A STUDY OF THE USE OF COMMA IN THE HISTORY OF EUROPEAN PORTUGUESE

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▪ ABSTRACT: This work aims to investigate the use of comma in European Portuguese from the 16th to the 19th centuries in two types of constructions: before verbal complement clause and after subject and non-clausal adjunct or dependent clause in first position. For this, a corpus of 24 texts by authors born between the 16th and 19th centuries was used. The results showed that, in the 16h and 17th centuries, the comma was used more frequently to help in the organization and reading of the text, indicating discursive and prosodic relations. However, in the 18th and 19th centuries, although the comma continues to serve as an indicator of the discursive role of the pre-verbal phrase, especially of pre-verbal subjects, before complement clauses such function was lost, as the authors began to pay more attention to the relation of complementarity between verb and argument, preferring not to separate them . One possible factor that would have favored this change seems to be the fact that, from the second half of the 18th century on, with the diffusion of the Enlightenment in Portugal, grammarians became more concerned with the norm and syntax of Portuguese, which led the punctuation system to be more based on logical-grammatical function.

▪ KEYWORDS: Comma. European Portuguese. Classical Portuguese. Prescriptive grammar. Prosody. Syntax. Punctuation.

Introduction[1]

Building on previous studies on the use of comma in Portuguese writing, particularly before complement clauses, in texts from the 16th to the 19th centuries (YANO, 2013), this study aims to deepen the analysis of how the comma works in Portuguese, from the 16th to the 19th centuries, focusing on the use of comma in two contexts, in main and embedded clauses: on the right of the verb, before verbal complement clause, and on the left of the verb, after subject and non-clausal adjunct or dependent clause in first position. It was used a *corpus* of 24 texts by Portuguese writers born between the 16th and the 19th centuries, and, for the collection of data from the *corpus*, the *CorpusSearch[2]*,

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[2] Available at: http://corpussearch.sourceforge.net/index.html. Access on: 14 Oct. 2020.

a tool with which one may search syntactically annotated texts and obtain information about lexicon, syntax and punctuation and, thereby, look more systematically at the matters related to punctuation.

In Yano (2013) it was observed that, in the 16th and 17th centuries, the comma also had the function of delimiting reported speech structures, and the use of punctuation was more based on discourse and textual organization, being its main purposes the reading aloud and the memorization of texts (CATACH, 1994; ROSA, 1994). However, from the 18th century on, the comma is no longer used with the same function, which seems to indicate that there was a distancing from the discursive function, and the logical-grammatical function became more predominant, that is, the syntactic relationships between the constituents in the sentence.

The results obtained in the present study confirm Yano's analysis, since it was also found a higher incidence of comma between verb and complement clause in the texts from the 16th and 17th centuries and that the punctuation served more to aid in reading aloud and memorizing texts, being the comma used more frequently on the left or right of the verb to indicate discursive and prosodic relations in writing. Yet in the 18th and 19th centuries, whereas, as noted by Yano, on the right of the verb such function of the comma seems to have fallen out of use, since writers started to give greater attention to the relationship of complementarity between verb and argument, with the logical-grammatical function being more predominant in the punctuation system, on the left of the verb, especially in cases with pre-verbal subjects, writers continue to mark the comma to indicate the discursive role of the pre-verbal phrase.

Moreover, from the reading of Portuguese grammars it is noticeable that the treatment of punctuation changed in the second half of the 18th century, when there was greater tendency to prescriptivism and a distancing from the rhetorical tradition of Latin and, therefore, Portuguese grammarians began to give more emphasis to syntactic problems (GONÇALVES, 2006; TANNIHÃO, 2016). Such chronological dating coincides with the period when the change in the use of comma seems to have happened, as observed in the data analysed here, that is, from the second half of the 18th century on. Besides, it was noted a similarity between the use of comma in the analysed contexts and the rules and definitions of punctuation in Portuguese grammars and orthography treatises. This seems to suggest that the change in the grammatical norm would have influenced the change in the use of comma and the punctuation system, in general.

The punctuation system and the rules for the use of comma in Portuguese grammars

Regarding the periodization of the history of punctuation in Romance languages, there is not a consensus in the literature, especially on the role of punctuation in the 16h and 17th centuries. Among the different proposals, Rocha (1997) says that both

the prosodic and the syntactical-semantic function of punctuation were in effect in the 17th and 18th centuries, although the latter was already more predominant, dividing the last two periods as Middle Age, from the 13th to the 14th century, and Modern Age, from the 17th to the 20th century. Catach (1994), on the other hand, says that in the 17th century punctuation still had the role of signalling aspects of orality and that the syntactical-semantic function of punctuation became more predominant only in the beginning of the 18th century. For that reason, the author divides the periods as Ancient Age, from the 12th to the 17th century, and Modern Age, from the 18th to the 20th century.

In Portuguese, particularly, from the reading of Portuguese grammars and orthography manuals, one can point out three moments in the discourse and treatment of punctuation. In a first moment, in the 15th and 16th centuries, the emergence of the press and, thus, the discovery of the composition and press with mobile characters brought the possibility of improving the *layout* of the text on paper, leading to the search for the standardization of the written text and the widespread expansion of visual reading, and, therefore, the imposition of the use of a more stable punctuation system, with better defined marks and rules, progressing towards a more logical-grammatical use. Despite that, in early Portuguese grammars, by Barros (1540) and Gândavo (1574), punctuation is a poorly systematized and discussed topic, and the punctuation system is more based on the rhetorical tradition of Latin, being its primary function to aid in reading aloud. That is, the authors say that the punctuation serves to mark pauses and distinguish clauses and sentences to aid in meaning construction, but they do not present any specific rule to how and where the marks should be used in the text, nor examples of usage. It should be noted, however, that the punctuation, in that period, does not seem to function as a mere system to transcribe speech melody and pauses, but to indicate, through pauses, meaning relations between clauses in the text (ROSA, 1994).

In a second moment, from the 17th to the second half of the 18th century, there were gradual changes in the treatment of punctuation, which will lead to the development of the modern system of punctuation. In the 17th and the first half of the 18th centuries, although there was a greater systematization of the punctuation system, with more specific rules and examples of use for the marks, possibly as a late reflection of the emergence of the press and the search for the written text standardization, the rhetorical tradition is still predominant and the grammarians' norms seem to continue being associated to semantic and prosodic relations. As for the comma, particularly, Barreto (1671) and Madureira Feijó (1734) say that the comma serves to mark pauses to breathe and indicate whether the meaning is complete or incomplete, aiding in the appropriate reading and comprehension of the text. Among the rules prescribed by these grammarians, the following ones are worth noting: a) the comma should be inserted before conjunctions, such as the complementizer *que*, introducer of complement and relative clauses, suggesting that the use of comma between verb and complement clause was accepted at the time, even though the function to introduce reported speech is not

mentioned in the grammars; and b) the comma should be inserted after a "verb with its arguments" (e.g., "Whomever loves God, loves their neighbors."[3] (BARRETO, 1671, p. 216, our translation)), which suggests that, if the subject is clausal, the use of comma between subject and verb was acceptable by the norm — although such rule seems to be more related to the notion that the meaning of the clause is "incomplete". Moreover, the common use of examples in Portuguese and Latin, in that period, indicates that the Latin grammatical tradition still had influence in that period.

