

Expressions of habituality in Brazilian Portuguese*

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This paper analyses three different types of habitual expressions: (i) the imperfect and (ii) the adverb sempre ‘always’ for marking habituality in the past, and (iii) two periphrastic constructions that are not restricted to specific temporal contexts. The imperfect is used typically in narrative descriptions of past events and situations; and the lexical expression sempre interacts in different ways with the imperfect and the simple past, creating implicatures concerning the continuation of the habit at the moment of speaking. Of the two periphrases, the infinitive construction with costumar ‘usually [do]’ is a dedicated expression of habituality, while the supposedly habitual construction with viver ‘live’ has a frequentative rather than a habitual meaning. The analysis of these expressions points towards a definition of habituality as a situation or a series of events that are characteristic of an (extended) stretch of time, which means that although habituals typically involve the iteration of events with human referents, this need not be the case.

1 Introduction

The present paper presents the means used for the expression of habituality in Brazilian Portuguese.¹ We consider habituality an aspectual distinction that quantifies states of affairs, without there being any kind of restriction on the mode of action of the state of affairs (henceforward: SoA) involved. This means that, first both dynamic events and states can be habitual, and, second, that habituality does not necessarily involve a human referent. Therefore, we follow Comrie’s definition of habituals: “The feature that is common to all habituals, whether or not they are also iterative, is that they describe a situation which is characteristic

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¹ Some of the phenomena we describe, particularly those mentioned in Sections 2 and 3 may be expected to hold for most varieties of Portuguese. But we can only vouch for the Brazilian data.

of an extended period of time” (1976: 27–28). Despite the fact that Comrie’s view on habituality has been contradicted in more recent publications, by e.g. Binnick (2005: 350–351), who argues that *used to* does not express habituality but ‘current relevance’ and Bertinetto & Lenci (2012), who claim that habituality is a form of pluractionality, i.e. necessarily implies multiple events (cf. also Travaglia 2016: 48–50 on Portuguese), our data will confirm Comrie’s view.

We will discuss three types of data: (i) the expression of habituality by means of **tense/aspect marking**, (ii) the interaction between tense/aspect marking and the adverbial expression of habituality, and (iii) the expression of habituality and a related notion by means of dedicated grammatical expressions. The first two types concern the expression of habituality in relation to the past with or without continuation into the present. The third type is not temporally restricted. However, before we deal with habituality in Portuguese, some observations about the idiosyncrasies of its tense/aspect system are in order.

Our paper is structured as follows: Section 2 will briefly introduce the Portuguese tense/aspect system, Section 3 will be dedicated to the use of the imperfect for the description of habituality in the past, Section 4 concerns the interaction of adverbial *sempre* ‘always’ with past tenses, and Section 5 describes two putatively habitual verbal periphrases, *costumar* + infinitive and *viver* + gerund. The latter construction will be shown not to be habitual in the strict sense of the concept, which will lead us to a clearer notion of habituality as such, which will be the subject of the discussion in Section 6. Section 7 concludes.

The discussion of habituality in this paper is based on the analysis of mainly oral corpora. The main corpus is *Iboruna* from the northern area of São Paulo State (407.269 w), but incidentally other corpus data will be consulted. The source will be indicated after each example, and all the corpora used will be specified at the end of this paper together with the other references.

2 Preliminaries: tense and aspect in Portuguese

The Portuguese tense/aspect system distinguishes the ‘perfective/imperfective’ opposition in the past tense, which the Romance languages inherited from Latin: the Portuguese *perfeito simples* (cognate of the French *passé simple* and the Spanish *pretérito indefinido*) is based on the Latin PERFECTUM, which is opposed to the *imperfeito* (Latin IMPERFECTUM). On the other hand, Portuguese contrasts with other well-known Romance systems in that it virtually lacks a present perfect. More precisely, although there is such a morphological form, termed *perfeito composto*, its use in present-day Portuguese is highly idiosyncratic in that it expresses the indeterminate iteration of an event from some moment in the recent past onward and the continuation of this iteration of events after the moment of speaking (Ilari 2001), which excludes both resultativity and experiential perfect. As a consequence, it occurs rarely, particularly in spoken Brazilian Portuguese, where it seems to be on the verge of extinction (Castilho

2002: 100).² Part of what the present perfect expresses in other Romance languages, such as the experiential meaning, and, more generally, the description of events that may be expected to continue to occur after the speech moment, also called “universal perfect” (cf. e.g. Laca 2010), is expressed by means of the *perfeito simples* (henceforward PS) in Portuguese.³ Examples (1) and (2) illustrate the case of the universal perfect expressed by means of the PS in (1a) and (2a), whereas (1b) and (2b) show the ungrammaticality of the use of the *perfeito composto* for this purpose. The examples in (1) have positive polarity and those in (2) are negatively polar.

