Como-gerund clauses in European Portuguese: figuring out the riddle

António Leal
University of Porto
jleal@letras.up.pt

Maria Lobo
NOVA-FCSH
maria.lobo@fcsh.unl.pt

Purificação Silvano
University of Porto
msilvano@letras.up.pt

Abstract

Previous literature on the typology of gerund clauses in Portuguese has overlooked a peculiar type of clauses which are always introduced by como (‘as’) and display an array of characteristics that set them apart from all other gerund clauses (and from other, somehow similar, constructions in different languages). In this paper, we provide an in-depth syntactic and semantic characterisation of these como-gerund clauses and the contexts in which they arise, highlighting their similarities and differences regarding other constructions, namely resultative and depictive secondary...
predicates. We put forward a proposal to deal with their syntactic configurations and the restrictions they exhibit. We also propose that como is obligatory in these clauses because it marks a type-shift operation, which gives como gerund clauses a predicative interpretation, usually found in the nominal domain.

**Keywords:** gerund clause, predicative complements, European Portuguese, secondary predication, type-shift.

### 1. Introduction

In this paper, we analyse a special type of gerund clause (GC) of European Portuguese (EP) that has been seldom considered in the literature: gerund clauses (in both simple and compound forms) headed by como (‘as’) (henceforth COMO-GC). An example of this structure is given in (1):

(1) O tribunal condenou as atividades do homem como sendo de burla qualificada.

‘The court condemned the man’s activities as being of qualified fraud.’

Previous literature has provided a typology of GC that includes predicative gerund clauses equivalent to the Prepositional Infinitival Construction (PIC) and adverbial gerund clauses. COMO-GC, however, are rarely described in the literature. For Portuguese, only occasional mentions can be found. For example, Raposo (2013) observes in a footnote that instead of a complement introduced by como, verbs of “characterization”, such as descrever ‘describe’, catalogar ‘catalog’ or identificar ‘identify’, can occur with a gerund clause with a copular verb introduced by como (o Rui descreveu o chefe como sendo uma pessoa instável ‘Rui described his boss as being an unstable person’). Silvano, Leal & Cordeiro (2019) only highlight the differences between COMO-GC and other types of gerund clauses in EP. Fong (2015), for Brazilian Portuguese, describes a subclass of COMO-GC among other types of GC. For other languages, similar clauses, often described as “as-phrases”, have been considered in work by Levin (1993), Stump (1985), Bowers (2001), and Rafel (2001), among others. Although many studies address secondary predication and different types of reduced clauses, none, to the best of our knowledge, provides a comprehensive analysis of COMO-GC, nor considers both their syntactic and semantic properties, contrasting them with other types of gerund clauses and predicative complements. This is the main aim of our study.

Our empirical basis is a sample of sentences extracted from the corpus CETEMPúblico (Rocha & Santos 2000; http:www.linguateca.pt/CETEMPublico/). This corpus includes written texts from Portuguese newspapers published in the

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1 The simple gerund has the -ndo ending, whereas the compound gerund has the auxiliary verb ter/haver ‘to have’ in the -ndo form followed by the past participle of the main verb.

2 The abbreviation “GER” stands for “simple gerund” (-ndo form, partially equivalent to -ing).
nineties. The search criterion was the occurrence of como followed by a gerundive form in the same sentence. This search rendered 152 cases with the simple gerund and 162 cases with the compound gerund. In a preliminary phase, we analysed 100 sentences with COMO-GC, 50 examples for each type of gerund, and considered their distribution and their syntactic and semantic properties. The annotation parameters were the following: (i) the verbs of the main clause and COMO-GC; (ii) the linguistic element linking both clauses; (iii) the aspectual type of the COMO-GC; (iv) the temporal relation between both clauses. Whenever deemed necessary, we conducted additional searches to validate the occurrence of certain constructions, namely, those involving como introducing DP, NP and ADJP. We relied on our intuitions as native speakers to assess the grammatical properties of these constructions.

Our paper is organised as follows: in section 2, we analyse the syntactic and semantic properties of COMO-GC, contrasting them with other types of GC available in EP; in section 3, we present our proposal of analysis of COMO-GC, taking into account their syntactic and semantic properties; finally, in section 4, we conclude, leaving some open questions for further research.

2. COMO-GC versus other types of GC

In this section, we will establish a comparison between COMO-GC and other types of GC grounded on syntactic and semantic features.

2.1. Syntactic characterisation

In Portuguese, as described in previous studies (Lobo 2001, 2006) and following prior descriptions for other languages (Lagunilla 1999, Lonzi 1988, 1997), GC can be grouped into three types: predicative GC (2); integrated (non-peripheral) adverbial GC (3); peripheral adverbial GC (4):

(2) As crianças chegaram a casa cantando alegremente.  
the children come-PST.3PL to home sing-GER joyfully  
‘The children came home singing joyfully.’

(3) Os ladrões arrombaram a porta usando um martelo.  
the thieves break-PST.3PL the door use-GER a hammer  
‘The thieves broke the door using a hammer.’

(4) Fazendo muito frio, decidimos acender a lareira.  
do-GER very cold, decide-PST.1PL light-INF the fireplace  
‘Being very cold, we decided to light the fireplace.’

These different types of GC display different types of syntactic and semantic properties (Lobo 2001, 2006, Leal 2002, 2011): only predicative GC can alternate with the PIC (5); only peripheral adverbial GC are compatible with the compound gerund (6), allow productively stative predicates (7), negation (8), and overt subjects (9). Furthermore, peripheral adverbial GC cannot be focused and, as such, cannot be clefted, behaving differently from non-peripheral GC and predicative GC (10).
(5) a. As crianças chegaram a casa cantando/ a cantar
the children come-PST.3PL to home sing-GER/to sing-INF
joyfully
‘The children came home singing joyfully.’
b. Os ladrões arrombaram a porta usando/*a usar um
the thieves force-PST.3PL the door use-GER/to use-INF a
hammer
‘The thieves forced the door using a hammer.’
c. Fazendo/*a fazer muito frio, decidimos acender a
have-GER/do-PTCP very cold, decide-PST.1PL light-INF the
fireplace
‘Being very cold, we decided to light the fireplace.’