Yet, in the second half of the 18th century, with the late influence of Enlightenment in Portugal and the education reform instituted by the Marquis of Pombal, who determined that the mother tongue should substitute Latin, a strong metalinguistic activity around the norm of Portuguese began (GONÇALVES, 2006; TANNIHÃO, 2016). Thereby, grammarians, such as Monte Carmelo (1767) and Freire da Cunha (1770 *apud* GONÇALVES, 2003), stopped using examples in Latin to explain the rules of punctuation marks and to discuss the syntax of Portuguese, even if briefly, although the marks are still classified according to the insertion of a small or a big pause. As for the comma, the innovation appears in the rule that comma should be inserted to isolate interpolated expressions, such as adverbial clauses (Ex.: "If the Evangelical Law is repressive, Charity softens everything"[4] (MONTE CARMELO, 1767, p. 453, our translation)) and vocatives (Ex.: "You order, oh Queen, to renew a pain, which is not to be talked about"[5] (FREIRE DA CUNHA, 1770 *apud* GONÇALVES, 2003, p. 202, our translation)). It is noteworthy, however, that Monte Carmelo says that the comma should be inserted before complement clauses with the example "God wants, that everyone be saved, and know the truth."[6] (MONTE CARMELO, 1767, p. 453, our translation), which seems to indicate that such ancient use of the comma was still acceptable in the 18th century.

In addition, in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, although the grammarians do not talk directly about the length of clauses, the notion that the comma should be inserted to indicate a pause where "the voice rests"[7] (BARROS, 1540, p. 50, our translation) suggests a relationship between length and punctuation, since the reading and memorization of long excerpts can be tiring and, therefore, it is necessary to break them in smaller parts.

The passage from the end of the 18th to the 19th century marks a third moment of great change in the grammatical norm of Portuguese. In that period, the precepts of the Enlightenment were spread in Portugal, with a greater tendency to prescriptivism, under the influence of new conceptions and rules proposed by the *Grammar of Port-Royal*, from 1660, and no longer of the "good use". Thus, especially after the earthquake in

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[3] Original: "*Quem ama a Deus, ama ao proximo*" (BARRETO, 1671, p. 216).

[4] Original: "*Se é jugo a Lei Evangélica, a Caridade tudo suaviza*" (MONTE CARMELO, 1767, p. 453).

[5] Original: "*Mandas, ó Rainha, renovar uma dor, que não é para se falar*" (FREIRE DA CUNHA, 1770 *apud* GONÇALVES, 2003, p. 202).

[6] Original: "*Deus quer, que todos se salvem, e conheçam a verdade*" (MONTE CARMELO, 1767, p. 453).

[7] Original: "*descansa a voz*" (BARROS, 1540, p. 50).

1775, when Sebastião José, the future Marquis of Pombal, took the power and imposed an educational reform, determining that the mother tongue should substitute Latin, a greater tendency to prescriptivism around the norm of Portuguese arose, based on the rationalist assumption that languages are ruled by universal principles and, therefore, there is a universal grammar (GONÇALVES, 2006; TANNIHÃO, 2016). Thus, there was a distancing from the rhetorical tradition of Latin and the grammarians ceased to use sentences in Latin to explain or exemplify the rules of punctuation marks and began to give more emphasis to the syntax of Portuguese and the relations of subordination between the parts of the sentences – even though it is still common to classify the punctuation marks based on the duration of a pause in manuals from the second half of the 18th century, such as Monte Carmelo (1767) and Freire da Cunha (1770 *apud* GONÇALVES, 2003).

In grammars like the ones by Dias de Sousa (1804) and Barbosa (1822) it is worth noting the rules stating that the comma should not be inserted before conjunctions (before a complement clause) and between subject and verb, because there would be a relation of dependency between the constituents that should not be broken, and that the comma should be inserted before and/or after every interpolated expression of parenthetical nature and, thus, structurally independent from the rest of the clause it is in (e.g., "Every interpolated Clause, that is, between other clauses, without modifying them, or being modified, must appear between commas; [...]."[8] (BARBOSA, 1822, p. 88-89, our translation)). Moreover, in grammars from that period and later works, the matter of the length of a clause is discussed more explicitly, the norm being to insert the comma to isolate a long clause to indicate a "pause to breathe" – as mentioned in grammars from the 16th and 17th centuries −, as Dias de Sousa says (1804, p. 266-267, our translation):

> Before the conjunctions and, nor, or, as, that, and other similar ones: the comma is inserted, when the words and the sentences they link make breathing tiring due to the incident clauses, and complements they carry with them: when however the words and sentences are short and simple, the commas are unnecessary; because the same conjunctions make up for them.[9]

In the 20th century, modern grammarians treat punctuation in the same manner as the ones from the 19th century did. Cunha and Lindley Cintra (1985, p. 429, our translation) say that punctuation serve to "to approximately reconstitute the live movement of

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[8] Original: "*Toda a Oração encravada, isto é, metida entre outras, sem as modificar, nem ser modificada, deve estar entre vírgulas*; [...]." (BARBOSA, 1822, p. 88-89).

[9] Original: "*Antes das conjunções e, nem, ou, como, que, e outras semilhantes: põe-se virgula, quando as palavras e frases que elas ligão fatigão a respiração pelas propozições incidentes, e complementos que trazem comsigo: quando porém as palavras e frases são curtas e simples, as virgulas são desnecessarias; porque as mesmas conjunções as suprem.*" (DIAS DE SOUSA, 1804, p. 266-267).

an oral elocution"[10], though, in regard to the usage rules for punctuation marks, it is clear that they are more based on syntactical relations. About the comma, particularly, the authors present rules that are similar to the ones stated in grammars from the 19th century. Amongst them, it is worth noting the ones stating that the comma should be used to indicate pauses and to separate elements with different syntactical functions, such as appositive clauses, vocatives, adjuncts in first position, repeated elements, parenthetical clauses or explicative relative clauses. Regarding adverbial adjuncts, specifically, the authors say that, when they are "of small body size"[11] (CUNHA; CINTRA, 1985, p. 429, our translation), that is, of short length, like a simple adverb, it is not necessary to insert a comma.

Besides that, a very discussed matter in the current literature is whether punctuation is determined by syntax or phonology: if writing is linked to the oral language, if writing and oral language are two distinct linguistic systems, or if writing is partially autonomous from the oral language. Given that, from the 16th to the 19th centuries, the comma seems to serve to indicate both discursive and prosodic relations (YANO, 2013) and syntactic relations (YANO, 2018) in Portuguese writing, it is adopted, in this study, the proposal that punctuation is linked to the prosody of the language and to a written grammar. But it is understood that it is not a mere transcription of speech melody and pauses, but that the comma indicated, through pauses, meaning relations, marking the intentions and the interactions of the author and his interlocutor (SONCIN, 2014), as well as grammatical relations between parts of the sentences.

About the intonational phrase and aspects of Portuguese prosody

In this study, the analysis of the uses of comma in Portuguese observed that, in both Classical and Modern periods, the comma serves to indicate, in writing, prosodic and discursive relations, in addition to syntactical relations, being inserted, most frequently, in the boundary of structures that may be characterised as intonational phrases (I), which suggests that, for the uses of comma in Portuguese writing, the domain of I is the relevant one. Thus, it is necessary to define the intonational phrase and, for that, it is adopted the definition proposed by Prosodic Phonology (NESPOR; VOGEL, 2007).

The Prosodic Phonology model presupposes that the speech flow is structured, as a hierarchy, in phonological constituents − syllable, foot, prosodic word, clitic group, phonological phrase, intonational phrase and utterance −, forming domains for the application of phonological rules and is organised in a way that each unity constitute a higher unity that immediately dominates it. The operation of phonological rules in the interior or the juncture of some domains is the evidence to the proposition of these domains. Moreover, although the phonological component functions in interaction

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[10] Original: "*para reconstituir aproximadamente o movimento vivo da elocução oral*" (CUNHA; CINTRA, 1985, p. 429).

[11] Original: "*de pequeno corpo*" (CUNHA; CINTRA, 1985, p. 429).

with other grammar components − syntax, morphology and pragmatics − there may be no isomorphy between the phonological structure and the syntactic or morphological structure, because phonological rules are applied in domains that are not strictly the ones determined by the morpho-phonological structure. (SELKIRK, 1984, 1986; NESPOR; VOGEL, 2007).