- (1) a. *Ele sempre gostou de você.*
 he always be_fond.PS.3SG of you
 ‘He has always been fond of you.’
- b. **Ele sempre tem gostado de você.*
 he always AUX.PRS.IND.3SG be_fond.PTCP of you
 ‘He has always been fond of you.’
- (2) a. *Eu nunca fui a África.*
 I never go.PS.1SG to Africa
 ‘I have never been to Africa.’
- b. **Eu nunca tenho ido a África.*
 I never AUX.PRS.IND.1SG go.PTCP to Africa
 ‘I have never been to Africa.’

The gradual loss of the *perfeito composto* in favour of the PS in oral Brazilian Portuguese is remarkable because it is the reverse of what happens in spoken French and Italian, where the present perfect is ousting the past simple.⁴

In addition, and on a par with its cognates in other Romance languages, the PS is also used for events that begun and ended in the past, which corresponds to a perfective past:

- (3) *A conheci num congresso faz 12 anos.*
 her meet.PS.1SG at_a conference ago 12 years
 ‘I met her at a conference 12 years ago.’

² Suter (1984: 15) mentions a proportion 0.68%, as opposed to 13.8% of tokens in the *perfeito simples* ‘simple past’ and 2.54% in the *imperfeito* ‘imperfect’ in an oral Brazilian corpus of some 400,000 words.

³ In regard to the resultative meaning, Santos (2008: 222) claims that the very concept of grammatical resultativity is alien to Portuguese.

⁴ For more details on the structures of Romance languages and their relations to their Latin ancestor, cf. Harris & Vincent (1988).

The *imperfecto* (henceforward IMPF) is used for events in the unbounded past, i.e. as an imperfective past, which generally implicates that the event in question does not continue at the moment of speech. The perfective/imperfective dichotomy is most relevant in narratives: the “action”, consisting of temporally bounded events, is described in the perfective past, and descriptive passages of the “background” on which the “action” develops are represented in the unbounded, i. e. imperfective, past.

As in other Romance languages, the distinction between the PS and the IMPF is only relevant in the indicative mood: the past subjunctive neutralizes the aspectual distinction.

3 *Imperfeito*

As mentioned above, the IMPF can express imperfective aspect and habituality in Brazilian Portuguese. When used to express imperfective aspect, it interacts systematically with the PS in order to mark aspectual distinctions in narratives. What is considered background information is marked with the IMPF and foreground information with the PS:

- (4) o dentista me atendeu muito bem tal... mas... eu
 the dentist me.DAT help.PS.3SG very well so_on but I
 estava muito nervoso e após a anestesia ... dentista
 COPTEMP.1SG very nervous and after the anaesthesia dentist
 perguntou se era o dente que tinha que
 ask.PS.3SG if COP.IMPF.3SG the tooth which have.IMPF.3SG to
 ser extraído... eu disse que era ... tudo bem
 COP.INF extracted I say.PF.1SG that COP.IMPF.3SG all well
 ele realizou ... a extração ... enquanto estava
 he effectuate.PS.3SG the extraction while COPTEMP.IMPF.3SG
 a anestesia eu num senti nada ...
 the anaesthesia I NEG feel.PS.1SG nothing

‘The dentist helped (PS) me very well and so on... but I was (IMPF) very nervous and after the anaesthesia... the dentist asked (PS) if it was (IMPF) the tooth that had (IMPF) to be extracted... I said (PS) it was (IMPF)... alright, he effectuated (PS) the extraction and while the (IMPF) anaesthesia worked I felt (PS) nothing...’ (Iboruna, AC-091-NE)⁵

⁵ The orthography of the original transcripts reflects alternative ways of the pronunciation of the informants. As these details are irrelevant for the present study, the orthography has been adapted to the written standard in order to enhance the readability of the examples.