(6) a. ??As crianças chegaram a casa tendo
the children come-PST.3PL to home have-GER
cantado alegrememente.
sing-PTCP
joyfully
‘The children came home having sung joyfully.’
b. ??Os ladrões arrombaram a porta tendo usado
the thieves break-PST.3PL the door have-GER use-PTCP
um martelo.
a hammer
‘The thieves broke the door having used a hammer.’
c. Tendo feito muito frio, decidimos acender a
have-GER do-PTCP very cold, decide-PST.3PL light-INF
a lareira.
the fireplace
‘Being very cold, we decided to light the fireplace.’

(7) a. ??As crianças chegaram a casa estando com febre.
the children come-PST.3PL to home be-GER with fever
‘The children came home being with fever.’
b. ??Os ladrões arrombaram a porta estando armados.
the thieves break-PST.3PL the door be-GER armed
‘The thieves broke the door being armed.’
c. Estando muito frio, decidimos acender a lareira.
be-GER very cold, decide-PST.3PL light-INF the fireplace
‘Being very cold, we decided to light the fireplace.’

(8) a. *As crianças chegaram a casa não cantando.
the children come-PST.3PL to home not sing-GER
‘The children came home not singing.’
b. *Os ladrões entraram em casa não usando um
the thieves come-PST.3PL in home not use-GER a
‘The thieves came home not using a hammer.’

Because it was not very cold, we decided not to light the fireplace.

‘The children came home the parents singing joyfully.’

‘It was singing joyfully that the children came home.’

‘It was using a hammer that the thieves broke the door.’

‘It was being very cold that we decided to light the fireplace.’

COMO-GC exhibit an array of properties that clearly set them apart from other types of gerundive clauses: (i) unlike predicative GC, the gerund of COMO-GC cannot alternate with the PIC, with or without como (11); (ii) unlike non-peripheral adverbial GC, COMO-GC allow the compound gerund (12), negation (13) and disallow clefting
(14)\(^3\); (iii) unlike peripheral adverbial GC, they disallow overt disjoint subjects (15) and anteposition (16):

(11) O tribunal condenou as atividades do homem \((\text{como sendo} /^*(\text{como}) \text{ a ser de burla qualificada})\).

The court condemned the man’s activities as being of qualified fraud.

(12) O livro é apresentado como tendo sido escrito por um psicoterapeuta.

The book is presented as having been written by a psychotherapist.

(13) Esta proposta foi criticada por muitos como não sendo suficiente.

This proposal was criticised by many as not being sufficient.

(14) ??Foi como sendo de burla qualificada que o tribunal condenou as atividades do homem.

He must have missed the train.

\(^3\) As pointed out by a reviewer, although COMO-GC do not allow clefting in general, they are possible with semi-pseudoclefts, also called ‘SER-clefts’ (BE-clefts) in Martins & Lobo (2020):

(i) Apresentaram o homem foi como tendo cometido muitos erros no passado.

They presented the man as having made many errors in the past.

This is not surprising since BE-clefts display a different behavior from other cleft constructions and may focus any constituent that occurs after a finite verb, including different types of verbal constituents:

(ii) Ele deve ter perdido o comboio.

He must have missed the train.

These cleft constructions presumably do not involve movement of the clefted constituent or of a wh-operator, unlike other cleft constructions (cf. Lobo, Santos & Soares-Jesel 2015).
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‘It was as being of qualified fraud that the court condemned the man’s activities.’

(15) *O tribunal condenou as atividades do homem como sendo esse crime de burla qualificada.  

‘The court condemned the man’s activities as being that crime one of qualified fraud.’

(16) *Como sendo de burla qualificada, o tribunal condenou as atividades do homem.  

‘As being qualified fraud, the court condemned the man’s activities.’

COMO-GC are, thus, syntactically distinct from the other types of GC in several ways. In what concerns their semantics, they also exhibit fundamental differences regarding the other types of gerund clauses, which is the main topic of the next section.

2.2. Semantic characterisation

This section addresses some semantic properties of COMO-GC, namely their aspectual types, and the temporal relations that COMO-GC establish with their main clauses, while showing how they contrast with other types of gerund clauses.

Starting with the aspectual issues, different authors (e.g., Lobo 2003, Leal 2002) point out that predicative GC and non-peripheral adverbial GC have aspectual restrictions since they never occur with stative predications. On the contrary, peripheral adverbial GC admit all aspectual types, although with some restrictions – for example, the combination of individual-level states with compound gerund is odd in most cases. However, COMO-GC admit all aspectual types (stative or eventive) without any restriction regarding the gerund form, that is, with simple and compound gerund. Furthermore, there is no change in the aspectual profile of predications due to the presence of simple or compound gerund: COMO-GC maintain the aspectual features of the inner aspect of predications (cf. Verkuyl 1993, among others). The following examples illustrate this claim: (17)-(18), with individual-level predicates, (19)-(20), with stage-level predicates, and (21)-(22), with events.

(17) as actividades que o tribunal condenou  

the activities that the court condemn-PST.3SG  

como sendo de burla qualificada  

as be-GER of fraud qualified  

‘the activities that the court condemned as being of qualified fraud’

(18) fez-se referência ao «cash-flow» como  

make-PST.3SG himself reference to-the «cash flow» as
tendo sido de 836,8 mil contos
have-GER be-PTCP of 836.8 one thousand contos
‘reference was made to the «cash flow» as having been of 836.8 million escudos’

(19) a central era definida como estando em
the plant be-PST.3SG define-PTCP as be-GER in
más condições
bad conditions
‘the plant was defined as being in bad condition’

(20) O líder africano foi dado como tendo
the leader African be-PST.3SG give-PTCP as have-GER
estado na origem de um delinquimiento.
be-PTCP in-the source of an embezzlement
‘The African leader was said to have been the source of an embezzlement.’

(21) o valor das acções da Lusotur foi apontado como tendo
the value of-the shares of-the Lusotur be-PST.3SG indicate-PTCP as range-GER between the 14 and the
20 thousand escudos
20 thousand escudos
‘the value of Lusotur’s shares was indicated as ranging between 14 and 20 thousand escudos’

(22) «The ways of gentleness» é apresentado como tendo
«The ways of gentleness» be-PRS.3SG present-PTCP as have-GER
sido escrito por uma psicoterapeuta.
be-PTCP write-PTCP by a psychotherapist
‘«The ways of gentleness» is presented as having been written by a psychotherapist.’

