

"Who's afraid of ... what?"
-- in English and Portuguese

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Sources of Inspiration

Johansson, S.K.A. 1998 "Loving and hating in English and Norwegian: A corpus-based contrastive study"

Maia, Belinda. 1994 *A Contribution to the Study of the Language of Emotion in English and Portuguese*

Mendes, Maria Amália Pereira. 2001 *Propriedades Sintáticas e Semânticas de Predicados Verbais com Pluralidade de Sentidos: o caso dos verbos psicológicos*

Sources of desperation!

- FEAR > complex subject at the level of:
 - The lexicon and its syntax
 - The semantics of emotion and cognition
 - The text and context
- Problem of ‘what’ to study
- Which corpora to use?

Joining forces

Belinda: PhD thesis
using comparable
English and
Portuguese fiction
corpora (1994)

Diana: corpus-based
semantics involving
large-scale
annotation of
Portuguese corpora



Presentation outline

- Basics about FEAR
- Problems of FEAR lexicon and syntax, in text and context in EN & PT
- Different corpora = different results
- Insight from translations
- The way(s) forward

Fear as an emotion

FEAR is generally accepted as a primary emotion, essential for survival

The physical reactions, both external – facial expression, and internal – blood pressure, release of adrenalin, are classified as universal in human beings and other animals

Fear in language?

Ortony et al. (1988)

The cognitive structure of emotions

FEAR = [DISPLEASED ABOUT THE PROSPECT OF AN UNDESIRABLE EVENT]

The variables affecting intensity are:

- The degree to which the event is undesirable
- The likelihood of the event

The language of FEAR

There is a gradient of **usage** of the FEAR lexicon in EN and PT:

- A reaction to a dangerous situation >
- A reasoned explanation of cause of fear >
- A polite expression of regret and related attitudes

Is fear a cognitive process?

Situation: A lorry out of control is coming towards you. You see the lorry and run.

Now, did you feel fear and/or cognitively process the danger of the situation **BEFORE** running?

OR did you react without processing the danger cognitively – and feel the fear **AFTERWARDS**?

No matter

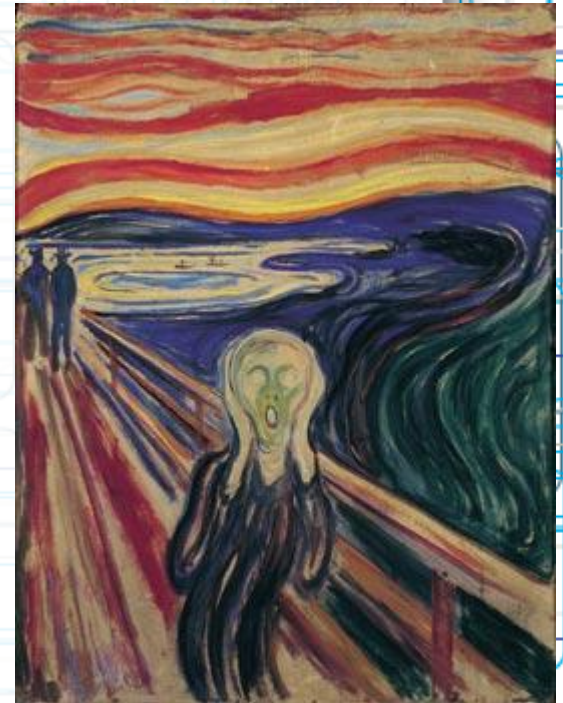
- When you talk about your fear, you have cognitively processed it
- BUT – how far have you identified its cause?

Descriptions of physical reactions

Cognitive linguists like to focus on observable emotional reactions like:

- *His hair stood on end*
- *She screamed*
- *They trembled*
- *The colour drained from her face,*
- *...his heart pounding against his ribs and his mouth suddenly dry...*

Not our objective here!



Kinds of fear (examples)

Temporary personal emotional state – e.g. resulting from sudden meeting with a tiger

General ‘public’ fear – e.g. *fear that salaries will be cut*

Permanent tendency, activated in certain circumstances – e.g. *fear of snakes / thunder*

Personality trait – e.g. *timid, shy, coward*

Mood – e.g. *anxious, worried*

FEAR – Lexicon

- Central lexicon – *fear, afraid, medo, recear* – but intensity varies according to context
- Others – in context – include other emotions – *anxious, ansioso* >
FEAR + DESIRE
- Mixed emotions – *fear* and *medo* like to co-occur with EMOTION words – *fear and loathing, vergonha e medo*

FEAR – Syntax & Semantics

- Conventions in English grammar
 - Stative verbs
 - No progressive use
 - No imperative
- Case semantics (see Halliday, 1994)
 - Senser – person who feels FEAR
 - Phenomenon – cause of FEAR

Case semantics = psychology in language?