When the IMPF expresses habituality, it encodes an unbounded repetition in the past, that is a repetition that does not have a limited number of occurrences. In (5), a boy who has just left school describes his routine during the school period, and in order to do so, he uses verbs in the IMPF.

- (5) *até a semana passada eu acordava... e eu ia*
 until the week last I wake_up.IMPF.1SG and I go.IMPF.1SG
pa escola ... escovava os dente[s] e eu ia pa
 to school brush.IMPF.1SG the teeth and I go.IMPF.1SG to
escola [...] tinha cinco aulas diariamente de manhã né? ...
 school have.IMPF.1SG five classes daily at morning TAG
das sete a meio-dia... tinha [...] duas aulas de... Física
 from_the seven to noon have.IMPF.1SG two classes of physics
...a terceira de Ciências ...[...] e duas últimas de História ... e
 the third of natural_sciences and two last of history and
de tarde [...] eu ia ... praticar esportes ... eu ia
 at afternoon I go.IMPF.1SG practice.INF sports I go.IMPF.1SG
na quadra poliesportiva ali do Antunes ... jogava
 to_the field multiple_sport there of_the Antunes play.IMPF.1SG
vôlei ... futebol ...que mais?... e tinha vez que também
 volleyball football what else and EXIST.IMPF time that also
que de noite eu ficava ali na pracinha ali ...
 that at evening I stay.IMPF.1SG there in_the square.DIM there
no Santo Antônio ... na sorveteria ... ficava
 in_the Saint Antônio in_the ice_cream_parlor COPLOC.IMPF.1SG
conversando com meus colega[s] ...
 talk.GER with my.PL colleagues

‘Until last week, I would wake up and go to school... I would brush my teeth and go to school [...] I had 5 lessons each day in the morning, from seven to noon, I had [...] two classes of Physics, the third one of Natural Sciences [...] and the last two were History classes... and in the afternoon, I would do sports... I would go to the sports center, over there in the Antunes district, I would play volleyball, football... what else? And sometimes I would also stay in the evenings, over there in that little square... in Santo Antônio... in the ice cream parlor... I would have a chat with my schoolmates...’ (Iboruna AC-039-RP)

The habitual events are SoAs that are spread throughout a period in an unbounded way. As it is expected due to this nature of habituality, the number of repetitions cannot be counted during the period described; nevertheless, modifiers of frequency, as *diariamente* ‘daily’, can be added in order to further specify the regularity of the repetition in the whole period.

The use of the IMPF to express habituality does not necessarily involve repetition:

(6) [informant answers to the question how the town was when he was young]

a Rio Preto Motor ficava na Galeria Bady Bassitt...
 the Rio Preto Motor COPLOC.IMPF.3SG in_the Galeria Bady Bassitt
era ali que era embaixo a Rio Preto Motor
 COP.IMPF.3SG there that COP.IMPF.3SG downstairs the Rio Preto Motor
... hoje ela tá ... lá em cima ...
 today it.F COPTEMP.PRS.IND.3SG there in top

‘the Rio Preto Motor was in the Galeria Bady Bassitt... it was there where it was downstairs the Rio Preto Motor... nowadays it is over there uphill...’
 (Iboruna AC-097-NE)

This example is reminiscent of Comrie’s (1976: 27) well-known sentence *the Temple of Diana used to stand at Ephesus*, where there is no implication that the temple stood there multiple times throughout a given period. Example (6) shows a similar situation: the store used to be in a certain address throughout a period, but later it moved to different location.⁶

In sum, the IMPF can express habituality in the past, but does not do so systematically, as it can also fulfil a background function in past narrative contexts. When it expresses habituality, the notion of iterativity may or may not be involved.

4 *Sempre* ‘always’ + past context

There is a strong tendency in Brazilian Portuguese to express habituality lexically, by means of adverbs such as *normalmente* ‘normally/usually’ *geralmente* ‘usually’, *sempre* ‘always’, both in present and in past tense contexts.

⁶ Travaglia (2016: 49) claims that habituality in Portuguese involves iterativity because he did not find examples of non-iterative habituais in his data. Therefore, he argues that in the Portuguese translation of Comrie’s example, the use of IMPF cannot be habitual, but is an expression of “indefinite aspect”, which marks SoAs having an indefinite and unlimited duration; this analysis would then also apply to our example (6).