So, regarding aspect, COMO-GC appear to be a completely neutral construction, that is, they do not impose any restriction on the occurrence of basic aspectual types and they apparently preserve the characteristics of these same basic types.

The second topic of this characterisation concerns temporal issues. Both simple and compound gerunds convey temporal information (Leal 2001, 2011), but, nonetheless, they are considered to be temporally defective, since their temporal information is only related to the Temporal Perspective Point (TPpt) (Kamp & Reyle 1993).4

4 Kamp & Reyle (1993) propose a bi-dimensional theory of tense, according to which a situation is located in relation to its TPpt and to the utterance time. Since the gerund only establishes the first type of relation, it creates a defective domain. In fact, the Infinitive, another non-finite form, behaves similarly to the gerund, carrying only the temporal information regarding its TPpt (cf. Cunha & Silvano 2006).
As mentioned before, one feature that characterises COMO-GC is that they admit both simple and compound gerund forms, which sets COMO-GC apart from both predicative GC and non-peripheral adverbial GC. On the other hand, peripheral adverbial GC admit compound gerunds, but they establish different temporal relations with the main clause. These relations are partially determined by the basic temporal value of the gerund forms, the relative position of the clauses, and the aspectual type of both clauses (cf. Leal 2002, Lobo 2003, Silvano, Leal & Cordeiro 2021). These considerations are illustrated in (23) and (24).

(23) Tendo rodado a chave na fechadura, o rapaz entrou em casa.
‘Having turned the key in the lock, the boy entered the house.’

(24) O rapaz entrou em casa, tendo rodado a chave na fechadura (antes/depois).
‘The boy entered the house, {having turned the key in the lock (before) / and then he turned the key in the lock (after)}.’

Both examples bear the compound gerund. According to Leal (2002, 2011), this verb form exhibits a [+ anteriority] feature. This means that clauses with this tense are always located in a time interval anterior to their TPpt. The TPpt of a compound gerund can be either the time interval locating the situation denoted by the main clause or the utterance time, and the choice of one or the other is conditioned by the relative position of clauses in the sentence. Therefore, if the gerund clause occurs before the main clause, as in (23), only the time interval locating the main clause is available as TPpt for the gerund clause. In (23), the boy turned the key in the lock before he entered the house. But if the gerund clause occurs after the main clause, as in (24), there are two possible TPpt available for the gerund clause: the time interval locating the main clause, which triggers an anteriority reading similar to (23), and the utterance time, in which case the situation described by the gerund clause is interpreted as anterior to the utterance time, but posterior to the temporal interval locating the main clause – in this case, the boy turned the key in the lock after entering the house.

Although peripheral adverbial GC and COMO-GC admit both gerund forms, the latter behave quite differently from the former in what concerns temporal relations: with simple gerund, COMO-GC are always interpreted as simultaneous to the situation described in the matrix clause, whereas with compound gerund they are always interpreted as anterior to the situation described in the matrix clause. These differences between simple and compound forms of the gerund in COMO-GC trigger different presuppositions. For instance, in (25), with the simple gerund, the situation expressed by the COMO-GC (Moçambique ser um “lupanar de balas”) is located in a time interval overlapping the time interval locating the event of the main clause (descrever ‘describe’). In other words, the event of ‘describing’ and the state of ‘being a “whorehouse of bullets”’ are simultaneous. Changing the gerund form, as in (26), with the compound gerund, the situation described in the COMO-GC (Moçambique ser um...
“lupanar de balas”) is now located in a time interval anterior to the time interval locating the event of the main clause (descrever ‘describe’), so a presupposition arises that Mozambique was no longer a “lupanar de balas” in the time interval that corresponds to the event of ‘describing’. Contrary to what happens with peripheral adverbial GC (cf. (24)), the gerund clause in (26) has only an anteriority reading.

(25) José Craveirinha descreveu Moçambique como sendo um “lupanar de balas”.
    José Craveirinha describe-PST.3SG Mozambique as be-GER
    a “whorehouse of bullets”
    ‘José Craveirinha described Mozambique as a “whorehouse of bullets”.’

(26) José Craveirinha descreveu Moçambique como tendo sido um “lupanar de balas”.
    José Craveirinha describe-PST.3SG Mozambique as have-GER
    be-PTCP a “whorehouse of bullets”
    ‘José Craveirinha described Mozambique as having been a “whorehouse of bullets”.’

So, although COMO-GC establish temporal relations with the main clause, these temporal readings are completely determined by the basic temporal value of the gerund forms (simultaneity, with simple gerund; anteriority, with the compound gerund). Additionally, peripheral adverbial GC with compound gerund occurring after the main clause, as mentioned above, have two TPpt available – the time interval locating the situation denoted by the main clause and the utterance time –, which gives rise to two possible temporal relations. COMO-GC, however, only allow one temporal interpretation, which is determined by the gerund form (cf. (24), with two temporal readings available, and (26), with only one temporal reading). One can conclude that COMO-GC are somehow “encapsulated” and do not interact with other linguistic elements that are typically relevant for calculating the temporal location of peripheral adverbial GC.

In the next section, we outline a proposal that accounts for the syntactic and semantic characteristics of COMO-GC discussed in the previous sections.

3. Our proposal for the analysis of COMO-GC

In this section, we will first consider the syntactic properties of COMO-GC by analysing their syntactic distribution, that is, the contexts in which they may occur, and especially the types of verbs that select them. We will then discuss the status of the COMO-GC, taking into account the differences between the syntactic types identified and the nature of como (‘as’) and we will investigate the internal structure of the GC that follows como. Finally, we will put forward an analysis that can account for the syntactic and semantic features of this type of structure.
3.1. The COMO-GC as a special predicative domain

As described in section 2.1, COMO-GC have properties that distinguish them from other GC. In particular, they seem to function as predicates of a special type of small clause. In our data, the COMO-GC follow 43 different verbs, the more frequent ones being, by order of frequency, *citar* ‘cite’, *apontar* ‘point’, *apresentar* ‘present’, *considerar* ‘consider’, *referir* ‘refer’ and *identificar* ‘identify’.\(^5\) In the occurrences that we analysed, three different verb patterns may be observed, similar to three subclasses of verbs that Levin (1993) includes under the label “Verbs with Predicative Complements”, namely the types 29.1. (Appoint verbs), 29.2. (Characterize verbs), and 29.6. (Masquerade verbs).