FEAR is 'internal' to the Senser –
Phenomenon has no real 'active' role

Spiders cannot actively 'frighten'
you! Even if someone deliberately
tries to frighten you, their success
depends on you – not them

FEAR – syntax – problems

- How do you classify *frightened* in *she is frightened (by x)*? (Passive +) past participle or (copula +) adjective?
- (BNC – classifies as adjective)
- In Portuguese – frequent use of expressions like *A Maria assustou-se*
- Debate – is this a Passive?
- Portuguese – copulas OR aspect OR ‘support’ verbs?
- ETC

Maia (1994) Contrastive aspect

PT reflects a deeper psychological 'perception' of *fear* than EN

The 'self-contained' nature of the Senser's relationship to *fear* is shown in the reflexive (?) construction, Verbs (Subject = Phenomenon) + *SE*

PT allows for explicit temporary / resultative nature of emotion, *estar / ficar* + adj / PP / pp (Subject = Senser)

The notion of 'having' *fear*, *ter* + noun - *ter*₁₈ *medo*, just like having *hunger* (hungry), or *pain*

Maia (1994) in a nutshell

- Literary Corpora in EN & PT of \pm one million words each
- Examples for FEAR extracted
 - EN – 1303
 - PT – 1392
- Each example classified manually at level of lexicon, syntax & context

Maia (1994) in a nutshell (cont.)

Main goals

- To see how far the lexicon was actually processed cognitively IN CONTEXT
- How far did the examples focus the Senser (human or human-like) – or the Phenomenon (11 different categories from least > most processed)

Phenomenon types (Maia, 1994)

1. Unknown, or unspecified in the immediate context.
2. Self, or permanent quality of SENSER
3. State or situation of SENSER
4. Emotion, perception or cognitive processes of SENSER
5. Action by SENSER
6. The Other
7. State or situation of the Other
8. Emotion, perception or cognitive processes of the Other
9. Action by the Other
10. A non-human object, concrete or abstract.
11. A complex proposition about the world

Maia (1994) – the FEAR examples

English

- Senser focus – 84.4 %
- Phenomenon focus – 15.6 %
- Behaviour S/P – 17.7%
- P type 1 – unspecified in context – 32.1%
- P types 9 /10 – Other's action /non-human – 30.3%

Portuguese

- Senser focus – 78.7%
- Phenomenon focus – 21.3%
- Behaviour S/P – 14.8%
- P type 1 unspecified in context – 39.7%
- P types 9 /10 – Other's action/ non-human – 34.1%

17 YEARS LATER

Two persons, three \neq paths

- Annotation of large Portuguese corpora with the FEAR domain
- Inspecting P-E and E-P translation corpora
- Testing central lexical items in BNC
 - *Fear* – S focus verb
 - *Afraid, anxious* – S focus adjectives
 - *Frighten, terrify* – P focus verbs

FEAR in text & context

- Usage of FEAR lexicon + syntax varies considerably in text type and context.
- Different corpora give different results
 - Literary corpora rich in emotional usage
 - Formal texts – e.g. EU corpora – FEAR becomes formal expression of regret

Contrastive expectations

The lexical sets present the usual problems of exact translation

Different attention to different “parts” of fear, consequence of interesting syntactic differences

Different metaphors provide translation challenges

Different textual strategies

The manifold dreadful problem of comparative numbers...

- The corpora are different
- The underlying analysis is different
 - The classification grid
 - Past participle: a verb or an adjective?
- The units are different
 - Sentence? MWE? Word? *Co[*vb*]*arde**?
- The languages are different ;-)

Partial solution: 1) Santos & Oksefjell (1999):
share corpus and annotation methodology
2) Santos & Mota (2010): allow for reanalysis
and human revision

Some random examples

- Maia (1994:chap. 10) discusses HOPE and FEAR together, as prospect-based reactions to events (incl. satisfaction, fears-confirmed, relief and disappointment)
- Mendes (2000) discusses psychological verbs
- In Maia, *fear* accounts for 15.1% and *medo* for 19.5% of the FEAR occurrences
- Includes *tímido, acanhado, preocupado, inquietar-se, inquieto, ansiedade, shy, ...*
- Does not include *coward* - not relevant to objectives

Further examples

- Mendes (2000), 11.5 million words (69% newspaper, 19% fiction, 17% magazines, 8% textbooks, 4% legal)
- But only 5 FEAR verbs
- *assustar*: 335 instances, 48.9% pp, 22.0% pron, 19.1% transitive, 7.4% passive, 12.5% com, 30.2% expressed experiencer
- *apavorar*, *amedrontar*, *acovardar*, *sobressaltar*

Portuguese data: AC/DC

- A set of different **parsed*** corpora available through the same interface, and (roughly) annotated with the “fear” domain (no human revision so far)
- 129 million words (PT 75, BR 53)
- 35,952 fear words (PT 22318, BR 13569)
 - 21186 N
 - 10927 V
 - 3838 ADJ

* By Eckhard Bick's PALAVRAS parser (2000)

Different contexts

- Senser FEAR Phenomenon
Tenho medo de ser incompreendida
- Phenomenon CAUSE-FEAR Senser
A crise assustou os investidores
- Event EXPL-BY-FEAR *Saltei de medo*
- Senser FEAR *A miúda ficou apavorada*
- Phenomenon CAUSE-FEAR *é assustador*
- Reference *O medo das alturas...*
- Agent CAUSE-FEAR Senser
O João pregou um susto ao Pedro

