non-T strategies towards parents. In addition, the lower the educational background of the speakers, the likelier it is for them to maintain hierarchy within the family environment. Lastly, the usage of *você* mainly to address neighbours was not conditioned by any sociolinguistic variables.

As a matter of fact, we do not have much more information on forms of address in Madeira at our disposal, but Soares (1914), Silva (1950) and Rosado (2003) point out the existence of the variant *amecê* throughout the entire archipelago. This form stems from *vossa mercê* and it resembles the archaic alternatives *vossemecê* or *vomecê* I have already referred to; however, these authors do not restrict it to isolated areas or a specific sociolinguistic profile.

The lack of detailed information and the apparent inclination towards patterns different from those widespread in continental Portugal make it necessary to carry out a rigorous analysis of the actual and current paradigm of pronouns of address in Madeira. As a consequence, below I depict the corpus and methodology I have employed, as well as the theoretical framework this paper has followed. I then show the data and analyse the results and, lastly, I present the conclusions of this in-depth study.

### 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, CORPUS AND METHODOLOGY

This research paper is based on the variationist theory. Hence, the results I will show throughout will establish whether or not the usage of either pronoun and inflection is conditioned by the sociolinguistic features of the speakers. Furthermore, I will apply the theses by Scollon, Scollon & Jones (1995) regarding the politeness systems. According to these authors, any situation and society can be divided into three possible alternatives: hierarchical, deferential and solidary. In a hierarchical system, there is no reciprocity in the exchange of

pronoun and forms of address, since the person who is in an upper position gives T to the one with a lower status, but s/he receives V from his/her interlocutor. This means that the person with a lower status gives V but receives T. In the deferential system, there is reciprocity between interlocutors, but they tend to exchange V by default. Lastly, in the solidary paradigm, there is again reciprocity, but the default exchange is now T.

Societies can also favour any of these three alternatives. Western countries were hierarchical and deferential for hundreds of years, until the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (Brown & Gilman 1960). From that moment onwards, these societies have gradually favoured pragmatic solidarity by default and every country that has selected this system has always applied it first in the family environment to later extend it to friends, spouses and, in an ulterior phase, to strangers (see Brown & Gilman 1960, and, for specific cases, Benigni & Bates 1977, Paulston 1984, Rigatuso 1992, García Godoy 2010, Molina Martos 2020 and 2021, Lara Bermejo & Guilherme 2021, Lara Bermejo 2022a). Therefore, this article is also committed to unveiling whether Madeira is inclined towards solidarity or, on the contrary, it prefers other strategies by default, as happens in continental Portugal despite the timid increase of solidarity in recent years (Lara Bermejo in press).

However, there may be a misunderstanding in the usage of the terms T, N and V. Even though the literature has labelled N as neutral, this does not mean that N strategies neutralise the degree of politeness. N forms and strategies arise as distant terms and alternatives for situations in which interlocutors find T impolite and V too polite. Moreover, N terms are usually employed reciprocally, but if they are resorted to in non-reciprocal communicative acts, their connotation conveys the degree of distance the interlocutors choose to maintain. Therefore, the non-reciprocity of terms, regardless of their combination, must be understood as a hierarchical relationship, while reciprocity denotes egalitarianism. The choice of either V, N and T in this (non-)reciprocity marks the degree of distance interlocutors wish to maintain, the former being the most and the latter, the least distant option.

With the aim of collecting as many occurrences as possible from spontaneous speech, I have invented an audio-visual methodology that prompts the production of second person pronouns and inflections. The likelihood of second person pronouns appearing is extremely low in a semi-conducted interview, so its elicitation makes it necessary to adopt other methods such as those pointed out by Lara Bermejo (2016) for this same line of research applied to Spanish.

As a result, I have compiled a series of scenes from a well-known sitcom in Portugal (*Aqui não há quem viva*), in which many types of characters address different groups of people. Firstly, I described to the informants what the character said; they were then required to become the character and repeat the lines as if their interlocutors were in front of them. All participants were asked to play the same characters in the same scenes. In this sense, there has been no variation in the sample depending on the sociolinguistic variables of the informants. This method worked successfully and enabled the elicitation of singular and plural stressed pronouns, as well as their inflections in all the syntactic contexts that were envisaged: verb, reflexive, accusative, dative and possessive.

Likewise, all informants were shown scenes that covered many types of contexts in order to also comprehend the degree of politeness and type of courtesy that is now the norm throughout the archipelago. The informants were thus required to speak to one addressee or group by taking into account the degree of formality of the situation. These scenes covered the following communicative acts and participants: customers, children, parents, neighbours, church, friends, spouses, students, professors, colleagues, subordinate to superior, job interview and TV interview. While friends and spouses are intimate contexts, some of them

present asymmetrical relations, specifically: the job interview entailed the address from a manager towards a candidate; another work-related scene showed the address from a subordinate towards a superior; in another scene, a professor talked to a student; and in a scene where church was the setting, the priest talked to his audience. Likewise, there was a series of scenes that can be considered either asymmetrical or symmetrical: the address from children towards their parents and viceversa. The results will determine whether these family environments are perceived in Madeira as hierarchical or not. In a latter selection of scenes I showed some N situations: interaction between customers and sellers, neighbours, colleagues and participants in a TV interview. The reason why these have been labelled N resides in the fact that there is no difference of power among interlocutors, but these situations do not necessarily trigger informality or much formality.

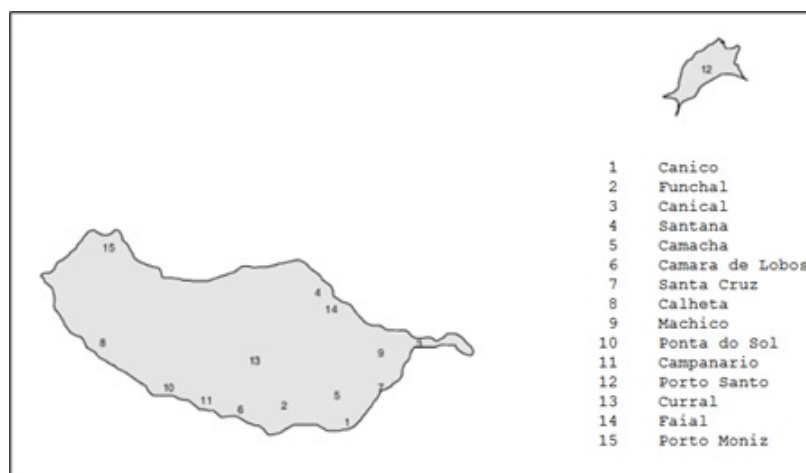
The survey I have depicted above has been applied to 83 informants (with the sociolinguistic variables detailed in [Table 2](#)), from whom I have extracted 2,319 occurrences. The island of Madeira provided 63 speakers, while Porto Santo supplied 20 informants.

**Table 2. Number of informants, based on their sociolinguistic features**

SEX	MEN: 35 (43%) / WOMEN: 48 (57%)
Educational background	High [university studies]: 27 (30%) / Low [non-university studies]: 56 (70%)
Age	-30: 37 (44.5%) / 30-60: 26 (31.3%) / +60: 20 (24.2%)
Demographics	Rural: 59 (71%) / Urban: 24 (29%)

Furthermore, the methodology has been carried out on the two inhabited islands as [map 1](#) shows:

**Map 1. Localities surveyed**



It is important to underlie that over two thirds of the population living in Madeira are concentrated in Funchal and its suburbs, while over 80% of the inhabitants are settled on the southern coast, near Funchal ([Região Autónoma da Madeira 2021](#)).