As described by Levin (1993), verbs from the first group occur in frames of the type <NP V NP (as) NP>: they take a predicative clause as their complement, the predicate is not obligatorily introduced by *as*, and some verbs take other types of sentential complements. Example (27) illustrates this type:

(27) The president appointed Smith (as) press secretary. \(\text{\textcopyright Levin 1993:181}\)

Verbs from the second group are followed by a predicate obligatorily introduced by *as*, with the verb frame <NP V NP as NP>, like in (28):

(28) Angela characterized Shelly *(as) a lifesaver. \(\text{\textcopyright Levin 1993:181}\)

Verbs from the third group are followed by a predicate obligatorily introduced by *as* which predicates of its subject (cf. 29):

(29) Dina masqueraded *(as) a lawyer. \(\text{\textcopyright Levin 1993:184}\)

In our data, COMO-GC can follow verbs with similar properties to these three verb classes. Thus, we can list the following three different verb types:

I. Group 1 includes epistemic and perception verbs, such as *considerar* ‘consider’, as in example (30).

II. Group 2 includes declarative/saying verbs, such as *citar* ‘cite’, *descrever* ‘describe’, *apontar* ‘point’, *apresentar* ‘present’, *indicar* ‘indicate’, *falar de* ‘speak about’, as in example (31).

III. Group 3 includes manifestation verbs, such as *figurar* *(no dicionário)* ‘appear (in the dictionary)’ or *aparecer* ‘appear’, as in example (32).

(30) Catroga considerou a pressão especulativa como estando assente em pressupostos artificiais. \(\text{\textcopyright Catroga consider-PST.3SG the pressure speculative as being based on assumptions artificial}^{5}\)

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\(^{5}\) In what concerns the COMO-GC, in the 100 examples that were annotated, there are 34 cases with copular verbs and 16 with non-copular verbs in clauses with the simple gerund, and 14 examples with copular verbs and 36 with non-copular verbs in clauses with compound gerund.
O «Jornal de Angola» cita fontes próximas de Nzau Puna como tendo garantido a execução de um elemento.

‘The «Jornal de Angola» quotes close sources of Nzau Puna as having guaranteed the execution of one element.’

nenhuma das 23 empresas que aparecem como tendo adquirido matéria-prima

‘none of the 23 companies that appear as having acquired feedstock’

The verbs from Group 1 are characterised by being able to alternatively select a finite clause with a similar meaning, as illustrated by the comparison of (30) with (33):

Catroga considerou que a pressão especulativa estava assente em pressupostos artificiais.

‘Catroga considered that the speculative pressure was based on artificial assumptions.’

These verbs also accept other predicative complements. With nominal predicates, *como* is optional. In contrast, in a COMO-GC, *como* is obligatory, as seen in the contrast between (34) and (35):

Catroga considerou a pressão especulativa (como) um desastre.

‘Catroga considered the speculative pressure (as) a disaster.’

Catroga considerou a pressão especulativa *(como) estando assente em pressupostos artificiais.

‘Catroga considered the speculative pressure *(as) being based on artificial assumptions.’

Finally, with verbs from Group 1, the predicative complement cannot be omitted without changing the verb’s meaning, as in (36):
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As for verbs from Group 2, *como* cannot be omitted when the predicate is nominal, as illustrated by (37):

(37) Descrevi Mandela *(como) um herói.
‘I described Mandela *(as) a hero.’

These verbs are transitive verbs that may occur only with a DP or PP object and without a predicative complement. As such, with most verbs, the predicative can be omitted (cf. (38b)), although sometimes the meaning of the verb changes (cf. (39b)):

(38) a. visto que Olga V. nos apresentou o estudo
since that Olga V. DAT.1PL present-PST.3SG the study
como tendo sido feito com Virodene,
as have-GER be-PTCP conduct-PTCP with Virodene,
parece -me óbvio que…
seem-PRS.3SG DAT.1SG obvious that
‘since Olga V. presented us the study as having been conducted with Virodene, it seems obvious to me that…’
b. visto que Olga V. nos apresentou o estudo,
since that Olga V. DAT.1PL present-PST.3SG the study,
parece -me óbvio que…
seem-PRS.3SG DAT.1SG obvious that
‘since Olga V. presented us the study, it seems obvious to me that…’

(39) a. Tony Blair apontou as deficiências da organização
Tony Blair point-PST.3SG the deficiencies of-the organization
como tendo contribuído para a violência.
as have-GER contribute-PTCP to the violence
‘Tony Blair pointed the organization’s deficiencies as having contributed to the violence.’
b. # Tony Blair apontou as deficiências da organização.
Tony Blair point-PST.3SG the deficiencies of-the organization.
‘Tony Blair took note of the organization’s deficiencies.’

Both verbs from group 1 and group 2 can occur in the passive voice. In that case, the COMO-GC predicates of their derived subject, base-generated in a complement position (cf. (40)):

(40) Ramos é citado como tendo afirmado
Ramos be-PRS.3SG quote-PTCP as have-GER state-PTCP
que com Artur Jorge não trabalha.
that with Artur Jorge not work- PST.3SG
‘Ramos is quoted as having stated that he doesn’t work with Artur Jorge.’
This possibility makes the syntactic configuration from Group 2 verbs similar to the one from Group 3 verbs.

In verbs from Group 3, we can identify verbs of appearance, such as in example (41):

\[
(41) \ A \ \text{Portugália} \ \text{surge} \ \text{em} \ \text{título} \ \text{como} \ \text{tendo} \\
\text{the} \ \text{Portugália} \ \text{appear-PRS.3SG} \ \text{in} \ \text{title} \ \text{as} \ \text{have-GER} \\
\text{negociado} \ \text{com} \ \text{a} \ \text{Indonésia.} \\
\text{trade-PTCP} \ \text{with} \ \text{the} \ \text{Indonesia} \\
\text{‘Portugália appears in title as having traded with Indonesia.’}
\]

These verbs pattern like unaccusative verbs, i.e. they do not select an external argument. Like unaccusative verbs, they may occur in past participle constructions, as in (42):

\[
(42) \ \text{Surgido} \ \text{o} \ \text{nome da} \ \text{Portugália} \ \text{em} \ \text{título}… \\
\text{appear-PTCP} \ \text{the} \ \text{name of-the} \ \text{Portugália} \ \text{in} \ \text{title} \\
\text{‘After Portugália’s name appeared in the title…’}
\]