About the domain of I,[12] specifically, Nespor and Vogel say that, in certain constructions, the phrase may be restructured, or reorganized, according to the following criteria: a) when the length of I is long, it can be broken in smaller Is to aid in breathing or form optimal Is, of uniform sizes (cf. examples 1b and 1c); b) in situations of fast or informal speech it may form bigger Is, or in situations of slow or formal speech, it may form smaller Is; and c) in constructions with contrastive prominence, in which the focalized expression may form an independent I (cf. example 2b). Besides prosodic and style restrictions, there are also syntactic restrictions, being accepted by the model that a CP complement forms an independent I, since it is a "complete clause" (cf. example 3b), even though the argument structure tends to be respected and a break between the argument and its governing element.

1. a. [O gato do meu amigo sempre caça passarinhos no jardim dos fundos]I
       [My friend's cat always hunts birds in the backyard garden]I
    b. [O gato do meu amigo]I [sempre caça passarinhos no jardim dos fundos]I
       [My friend's cat]I [always hunts birds in the backyard garden]I
    c. [O gato do meu amigo]I [sempre caça passarinhos]I [no jardim dos
       fundos]I
       [My friend's cat]I [always hunts birds]I [in the backyard garden]I
2. a. [Vi o gato no canal sujo]I[13]
       [I saw the cat in the dirty canal]I
    b. [Vi o gato no canal]I [sujo]I
3. a. [O João avisou que vai buscar a Maria no shopping]I
       [John said that he will pick up Mary at the shopping mall]I
    b. [O João avisou]I [que vai buscar a Maria no shopping]I
       [John said]I [that he will pick up Mary at the shopping mall]I

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[12] About the formation of I, it is adopted the formation algorithm proposed by Nespor & Vogel (2007) and adapted by Frota (2000, p. 57) for the Portuguese:
Intonational Phrase (I) formation
a. I DomaIn: (i) all the fs in a string that is not structurally attached to the sentence tree (i.e. parenthetical expression, tag questions, vocatives, etc); (ii) any remaining sequence of adjacent fs in a root sentence; (iii) the domain of an intonation contour, whose boundaries coincide with the positions in which grammar-related pauses may be introduced in an utterance.
b. I Restructuring: (i) restructuring of one basic I into shorter Is, or (ii) restructuring of basic Is into a larger I. Factors that play a role in I restructuring: length of the constituents, rate of speech, and style interact with syntactic and semantic restrictions.

[13] The sentence in this example cannot be translated to English and have its ambiguity maintained. In Portuguese, there is an ambiguity about whether "sujo" ("dirty") refers to "o gato" ("the cat") or "o canal" ("the canal"). In 2b. "sujo" is focalized and refers to "o gato", so the interpretation is that the cat was dirty, not the canal, differently from the sentence in 2a.

Moreover, expressions like explicative relative clauses, appositive clauses, vocative and parenthetical clauses, among others, also form independent Is, as they are not structurally linked to the clause they are in. In these cases, there may be no isomorphy with the syntax, since, if there is an interpolated expression, its adjacent sequences also form independent Is. (cf. example 4)

4. [O João]I [como eu disse]I [vai buscar a Maria no shopping]I
   [John]I [as I said]I [will pick up Mary at the shopping mall]I

In European Portuguese, studies show that interpolated expressions are not all phrased in the same way. According to Abalada, Cabarrão and Cardoso (2011), vocatives are phrased differently depending on their position in the sentence. That is, if they are in the initial position, they tend to form an independent I, but if they are in medial or final position, they tend to be phrased in the same I that contains the rest of the sentence. And regarding parenthetical clauses, Frota (2000, 2014), Frota and Vigário (2007), Cruz (2013) and Barros (2014) show that they tend to always form an independent I.

Besides that, as Frota (1997, 2000, 2002, 2014), Vigário (1998), Barros (2014) and Frota *et al*. (2015) show in their studies, expressions with focus, contrastive or informational, or topic prominence also tend to form independent Is, both in initial or final position.

Another interesting aspect about the prosody of European Portuguese is that, as predicted by Nespor and Vogel's (2007) model, Elordieta, Frota and Vigário (2005) show that the phonological weight, or length, of a subject also has an effect on the intonational phrasing of SVO sentences − or if it is branched (composed by more than one prosodic word (ω)) or non-branched (composed by one ω). That is, a long and branched subject (with eight or more syllables) tends to form an independent I, and so the sentence is phrased in two Is: one containing the subject, and another one containing the rest of the sentence − (S)(VO). On the other hand, a long and non-branched subject (with more than 5 syllables) or a short subject (with 3 syllables), branched or not, does not tend to form an independent I, and so it is phrased in the same I as the rest of the sentence − (SVO).

Corpus and methodology

For the *corpus* used in this study 24 texts were selected written by Portuguese authors born between the 16th and the 19th centuries.[14] The texts were transcribed and modernized from original or edited source texts, from the Biblioteca Nacional

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[14] In this study the years of birth of the authors was chosen, instead of the years of text publication, because in generative studies of grammatical change it is believed that the grammar emerges in the process of acquisition of a natural language and, therefore, it is considered here that the use of comma in writing, by the authors, could be a reflex of the syntax and prosody of their grammars.

Digital, the Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal[15], the Biblioteca Nacional Digital, the Fundação Biblioteca Nacional[16], the Corpus Histórico do Português Tycho Brahe[17], and the Hemeroteca Digital, from the Hemeroteca Municipal de Lisboa[18]. When the source text is edited, care was taken to check if its punctuation was not modernized by the editor, as this could compromise the data and the analysis.

Table1 – Titles, names and years of birth of the authors of each text in the *corpus*

Title	Author	Year
História da Província de Santa Cruz	Pero de Magalhães Gândavo	1502
Peregrinação	Fernão Mendes Pinto	1510
O auto das regateiras	Antonio Ribeiro Chiado	1520
Décadas	Diogo do Couto	1542
A vida de Frei Bertolameu do Mártires	Luis de Sousa	1556
Gazeta, em que relatam as novas todas, que ouve nesta corte, e que vieram de varias partes no mês de novembro de 1641	Manuel de Galhegos	1597
Mercurio Portuguez, com as novas da Guerra entre Portugal, & Castella: começa no principio de anno de 1663 (1663-1667)	Antônio de Souza de Macedo	1606
Sermões	Padre António Vieira	1608
O Fidalgo Aprendiz	Francisco Manuel de Melo	1608
Rellaçaõ da Vida e Morte da Serva de Deos a Venerável Madre Elenna da Crus	Maria do Céu	1658
Gazetas manuscritas da Biblioteca Pública de Évora (1729-1731)	D. Francisco Xavier de Menezes	1673
Vida do apostólico Padre António Vieira	André de Barros	1675
Folheto de Lisboa (1741)	Luis Montez Matoso	1701
Cartas familiares	Cavaleiro de Oliveira	1702
Reflexões sobre a vaidade dos homens	Matias Aires	1705
Teatro cômico português	António José da Silva, o Judeu	1705
Cartas e Outros Escritos	Marquesa de Alorna	1750
Gazeta de Lisboa (Janeiro a Dezembro de 1810)	Autor desconhecido	17??
Memórias do Marquês da Fronteira e d'Alorna	Marquês de Fronteira e d'Alorna	1802

[15] Available at: purl.pt. Access on: 14 Oct. 2020.

[16] Available at: http://bndigital.bn.gov.br. Access on: 14 Oct. 2020.

[17] Available at: www.tycho.iel.unicamp.br/~tycho/corpus/index.html. Access on: 14 Oct. 2020.