The occurrences have been subsequently classified based on the sociolinguistic variables I have mentioned, but also pursue a series of linguistic parameters: the stressed pronoun, the syntactic context of the stressed pronoun (subject or prepositional phrase), verb, reflexive, accusative, dative, possessive, as well as degree of politeness. The chi squared has also been applied to the data I provide below in order to discover which variable is significant in the

usage of either strategy. The instances I show will be labelled after the extra-linguistic features of the informant: M (male), F (female), -30 (younger than 30 years old), 30-60 (between 30 and 60 years old), +60 (older than 60), L (low educational background), H (high educational background), city and demographics. Consequently, M+60H Funchal urban equates to male above the age of 60 with a high educational background, from Funchal, an urban area.

#### 4. DATA

As set out above, the method I employed made it possible to elicit stressed pronouns as well as different inflections in the rest of the syntactic contexts. I show the distribution of each of them in tables 3 and 4.

**Table 3. Stressed pronouns**

	STRESSED PRONOUN: SUBJECT	STRESSED PRONOUN: PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE
Singular	Tu: 164 (23%)	Ti (contigo): 76 (26,7%)
	Você: 204 (28,5%)	Você: 20 (7%)
	O senhor / a senhora: 107 (15%)	O senhor / a senhora: 6 (2%)
	Noun phrase: 64 (9%)	Si (consigo): 176 (62,3%)
	Null subject + 3sg: 179 (24,5%)	Noun phrase: 6 (2%)
Total	718 (100%)	284 (100%)
Plural	Vós: 11 (4%)	Vós: 1 (20%)
	Vocês: 232 (86%)	Vocês: 79 / Convosco: 3 (60%)
	Os senhores / as senhoras: 28 (10%)	Os senhores / as senhoras: 1 (20%)
	Total	271 (100%)

**Table 4. Agreement in the inflectional system**

VERB	REFLEXIVE	ACCUSATIVE	DATIVE	POSSESSIVE
2sg: 372	2sg: 1	2sg: 136	2sg: 12	2sg: 197
3sg: 509	3sg: 28	3sg: 58	3sg: 27	3sg: 96
2pl: 6	2pl: 1	2pl: 89	2pl: 99	2pl: 47
3pl: 316	3pl: 79	3pl: 22	3pl: 6	3pl: 7

Table 3 clearly shows that Madeira speakers explicitly use *você* in singular as well as *vós* in plural, though the latter pronoun was produced on a few occasions. Likewise, the verbal inflection exhibits a 2pl agreement six times, whereas the reflexive pronoun has only arisen once with a 2pl desinence (3-7).

(3)

Você	copiou	e	não	vou	aceitar
3SG.NOM.	3SG.PST.copy	and	no	1.SG.PRES.go	INF.accept
o	exame (M-30H Funchal urban)				
the	exam				



'You cheated and I am not going to accept your exam'

(4)

Você	e	o	representante
3SG.NOM.	3SG.PRES.be	the	representative
Desta	greve? (F-30L Ponta do Solo rural)		
of+this	strike		

'Are you the representative of this strike?'

(5)

Você	está	sempre	a	falar
3SG.NOM.	3SG.PRES.be	always	to	INF.speak
mal	das pessoas (F30-60H Santana rural)			
bad	of+the persons			

'You are always criticising the people'

(6)

Vós	sois	o	futuro
2PL.NOM.	2PL.PRES.be	the	future
da	igreja (M30-60H Funchal urban)		
of+the	church		

'You are the future of the church'

(7)

Tendes	de	vos	basear
2PL.PRES.have	of	2PL.REFL.	INF.base
no	cristianismo (F-30H Camacha rural)		
in+the	Christianity		

'You have to follow your lives on a Christian life'

The remaining syntactic elements inflected in 2pl do not necessarily refer to *vós*, since throughout Portugal *vocês* induces 3pl in verbs and reflexives and 2pl in objects and possessives (8-10).

(8)

Vocês	são	maus	pais,	já	não
3PL.NOM.	3PL.PRES.be	bad	parents,	now	no
vos	quero	voltar		a	ver (M-30L Caniço rural)
2PL.ACC.	1SG.PRESS.want	INF.return		to	INF.see

'You are bad parents, I don't want to see you anymore'

(9)

Filhos,	vocês	portaram-se		bem e cá
Children	3PL.NOM.	3PL.PST.behave+3PL.REFL.		well and here
têm	a	televisão		que vos
3PL.PRESS.have	the	television		that 2PL.DAT.
tinha		prometido		
1SG.PST.have		PCP.promise		

(F-30L Machico rural)

'Children, you behaved well and here you are the television I had promised you'

(10)

Vocês	vão	ter	que	pagar
3PL.NOM.	3PL.PRES.go	INF.have	that	INF.pay
pelos	vossos	electrodomésticos		(F+60L Funchal urban)
for+the	2PL.POSS.	appliances		

'You have to pay for your home appliances'

Besides the abovementioned examples, the results have also shown the employment of another three strategies that the literature has repeatedly referred to: *o senhor / a senhora* to address someone politely, the resource of the noun phrase plus 3sg to treat somebody with whom distance should be maintained and the selection of no subject plus 3sg for the same diaphasic situation (11-17). According to Raposo et al. (2020), the choice of either depends on the degree of distance, with *o senhor / a senhora* being more formal than the proper name plus 3sg, but less than the explicitness of the treatment followed by social status plus 3sg (such as *o senhor doutor*, 'sir doctor').

(11)

A	menina	foi	a	melhor
The	girl	3SG.PST.be	the	best

candidata                      que            tive (F+60L Câmara de Lobos rural)  
 candidate                      that            1SG.PST.have  
 'You, girl, were the best candidate I have had'

(12)

A            Joana            é                      a            melhor            candidata  
 The        Joana            3SG.PRES.be            the        best            candidate  
 para        esta            vaga (F30-60H Caniçal rural)  
 for        this            job  
 'Joana, you are the best candidate for this job position'

(13)

Queria                      saber                      se    o    patrão            podia  
 1SG.PST.want            INFknow                      if    the    boss            c3SG.PST.can  
 dar-me                                      alguns    dias    de    folga (M-30L Caniço rural)  
 INF.give+1SG.DAT.                      some    days    of    rest  
 'I would like to know whether you, boss, could give me some holidays'

(14)

A        mãe            é                      muito    má (F+60L Funchal urban)  
 The    mother        3SG.PRES.be            very    bad  
 'Mother, you are very bad'

(15)

O            senhor            é                      o            melhor  
 The        sir                      3SG.PRES.be                      the        best  
 chefe        que            tive (M-30L Santo António urban)  
 boss        that            1SG.PST.have  
 'You sir were the best boss I have ever had'

(16)

A            vizinha                      está                      sempre  
 The        neighbour                      3SG.PRES.be                      always  
 a            cochinar (M+60L Funchal urban)

to            INF.gossip  
 'You, neighbour, are always gossiping'

(17)

A	senhora	tem	experiência	e
The	lady	3SG.PRES.have	experience	and
parece		responsável (M30-60H Santa Cruz rural)		
3SG.PRES.seem		responsible		

'You lady have expertise and seem responsible'

These examples reflect the array of possibilities in non-T communicative acts. Informants have chosen the proper name, the professional status, the kinship position and the noun phrase, *o senhor / a senhora*. It is important to clarify that I will treat the phrase *o senhor / a senhora* as virtually pronominal. Although it emerges as a nominal compound, its behaviour resembles that of a pronoun (in fact, Cunha & Cintra 1992 have already pointed out this fact), since it has achieved a very fixed degree of coalescence and is undergoing a grammaticalization process with loss of phonic weight that in Brazil has been addressed with solutions such as *sinhô* and *sô* (Ramos 2011).