Verbs from group 3 have, thus, a subject which is an internal argument of the verb followed by a predicative complement. As such, with verbs from Group 3 the COMO-GC predicates of their derived subject. The predicative complement can also be omitted in verbs from Group 3, as in (43), which is similar to what happens with verbs from Group 2:

\[
(43) \ \text{O} \ \text{nome da} \ \text{Portugália} \ \text{surge} \ \text{em} \ \text{título.} \\
\text{the} \ \text{name of-the} \ \text{Portugália} \ \text{appear-PRS.3SG} \ \text{in} \ \text{title} \\
\text{‘Portugália’s name appears in title.’}
\]

COMO-GC can, thus, be analysed as a special type of predicative complement that predicates of a DP in a predication relation similar to a Small Clause (SC) (Stowell 1981, 1983, Bowers 1993, Citko 2011). However, different from typical SC, which have a non-clausal predicate, in this case, the predicate is a clausal domain. In this respect, these structures are similar to what Rafel (2001) classifies as Complex Small Clauses, which include Pseudo-relatives (44), and Prepositional Infinitival Constructions (PIC) (45), among others:

\[
(44) \ \text{Vi} \ \text{o} \ \text{Rui} \ \text{que} \ \text{corria} \ \text{sem} \ \text{parar.} \\
\text{see- PST.3SG} \ \text{the} \ \text{Rui} \ \text{that} \ \text{run- PST.3SG} \ \text{without} \ \text{stop-INF} \\
\text{‘I saw Rui running without stopping.’}
\]

\[
(45) \ \text{Vi} \ \text{o} \ \text{Rui} \ \text{a} \ \text{correr} \ \text{sem} \ \text{parar.} \\
\text{see- PST.3SG} \ \text{the} \ \text{Rui} \ \text{to} \ \text{run- INF} \ \text{without} \ \text{stop-INF} \\
\text{‘I saw Rui running without stopping.’}
\]

We will follow here the hypothesis that SC have an asymmetric configuration, where the subject of predication is the specifier of a head and the predicate is its complement (Bowers 1993, 2001, Adger & Ramchand 2003). This type of analysis
has been adopted to account for *as*-phrases in English, where *as* is taken to be the lexicalizer of a Predicate head (Bowers 1993, Heycock 2013):

\[
(46) \quad \text{PredP} \\
\text{DP} \quad \text{Pred'} \\
\text{John} \quad \text{Pred} \quad \text{as} \quad \text{DP} \\
\text{a winner}
\]

Regarding the status of the connective *como*, it has been analysed in different ways in the literature. Fong (2015) considers it a preposition. Since it only occurs when the predicate is a gerund clause or a DP (but it must be absent with prepositional or adjectival predicates), she argues that it Case licenses the gerund morpheme. This analysis, however, encounters the problem of explaining why *como* is not always present with DP predicates of verbs of Group 1. Additionally, there are examples of *como* introducing AP in our data (see section 3.2).

Another feature of the connective *como* is its presence in different structures introducing a DP that denotes properties of entities and professions, in particular (cf., for Spanish, Gumiel Molina 2005), as in (47):

\[
(47) \quad \text{Até 1958, Jan Korec trabalhou como operário numa fábrica.} \\
\text{until 1958, Jan Korec work-PST.3SG as worker in-a factory} \\
\text{‘Until 1958, Jan Korec worked as a worker in a factory.’}
\]

Sometimes, the same verb is associated to both structures, *como* + DP and *como* + GC, as shown in (48):

\[
(48) \quad \text{a. Inácio foi proposto com um currículo} \\
\text{Inácio be-PST.3SG propose-PTCP with a curriculum} \\
\text{que remonta a 1941, quando se} \\
\text{that go.back-PRS.3SG to 1941, when himself} \\
\text{inscreveu como voluntário na AM.} \\
\text{register-PST.3SG as volunteer in-the AM} \\
\text{‘Inácio was proposed with a curriculum that goes back to 1941, when he registered as a volunteer in the AM.’}
\]

\[
(48) \quad \text{b. Apesar de não o poder fazer,} \\
\text{despite of not it can-INF do-INF,} \\
\text{inscreveu-se no início do ano letivo} \\
\text{register-PST.3SG himself in-the beginning of-the year of_school} \\
\text{como tendo transitado de ano.} \\
\text{as have-GER pass-PTCP of school_level} \\
\text{‘In spite of not being able to do it, he registered at the beginning of the school year as having passed to the next school level.’}
\]
In the case of the PIC, the preposition *a* that introduces the infinitival domain has been analysed as an aspectual functional head (Duarte 1993, Barbosa & Cochofel 2005, Casalicchio 2019). In his analysis of Spanish predicative gerund clauses, Casalicchio (2019) also considers that an aspectual head is projected. The author accounts for some differences between predicative gerund clauses and the PIC by assuming that in predicative gerund clauses the progressive morpheme is generated in a lower aspectual head.

There are, however, important differences between predicative gerund clauses equivalent to the PIC and COMO-GC. These differences are found both in their internal structure and in their external structure. On the one hand, COMO-GC are clearly functionally more complex, since they allow the compound gerund, negation, all types of aspectual classes, and different temporal interpretations, according to the gerund verb form. On the other hand, unlike the preposition *a* from the PIC, the connective *como* as an introducer of GC does not impose aspectual restrictions on the situation described by the GC, as described in section 2.2.