[18] Available at: http://hemerotecadigital.cm-lisboa.pt. Access on: 14 Oct. 2020.

Title	Author	Year
A inauguração da estátua equestre	Joaquim da Costa Cascais	1815
Maria Moisés	Camilo Castelo Branco	1825
A morgadinha de Val-d'Amores	Camilo Castelo Branco	1825
Cartas a Emília	Ramalho Ortigão	1836
O regente	Marcelino Mesquita	1856

Source: Author's elaboration.

The data was collected through searches in the texts with the program *CorpusSearch*[19] to identify all cases with or without comma after subject, non-clausal adjunct or dependent clause in first position, in V1 sentences (cf. examples 5 to 8), and before verbal complement clause (cf. examples 9 and 10), and sentences with an expression interpolated between verb and complement clause (cf. examples 11 to 14), in main and embedded clauses. And considering that in Classical Portuguese the comma, before verbal complement clause, had the function of introducing reported speech (YANO, 2013), only discursive verbs were considered for the analysis: declarative verbs, like "afirmar" ("to declare"), "dizer" ("to say"), and verbs that express opinion, like "julgar" ("to judge"), "achar" ("to think"), or thought, like "pensar" ("to think"), "crer" ("to believe"). In the examples given below, the verb is in bold and the phrase that precedes or follows the verb, in italic.

5. *ambas de muito claro*, **pareceram-me** elegantíssimas. (Ortigão, 1836)
   both women wearing light clothes, **looked** very elegant to me.
6. Então, sentem-se, que *eu* **vou** chamar a menina. (Cascais, 1815)
   Then sit down, *I* **will call** the girl.
7. *buscando o, seguindo o e contemplando o*, **o adora** sempre. (Oliveira, 1702)
   searching him, following him, contemplating him, one always **adores** him.
8. *Em caso de aperto* **serve** o colchão. (Cascais, 1815)
   In case it is tight the mattress **suits**.
9. ainda **crê**, *que há no mundo cavaleiros andantes*! (Judeu, 1705)
   One still **believes**, *that there are walking in the world.*
10. Eu **digo** *que sou contente*. (Chiado, 1520)
    I **say** *that I am happy*.
11. Já **te disse**, <u>Joanna</u>, *que te vás arranjar*. (Castelo Branco, 1825)
    I already **told you**, <u>Joanna</u>, *to go manage yourself.*

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12. Todavia bem **disse** <u>eu</u> *que era sesudo*. (Melo, 1608)
    However, **said** <u>I</u> *that I was serious*.
13. *A nudez de Vénus*, <u>diz ele</u>, **desagrada** muito, (Oliveira, 1702)
    Venus' nudity, he says, **is** very **displeasing**,
14. *Os achéns* <u>logo em chegando</u> **começaram** a bater a cidade, (Mendes Pinto, 1510)
   *The acehnese* <u>as soon as they arrived</u> **started** to explore the city.

It was also investigated the effect of the length, or phonological weight, of the pre-verbal phrase over the use of comma on the left of the verb. Considering that in Classical Portuguese the comma served more to indicate discursive and prosodic relations in writing (YANO, 2013, 2018) and that in prosodic terms a phonologically heavy phrase tends to form an independent I (NESPOR; VOGEL, 2007), it seems possible that the authors inserted a comma after a long phrase for interpreting the presence of the intonational boundary of I on the right of the pre-verbal phrase. Following Galves and Kroch (2016), as the criterion to measure the length of the pre-verbal phrase, the number of morphosyntactic words was chosen, due to the fact that the data can be separated automatically with *CorpusSearch*, being considered a long phrase one that contains more than 8 words, and a short phrase, one that contains less than 9 words.

The nature of the change in the use of comma

The use of comma before verbal complement clause

Quantitatively, in the cases with and without comma on the right of the verb, with the verb adjacent to the complement clause, it was noted that in the 16th and 17th centuries there is variation among the authors on inserting or not the comma. Nevertheless, the incidence of cases with comma is higher in comparison to the texts from the 18th and 19th centuries, when there is a fall in the use of comma, especially from the second half of the 18th century, with the percentages of cases with comma under 20% in all texts. (cf. Figure 1)

Figure 1 – Comparison between the percentages of cases with and without comma before verbal complement clause, in each text
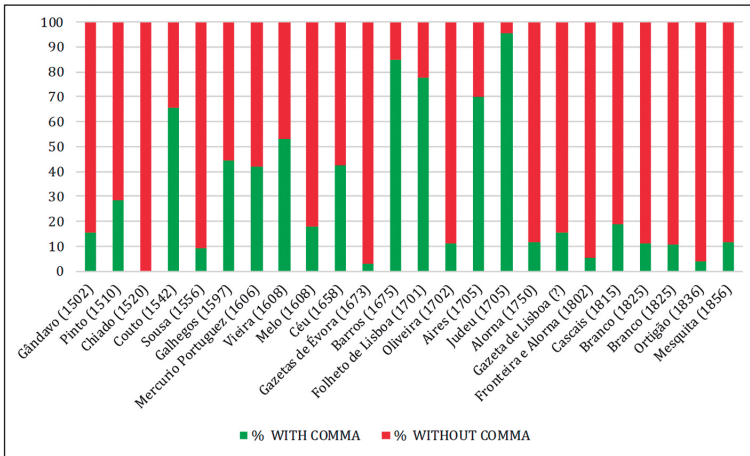
It is worth pointing out that, in the first half of the 18th century, Oliveira's text (1702), with 11.1% of cases with comma, behaves similarly to its successors, but all the others from this period, *Folheto de Lisboa* (1701), Aires (1705) and the Judeu (1705), with 77.5%, 70% and 95.4%, respectively, are more similar to the authors from the 16th and 17th centuries. That, added to the fact that Matoso, Aires and the Judeu were born in the beginning of the 18th century, leads to think that their writing reflects the grammar of Classical Portuguese, and thus that, in the beginning of the 18th century, the change in the punctuation system of Portuguese was already in the process of taking place and came to be established from the second half of the 18th century on.

As for the cases with an interpolated expression between the verb and the complement clause, it was observed a distinction in the use of comma as to the type of interpolated expression. While in the 16th and 17th centuries cases with an interpolated non-clausal adjunct, complement (indirect object) or subject are predominant, as shown in Figure 2, in the 18th and 19th centuries, there is a rise in the incidence of cases with an interpolated gerundive clause, adverbial clause, appositive clause, vocative, adjunct or subject or complement with a relative clause, as shown in Figures 2 e 3. This suggests that in European Portuguese the comma began to serve more to indicate syntactical relations, in this case, to isolate expressions of parenthetical nature, which are structurally independent from the clause they are in (NESPOR; VOGEL, 2007).