As for the null subject plus 3sg, its emergence reaches up to 179 occurrences. It is important to make clear what is understood by null subject plus 3sg, because this terminology lends itself to spurious conclusions in a *pro drop* language such as Portuguese. The tokens I have counted do not encompass any sentence without a pronoun, but they entail the number of sentences without any explicit subject in a given pragmatic situation. This means that, for a specific scene, if the informant has produced 5 out of 6 sentences without any subject (but s/he has done so in one), then none of them can be considered null subject plus 3sg. The fact that five of them fail to exhibit a subject simply follows the grammatical behaviour of a *pro drop* language, but it becomes clearly apparent that the sentence with the subject is simultaneously the implicit subject of the other five. As a consequence, I have applied the label of null subject plus 3sg only when the informant did not produce any subject at all in all the speech s/he uttered throughout an entire situation. This slight difference is crucial, for it cannot be said that the informants who resorted to a null subject plus 2sg tried to avoid the subject in order not to be impolite. The mere employment of 2sg establishes the relationship and implies the usage of *tu*. Nevertheless, the selection of the 3sg without any subject leaves the treatment the addresser has in his/her mind, and tries to avoid at any cost precisely to avoid impoliteness, unclear. In this sense, the 3sg envisages several alternatives: *o senhor / a senhora*, the noun phrase or *você*, while the 2sg can only refer to *tu*.

The occurrences I have depicted up to now suggest the large paradigm that exists in Madeira Portuguese, mainly in singular. All these characteristics are at the same time constrained by geographical and sociolinguistic variables, as well as by universal pragmatic tendencies and cross-linguistic grammatical patterns. Therefore, in the next section, I will analyse all these factors under study.

## 5. ANALYSIS

The previous section showed the total results of the survey and shed light on the existence of the pronouns of address in the Madeira of today, as well as the inflectional system. Nevertheless, the data suggest that not every pronoun or strategy is conditioned by the same geographical, sociolinguistic or pragmatic variables. In fact, the geolinguistic constraint applies to the behaviour of *vocês* and its agreement pattern only, since the results have not provided any specific pattern for the usage of *tu*, *vós*, *você*, *o senhor* (and its counterparts in gender and number) and other strategies, such as null subject plus 3sg or noun phrase plus 3sg.

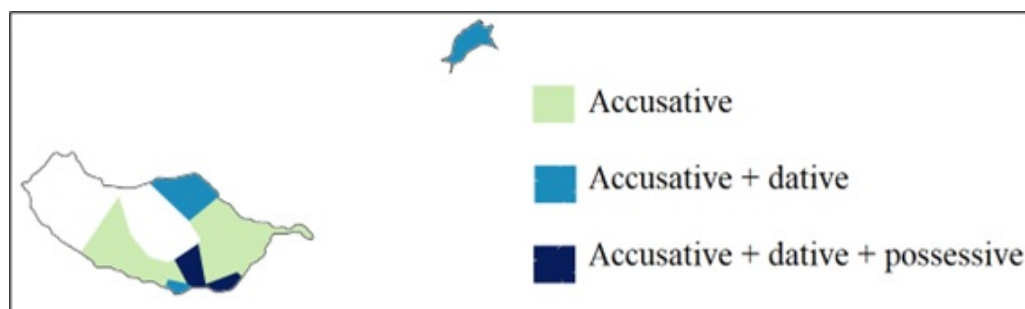
Moreover, the analysis reveals that sociolinguistic factors affect the usage of *você* as well as the strategies employed to address parents, but not any other pronoun or strategy. Likewise, the results show that the pragmatic reality of Madeira is undergoing important changes regarding the conception of family, the spread of pragmatic solidarity, as well as the virtual disappearance of *vós* even for the expected stereotyped contexts. Finally, it is worth mentioning that grammar also plays a role in the changes in progress: this is especially relevant in the extension of *vocês* as well as in the deletion of *vós*. Furthermore, the data have also been supplied with tokens of stressed pronouns in object positions as well as with dative clitics for accusative contexts.

In light of the abovementioned features, the analysis is focused on the following phenomena: in 5.1., I discuss the geolinguistic extension of *vocês*; in 5.2., I present the sociolinguistic constraints I have referred to previously; in 5.3., I argue the pragmatic tendencies attested nowadays in Madeira; and in 5.4., I detail the grammatical behaviour of the inflections anchoring *vocês* and the elimination of *vós*, as well as the other phenomena regarding clitics and objects.

### 5.1. Geolinguistics

As has been stated, the single element that is subject to geographic variation is the extension of the agreement referring to *vocês*. This was expected, since this pronoun and its inflections vary on the continent, depending on a continuum. In previous sections I stated that continental Portugal possesses different areas that are characterised by prompting the 3pl in a given implicational stage within a hierarchy. As a result, it is also necessary to draw the diffusion of the 3pl in the syntactic elements anchoring *vocês* in Madeira ([map 2](#)) in order to discover whether it has the same behaviour and to what extent the 3pl has reached the end of the continuum.

Map 2. Extension of 3pl anchoring *vocês*



Map 2 represents the cartographic diffusion of the 3pl throughout the objects and the possessive. It is important to bear in mind that in the case of 3pl the entire archipelago is in agreement on the stressed pronoun, the reflexive and the verb. However, the emergence of the 3pl in further elements depends upon a diatopic factor. Whilst Funchal and its surroundings now exhibit 3pl in objects and possessives (18 and 19a-21a), Porto Santo and some areas in southern Madeira and around the village of Santana in the north also present the 3pl in the accusative and the dative, but not yet in the possessive (18, 19a-20a and 21b). The eastern part of the island as well as most of the southern zone only inflect the accusative in 3pl, but not the dative and the possessive (18, 19a and 20-21b). Lastly, the rest of Madeira only agrees on the verb, the reflexive and the stressed pronoun in 3pl, but prefers the objects and the possessive to be construed in 2pl morphology (18, 19b-21-b).

(18)

(M-30N Funchal urban // F60N Porto Santo rural // M-30N Machico rural // M30-60N Porto Moniz rural)

Vocês	portaram-se	muito	bem
You.3PL	behave.3PL.PST.+REFL.3PL.	very	well

'You behaved very well'

(19) a.

(M-30N Funchal urban // F60N Porto Santo rural // M-30N Machico rural)

Já	não	os	quero
Already	no	3PL.ACC.	want.1SG.PRS.
Ver	mais		
see.INF.	more		

'I don't want to see you anymore'

b.

(M30-60N Porto Moniz rural)

Já	não	vos	quero
Already	no	2PL.ACC.	want.1SG.PRS.
Ver	mais		
see.INF.	more		

'I don't want to see you anymore'

(20) a.

(M-30N Funchal urban // F60N Porto Santo rural)

Comprei-lhes	uma	televisão
--------------	-----	-----------

Buy.1SG.PST.+3PL.DAT.                    a                    television  
 'I bought you a television'

b.

(M-30N Machico rural // M30-60N Porto Moniz rural)

Comprei-vos                                    uma                    televisão  
 Buy.1SG.PST.+2PL.DAT.                    a                    television  
 'I bought you a television'

(21) a.

(M-30N Funchal urban)

Vão                    ter                    de    pagar                    os    seus  
 Go.3PL.PRS.                    have.INF.                    of    pay.INF.                    the    POSS.3PL.  
 eletrodomésticos  
 electrical appliances  
 'You must pay for your electrical appliances'

b.