Phenomenon X

- N_{FEAR} de X_N 2700
- N_{FEAR} de X_{Vinf} 2353
- N_{FEAR} de que X_S 964
- V_{FEAR} X_N 3206
- V_{FEAR} X_{Vinf} 1008
- V_{FEAR} que X_S 2957

Senser Y

- $V_{\text{FEAR}} Y_N$ 998
- $(Y_N) V_{\text{FEAR}}(\text{refl})$ 517

An intriguing issue

Wittgenstein distinguishes between the **object** of fear and the **cause** of fear

- *Medo do escuro* or *fear of darkness*: property inherent to an individual
- *Medo por entrar no quarto escuro* or *fear because entering a dark room*: a temporary state due to an event, which causes a psychological event

Can this be connected to *ser/estar*? ³⁴

Other interesting issues

De can also indicate Senses, as in

- *Medos noturnos de uma criança*

One can use both permanent and temporary words in the same utterance

- *Bando assustado de medrosos*

Fear of events vs. fear of things

Kind of “object”

- *Represálias, morte, violência, consequência, intervenção, polícia*, população*, perda, coisa, retaliação*

Kind of event

- *perder, morrer, ser, ficar, errar, ir, fazer, enfrentar, ver, sair, falar*
- *Ser morto, preso, atacado, apanhado, acusado assassinado, atingido, visto*

Fear of events vs. fear of things

Kind of “object”

- *Death, crime, failure, unemployment, violence, persecution, flying, attack, loss, rape*
- *The - unknown, dark, consequences*

Kind of event

- *Being, losing, falling...*
- *To - ask, say, be, tell, come, admit*

Some idiosyncrasies

- *Ganhar medo a / perder o medo a* (massive vs. countable)
- *Apanhar medo* (like a disease)
- *Cheio de medo* (full of fear), *Encher de medo* (fill with fear)
- *Pregar um susto* (as a practical joke)
- *Não ganhar para o susto* (balance is negative)

Support verbs of FEAR

| | |
|-----------|------|
| • ter | 3325 |
| • estar | 216 |
| • levar | 152 |
| • ficar | 122 |
| • pregar | 38 |
| • apanhar | 33 |
| • ganhar | 7 |
| • andar | 1 |

Prospective or retrospective

- By far the most frequent tense of verbal FEAR in Portuguese is the present, although a high number of cases is in the infinitive
Parece temer, chegar a temer, não há que temer, levam a temer, por temer, para temer, podem temer
- The past is balanced between Imperf/Perf
- A fair number of nonfinite (ger, pp) clauses

Prospective or retrospective

Verbal fear

- 3670 PR
- 2178 INF
- 797 IMPF
- 784 PCP
- 754 PS
- 552 GER
- 70 FUT, 34 COND
- 28 MQP, 14 PPC

Support verb

- 2129 PR_IND
- 497 INF
- 469 IMPF_IND
- 419 PS_IND

Negative or positive?

- How often does one deny FEAR in Portuguese?
 - Negative clauses
 - 1302 in 10,928
 - 1196 in 5984
 - PP's with the prep *sem* (without)
 - com 1212 1570
 - sem 875 968

Testing Maia (1994) analysis on BNC

- Confirms FEAR as favouring personal and private situations – emphasis on Senser's emotions and / or perception of same in the Other
- Examples of differences due to corpus
 - Usage in oral language – e.g. final *I'm afraid, I fear*
 - Usage in formal language – e.g. *fear* as verb

Contrast through translation

- Como sempre tenho **medo** de faltar bebida, →
As I always **dread** running out of drinks,
- A quantidade de ingredientes por receita também costuma **assustar**: → The quantity of ingredients each recipe calls for tends to be **astounding**
- e não se **assuste** com as etapas da receita →
don't **get discouraged** by the steps required in the recipe

Contrast through translation

- «You're not gonna **chicken out** of the boat-ride, are you, Mr Maxwell?» Mrs Finklepearl taunted him. → -- Não me diga que **está com medo** da viagem de barco, Mister Maxwell! -- escarneceu Mrs. Finklepearl.
- os olhos fechados, que parece que **estou com medo** de os abrir, → my eyes closed as if I **were afraid** of opening them

Almost always shows OTHER things as well!

SUMMING-UP

Genre is important

- Very different FEAR profiles in
 - Europarl meetings
 - Informal conversation
 - Technical reports
 - Newspaper text
 - Fiction

Non trivial interaction

- Between grammatical and discourse features and the syntax of FEAR
 - Reflexive construction
 - *Ser/estar* and passive with *estar/ficar*
 - End clauses (*I must leave, I'm afraid*)
- Between usual metaphors and the expression of FEAR

All this in need of more detailed study

Translation corpora

- One has to look also at the translator's distribution – their tastes and habits
- Looking at what the translator expressly said and what s/he left out provides wonderful insights into the languages micro-differences, something that can only be appreciated through translation

We are not afraid of

- Opening up alleys for research
- Comparing and contrasting many different views of FEAR
- Asking people to redo our analyses and come up with other interpretations and ideas

LAST WORDS, WE FEAR