Figure 2 – Percentages of cases with comma between subject, non-clausal adjunct or complement between verb and complement clause, in each text
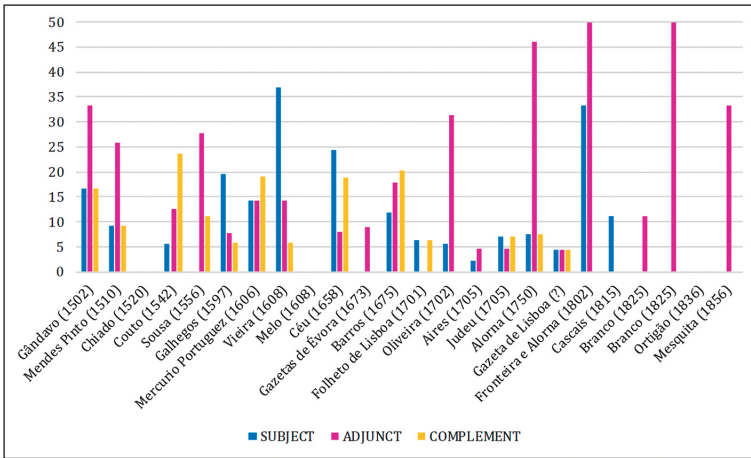
Figure 3 – Percentages of cases with comma between appositive clause, vocative, adverbial clause, gerundive clause, parenthetical clause or subject or complement with a relative clause, in each text
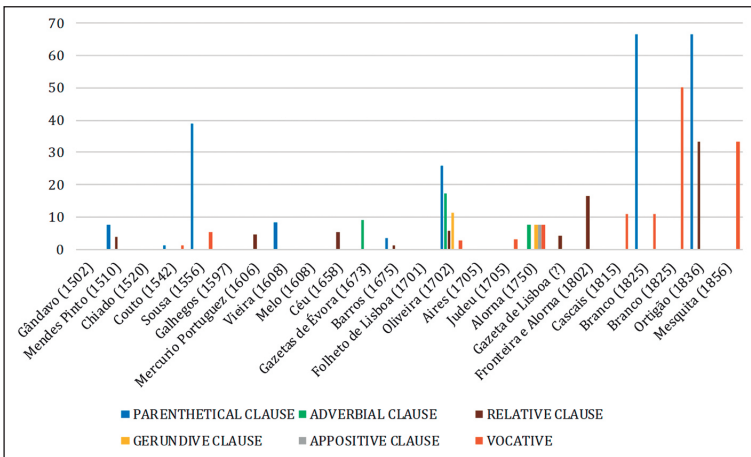
From these results, it is observed that in the 16th and 17th century the incidence of the use of comma seems to take place for discursive and prosodic reasons, which reflects the discourse present in the grammars of that period, influenced by the rhetorical tradition of Latin, which stated that punctuation serves to mark pauses and organize the discourse.

Whereas there is a high variation in the use of comma in the 16th and 17th centuries, from author to author, between 0% in Chiado's text (1520), and 84.8%, in Barros' text (1675), the percentage is higher in comparison to the texts from the 18th and 19th centuries, when there is a fall in the percentages of cases with comma, between 4.1%, in Ortigão's text (1836), and 19.1% in Cascais' text (1815). These results lean toward those reported by Yano (2013), who also found a higher percentage of cases with comma between verb and complement clause in the 16th and 17th centuries, of 9.47% and 84.84%, and a fall from the 18th century on, with the percentages of cases under 15% in most of the texts.

In qualitative terms, the comma seems to have two functions: a) to introduce a reported speech, as already described by Yano (2013), and to indicate emphasis on the speech verb, and b) to break long sentences in smaller parts to aid in reading.

As for the first function of comma, considering that, in the punctuation system of Classical Portuguese, the prosodic and discursive functions were predominant, the use of comma between verb and complement clause can be explained, in prosodic terms, by the fact that in a situation of slow speech − conceivable in cases of reading aloud − the sentence may be restructured in smaller intonational phrases (Is), occurring the break between the verb and the complement clause, even if, in syntactical terms, a verb requires an argument (NESPOR; VOGEL, 2007). Thus, the comma indicates the presence of the intonational boundary of the restructured I, which contains the complement clause, and introduces the reported statement, marking the break between the reporter's introductory expression and the quote of the mentioned speaker's speech (DUARTE, 2003), cf. example 15. And as the verb is then contained in an independent I from its complement, with the restructuring, and the element that bears the main accent is the rightmost element in I, the comma also indicates emphasis on the speech verb, which characterizes the "voice" introducing the discourse and indicates the way the verbal interaction between the speakers happens (DUARTE, 2003). And about the second function of comma, it seems to also mark the break of a sentence in smaller parts (Is), of similar lengths. According to Nespor and Vogel (2007), a long phrase may be restructured in smaller phrases to aid in breathing. Even though the break between verb and complement clause disrespects the argumental structure, in this case it would be acceptable because a complement clause constitutes a "complete clause" (cf. example 16).

15. [Outros querem **dizer**,]I [*que é sem nenhuma falta a esperma da mesma Baleia*:]I (Gândavo, 1502)
    [Others want to **say,**]I [*that it is without any doubt the sperm of the same Whale*]I

16. [**mandou**-lhe o seu Diretor o Padre Cruz,]I [*pedisse à serva de Deus luz nesta matéria*,]I
    [**ordered** him his Director the Father Cruz,]I [*to ask the God's servant for light in this matter*,]I

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the use of comma became less frequent, especially from the second half of the 18th century on, a fact which seems to have occurred because the authors started to pay more attention to the relationship of complementarity between verb and argument, preferring not to separate the two, except when there is an interpolated expression of parenthetical nature. With the distancing from the grammar of Latin and the loss of the practice of reading aloud, in the 18th century there was "the transition from a culture of voice and ear to a culture of looking"[20] (CATACH, 1994, p. 77, our translation) and thereby punctuation started to no longer mark pauses of speech, but to indicate the grammatical relations between parts of the sentences, helping the reader to understand the written text. (CATACH, 1994; ROSA, 2016).

Moreover, in that period there was a distinction between the types of reported speech and, therefore, in the way of representing the direct and indirect discourses in writing, being the former introduced and delimited by a colon and a dash or quotation marks, and the latter, indicated by the structure of a verb followed by a complement clause.

It is notable that in the analyzed texts it is found some use of dash already in the second half of the 16th century − even though it is only mentioned in grammars in the 19th century (GONÇALVES, 2003) − in the text *A Vida de Frei Bertolameu do Mártires*, by Luis de Sousa (1556, p. 79, our translation), in the following excerpt:

> [...] in fact, the major prelates are eminently abbots and priests and even sacristans of each little church, and they must not take care that they fulfill quite a lot in such a matter of importance with saying: - I read it, I ordered it to the priest.[21]

However, the structure is similar to the one of indirect speech (verb + complement clause) and not of direct speech, as it is seen in the texts from the 18th century on, with the main clause with the speech verb and the colon in one line and the reported statement introduced by a dash in the line below, as the following example from the text *Maria Moisés*, by Camilo Castelo Branco (1826, p. 4, our translation), illustrates.

> João da Lage, the master, loomed, at the court door, and shouted:
> — Did you lose any neat?
> The boy stammered, shivering with fear:
> — Did you lose, thief? Go in search of it, and, look here: if you don't bring it, don't show up anymore, or I'll pluck your livers through the mouth. And gave him two valiant kicks on account.[22]

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[20] Original: "*a passagem de uma cultura da voz e da orelha para uma cultura do olhar*". (CATACH, 1994, p. 77).

[21] Original: "[...] *na verdade, os prelados maiores são eminentemente abades e curas e até sacristães de cada igrejinha, e não devem cuidar que cumprem bastantemente em cousa de tanta importância com dizer: — Li o, encomendei o ao cura.*" (SOUSA, 1556, p. 79).

[22] Original:
"*João da Lage, o amo, assomou, à porta da corte, e bradou:*

Such linear representation of the discourse, as in the example from Sousa's text (1556), evidences the rhetorical character of Classical Portuguese writing, in which the author takes the voice of the speaker, reporting the statement. Yet in the traditional representation of direct speech, as in the example from Branco's text (1826), above, there is a distancing of the author from the discursive situation, that is, from the person who speaks and the reported statement.

The use of comma after subject and non-clausal adjunct or a dependent clause

As for the data with and without comma on the left of the verb, in quantitative terms, it was noted that, in all periods, after a pre-verbal subject the tendency between all authors is to not insert the comma, but after a clause or a non-clausal adjunct the tendency between most of the authors is to insert the comma, regardless on the type of expression − adjunct, adverbial clause, gerundive clause or complement (cf. figure 4).