(F60N Porto Santo rural // M-30N Machico rural // M30-60N Porto Moniz)

Vão                    ter                    de    pagar                    os    vossos  
 Go.3PL.PRS.                    have.INF.                    of    pay.INF.                    the    POSS.2PL.  
 eletrodomésticos  
 electrical appliances  
 'You must pay for your electrical appliances'

The geographical distribution drawn by [map 2](#) points out two tendencies: the first refers to the fact that no specific pattern is followed in the diffusion of the 3pl. The appearance of this agreement in objects and possessives is attested randomly and suggests that every area ends up spreading this inflection to further elements without the pressure or the affectedness from a neighbouring region; secondly, the most rural and remote areas within Madeira (the west, the north-west and the centre) are coherent in maintaining the 3pl only in the stressed pronoun, the verb and the reflexive. The relative isolation of this region with respect to the rest of the archipelago may have played a role in this sense.

## 5.2. Sociolinguistics

In the previous paragraphs I described the distribution of stressed pronouns and inflections in current Madeira. Nonetheless, there are two options that seem to be subject to the sociolinguistic parameters of the speaker (apart from the communicative context, as will be discussed in the pragmatic section): the usage of *você* as well as the strategies to address members of the family.

In Table 5, I detail the sociolinguistic variables that have explicitly used the pronoun *você*.

**Table 5. Sociolinguistic variables in the usage of *você***

SEX	AGE	EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND	DEMOGRAPHICS
Male: 32 (91,5%) out of 35	-30: 30 (81%) out of 37	Low: 44 (78,5%) out of 56	Rural: 49 (83%) out of 59
Female: 35 (73%) out of 48	30-60: 21 (80,7%) out of 26 +60: 16 (80%) out of 20	High: 23 (85%) out of 27	Urban: 18 (75%) out of 24
67 (80,7%) out of 83 informants			

Table 5 clearly establishes the scarce differences that seem to appear when collating the profiles. Regardless of age, employment is high and the same applies to educational background and, to some extent, the demographic pattern. Only sex supplies a wider gap, with the male informants being more inclined to produce *você*. If the chi squared is calculated, no variable is significant except the one that refers to sex, which grants the following result: *p*-value is .034748, significant at  $p < .05$ . In other words, the resource of *você* in Madeira is restrained to the sex of the informant and not to any other sociolinguistic characteristic, but this restriction is statistically significant in a minimal proportion.

Another crucial aspect is related to the hierarchical consideration of family. Below, in Table 6, I list the sociolinguistic profiles of the speakers who have resorted to non-T strategies to address parents. Attention should be drawn to the fact that Table 6 synthesises all the strategies that are not associated with informality. In this sense, both V and N alternatives have been included. In the pragmatic section, I will disentangle the behaviour of both strategies (N and V) in this regard.

**Table 6. Sociolinguistic variables in the usage of non-T strategies towards parents**

SEX	AGE	EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND	DEMOGRAPHICS
Male: 15 (42,8%) out of 35	-30: 10 (27%) out of 37	Low: 24 (42,8%) out of 56	Rural: 22 (37,3%) out of 59
Female: 19 (39,5%) out of 48	30-60: 11 (42,3%) out of 26 +60: 13 (65%) out of 20	High: 10 (37%) out of 27	Urban: 12 (50%) out of 24
34 (40,9%) out of 83 informants			

Table 6 suggests the increase of pragmatic solidarity and the gradual conception of family as an egalitarian entity. It reveals that at least 4 out of 10 speakers in current Madeira still considers the family entity as non-solidary. As that which occurred with the usage of *você*, the percentages are more or less close to each other, and it becomes necessary to apply the chi squared. In this case, the single variable that has emerged as significant is age: *p*-value is .020557, significant at  $p < .05$ . In other words, the older the informants, the more inclined they are to employ non-T strategies in the family environment.



To summarise, the current sociolinguistic panorama in Madeira determines that the employment of *você* is quite extended, but it is more rooted in men. Furthermore, the hierarchical (at least, non-solidary) conception of family is still valid amongst older people, whereas the rest of the speakers tend to make it solidary, mainly in the case of younger speakers. Below, I discuss the pragmatic behaviour of the current system, focusing on the pronoun *você*, the gradual tendency towards solidarity in plural forms and within the family and the maintenance of deference in singular and the elimination of *vós*.

### 5.3. Pragmatics

The ruling pragmatic system in current Madeira suggests three changes in progress: the total disappearance of *vós* even in contexts where it had been preserved; the gradual tendency towards pragmatic solidarity in plural; and the maintenance of deference and distance in singular, though less and less within the family and in conflict with the usage of *você*.

#### 5.3.1. The usage of *vós*

The employment of *vós* has been scarce, as [Table 7](#) depicts.

**Table 7. Usage of *vós* based on sociolinguistic profiles**

SEX	AGE	EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND	DEMOGRAPHICS
Male: 4 (11,4%) out of 35	-30: 2 (5,4%) out of 37	Low: 3 (5,3%) out of 56	Rural: 6 (10,1%) out of 59
Female: 4 (8,3%) out of 48	30-60: 4 (15,4%) out of 26 +60: 2 (10%) out of 20	High: 5 (18,5%) out of 27	Urban: 2 (8,3%) out of 24
8 (9,6%) out of 83 informants			

Although I have already made clear that the usage of *vós* does not depend upon any sociolinguistic feature (as determined by the statistical proof), I have intentionally included this information in [Table 7](#) in order to demonstrate the generalised disappearance of *vós* in Madeira society. Scarcely 10% of informants have produced it within the expected contexts from where it may emerge.

The twelve occasions on which speakers produced it referred to the church, precisely one of the situations where it is expected to be attested, but its scarcity and its substitution by the pronoun *vocês* in most informants, regardless of their sociolinguistic profile, indicate that it is close to disappearance even in these contexts.

The gradual loss of *vós* even for certain stereotyped contexts resembles its Spanish counterpart in Hispanic America. The opposition *vosotros-ustedes* that dominates in Spain, the former being T plural and the latter V plural, stopped being valid in Hispanic America in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, when *ustedes* generalised as the single plural pronoun, regardless of the degree of politeness (Lara Bermejo 2022a). Nevertheless, *vosotros* was maintained as the selected pronoun within the church, army and parliament, exactly the same situations as for European Portuguese (Cunha & Cintra 1972). The usage of *vosotros* is widely attested in Hispanic America for these purposes, as [Vázquez Laslop \(2010\)](#) demonstrates for Mexico, but this same author has drawn attention to the fact that even these contexts are gradually dismissing *vosotros* as a formula and are on the verge of choosing *ustedes* plus 3pl. This is exactly what my corpus suggests regarding current Portuguese, at least in Madeira.

### 5.3.2. Address within the family

With respect to the family environment, [Bazenga \(2019\)](#) remarks upon the profound maintenance of non-T strategies from children towards their parents, with a persistence as regards the hierarchical view of family, as that which occurred in western societies prior to the French Revolution. According to this author, nearly three quarters of the people she surveyed preferred alternatives such as *o senhor / a senhora*, the noun *pai* and *mãe* followed by 3sg rather than 2sg, and the strategy of null subject plus 3sg. This tendency was, however, restrained to elderly speakers and to informants with a low educational background. My survey has further analysed this fact and in [Table 6](#) I referred to the fact that the elderly are more inclined to do so, with this being less and less the case the younger the speaker is. Regardless, in this section I will deal with the strategies people from Madeira resort to for relatives in a higher position. In [Tables 8, 9 and 10](#), I detail the number of occurrences of T, N and V strategies respectively to address parents.

