Alternations between regular and athematic participles in Brazilian Portuguese

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1. Introduction. In BP, there are three constructions where a participle can be used:

(1) a. Essa camisa foi **pass-a-d-a**   pelo   João.
        this   shirt   was iron-THV-PTC-AGR by.the João
        'This shirt was ironed by João.'   ***Verbal passive***

  b. Essa camisa está **pass-a-da**.
        this   shirt   is   iron-THV-PTC-AGR
        'This shirt is ironed.'   ***Adjectival passive***

  c. [**Pass-a-da**   a   última camisa], o   João pôde descansar.
        [iron-THV-PTC-AGR the last   shirt   ] the João could rest.INF
        'Having ironed the last shirt (Lit.: Ironed the last shirt), João could go rest'.   ***Absolute participle***

In its regular form, the participle is exponed by */-d/*; it is preceded by a theme vowel and followed by agreement morphology. Besides a regular participial form (leftmost column in (2)), some verbs allow for a form that lacks */-d/* and a THV (3rd column) – the same is true in other Romance languages, *e.g.* Italian (Calabrese:2015). These are called *athematic participles* (Lobato:1999; Chagas:2011; Scher *et al.*:2013; 2014; Nevins *et al.*:2014, *i.a.*).

(2) a. *ganh-a-d-o/a(s)* 'win-THV-PTC-AGR'   *ganh-o/a(s)* 'win-AGR'
  b. *limp-a-d-o/a(s)* 'clean-THV-PTC-AGR' *limp-o/a(s)* 'clean-AGR'

The participial constructions in (1) differ in which participle(s) they may take. Verbal passives allows for either participial form (3a), adjectival passives only allow for the athematic participle (3b), and absolute participles only allow for the regular participle (3c).

(3) a. O armário foi **limp-a-d-o**   / **limp-o**   (pelo   João).
        the wardrobe was clean-THV-PTC-AGR / clean-AGR (by.the João)

  b. O armário   permanece/está *__limp-a-d-o__   / **limp-o**.
        the wardrobe remains/is   *clean-THV-PTC-AGR / clean-AGR

  c. [**Limp-a-d-o**   / *__Limp-o__   o   armário], o   João foi   descansar.
        [clean-THV-PTC-AGR / *clean-AGR the wardrobe] the João went rest.INF

While it is not unusual for there to be more than one participle available (*cf.* Embick:2004, 2003), each form is usually restricted to a particular environment. Our goal is to explain why *either* participle is possible in verbal passives (3a) in BP, an alternation that, to the best of our knowledge, has not been addressed. (3b) and (3c) are boundary cases that the analysis must also account for.

2. Three classes of participles. Only verbal passives can license a *by*-phrase (3a); adjectival passives (4a) and absolute participles (4b) cannot.

(4) a. O armário permanece/está limp-o   (*__pelo João__).
        the wardrobe remains/is   clean-AGR (*by.the João)

  b. [Limp-a-d-as   as gavetas (*__pelo João__)], …
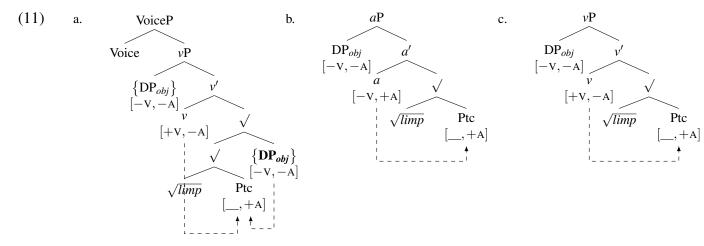   [clean-THV-PTC-AGR the drawers (*by.the João)] …

Absolute participles (5c) are still different from adjectival passives (5b) (and similar to verbal passives (5a)) in that they can be modified by manner adverbs.

(5) a. O armário foi limp(-a-d)-o   **cuidadosamente / rapidamente**.
        the wardrobe was clean-PTC-AGR carefully   / quickly

b. O armário permanece/está aber-t-o   (***cuidadosamente / *rapidamente**).
the wardrobe remains/was*estar* open-PTC-AGR (*carefully   / *quickly)

c. [Aber-t-o   o armário **cuidadosamente / rapidamente**], …
[open-PTC-AGR the wardrobe carefully   / quickly   ] …

3. Analysis. Following Oltra-Massuet:1999, *i.a.*, I assume that theme vowels are dissoaciative morphemes. I propose that they are inserted to the right of the root in $[+v]$ environments.

(6)   *Theme Vowel insertion*: $\emptyset \rightarrow$ THV$/\_\_[+v]$ (*where* THV $= \{-a, -e, -i\}$)

I propose the following system of $[\pm v(\text{ERBAL}), \pm A(\text{ADJECTIVAL})]$ features:

(7)   a. Participle: $[+v, +A]$ b. Adjective: $[-v, +A]$ c. Verb: $[+v, -A]$ d. Noun: $[-v, -A]$

Inspired by Kučerová:2018's treatment of class markers in Italian, I propose that roots determine which PTC is inserted. Roots like those in (2) select for a PTC that lacks a $[\pm v]$ feature (8)-a; such a feature will be supplied by the context. Other roots select for a fully specified PTC (8)-b.

(8)   a. PTC $\rightarrow [\_\_, +A] / \sqrt{limp}, \sqrt{ganh}, \dots \_\_$ b. PTC $\rightarrow [+v, +A]$

The Vocabulary Entries that expone PTC are as follows:

(9)   a. $[+A]_{Ptc} \leftrightarrow /\emptyset/$ b. $[+A, +v]_{Ptc} \leftrightarrow /-d/$

I propose that verbal passives have two object positions. The verb *perguntar* 'ask' can only be used in verbal passives; it cannot be used in adjectival passives nor absolute participles (not shown). I attribute this possibility to the availability of an additional object position in verbal passives. Since *a Maria* is a goal argument in (10), I assume this is a lower position (Larson:1988; *cf.* (11a)).

(10)   A Maria foi **pergunt-a-d-a**   se já   foi assaltada alguma vez.
        the Maria was ask-THV-PTC-AGR if already was robbed   some time

I propose that verbal passives (11a), adjectival passives (11b), and absolute participles (11c) have the following structures, illustrated with *limp(-a-d)-as* '$\sqrt{clean}$-(THV-PTC)-AGR':

(11)

$\sqrt{limp}$ requires the $[\pm v]$-less PTC (8)-a. In **adjectival passives** (11b), what supplies this feature is *a*, which is $[-v]$. As such, PTC is going to be exponed as $/\emptyset/$ (9a) and a THV is not going to be inserted. The net result is the athematic participle *limp-o*. If the root requires a fully specified PTC (8)-b, a THV *is* inserted and the VI chosen for PTC is /-d/ (9b). The second case holds for all participial constructions. In **absolute participles** (11c), a *v* provides a $[+v]$ feature to the $[\pm v]$-less PTC. As a result, PTC is going to be exponed as *-d* (9b) and a THV is going to be inserted even though PTC starts out defective. The result is a regular participle *limp-a-d-o*. In **verbal passives**

(11a), if the object occupies a lower position (**DP**$_{obj}$), it is this DP that supplies a $[-\textsc{v}]$ feature to PTC. The result is an athematic participle. If the object occupies the higher position, the closest element that can supply a $[\pm\textsc{v}]$ feature to PTC is *v*. In that case, PTC is going to be exponed as */-d/* and a THV will be inserted. The optionality between athematic and regular participles in verbal passives is the reflex of the two structures proposed for them.