Figure 4 – Percentages of cases with comma between subject (S) or dependent clause ou non-clausal adjunct (XP) and verb
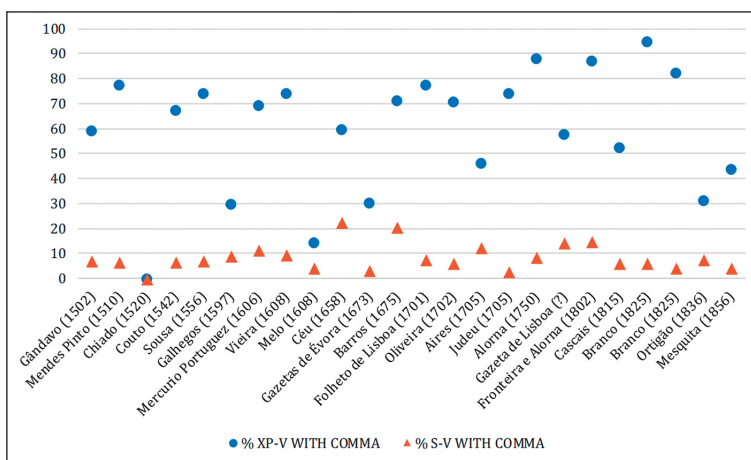
Source: Author's elaboration.

In qualitative terms, in the 16th and 17th centuries, in both types of constructions, the comma, after a pre-verbal subject, seems to have the function of indicating emphasis on the pre-verbal phrase, signaling which is the person or object to which the action

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— Perdeste alguma rês?

O rapaz tartamudeou, tiritando de medo:

— Perdeste, ladrão? Vai em cata dela, e, olha lá: se a não trouxeres, não

me apareças mais, que t'arranco os fígados pela boca.

E deu-lhe dois valentes pontapés à conta." (CASTELO BRANCO, 1826, p. 4)

refers and calling attention of the reader/listener to it (SONCIN, 2014), or, after a pre-verbal clause or adjunct, the function of helping the construction of a discursive frame in which the action happens. In the example 17, for instance, the comma emphasizes which person it is being talked about and marks the distinction between the subject "um que escapou", who refers to a specific person, and the group of people to which he belongs, "algum portugueses", previously mentioned. This indicates that in the 16th and 17th centuries, as well as in the data with comma between verb and complement clause, on the left of the verb, the incidence of use of comma seems to also occur for discursive and prosodic reasons. Considering that, in prosodic terms, and in European Portuguese, expressions with focus and topic prominence tend to form independent Is (FROTA, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2014; VIGÁRIO, 1998; BARROS, 2014; FROTA *et al*., 2015), such use of the comma seems to be linked to the informational structure, which would be indicated, in writing, by the marking of the intonational boundary, by the comma.

1. [e *um que escapou*,]I [**salvou** a vida,]I [casando com uma índia principal;]I (Gazetas de Évora, 1673)
   [and *one who escaped*,]I [**saved** his life,]I [by marrying a head indian;]I
2. [*Estando a naveta Nossa Senhora da Estrela na Bahia de Todos os Santos*,]I [**saíram** uns marinheiros no batel a fazer a guarda,]I (Galhegos, 1597)
   [The ship *Nossa Senhora da Estrela being at the Bahia de Todos os Santos*,]I [some sailors **left** in the boat to guard,]I

Besides the discursive role, the length of the pre-verbal phrase also seems to favor the use of comma, which is marked more frequently after a long phrase, whether it is a subject, a clause or an adjunct in first position (cf. Figures 5 and 6). This points in the direction of the notion that, when a phrase is long, or phonologically heavy, it tends to form an independent I (NESPOR; VOGEL, 2007) and thus the sentence is phrased in two Is: one containing the pre-verbal phrase, and another containing the verb and the rest of the sentence (cf. example 20). But if the phrase is short, it does not tend to form an independent I and the sentence, then, is phrased in a single I (cf. example 21). (GALVES; BRITTO; PAIXÃO DE SOUSA, 2005; GALVES; KROCH, 2016). Therefore, the authors would tend to insert the comma after a long pre-verbal phrase for interpreting the presence of the intonational boundary of I.

3. [*As dracmas,*]I [*e todas as mais espécies semelhantes de moeda que correm pelo mundo com nome de dinheiro*,]I [**fogem** dos oradores,]I [dos poetas e dos retóricos como dos mesmos demónios.]I (Oliveira, 1702)
   [*The drachmas,*]I [*and all the other similar kinds of currency that run around the world under the name of money*,]I [**flee** from the orators,]I [from the poets and rhetoricians as from the same demons.]I

4. [*quem os pretender*]I [**pode** ver as mostras na dita loja.]I (Gazeta de Lisboa, 17??)
[*whoever wants them*]I [**can** see the samples in the said store.]I

Figure 5 – Comparison between the percentages of cases with comma between a long or short subject and verb, by century
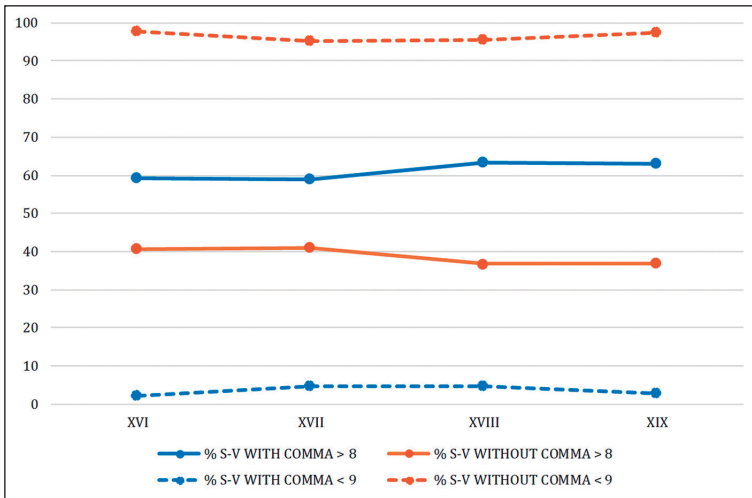
Source: Author's elaboration.

Figure 6 – Comparison between the percentages of cases with comma between a long or short dependent clause or non-clausal adjunct and verb, by century
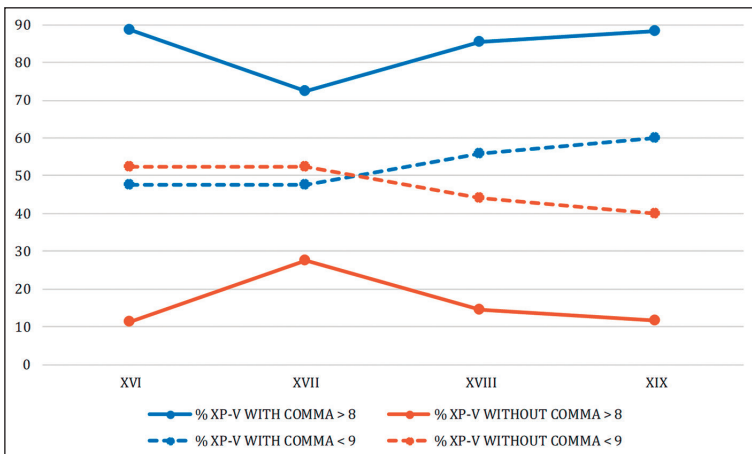
Source: Author's elaboration.