**Table 8. T strategies towards parents**

TU	NULL SUBJECT + 2SG	ACCUSATIVE 2SG	PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE
26 (29%)	22 (24,7%)	20 (22,5%)	Ti: 21 (23,8%)
89 (100%)			

**Table 9. N strategies towards parents**

VOCÊ	NULL SUBJECT + 3SG	PAI / MÃE (NOUN PHRASE)	ACCUSATIVE 3SG	PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE
12 (15,6%)	5 (6,5%)	18 (23,3%)	15 (19,5%)	Si: 21 (27,3%) Você: 1 (1,3%) Pai / mãe (noun phrase): 5 (6,5%)
77 (100%)				

**Table 10. V strategies towards parents**

O SENHOR / A SENHORA	PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE
5 (20%)	Si: 21 (80%)
26 (100%)	

[Tables 8, 9 and 10](#) indicate firstly that T alternatives are based upon the pronoun *tu* and 2sg inflections. Nonetheless, non-T strategies exhibit further possibilities: the explicit usage of *você*, the employment of *o senhor / a senhora*, the status held within the family as the subject of the sentence (*mãe, pai*) as well as the null subject plus 3sg.

Firstly, the choice for the kinship status is always followed by the 3sg, revealing that it is not a T strategy. Secondly, the accusative inflected in 3sg is not reinforced by any stressed pronoun or form, which is why I have labelled it as N, as in the strategy of null subject plus 3sg, for it leaves the address opaque. Finally, the most diffused prepositional phrase is *si*, again increasing the opacity of the form of address, since it is useful for any resource that envisages the 3sg regardless of the subject form. In any case, as [\(22-24\)](#) demonstrate, at present 40% of Madeira speakers produce non-T strategies to address parents.

(22)

A	mãe	é	muito	má	e	não
The	mother	3SG.PRES.be	very	bad	and	no
me	deixa		sair (F-30L Machico rural)			
1SG.DAT.	3SG.PRES.let		INF.go out			

'You mother are very bad and don't let me go out'

(23)

A	senhora	fez	mal (F+60L Porto Santo rural)
The	lady	3SG.PST.do	bad

'You mother did badly'

(24)

Você	não	me	deixa
3SG.NOM.	no	1SG.DAT.	3SG.PRES.let

sair (F30-60H Caniçal rural)  
INF.go out  
'You don't let me go out'

The resource of *você* has been employed by 4 elderly, 5 middle-aged and one young informant. *O senhor / a senhora*, on the contrary, has been used by one elderly, 2 middle-aged and two young informants. The noun phrase strategy is divided as follows: 9 elderly, 4 middle-aged, and 4 young people. Finally, the null subject has been preferred by 1 elderly, 4 middle-aged and 1 young. The overall results suggest the tendency within the family entity towards solidarity, but undergoing an intermediate phase earlier.

Apart from the fact that 40% of the sample used non-T strategies towards parents, the most diffused pronouns and alternatives are those associated with N, since *o senhor / a senhora* hardly appeared. In this sense, the family concept has passed from being considered hierarchical to being conceived slightly more solidary in these profiles, for they prefer N strategies such as *você*, the family status plus 3sg or null subject plus 3sg. It cannot be affirmed, however, that this slow tendency means solidarity, rather less hierarchy, since the abovementioned options are still deferential. Children gave V or N to their parents, but they were replied to with the T form, so there was no reciprocity in the exchange of the level of politeness. As a result, the transformation that the family has undergone in Madeira has entailed an in-between phase, before a final reversion to solidarity. Hence, the results found in this field study simply reveal the last relics of the family as a non-solidary entity, underlying this in-between stage before achieving this goal.

This in-between phase is likewise underpinned again by Spanish. García Godoy (2008, 2010) has documented the change in Spain that occurred in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when upper-class and urban people started to address their parents through T. However, the usage

of pronoun *tú* (T) for parents was not immediate and, before this happened, children underwent a stage in which they continued to employ V pronouns but with noun phrases that were perceived as T. Specifically, children ousted the terms *padre* ('father') and *madre* ('mother') by favouring the allocutives *papá* ('dad') and *mamá* ('mom'). The emergence of these noun phrases did not imply the rise of *tú*, but there was a period of time in which T noun phrases coexisted with V pronouns for the same interlocutors. With time, children also deleted V pronouns and treated their parents by means of *tú*. This is not exclusive to the family, but [Molina Martos \(2021\)](#) states that T noun phrases are always the prelude to T pronouns. Her affirmations are based on the fact that there was also a generalised usage of *tú* in relationships of friendship or marriage in the late 19th century after the previous universalisation of T noun phrases for these contexts ([Molina Martos 2020](#)).

Unlike European Portuguese, Peninsular Spanish does not possess N pronouns or strategies. Whereas Spanish mixed T noun phrases with V pronouns in the intermediate stage before the total establishment of pragmatic solidarity in the abovementioned contexts, Madeira Portuguese has selected N forms and alternatives for this in-between phase towards pragmatic solidarity.

### 5.3.3. The usage of *você* and null subject + 3sg

One of the relevant factors to be assessed as regards the pronoun *você* is its pragmatic range in current Madeira. Based on my corpus, this resource has arisen on 15 (6.7%) occasions to address someone politely; on 83 (37%) occasions to address an interlocutor who is in a lower position; and on 126 (56.3%) occasions to treat an addressee who is in an equal position. In the former case, the informants selected it to address a manager (5 young, 6 middle-aged and 3 elderly), while in the second situation, the addresser was either a professor who spoke to a student or a manager who addressed a subordinate. In the latter case, the interlocutors covered clients, non-elderly strangers and neighbours.

The distribution of pronouns makes it necessary to assess whether it also depends on the diaphasic context or if it is only a matter of sociolinguistic factors. In Table 11, I detail the number of times every pronoun has arisen and in what context.

**Table 11. Distribution of singular pronoun based on the diaphasic situation**

	T	N	V
Tu	132 (27%)	32 (6,3%)	0
Você	101 (20%)	110 (21,8%)	13 (2,6%)
O senhor / a senhora	0	71 (14%)	46 (8,3%)

[Table 11](#) illustrates that *tu* cannot be resorted to as a V strategy and neither can *o senhor* be employed as T. The former is useful in intimate contexts and, to a lesser extent, in neutral situations in which interlocutors share power. The latter is employed to give V to someone and it can also appear in N situations. As was stated by the literature regarding continental Portugal, *você* can be perceived as T, N and V. In Madeira, following the results of this field study, *você* as asymmetrical ascendant (V) is strictly limited to those informants that still use it for parents as well as, on very rare occasions, to address a manager. The most diffused pragmatic value of *você* in current Madeira lies on N and, in the case of T, if there is no reciprocity in the treatment. In other words: *você* is deferential when it is expected to serve for

both interlocutors, and asymmetrical as it is also employed to address someone in a lower position. To sum up, *tu* is solidary, *o senhor* is both deferential and hierarchical to address someone in a higher position, and *você* is both deferential and hierarchical to address someone in a lower position. The difference in the employment of *o senhor* and *você* for deference is the degree of communicative distance, the former being more distant than the latter. As a matter of fact, the statistical results leave no doubt; based on the chi squared, the *p*-value is  $< 0.00001$ , significant at  $p < .05$ .

The apparent contradictory behaviour of *você* resembles the pragmatic path of singular *vós* in both Portuguese and Spanish as a V pronoun. The pragmatic origin of this form was V in the Middle Ages, but as V forms emerged by default, their courteous connotation stopped being perceived and by the late Middle Ages and the early Modern Era, speakers made up new polite strategies to replace the gradual loss of courtesy that *vós* was undergoing (Cintra 1972). Nevertheless, the pragmatic depreciation of *vós* entailed a period of time in which it could be considered in a contradictory way: polite, informal and even offensive. *Vós* became an N pronoun, for contexts in which a V strategy was too polite and where *tu* was not polite enough. Thus, European Portuguese exhibited at that time a tripartite system in singular, in which *vós* could be employed as the current *você*. The problem with N situations is the certainty about such a consideration on the part of the interlocutor. The boundary between a T and an N context can be narrow, as the frontier between N and V can also be. This is why tripartite paradigms in singular are rarely attested cross-linguistically (Helmbrecht 2005) and can be witnessed for example in Romanian.