Normalmente and *geralmente* occur with the present in (7a)–(8a) and the IMPF in (7b)–(8b):

- (7) a. *e rádio éh normalmente eu conserto assim éh*
and radio HES normally I repair.PRS.IND.1SG like_that HES
com uma facilidade muito grande
with a easiness very big
‘and I normally repair radios very easily’ (Iboruna AC-149-NE)
- b. *e... quando eu comecei né? eu num sabia*
and when I begin.PS.1SG TAG I NEG know.IMF.1SG
tem que ... tinha que cortar a mercadoria
have.PRS.IND.3SG to have.IMPF.3SG to cut.INF the ware
certa né? normalmente eu num cortava certo
correct TAG normally I NEG cut.IMPF.1SG correct
cortava torto né? então eu já levava
cut.IMPF.1SG slantwise TAG so I already have_got.IMPF.1SG
umas bronquinha[s] né?
some scoldings TAG
‘and when I started, right? I didn’t know one has to... had to cut the ware [plastics] correctly, right? Normally I didn’t cut it correctly, I cut it slantwise, right? So, I had already been enduring a lot of scolding, right?’ (Iboruna AC-069-RP)
- (8) a. *a cozinha é bem grande com uma mesa de*
the kitchen COP.PRS.IND.1SG very large with a table from
madeira bem ... grande mesmo aquelas mesa[s] de área
wood very big indeed those tables of area
mesmo ...lá geralmente eu guardo a minha
indeed there generally I put.PRS.IND.1SG the my
moto fica tudo abarrotado todo dia...
motorbike COPLOC.PRS.IND.3SG all filled-up every day
‘the kitchen is very big with a wooden table very... really big of those you have in the service area, there I generally put my motorbike, it is all full every day...’ (Iboruna AC-050-DE)

- b. *geralmente eu ficava com o material radioativo...*
 generally I COPLOC.IMPF.1SG with the material radioactive
responsável pelo material radioativo...
 responsible for_the material radioactive
 ‘generally I was with the radioactive material, I was in charge of the
 radioactive material...’ (Iboruna AC-082-RP)

The distinctions made are straightforward: both (7a) and (8a) locate the habit in the present, and (7b) and (8b) in the past, co-occurring with the IMPF. The adverb *sempre* may also be used in the present, but the main difference from the other adverbs is that in past tense contexts it interacts in different ways with the PS and the IMPF, which makes it of interest to this paper.

Barreto & Freitag (2014: 278) point out that the IMPF itself already triggers the habitual reading as it is in the domain of imperfectivity, but it can be associated with adverbs to indicate frequency, as shown in the previous section. As for the PS contexts, the authors claim that the habitual meaning is achieved exclusively by means of the adverbial modifiers, because the PS by itself is unable to express habituality. However, the authors do not discuss why speakers can choose at all between the IMPF and the PS with *sempre* and which are the possible interpretations that arise in each context. This matter will be discussed in the present section.⁷

When *sempre* occurs with the IMPF, there is a generalized conversational implicature (in the sense of Levinson 2000) that the habitual event no longer holds at the moment of speech. This is immediately obvious in (9) and clear from the context in (10):

- (9) *naquela época num tinha nem esgoto né? tinha ...*
 in_that period NEG EXIST.IMPF not_even drainage TAG EXIST.IMPF
era fossa né? o banheiro sempre ficava
 COP.IMPF.3SG hole TAG the toilet always COPLOC.IMPF.3SG
no fundo do quintal... então num tinha recurso nenhum...
 in_the back of_the garden then NEG EXIST.IMPF resort none
 ‘In those times there wasn’t even drainage, right? There was... it was a hole
 in the ground, right? The toilet always was in the back of the garden... so
 there weren’t any facilities at all...’ (Iboruna AC-133-DE)

⁷ Note that we will translate the IMPF with the simple past and the PS with the present perfect into English, thus reflecting their functional differences in the context of *sempre* (cf. Section 2 on the universal perfect function of the PS).

(10) [a situation in the past, when the speaker's mother lived elsewhere]

aí toda noite ... a minha mãe sempre escutava um
 then every evening the my mother always hear.IMPf.3SG a
barulho na porta... (Iboruna AC-055-NR)
 noise at_the door

‘so every evening, my mother always heard a noise at the door’

In (10) the speaker talks about the house his mother used to live in. As she no longer lives there, the only possible reading is that the repetition no longer holds at the speech moment. In such a case, the paraphrase with PS is of doubtful grammaticality:

(10') ? *aí toda noite ... a minha mãe sempre escutou um*
 then every evening the my mother always hear.PS.3SG a
barulho na porta ...
 noise at_the door

‘so every evening, my mother has always heard a noise at the door...’