These results, along with the use of comma on the right of the verb to break long sentences in smaller parts, help to better understand the notion that the comma serves to mark a "pause to breathe", common in grammars from the Classical period. Rosa (1994) says that in the 15th and 16th centuries long excerpts with no punctuation were an annoyance to people, in particular to the ones who needed to memorize texts, and thus it was necessary to make use of punctuation marks to distinguish clauses and sentences.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, however, it is observed a distinction in the function of the comma depending on the type of pre-verbal phrase. In the cases with a clause or an adjunct in first position, the use of comma remains constant, but the loss of the relationship between the use of comma and the length of the phrase, being the authors' preference to insert the comma higher despite the length of the phrase (cf. Figure 6), suggests that the use of the mark became more linked to the syntactic function of the pre-verbal phrase, of adjunct nature. But after a subject in first position, the discursive and prosodic functions seem to still be relevant to the use of comma, as the mark continues to be inserted, frequently, to indicate emphasis on the subject or delimit a long subject. In the former case, given that expression with focus and topic prominence tends to form independent Is in European Portuguese (FROTA, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2014; VIGÁRIO, 1998; BARROS, 2014; FROTA *et al*., 2015), the pause, marked by the comma, indicates the presence of the intonational boundary on the right of the subject.

5. [porém *os soberanos preceitos*,]I [**se devem** obedecer,]I [maiormente por não caber em mim a nota de covarde.]I (Judeu, 1705)
   [but *the sovereign precepts*,]I [**must be** obeyed,]I [mainly because the reputation of coward does not fit me.]I

And as for the length of the subject, while it is expected the loss of such correlation given that the punctuation system became more based in the logical-grammatical function, it is noted that length continues to be relevant to the use of comma, the authors' preference still being for inserting the comma after a long subject, but not after a short subject. (cf. Figure 6) This leans toward the idea that in European Portuguese length has an effect on the phrasing of SVO sentences, that is, a branched and long subject tends to form an independent I and thus the sentence is phrased in two Is, one containing the subject and another one containing the rest of the sentence − (S)(VO), but a long and non-branched or short subject does not tend to form an independent I and is phrased in the same I as the rest of the sentence − (SVO) (ELORDIETA; FROTA; VIGÁRIO, 2005). Therefore, in writing, the author marks the comma to indicate such break of the intonational boundary on the right of the subject.

In regard to the data with an interpolated expression between subject and verb, it was noted an interesting distinction on the number of commas before and/or after an interpolated expression, that is, if the expression is delimited by only one comma before the verb or if the expression is delimited by two commas, before and after. Thus, in the 16th and 17th centuries, there is variation in the use of comma before and/or after

an appositive clause, an adverbial clause, a gerundive clause, a comparative clause, a parenthetical clause, a vocative, an adjective or an adjunct. On the other hand, in the 18th and 19th centuries, in the majority of cases, these expressions are isolated by two commas, before and after, which indicates that in European Portuguese, the use of comma became more grammatical, as well as in cases with a dependent clause or a non-clausal adjunct in first position. In this case, both in prosodic and syntactic and semantic terms, the concept of independence of parenthetical constituents seems to have become clearer (cf. Figure 7).

Figure 7 – Percentages of cases with comma, by the number of commas before and/or after an interpolated clause between subject and verb, in each text
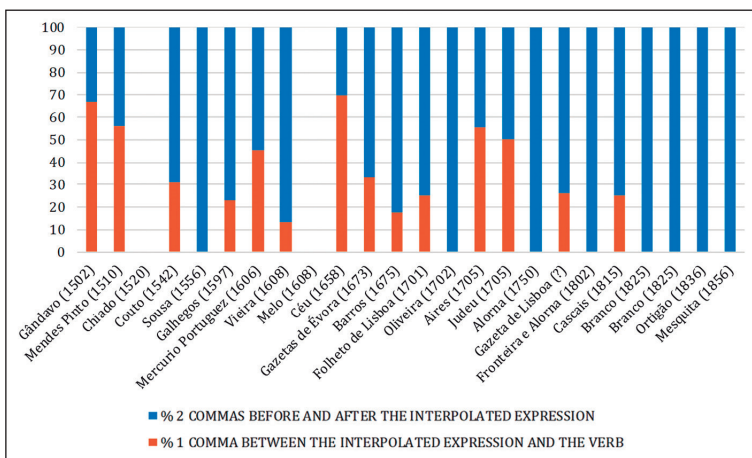
Source: Author's elaboration.

The influence of the change in the grammatical rules of Portuguese over the change in the use of comma in writing

Considering, therefore, the notion that the change in the use of comma and, by extension, in the Portuguese punctuation system, occurred more strongly from the second half of the 18th century on, it seems possible to think that such change is a result of the influence of the change in the grammar of Portuguese, which also begun in the second half of the 18th century and was established in the 19th century, when there was a greater tendency to prescriptivism in Portugal with the spreading of the Enlightenment precepts and the publishing of the first philosophical grammars, which gave more emphasis to the syntax of Portuguese, rather than to privilege only the analysis of the parts of discourse (GONÇALVES, 2006; TANNIHÃO, 2016). Concerning the punctuation norm proposed by the grammars (cf. section 1), in comparative terms, the similarity between the changes observed in the use of comma in the analyzed contexts

and the rules and definitions in the grammars and orthography treatises suggest that the change in the use of punctuation in European Portuguese is a reflex of the change in the discourse of grammars.

As for the use of comma on the right of the verb, before a complement clause, although grammarians do not mention such use that is found in the analyzed data, to delimit and introduce reported speech, in grammars and orthography treatises from the 17th and 18th centuries, the rule prevails that a comma should be inserted before conjunctions and relatives. Monte Carmelo (1767, p. 452-453, our translation) even presents the following example: "God wants, everyone to be saved, and to know the truth."[23].

And about the use of comma on the left of the verb, after subject and dependent clause or non-clausal adjunct, it is interesting to point out that in grammars from the 16th and 17th centuries the authors do not discuss directly the use of punctuation between subject and verb, but it is frequent the use of the example "Whomever loves God, loves their neighbors."[24] (BARRETO, 1671, p. 216, our translation), accompanied by the rule stating that a comma should be marked "after the verb and its arguments; namely, at the end of each clause"[25] (BARRETO, 1671, p. 216, our translation), which seems to be more related to the idea that the meaning of the clause is "incomplete" and the comma after the clause "Quem ama a Deus" has, therefore, a cohesive role of indicating that something else comes after it. However, since that is a clausal subject, the use of comma between subject and verb seems to be acceptable by the grammatical norm at the time. And in the cases with a clause in first position, the grammarians, until the first half of the 18th century, say that the clause should be delimited by comma, as it does not have complete meaning.

Moreover, although until the 18th century length was not a topic discussed explicitly in any grammar, the idea that the comma serves to mark a pause where "the voice rests"[26] (BARROS, 1540, p. 50, our translation) or "for the one who speaks to take a breath, and vigor to say more"[27] (FIGUEIREDO, 1722, p. 60, our translation). suggests that there is a relation between punctuation and length, as it can be tiring to read a long excerpt and therefore it is necessary to break it in smaller parts.

Yet in the 19th century, when syntax and subordination relation were treated more explicitly in the grammars, the grammarians state that all expressions "that modify themselves by agreeing with each other, or governing themselves"[28] (BARBOSA, 1822, p. 87, our translation), that is, subjects and clausal and non-clausal complements should not be separated from verb. Dias de Sousa (1804) and Barbosa (1822), for instance, say

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[23] Original: "Deus quer, que todos se salvem, e conheçam a verdade." (MONTE CARMELO, 1767, p. 453)

[24] Original: "Quem ama a Deus, ama ao proximo." (BARRETO, 1671, p. 216)

[25] Original: *depois do verbo, e seus casos: a saber, no fim de cada oração*". (BARRETO, 1671, p. 216)

[26] Original: "*descansa a voz*". (BARROS, 1540, p. 50).

[27] Original: "*para o que fala tomar espírito, e vigor para mais dizer*" (FIGUEIREDO, 1722, p. 60).