The fear of committing a face-threatening act obliges the addresser to know some data about his/her interlocutor in order to satisfy the communicative act. As *você* can be problematic for the abovementioned reasons, speakers solve this problem by not explicitly producing a pronoun and resorting to a null subject plus 3sg or to a noun phrase. This alternative is crucial, since the explicit expression of a subject is sometimes necessary for topical continuity or for contrastive purposes. When the informants who took part in this survey needed to produce a subject in an N situation and did not want to use *você*, they asked me about the proper name of the addressee. Only when they were given the name could they go on with the discourse. In the cases in which no proper name was given, they could not help inventing it. Additionally, if they knew the job their addressee had, this problem was solved by referring to the professional status, but the knowledge of the proper name of the addressee has become essential in current European Portuguese to avoid impoliteness in certain situations in which the addresser does not consider *você* the right subject. This can even be valued in the distribution of the null subject + 3sg and the explicit usage of a subject in both N and V (Table 12).

**Table 12. Occurrences of N and V with and without a subject**

	N	V
Null subject + 3sg	99 (35,4%)	80 (57,6%)
Subject	181 (64,6%)	59 (42,4%)

Table 12 shows that, contrary to the statements in the literature regarding continental Portugal, Madeira speakers prefer the explicitness of a subject in the most problematic pragmatic context of all: N. However, V situations give the opposite picture though with a lesser gap between percentages. It is pertinent to recall that accounting for the null subject plus 2sg is useless, because any 2sg inflection with or without a subject implies the usage of

*tu*. The data Table 12 provides is interesting, as it shows the need to make the degree of politeness clear through the treatment itself in spite of the fact that the 3sg alone avoids such a commitment. In this sense, Madeira seems to follow a different path from continental Portugal, as Bazenga (2019) claims.

The results I present regarding *você* contradict a number of statements that can be found repeatedly in the literature, but which are not supported by any empirical research. For instance, Bacelar de Nascimento, Duarte & Mendes (2018) state that in Portugal, *você* is employed by an elite who use it interchangeably with *T* as a way to differentiate themselves from other social classes. This is the first theory yet to be underpinned by any empirical data and which demands specific research. Secondly, these authors also remark that Portugal is experiencing an increasing tendency towards the usage of *você* in younger generations and speakers with low educational backgrounds. My study does not support this hypothesis at all (it is important to highlight that these statements are not backed up by any empirical study) and, with regards to Madeira, *você* is widely attested irrespective of sociolinguistic variables, except for sex, though to a minimal degree. Thirdly, Bacelar de Nascimento, Duarte & Mendes (2018) resort to quite an extended cliché in Lusophone linguistics when they affirm that the supposed increase of *você* is a direct influence of TV series produced in Brazil (*telenovelas*) as well as of the mass migration on the part of Brazilian people to Portugal.

As regards the aforementioned cliché, apart from the lack of empirical evidence it emerges as the least likely hypothesis of all. In the first place, language contact and dialect contact (which more or less behave the same) exhibit a series of stages that depend on both linguistic and extra-linguistic features. While the former usually affect lexicon, to a lesser extent phonetics, very rarely morpho-syntax and virtually never pragmatics, the latter respond to the prestige and consideration of every language and dialect involved in the contact (Van Coetsem 1988, Heine & Kuteva 2005). Applied to European Portuguese and its contact with Brazilian Portuguese via television and migration, this means that the Portuguese would have adopted many lexical items from the Brazilian variety, had they incorporated *você* as it is used in Brazil. Moreover, the Portuguese would have started to produce certain phonetic contexts in a Brazilian way, had they incorporated *você* as it is used in Brazil. Additionally, the Portuguese would have developed morpho-syntactic features coming from the Brazilian variety, had they incorporated *você* as it is used in Brazil. To summarise: if Portugal had reinterpreted the pragmatic employment of *você* because of a direct influence from the Brazilians, then European Portuguese would have to exhibit an array of linguistic features, mainly in lexicon, less in phonetics and even less in syntax, influenced by the Brazilian variety. However, this has not occurred. The usage of *você* has nothing to do with the Brazilian reality.

Empirical evidence supports my proposal that the employment of *você* in European Portuguese is not affected by the Brazilian paradigm, at least regarding Madeira. Pragmatics is a characteristic that varies depending on a specific country, but not on the language. It is very rooted in the beliefs of a given society and, consequently, the pragmatic system of Portugal is different from that of Brazil, which is also different from that of Angola and so on. It is not Portuguese that is the factor that imposes a type of pragmatic system, rather, it is the country regardless of the language and languages spoken within. For example, politeness in Switzerland is not conceived the same way as in Germany, Italy and France, despite the fact that this country presents the three languages. Indeed, Switzerland applies a type of politeness that is useful for all of its official languages (Hickey & Stewart 2005).

The same happens in the Hispanic world. The pragmatic conception of politeness in Spain is not the same as that in Costa Rica, although both countries possess Spanish (Hummel, Kluge

& Vázquez Laslop 2010, Hummel & Lopes 2020). Within Spain, however, speakers of Spanish, Galician, Catalan and Basque behave identically in this respect because the pragmatic system is constrained to what Spain understands, and not to what every language triggers. Furthermore, the shift in pragmatics, specifically in relation to politeness, follows the prestige (Lara Bermejo 2022a). Spain changed to pragmatic solidarity in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century as a French influence because the prestige at that time was France (Lara Bermejo 2020b). But in the case of dialect contact, the change is usually made by those who are in a lower position. Sinner (2010) investigated the pragmatic behaviour of Argentinians who migrated to both Germany and Spain. While they did not develop any shift in Spanish if they lived in Germany, those who settled in Spain gradually took the Spanish pragmatic system and not the other way around. Lara Bermejo (2018b) studied the adoption of the politeness system from Ecuadorian people in Spain and concluded that they tended to adopt the Spanish system because it is the prestigious model in that country, but they did it in stages and very slowly, underlying again the reluctance towards pragmatic shifts even within the same language. Hence, it is very unlikely for Brazilian immigrants to have conditioned the Portuguese in Portugal. The statements by Bacelar de Nascimento, Duarte & Mendes (2018) do not have counterparts elsewhere.

### 5.3.4. Tendency towards solidarity

I affirmed above that present day Madeira is gradually accepting solidarity in the plural. The comparison of occurrences suggests this fact: *vocês* was produced 311 times whereas *os senhores / as senhoras* was expressed 29 times. The latter was resorted to when the addressees were elderly and in situations that implied distance, but not necessarily hierarchy, such as when dealing with customers. It is worth mentioning that the same speakers that talked to their parents by means of a V strategy in singular opted for *vocês* and not for *os senhores* when they addressed both parents. Likewise, most informants that resorted to *o senhor or a senhora* in singular preferred *vocês* for the same situations in plural. As that which could occur in singular with the choice of *o senhor* and *você* or null subject plus 3sg, the selection for either *vocês* or *os senhores* in certain contexts, mainly N, is subject to the degree of distance and deference that the addresser establishes with respect to his/her addressees. But, roughly speaking, *vocês* can be used for plural contexts where *o senhor / a senhora* would be the most adequate strategy in singular.