Although COMO-GC constitute an autonomous clausal domain, as shown by the fact that they allow negation and may have an anterior interpretation with respect to the situation described in the main clause, there is evidence that they occupy a low position in the sentence, since they can be under the scope of matrix negation and their null subject is controlled by an argument of the main predicate. For instance, in (49), what is negated is the fact that Germany is an imperialist country, and not the fact that there was a description of Germany.

\[
\begin{align*}
(49) & \quad \text{O repórter não descreveu a Alemanha como sendo um país imperialista, mas antes como sendo um país ameaçado.} \\
& \quad \text{The reporter did not describe Germany as being an imperialist country, but rather as being a threatened country.}'
\end{align*}
\]

Although it is not completely clear why the subject of the COMO-GC is obligatorily null, since the COMO-GC is not as temporally defective as predicative GC and non-peripheral adverbial GC, we may relate the difference between non-peripheral GC – more defective – and COMO-GC – less defective – to the fact that COMO-GC integrate an opaque predicative domain. As we will argue in section 3.2, we believe that *como* is obligatory with this specific type of GC because it is a type-shifter that turns the whole gerund predication into a predicate. This behaviour seems to be compatible with an analysis of *como* as a special Predicate head that takes the GC as its complement and the subject of Predication as its specifier:

![Diagram](attachment:diagram.png)
Considering now the syntactic position where COMO-GC are merged, we can see that COMO-GC have a flavour that reminds us of secondary predication. Secondary predication has been investigated in different frameworks and different proposals have been put forward (Williams 1980, Stowell 1981, 1991, Rothstein, 1983, Schultze-Berndt 2017, a.o.). Usually, a distinction is made between depictives and resultatives, and sometimes also between circumstantial and absolute predicates (Irimia 2005, Rothstein 2012, Bosque 2022, Demonte 2022):

(51) The cat ate the mouse alive. (depictive)
(52) He hammered the metal flat. (resultative)
(53) Angry, he closed the door. (circumstantial)
(54) He left the room, his hands full of dust. (absolute)

(51)–(54) (adapted from Irimia 2005: 24)

Depictives are always temporally simultaneous to the situation described in the main clause, whereas resultatives are always the result of the main eventuality. Depictives can predicate of the object or of the subject, whereas resultatives always predicate of the object.

COMO-GC, however, are different both from depictives and from resultatives: they do not express the result of the main eventuality and they cannot predicate of an external argument of the main verb. Furthermore, COMO-GC cannot occur with all verbs: there are lexical restrictions on the selection of the COMO-GC. This suggests that COMO-GC are selected by the main verb and, differently from depictives, are not generated as adjuncts. In our view, with verbs from Groups 2 and 3, COMO-GC behave as arguments that do not need to be syntactically expressed, that is, as “default arguments” in Pustejovsky’s (1995) proposal, whereas with verbs from Group 1, the COMO-GC is part of a propositional internal argument. Take, for instance, example (49): with the verb descrever ‘describe’, the GC specifies the nature of the description that applies to the Theme direct object. Thus, it has a tight semantic relation with the main verb, although this argument does not need to be syntactically expressed. In contrast, verbs from Group 1 select a propositional internal argument whose predicate may be a GC.

Taking this into account, we propose that COMO-GC can be merged in two different configurations depending on the selection properties of the main verb: i) with verbs from Group 1, the main verb selects as its only internal argument a Small Clause (PredP), whose specifier is the DP object and whose complement is the gerund clause (see (55)); ii) with verbs from Groups 2 and 3, the main verb selects two internal arguments: the first one is the DP/PP, the second one is a Small Clause (PredP), whose specifier is occupied by an empty category controlled by the internal argument, in a structure that resembles object control (see (56)):
In fact, constituency tests show that with verbs from Group 1 the postverbal DP and the COMO-GC form a constituent (cf. (57)), whereas with verbs from Groups 2 and 3 this is not the case (cf. (58)).

\[(55)\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{VP} \\
\text{V'} \\
\text{V considerar} \\
\text{‘consider’} \\
\text{DP} \\
\text{PredP} \\
\text{Pred} \\
\text{como} \\
\text{‘as’} \\
\text{TP} \\
\end{array}
\]

\[(56)\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{VP} \\
\text{v'} \\
\text{v descrever,} \\
\text{‘describe’} \\
\text{DP} \\
\text{V} \\
\text{PredP} \\
\text{Pred} \\
\text{como} \\
\text{‘as’} \\
\text{TP} \\
\end{array}
\]

In fact, constituency tests show that with verbs from Group 1 the postverbal DP and the COMO-GC form a constituent (cf. (57)), whereas with verbs from Groups 2 and 3 this is not the case (cf. (58)).

\[(57)\]

O Ministro considerou a situação como sendo um completo desastre e o Presidente também o considerou/considerou o mesmo.

\[\text{The Minister considered the situation as being a complete disaster and the President also considered it the same.}\]

\[(58)\]

??Tony Blair apontou as deficiências da organização como tendo contribuído para a violência e a Rainha também o apontou.

\[\text{Tony Blair pointed out the deficiencies of the organisation as having contributed to the violence and the Queen also pointed out.}\]
‘Tony Blair pointed the deficiencies of the organisation as having contributed to the violence and the Queen also pointed it.’

In what follows, we will consider the internal structure of the GC headed by como. As shown in section 2.1, COMO-GC, similarly to peripheral adjunct GC, allow the compound gerund, sentential negation and clitics (cf. (12)-(13), renumbered as (59)–(60), and (61)):

(59) O livro é apresentado como tendo sido escrito por um psicoterapeuta.
the book be-PST.3SG present-PTCP as have-GER be-PTCP
‘The book is presented as having been written by a psychotherapist.’

(60) Esta proposta foi criticada por muitos como não sendo suficiente.
this proposal be-PST.3SG criticise-PTCP by many as not be-GER sufficient
‘This proposal was criticised by many as not being sufficient.’

(61) Os investigadores apresentaram o estudo como tendo aberto novas perspetivas sobre o assunto.
the researchers present-PST.3PL the study as having-GER DAT.3PL open-PTCP new perspectives on the topic
‘The researchers presented the study as having opened them new perspectives on the topic.’

Since the projection of a temporal auxiliary, the presence of sentential negation and the licensing of object clitics have been related to the projection of a functional head related to T (cf. Zanuttini 1996, Matos 1999, Gonçalves 1999), this is evidence that COMO-GC project at least a TP domain. However, we have also observed that, unlike peripheral adjunct GC, COMO-GC usually do not have an overt subject:

(62) *Esta proposta foi criticada por muitos como não sendo as verbas suficientes.
this proposal be-PST.3SG criticise-PTCP by many as not be-GER the sums sufficient
‘This proposal was criticised by many as not being the sums sufficient.’

Despite projecting a TP (and possibly a CP), the GC has a null subject controlled by the subject of the PredP. This behaviour is not that surprising and is not unique to COMO-GC. In fact, infinitival object control structures, where we can find both inflected and non-inflected infinitives, usually have null controlled subjects (63).