[28] Original: "*que se modificão, ou concordando umas com outras, ou regendo-se*" (BARBOSA, 1822, p. 87).

that a verb should not be separated from a complement clause, since the clause is an "accusative object" of the verb and, therefore, there is a relationship of complementarity between them that must not be broken: "The same reason dictates that between the words that modify themselves, either agreeing with each other, or governing themselves, there must be no punctuation at all."[29] (BARBOSA, 1822, p. 87, our translation).

About the use of comma after a pre-verbal subject, Dias de Sousa (1804, p. 266-267) states that subject and verb should not be separated by comma – although, in the given example, what the author calls the subject is a vocative ("Ó Mortais"), which suggests that, in that period, the concept of subject was distinct from the concept adopted in modern grammars.

> 3.° Oh Mortals, hope intoxicates. These two words: Oh Mortals, are entirely separated by its following proposition, and must be separated by comma: they are the subject of an implied verb, for instance: Oh Mortals I heard. From here it follows that when the apostrophe is before a verb in second person it must not be separated by comma, because the subject must not be separated from its verb; and therefore it should be written without comma: Tribunes give way to consuls.[30] (DIAS DE SOUSA, 1804, p. 269, our translation).

However, the grammarians make a reservation that the comma may be marked in cases where the length of the clause is long and "makes breathing tiring[31]" (DIAS DE SOUSA, 1804, p. 266, our translation). According to Barbosa (1822, p. 88, our translation),

> It is therefore wrong the punctuation rule, which some people propose, telling to always insert comma before That; when on the contrary it must never be inserted, unless when the main clause, and the incident clause are so long, that exceeds the measure of an ordinary pause, which is the one of a thirteen to seventeen Syllables verse.[32]

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[29] Original: "*A mesma razão dicta que entre as palavras que se modificação, ou concordando umas com outras, ou regendo-se, não deve haver pontuação alguma.*" (BARBOSA, 1822, p. 87).

[30] Original: "*3.° Ó Mortais, a esperança embebeda. Estas duas palavras: Ó Mortais, são inteiramente separadas da proposição seguinte, e devem ser separadas pela vírgula: elas são o sujeito de um verbo subentendido, como por exemplo: Ó mortais ouvi. Daqui se segue que quando o apóstrofe está antes de um verbo na segunda pessoa não se deve separar pela vírgula, porque o sujeito não se deve separar do seu verbo; e assim deve-se escrever sem vírgula: Tribunos cedei lugar aos Cônsules.*" (DIAS DE SOUSA, 1804, p. 269).

[31] Original: "fatiga a respiração" (DIAS DE SOUSA, 1804, p. 266).

[32] Original: "*É portanto errada a regra da pontuação, que alguns dão, mandando pôr sempre vírgula antes de Que; quando pelo contrário nunca se deve pôr, senão quando a oração principal, e a incidente são tão extensas, que vêm a exceder a medida de uma pausa ordinária, que é a de um verso de treze até dezessete Sílabas.*" (BARBOSA, 1822, p. 88).

And Cunha and Cintra (1985, p. 431-432) say the comma should be inserted to separate adverbial and gerundive clauses, especially when they are in first position in the sentence, but adjuncts should be isolated by comma only when they are long.

This indicates that length is still a relevant factor for the punctuation of European Portuguese – although the analyzed data show that in constructions with a pre-verbal clause or adjunct the length is no longer related to the use of comma, being the mark inserted more frequently regardless of whether the clause is long or short.

In regard to constructions with an interpolated expression, whereas such cases are mentioned in grammars from the second half of the 18th century, that a comma should be inserted after vocatives and adverbial clauses, the 19th century grammarians generalize the rule and explain that any grammatically independent clause, and not only vocatives and adverbial clauses, should be isolated by two commas, before and after, when it appears in the middle of the sentence.

> Every interpolated Clause, that is, between other clauses, without modifying them, or being modified, must be between commas; and every addition which is not part of its grammatical constitution. [...][33] (BARBOSA, 1822, p. 88-89, our translation).

Besides that, it is worth noting that, whereas they treat specifically of adjuncts, Cunha and Cintra (1985, p. 431) mention the use of comma to indicate emphasis or "highlight"[34]. "The comma is, however, obligatory when one intends to highlight them."[35] (CUNHA; CINTRA, 1985, p. 432, our translation).

Comparing this evolution of the grammatical norm of punctuation to the results of the data analysis, discussed in section 4, it is notable that the dating of the change in the grammatical norm coincides with the dating of the change in the use of comma in Portuguese writing. This seems to indicate that such change would have been a reflex of the discourse present in the Portuguese grammars.

Conclusion

Contrary to the generalization in the literature about the change in the punctuation system of Romance languages, from a solely oral system in the Classical period to a system more based on the syntax in the Modern period (CATACH, 1994; ROCHA, 1997), the results suggest that, in Portuguese, the change in the use of comma seems to have occurred in a different way depending on the position of the comma, on the right or left of the verb.

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[33] Original: "*Toda a Oração encravada, isto é, metida entre outras, sem as modificar, nem ser modificada, deve estar entre vírgulas; e bem assim toda a adição, que não faz parte de sua constituição gramatical.* [...]" BARBOSA, 1822, p. 88-89).

[34] Original: "*realce*" (CUNHA; CINTRA, 1985, p. 431).

[35] Original: "[...] *A vírgula é, porém, de regra quando se pretende realçá-los.*" (CUNHA; CINTRA, 1985, p. 432).

In the 16th and 17th centuries, the prosodic and discursive functions were predominant in the punctuation system of Portuguese, being the comma's main role to mark pauses and indicate discursive relations to aid in reading aloud and memorizing written texts. Yet in the 18th and 19th centuries, especially from the second half of the 18th century on, the logical-grammatical function became more predominant and the comma was used more to indicate syntactical relations between the constituents of the sentences. However, in constructions with a pre-verbal subject the prosodic and discursive functions seem to still be present in European Portuguese writing and the comma, in that position, would rather serve to indicate the discursive role of the pre-verbal phrase.

And about the dating of this change in the use of comma, as observed by Yano (2013), it was noted that the change seems to have begun in early 18th century and was established from the second half of the 18th century on. It is interesting that such dating coincides with the period when there was a distancing from the grammar of Latin and a greater tendency to prescriptivism in Portugal and, therefore, the grammarians began to give more attention to the matters of syntax and to state rules for the use of punctuation based more in relations of dependency between the constituents of the sentence (GONÇALVES, 2006; TANNIHÃO, 2016). This suggests that the change in the way Portuguese grammarians looked at punctuation would have influenced the change in the use of comma – and the punctuation system, in general.

- *RESUMO: No presente trabalho investiga-se o funcionamento da vírgula no português europeu nos séculos XVI ao XIX em dois tipos de construções: antes de oração completiva e após sujeito e adjunto não-oracional ou oração dependente em primeira posição. Para tanto, utilizou-se um corpus com 24 textos de autores nascidos entre os séculos XVI e XIX. Observou-se que, nos séculos XVI e XVII, a vírgula servia mais para auxiliar na organização e leitura do texto, indicando relações discursivas e prosódicas. No entanto, nos séculos XVIII e XIX, embora a vírgula continue a servir para indicar o papel discursivo do sintagma pré-verbal, especialmente nos casos com um sujeito pré-verbal, antes de oração completiva tal função se perdeu, pois os autores passaram a dar maior atenção à relação de complementaridade entre verbo e argumento, preferindo não separar os dois. Um possível fator que teria favorecido tal mudança parece ser o fato de, a partir da segunda metade do século XVIII, com a maior difusão do Iluminismo em Portugal, os gramáticos terem passado a se preocupar mais com a norma e a sintaxe do português, que levou o sistema de pontuação a ser mais baseado na função lógico-gramatical.*

- *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Vírgula. Português europeu. Português clássico. Gramática normativa. Prosódia. Sintaxe. Pontuação.*

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