Solidarity usually starts in the plural rather than in the singular in languages that have pronominal divergences in this grammatical number for different diaphasic situations. For example, French or Italian do not exhibit different pronouns in plural to distinguish the degree of politeness, for *vous* can serve for both T and V and *voi* behaves alike. However, Peninsular Spanish opposes *vosotros* for T to *ustedes* for V and Lara Bermejo (2022b) has demonstrated that pragmatic solidarity in Spain began in the plural in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. From that moment, Spanish society gradually tended to accept more contexts via *vosotros*, but did not do the same thing in singular. It was only when this happened in plural that Spain further prompted pragmatic solidarity by also resorting to singular T pronouns in contexts where a V pronoun was previously mandatory. Moreover, as Siewierska (2004) argues, it is quite rare to attest languages that also establish pronominal differences in plural to express social deixis, and this is why most languages only exhibit an array of pronouns (two in French or Italian, up to four in Hispanic America) to mark diaphasic distinctions in singular. The plural lends itself to syncretism and, as a result, entails fewer pragmatic risks; therefore, the plural favours profound pragmatic changes in society, as occurs with the case of pragmatic solidarity.

## 5.4. Grammatical behaviour

Lastly, it is important to determine the grammatical behaviour of the Madeira paradigm: stressed pronouns in unstressed positions, dative clitics in accusative contexts, the prepositional phrase for non-T forms, the extension of the 3pl in *vocês* and the deletion of *vós*.

### 5.4.1. Objects and oblique: stressed pronouns, dative and the prepositional phrase

As for the usage of stressed pronouns in unstressed positions, this has only happened with the pronoun *você*. Specifically, it has been produced 9 times as an accusative and, though there are no restrictions that apply to age or sex, 2 people have a high educational background whereas 7 informants have a lower educational level (25-26). Likewise, the employment of dative pronouns in accusative contexts has also arisen 4 times, all of them produced by young speakers with no educational background (27-29).

(25)

Vi	você	copiar (M-30L Caniço rural)
1SG.PST.see	3SG.NOM.	INF.copy

'I saw you cheated'

(26)

Os	vizinhos	consideram
The	neighbours	3PL.PRES.consider
você	o	portavoz? (M-30L Santana rural)
3SG.NOM.	the	speaker

'Do your neighbours consider you as the speaker?'

(27)

Vi-lhe	a	copiar (M-30L Caniço rural)
1SG.PST.see+3SG.DAT.	to	INF.copy

'I saw you cheated'

(28)

Já	não	lhe	aguento	mais (M-30L São Martinho urban)
Now	no	3SG.DAT.	1SG.PRES.bear	more

'I can't stand you anymore'

(29)

Não	lhe	quero	ver	mais (F-30L Caniço rural)
-----	-----	-------	-----	---------------------------



No 3SG.DAT. 1SG.PRES.want INF.see more  
 'I don't want to see you anymore'

The resource of stressed pronouns in unstressed contexts, mainly direct objects, is widely documented in Brazil, but it has also been pointed out for Madeira by [Bazenga, Andrade & da Silva Rodrigues \(2016\)](#). However, in their study, this alternative is found in people with a low educational background. This is also the main sociolinguistic variable in my corpus, though it has also emerged in informants with the opposite profile. As for the dative in accusative environments, this *lhe* instead of the normative accusative pronouns has also been attested in continental Portugal as well as in Madeira with reference to a semantic third person ([Segura da Cruz 1991](#), [Bazenga & Rodrigues 2019](#)), but in my corpus this has occurred with reference to *você* and not to any other 3sg strategy. This suggests that *lhe* could also appear for reasons of politeness, imitating the model in Brazil and in Spain. Regardless of the sociolinguistic factors that may prompt this shift, its mere existence obeys two specific purposes: the differentiation between a semantic and a syntactic third person, and the promotion of the human entity in the topical scale, conveyed by the most common grammatical case (the dative).

The former reason can also be found in Brazilian Portuguese and Peninsular Spanish, where the dative *lhe* and *le*, respectively, have established themselves as the unique unstressed pronouns in third person in order to distinguish politeness and a semantic third person. By doing so, both varieties resort to normative accusative pronouns where the entity is *he* or *she*, but change to dative in any unstressed context when the reference is an addressee who should be addressed politely. As a result, this variation in case responds to pragmatic motives ([Fernández-Ordóñez 1999](#), [De Souza & Lopes 2015](#), [Gómez Seibane 2021](#)).

The latter reason is a cross-linguistic tendency prompted by several semantic and discursive grounds. [Givón \(2001\)](#) pinpoints that the dative case usually conveys a human entity, embodied in a number of semantic roles: beneficiary, recipient, possessor or even dative, which the author defines as a conscious participant in the event, typically animate, but not the deliberate initiator. This last semantic role can materialise in different syntactic functions (30-32).

(30) *John* knew *Mary*

(31) John scared *Mary*

(32) John talked to *Mary*

Instances (30-32) underlie that the element in italics is semantically a dative and, syntactically, it can be the subject, the direct object and the indirect object. In other words: a dative can be these three syntactic functions, but a patient or an agent cannot. Moreover, as the dative is usually a human entity and can emerge in all those syntactic positions, it is inclined to be conveyed by a specific marker, also because of discursive reasons. Again, according to [Givón \(2001\)](#), the human entity is the most salient feature in discourse, tending to be positioned at the beginning of the speech because of a topical hierarchy that promotes the human to the first place. Furthermore, the human entity also lends itself to being referred to in a specific way to follow its saliency: this means that, regardless of its syntactic function, it may be expressed coherently and differently with regards to non-human entities. As a result,

humans may develop their own marker for any syntactic case in contrast to a different marker for other referents.

If we compare these cross-linguistic tendencies to the dialectic realities in Madeira or elsewhere in Brazil and Spain, it is possible to observe that all of them follow these assumptions. Firstly, the human entity is conveyed coherently with its own marker, in this case *le* in Spanish and *lhe* in Portuguese. Secondly, the human entity is inclined to be expressed differently with respect to another referent even for the same syntactic functions, which is why Spanish and some varieties of Portuguese have developed a clitic for polite third person and another one for a non-human or semantic third person (Fernández-Ordóñez 1999, Gómez Seibane 2021). Thirdly, the two of them have selected the dative case, which coincides with the semantic role of dative and which is nearly always a human entity (Givón 2001).

Apart from these particularities in the object position, Madeira Portuguese has syncretised the stressed pronoun in *si* (or *consigo* when the preposition is *com* ‘with’) within a prepositional phrase to refer to non-T forms: 176 times in contrast with 26 occurrences of stressed pronouns homophonous to the subject form. Nonetheless, the usage of *si* is only 3sg and cannot refer to a plural entity. The relevance of *si* is the fact that it is useful for *você* and *o senhor / a senhora*, again reflecting the problematic feature of singular pronouns that are not *tu*. By resorting to *si*, speakers avoid the explicit production of the address, which may only arise as the subject. This applies to noun phrases and null subject plus 3sg too. The most important pragmatic decision nowadays in the singular in syntactic terms is the production of the subject, while *si* has been applied in the prepositional phrase as a solution in this grammatical context.

### 5.4.2. Extension of the 3pl anchoring *você*s

In the previous paragraphs, I highlighted the fact that, even though *você*s is syntactically 3pl, European Portuguese is characterised by exhibiting agreement mismatches between the pronoun, verb and reflexive (3pl) and possessives and objects (2pl). This does not happen in Brazilian Portuguese where *você*s systematically induces 3pl, but Portugal also presents different extension of the 3pl, depending on the geographical area. In the case of Madeira, in Table 13 I depict the distribution of agreement referring to *você*s.