---

6 We thank an anonymous reviewer for the suggestion of this example as an additional argument in favour of the projection of TP.
However, as shown by Barbosa (2009, 2021) and Santos (2023), overt subjects are allowed provided they have a bound reading and occur in a postverbal position (64):  

(63)  

A mãe obrigou as crianças a (*elas) fazer/fazerem a cama.  

‘The mother forced the children to (*they) make the bed.’  

(64)  

Santos (2023:14)  

O diretor obrigou / ajudou os médicos a irem eles/*k ao congresso.  

‘The director forced the doctors to go to the congress themselves.’  

Although we have not found overt subjects in COMO-GC, postverbal bound subjects seem to be possible in COMO-GC, which points to a syntactic similarity between COMO-GC and control:  

(65)  

O tribunal considerou o homem como sendo ele o único responsável pelo raptô.  

‘The court considered the man as being the only one responsible for the kidnapping.’  

COMO-GC are, thus, part of a set of defective structures that have a subject argument controlled by a higher constituent.  

3.2. A semantic analysis of COMO-GC  

At this point we would like to stress some key semantic and syntactic features of the former analysis:  

1. the COMO-GC appears to be completely aspect-neutral: it does not restrict the occurrence of basic aspectual types and apparently preserves the features of those same basic types - which is different, for instance, from non-peripheral gerund clauses.  

2. COMO-GC temporal readings are completely determined by the basic temporal value of the respective gerund forms (simple gerund triggers simultaneity, whereas
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Furthermore, the TPpt of a COMO-GC is always the time interval locating the situation represented by the main clause, contrary to peripheral adverbial GC with compound gerund occurring after the main clause, which have also the time utterance as an available TPpt.

3. Unlike the other types of gerund clauses, COMO-GC are obligatorily introduced by como, which is used productively to introduce DP denoting properties of entities and professions.

4. COMO-GC occur, among others, with main verbs that select small clauses (Group 1), such as considerar ‘consider’, and behave as a predicate of the small clause.

To account for these data, we hypothesise that COMO-GC are radically different from other gerund clauses in that they correspond to different semantic objects. Peripheral gerund clauses correspond to propositions (type \( t \)), that is, they are “meanings of tense phrases in a context” (van Elswyk 2022), whereas COMO-GC correspond to predicates \(<e,t>\), i.e., they bear an interpretation that is commonly attributed in the domain of DP.

It is a standard assumption that DP interpretation can correspond to different types: \( e \) (referential), \(<e,t>\) (predicative) and \(<<e,t>,t>\) (quantificational). Evidence that DP can have a predicative interpretation comes from verbs that allow arguments that can be both adjectival and nominal phrases (such as “consider”). Partee (1987) (among others) assumes that constituent conjunction requires identical semantic types. Therefore, in (66), if one assumes that the AP “competent in semantics”, an \(<e,t>\) type constituent, is selected by “consider”, one has also to assume that the DP “an authority on unicorns” belongs to the same type of the AP since it is conjoined with it.

(66) Partee (1987:119)
Mary considers John competent in semantics and an authority on unicorns.

According to Partee (1987), a DP such as “an authority on unicorns” in (66) is a quantificational DP. However, the syntactic context requires a predicative interpretation. This interpretation, according to Partee (1987), is possible in (66) because, although each DP receives a basic interpretation, DP can bear all three interpretations. This possibility can be explained of operators that allow type-shifting. In the case of (66), the relevant operator is BE, which turns quantificational types into predicative types.

As shown in section 3.1, one can find examples with the verb considerar ‘consider’ – and, in fact, with other verbs taking small clauses as arguments, such as tornar ‘turn’ – with AP and COMO-GC (cf. (67)–(68)).

(67) a. O primeiro-ministro sueco anunciou the Prime Minister Swedish announce-PST.3SG
que a Suécia não vai integrar a that the Sweden not go-PRES.3SG join-INF the
primeira fase da moeda única, considerando o first phase of-the currency single, consider-GER the
projecto instável.
project unstable
‘The Swedish Prime Minister announced that Sweden will not join the first phase of the single currency, considering the project unstable.’

b. Souness considerou o trabalho dos árbitros como sendo mais difícil do que o seu.
Souness consider-PST.3SG the job of-the referees as be-GER more difficult of-the that the his
‘Souness considered the referees’ job to be more difficult than his own.’

(68) a. O assassinio de Shakaki tornou a situação extremamente tensa.
the murder of Shakaki make-PST.3SG the situation extremely tense
‘Shakaki’s murder made the situation extremely tense.’

b. O facto de estarem 16 mil pensionistas envolvidos torna este caso como sendo “de interesse nacional”.
the fact that be-INF.3PL 16 thousand pensioners involve-PTCP make-PRS.3SG this case as be-GER “of interest national”
‘The fact that 16 thousand pensioners are involved makes this case “of national interest”.’

Furthermore, it is possible to find in our data the conjunction of a COMO-AP and a COMO-GC, both with simple and compound gerunds:

(69) a. essas foram classificadas pela KBC como pró-marxistas e como tendo apelos à insurreição violenta
these be-PST.3PL classify-PTCP by-the KBC as pro-Marxist and as have-GER calls for-the insurrection violent
‘these were classified by KBC as pro-Marxist and as calling for violent insurrection’

b. O nosso batalhão foi considerado como inexperiente ou incompetente e como tendo provocado o incidente.
the our battalion be-PST.3SG consider-PTCP as inexperienced or incompetent and as have-GER provoke-PTCP the incident
‘Our battalion was considered to be inexperienced or incompetent and to have provoked the incident.’
Although our data do not include any example with the conjunction of an AP and a COMO-GC, one can easily manipulate some of the examples above to change the COMO-phrase into an AP, as in (70), a version of (67b), and (71), a version of (69b).

(70) Souness considerou o trabalho dos árbitros ingrato
    Souness consider-pst.3sg the job of-the referees unpleasant
    e como sendo mais difícil do que o seu.
    and as be-ger more difficult of-the that the his
    ‘Souness considered the referees’ job to be unpleasant and more difficult than his own.’

(71) O nosso batalhão foi considerado inexperiente
    the our battalion be-pst.3sg consider-ptcp inexperienced
    ou incompetente e como tendo provocado o incidente.
    or incompetent and as have-ger provoke-ptcp the incident.
    ‘Our battalion was considered inexperienced or incompetent and to have provoked the incident.’