When the adverb *sempre* combines with the PS to express habituality, the implicature generally is that the habit holds until the moment of speech.

(11) *eu podia construir um sistema de contabilidade e também*
 I can.IMPf.1SG build.INF a system of accounting and also
um sistema administrativo que foi a área que eu
 a system administrative which COP.PF.3SG the field which I
sempre gostei na minha vida, que é
 always like.PS.1SG in_the my life which COP.PRS.3SG
a administração
 the administration

‘I could build an accounting system and also an administrative system because it is the field that I have always liked in my life, which is administration.’ (Iboruna AC-099-NE)

In (11), the speaker expresses his passion for managing, which still holds at the moment of speech. The fact that the speaker further specifies the duration of the habit by means of the modifier *na minha vida* ‘in my life’ ensures that the habit is valid in the present. Using the IMPF (in 11a) in such case is inappropriate:

- (11') # *a área que eu sempre gostava na minha vida,*
the field which I always like.IMPF.1SG in_the my life
que é a administração...
which COP.PRS.3SG the administration
‘the field that I always liked in my life, which is administration’

The example in (11') is not a paraphrase of (11). The use of the IMPF implicates that the habit no longer holds, which would only be the case if the speaker were about to die. In other words, the incompatibility between the IMPF and the adverbial modifier makes (11') inappropriate.

Although the modifier *na minha vida* confirms the interpretation as a habit that continues to obtain until the speech moment, the presence of such a lexical modifier is not necessary, as shown in (12).

- (12) *a mãe dela tem uma garagem e ele*
the mother of_her have.PRS.IND.3SG a dealership and he
sempre trabalhou nessa garagem... inclusive ele
always work.PS.3SG in_that dealership even he
ganha muito bem ...
earn.PRS.IND.3SG very well
‘her mother has a car dealership and he has always worked in that car dealership... he even earns a lot...’ (Iboruna AC-040-NR)

The case in (12) illustrates a habit that still holds until the moment of the speech. There are no modifiers that restrict the frequency, as in the examples in (9)–(11), however the previous and following sentences are in the present, which excludes the reading that the habit no longer holds. Once again, the paraphrase with the IMPF would be ungrammatical: if the speaker wishes to express that a situation is still habitual at the moment of speech, the way to do so is to use *sempre* + PS rather than *sempre* + IMPF.

Note, in addition, that *gostar* ‘to like’ (11) does not imply repetition, while *trabalhar* ‘to work’ (12) does. This means that habituais coded by means of *sempre* with either the PS or the IMPF do not show any restrictions on iterativity or continuity. As we have shown, both situations are possible not only with the combinations mentioned, but also with the IMPF by itself, as illustrated in example (6) discussed in Section 3 above. The examples consistently show that, at least in Portuguese, habituality does not require iterativity regardless of the lexical or grammatical nature of the marker.

The examples so far illustrate contexts in which only one reading is available for each combination of *sempre* + past tense/aspect marker, either because modifiers restrict the interpretation or because the previous or following discourse limits the interpretation of the habitual meaning. However, this is not always the case, as in certain uses the continuation of the habit described in the IMPF is not entirely excluded. Note that we indicated that the non-continuation of the habit with *sempre* in combination with the IMPF is a conversational implicature, and, as such, it can be cancelled.⁸ Consider the examples in (13):

- (13) a. *Meu irmão sempre comprava doces para mim.*
 my brother always buy.IMPF.3SG sweets for me
 ‘My brother always bought sweets for me.’ (Travaglia 2016: 106)
- b. *Meu irmão sempre comprava doces para mim*
 my brother always buy.IMPF.3SG sweets for me
e ainda compra.
 and still buy.PRS.IND.3SG
 ‘My brother always bought sweets for me and he still does.’

Although (13b) is probably not the default way of expressing the continuation of the habit, it is fully grammatical and acceptable. Yet due to the implicature of non-continuation, the IMPF is avoided whenever the speaker wants to express that the event or situation continues, and in this case the use of *sempre* + PS is preferable, as can be appreciated in the following example.