Table 13. *Você*s and its agreements

STRESSED PRONOUN	REFLEXIVE	VERB	ACCUSATIVE	DATIVE	POSSESSIVE
311 3pl (100%)	79 3pl (100%)	316 3pl (100%)	89 2pl (80%) 22 3pl (20%)	99 2pl (94%) 6 3pl (6%)	47 2pl (96%) 2 3pl (4%)

Table 13 pinpoints that any syntactic element anchoring *você*s is coherently inflected in 3pl as long as it is the subject, the reflexive and the verb. The rest of the elements swing between the 2pl and the 3pl, but not to the same degree. Whereas the accusative gives more occurrences of 3pl (though the 2pl is the major one), there is more reluctance towards the dative as regards 3pl and, finally, the possessive hardly inflects in 3pl. It must be stated that the prepositional phrase has also given *você*s as the preferred stressed pronoun, except when it is preceded by the preposition *com* (‘with’). In this case, the usage of the 3pl is 86% (19 times), and the strategy *convosco*, syntactically 2pl, appears 3 times (14%).

The picture provided with by the data clearly establishes that Madeira follows the same pattern as continental Portugal, since the 3pl undergoes a specific hierarchy: subject > verb /

reflexive > accusative > dative > possessive. The behaviour of the accusative allows for analysing the path transited by the 3pl, since it starts emerging in this case when the pronoun is enclitic (10 times in 3pl versus 15 times 2pl) while there is a leaning towards proclisis in 2pl (10 times 3pl versus 74 times 2pl) (33-34).

(33)

Já	não	quero
Now	no	1SG.PRES.want
vê-los		mais (M+60H Camacha, rural)
INF.see+3PL.ACC.		more
'I don't want to see you anymore'		

(34)

Já	vos	tinha	avisado	que
Now	2PL.ACC.	1SG.PST.have	PCP.warn	that
isto	ia	acontecer (F-30H Caniço rural)		
this	3SG.PST.go	INF.happen		
'I had already warned you that this was going to happen'				

The rise of the 3pl in enclitic accusatives in my corpus has been mainly produced after an infinitive. The concatenation of the sound /r/ plus the sound /v/ might have been a phonetic context that has triggered the conversion of the 2pl into a 3pl. This hypothesis is supported by an analogous phenomenon witnessed in Spanish in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. According to [Calderón Campos \(2010\)](#), the current 2pl unstressed pronoun is *os* and not *vos* as it was in the Middle Ages, because the pronunciation of the sequence /r/+/v/, such as the one in Portuguese, produced the gradual loss of /v/ in these contexts. Once *vos* turned itself into *os* whenever it followed an /r/, speakers ended up generalising *os* in every situation regardless of the phonological constraints. But the final shift of *vos* into *os* commenced in these specific phonological sequences. The same seems to apply to the establishment of the 3pl in the accusative in Portuguese.

However, this shift is firstly attested in the accusative, since the same speakers that preferred 3pl in the accusative after /r/ did not produce a 3pl in the dative after /r/. Therefore, the spread of the 3pl must necessarily undergo the abovementioned hierarchy. This continuum is not arbitrary either, but it responds to the grammatical behaviour that many phenomena follow when they are subject to grammatical case ([Blake 2004](#)). For instance, causativisation, passivisation and relativisation are also constrained by this hierarchy ([Comrie 1976](#), [Keenan & Comrie 1977](#)). English can make a passive out of an indirect object (dative) because it can do so out of a direct object (accusative). The languages capable of relativising a genitive (*whose*) can do so because they are able to relativise the subject, the direct object and the indirect object. Hence, the extension of the 3pl in *vocês* obeys this same feature and can even have a counterpart in Andalusian Spanish, where the spread of the 3pl referring to the pronoun *ustedes* runs across this same hierarchy at the expense of the 2pl that refers to the eliminated pronoun *vosotros* ([Lara Bermejo 2018a, 2020a](#)).

### 5.4.3. The loss of *vós*

The loss of *vós* as 2pl has already been discussed: the scarcity of speakers who have expressed it in expected contexts is proof of this fact. But this tendency can even be underpinned by the agreement pattern referring to the stressed form, for not all informants expressed a verb in 2pl right after the subject, but two of them preferred a 3pl agreement, suggesting again that *vocês* has virtually established itself as the plural pronoun in any T and N situation (35-36). It is pertinent to recall that only ten people produced *vós*, so 20% them are already spreading the 3pl even with this referent.

(35)

Vós	são	o	futuro
2PL.NOM.	3PL.PRES.be	the	future
da	igreja (M30-60L Santana rural)		
of+the	church		
'You are the future of the church'			

(36)

Vós	sois	o	futuro da	igreja e
2PL.NOM.	2PL.PRES.be	the	future of+the	church and
desejo		que sigam		uma
1SG.PRES.wish		that 3PL.PRES.follow		a
vida	cristã (F+60L Porto Moniz rural)			
life	Christian			
'You are the future of the church and I wish you to follow a Christian life'				

The instances pinpoint the grammatical instability of *vós*, as a proportion of the few speakers who resorted to it were not coherent in agreeing on all the elements in 2pl. While (35) already enables the verb in 3pl right after the treatment, (36) shows that, despite the first verb inflecting in 2pl, the second prefers the 3pl though its referent is the same one. This apparent contradiction, according to Corbett (2006), responds to a change in progress that opposes two different agreements. The extension of one of them at the expense of the other reveals the deletion of the latter. However, this process entails not only gradualness, but the coexistence of the new agreement with the one which is being ousted. This is exactly what (35-36) suggest.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

This article represents a considerable breakthrough in Portuguese and politeness studies, mainly referring to Madeira. The lack of in-depth research regarding actual data on one of the most complex phenomena in Lusophone linguistics is still an incognita that is being slowly

unveiled. Thanks to this study, it is possible to analyse the current reality in the Madeira archipelago. I summarise the main achievements below.

The field study carried out has shown that present day Madeira exhibits a politeness paradigm that resembles that of continental Portugal, but with a few divergences. Even though it possesses a tripartite system in singular and a bipartite one in plural, no archaic form whatsoever has been elicited and the pronoun *você* in singular has appeared very frequently. Nevertheless, this usage coexists with that of null subject and noun phrases for N situations, although every now and then it has also appeared in the addressing of someone in a higher position and more frequently in the addressing of someone in a lower position, when the relation between the participants was asymmetrical. In any case, there is a preference for the explicit subject rather than the avoidance thereof, irrespective of the choice for a pronoun or a noun phrase.

From a geolinguistic point of view, the main characteristic resides in the extension of the 3pl referring to *vocês*, for it has already shifted onto the accusative in the east and some parts of southern Madeira, while it is also attested in the dative in Porto Santo and other areas within populated areas of Madeira. It is in Funchal and its surroundings where the 3pl can also emerge in the possessive, completely ousting any remnant of 2pl.

The sociolinguistic study has revealed that men tend to employ *você* more and that the elderly are more inclined to consider the family as a hierarchical entity. However, pragmatic solidarity has increased in the plural, for *vocês* covers the majority of contexts to the detriment of *os senhores*. Likewise, the usage of *vós* for reverential contexts such as church is in clear disuse by favouring the resort to *vocês*, and the knowledge of the proper name of the interlocutor turns out to be essential in order to express a subject in situations where no pronoun is considered adequate.

From a grammatical perspective, the extension of the 3pl anchoring *vocês* follows a specific continuum that obeys cross-linguistic phenomena, but the establishment of the 3pl in the accusative seems to be brought about by phonetic reasons. Moreover, in *si* speakers have syncretised the pronoun to be employed in a prepositional phrase, regardless of whether it refers to *você* or *o senhor*.

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