

“We should all address each other by *tu* and stop being offended” – the conflict between volition and discernment and a metalanguage of address in European Portuguese.

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Forms of address in European Portuguese defy the binary T/V notation by encompassing nominal, pronominal and pro-drop forms in the 2nd and 3rd persons. The address pronoun *você* and the 3rd p. pro-drop can be applicable to a variety of social meanings where lack of familiarity precludes *tu*, thus making them a potentially suitable *N* (neutral) encoder (Cook 2019) and a mediating platform disrupting the T (*tu* and 2nd p. singular) and V (nominal forms and 3rd p.) polarisation. This is in line with “volition” patterns in address behaviour guided by more equalitarian goals, which nevertheless coexist with concerns for a normative nexus between form and context, or “discernment politeness” (Ide 1989), which remain paramount to shape interpersonal relationships. To further the understanding of the precarious balance speakers must strike between their own interactional goals and pre-existent sociocultural expectations, this study examines the metalanguage of address constituted and used by interactants to describe and make sense of the volition/discernment conflict, that is, the reflexive language speakers use to take a stance towards address forms and their social meanings.

A corpus collected from Reddit *fora* where forms of address in European Portuguese are discussed at length was examined based on a qualitative, fine-grained approach to data. This allowed for the identification of multiple stance-taking strategies such as lexicalisation applied to forms of address, the use of metaphors to describe address behaviour, impoliteness resources such as insults directed at speakers with differing notions of discernment and volition, etc. Preliminary results show a stance of rejection towards discernment and linguistic forms denoting rank and deference (such as nominal forms) and a general approval of the form *tu* as ‘supra-social’, *N* address levelling out interlocutors’ social discrepancies and backgrounds.

Keywords: forms of address; European Portuguese; discernment; volition; metalanguage.