These cases are all well-formed in Portuguese and are evidence that COMO-GC behave as semantic objects of the type <e,t>, since they can occur in the same contexts of AP and can also be conjoined with this type of syntactic phrase.

This <e,t> interpretation is not typically attributed to sentences/clauses, but to DP, as mentioned before. So, a type-shift is needed to explain the interpretation of COMO-GC. We propose that como is obligatory in COMO-GC because it is lexically marking this type-shift from propositions to predicates, that is, in these constructions, como is an operator of the type <t, <e, t>>. Example (41), renumbered (72), illustrates this claim: the COMO-GC denotes the set of events of TRADE that occur before their TPpt and that have Portugália as their Agent and Indonesia as their Partner (cf. (73), for the representation of the example in a Neo-Davidsonian way). The anteriority reading is motivated by the use of the compound gerund (cf. section 2.2).

(72) A Portugália surge em título como tendo
    the Portugália appear-prs.3sg in title as have-ger
    negociado com a Indonésia.
    trade-ptcp with the Indonesia
    ‘Portugália appears in title as having traded with Indonesia.’

(73) λe [TRADE e & e < TPpt & AGENT e, p & PARTNER e, i]

This proposal can deal with all syntactic and semantic features of COMO-GC highlighted before. First, since there is a type-shift, there are no restrictions regarding basic aspectual classes (that one can find with the other gerund clauses), as they are commuted by como into predicates. Additionally, temporal relations are completely determined by the basic temporal value of gerund forms, as como operates over the whole gerund predication, making it a predicate. In a sense, the type-shift ‘freezes’ the properties of these gerund predications, which prevents other temporal mechanisms – such as the ordering of clauses - from changing their temporal location. Thirdly, the
occurrence of *como* is mandatory (corresponding to the lexicalization of a Predicate head in syntax), since this type-shift operation cannot be covert – the input of this operation takes the domain of propositions, but its output corresponds to a semantic object of a different sort. Finally, COMO-GC occur in syntactic environments that usually correspond to semantic predicates, not to propositions, which explains the occurrence of COMO-GC, in particular, with verbs of Group 1. The fact that *como* requires a semantic predicate as its argument is strengthened by the circumstance that in most cases of *como* introducing DP interpreted as professions, these DP correspond to bare nouns, i.e., semantic predicates (cf. (47), renumbered (74)).

(74)  
Até 1958, Jan Korec trabalhou como operário numa fábrica.  
until 1958, Jan Korec work-PST.3SG as worker in-a factory  
‘Until 1958, Jan Korec worked as a worker in a factory.’

However, it is also possible for the DP to correspond to a quantified expression, as in example (75):

(75)  
Foi forçado a fugir e, pela primeira vez, admitiu à sua mulher que trabalhava como um agente informador.  
be-PST.3SG force-PTCP to flee-INF and, for-the first time, admit-PST.3SG to-the his wife that work-PST.3SG as an agent informant  
‘He was forced to flee and, for the first time, he admitted to his wife that he worked as an informant.’

In this case, *um agente informador* ‘an informant’ has a predicate interpretation (in fact, in this example, one could replace *um agente informador* with *agente informador*, removing the determiner *um*, without changing the meaning), so we must assume that it is *como* that forces the type-shifting of the DP *um agente informador*, from a quantificational type into a predicative type. Our proposal for the treatment of COMO-GC differs from the former analysis of example (75) in that the type-shifting triggered by *como* applies to a clause domain, i.e., a syntactic object different from a DP, although the output of the type-shifting operation is a denotation that typically corresponds to a DP. As we mentioned before, this type-shift corresponds to Partee’s BE operator: we propose that BE can be applied to syntactic objects other than DP, but the result of applying BE is always a semantic object of the “predicative” type.

This proposal blurs the semantic differences between expressions denoting entities and expressions denoting propositions, since the same interpretation can be attributed to both kinds of expressions, under the same semantic operator. However, this is not a radically new idea. For instance, copredication (e.g., Pustejovsky 1995, Asher 2011) is an operation that requires that two different predicates, related to entities and events, can be attributed to one and the same object, expressed by a DP. For instance, in (76), “was delicious” (a property of entities) and “took forever” (a property of events) are attributed to the same entity (“lunch”).
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Asher (2011:11)
Lunch was delicious but took forever.

So, the same syntactic object, the DP “lunch”, is lexically ambiguous between the entity and the event interpretation. We propose that gerund clauses are syntactic objects that usually bear event interpretation, but, in the scope of como, a lexical expression of BE operator in European Portuguese, they have their interpretation shifted to a predicative (i.e., a DP-like) interpretation.\(^8\)

4. Conclusions

In this paper, we conducted a syntactic and semantic description and analysis of COMO-GC. In sections 2.1 and 2.2 we showed that COMO-GC exhibit a range of syntactic and semantic characteristics that set them apart from all other gerundive clauses. We have also shown (i) that a COMO-GC appears to be completely aspect-neutral (it imposes no restriction on the occurrence of basic aspectual types and apparently preserves the features of those same basic types) and (ii) that COMO-GC temporal readings are completely determined by the basic temporal value of the respective gerundive forms. In section 3.1, we showed (i) that these gerundive clauses occur with three distinct types of verbs in the main clause, (ii) that, in all cases, the null subject of the COMO-GC is coreferential with an internal argument of the verb of the main clause, and (iii) that a COMO-GC constitutes an autonomous clausal domain that is merged in two different configurations, depending on the main verb. In section 3.2, to deal with the syntactic and semantic features of COMO-GC, we put forward the hypothesis that como (“as”) requires a type-shift of the semantic type of the gerundive clause and that the output of this type-shift is a predicative \(<e,t>\) interpretation, similar to the one exhibited by certain DP.

In the future, we plan to address several facets of this analysis, namely the nature of the null subject category of the COMO-GC and the relation it establishes with its antecedent. We also intend to investigate in more detail the conditions that trigger the type-shifting and the correlation between the temporal relations/aspectual classes and linguistic features of these structures.

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\(^8\) Furthermore, Portuguese (and other languages, such as Spanish and Italian) exhibit nominalisations of infinitival clauses, which is another argument to consider that the borders between entities and events are not clear-cut (for European Portuguese, cf. Brito 2012, among others).
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