- (14) *eu passei uma época ruim também com a minha*
 I pass.PS.1SG a period bad also with the my
vó porque minha vó sempre tratava
 grandmother because my grandmother always treat.IMPF.3SG
a gente mal né? sempre tratou a gente mal ... desde criança
 us badly TAG always treat.PS.3SG us badly since child
 ‘I also had a hard time with my grandmother because my grandmother always treated us badly, right? She has always treated us badly... since our childhood’ (Iboruna AC-069-NE)

⁸ According to Comrie (1976: 28–29), it is often claimed that the fact that the situation no longer holds is in the meaning of the English Habitual Past and the Russian Habitual Past, for example. However, the author argues that it is possible for one to say that situation still holds in the ensuing discourse without contradictions.

In (14), first the speaker uses the IMPF to express that his grandmother used to treat him badly, however in what follows he corrects himself by switching to the PS. This switch probably is due to the perception that he might be misunderstood in the sense that nowadays things would be settled between the speaker and his grandmother. Moreover, when he uses *sempre* + PS another modifier is also added, i.e. *desde criança* ‘since our childhood’, which indicates that the event started in a moment of his past, but has not yet ended.

Summing up, the adverb *sempre* interacts with the IMPF and the PS to express habituality in past contexts. Both can be used in contexts where the habit implies iterativity and in contexts where iterativity does not play a role. The main difference, as stressed throughout this section, is that *sempre* + IMPF implicates that the situation no longer holds, and *sempre* + PS implicates the opposite.

5 Periphrastic expressions: *costumar* + infinitive and *viver* + gerund

This section will discuss two constructions that have been considered to be dedicated expressions of habitual meaning, *costumar* ‘usually [do]’, constructed with a bare infinitive (Bechara 2009: 232; Travaglia 2016: 213–214), and *viver* ‘live’, constructed with a gerund (Travaglia 2016: 210–211). The former may be supposed to have a habitual function because of its very meaning; the latter belongs to the set of verbs that are typically regarded as a source of the grammaticalization of habituais (Bybee et al. 1994: 154–156). In both constructions, the finite verb functions as an auxiliary, which, in Portuguese, means that it cannot occur on its own. More concretely, the infinitive in the case of *costumar* and the gerund in the case of *viver* cannot be questioned or pronominalized:

- (15) a. *é apenas um campo de grama ... onde as*
 COP.PRS.IND.3SG only a field of grass where the
crianças costumam brincar
 children HAB.PRS.IND.3PL play.INF
 ‘It is only a grass field... where children play’ (Iboruna AC-088-DE)
- b. **o_que costumam as crianças no campo de grama?*
 what HAB.PRS.IND.3PL the children on_the field of grass
 ‘What usually-do children on the grass field?’
- c. **as crianças costumam isso no campo de grama.*
 the children HAB.PRS.IND.3PL this on_the field of grass
 ‘Children usually-do this on the grass field.’

- (16) a. [os professores] vivem faltando ...
 the teachers live.PRS.IND.3PL be_absent.GER
 ‘The teachers are always absent...’ (Iboruna AC-014-RO)
- b. # Como é que os professores vivem?
 how COP.PRS.IND.3SG that the teachers live.PRS.IND.3PL
 ‘How do the teachers live?’
- c. # Os professores vivem assim.
 the teachers live.PRS.IND.3PL this_way
 ‘The teachers live like this.’

The difference between these two cases is in the fact that examples (15b) and (15c) are ungrammatical, while (16b) and (16c) are grammatical but inappropriate as reformulations of (16a). This is due to the fact that *costumar* is an auxiliary only, whereas *viver* receives its lexical reading ‘live’ by default whenever a grammatical reading of the construction with the gerund is excluded.

We will now discuss each of the constructions individually, beginning with the one with *costumar* (5.1) and then turning to *viver* + gerund (5.2).

5.1 *Costumar* ‘usually [do]’ + infinitive

The auxiliary *costumar* co-exists with the lexical verb *acostumar* ‘accustom’, which can be used (i) transitively, (ii) reflexively and can be followed by (iii) a prepositional construction introduced by *com* ‘with’ or (iv) an infinitival clause preceded by the preposition *a* ‘to’. The last of these construction types, which is the one that looks most similar to the auxiliary construction, is illustrated in the following example:

- (17) a. eu num tava acostumada a sair e
 I NEG COPTMP.IMP.1SG accustomed.F to go_out.INF and
 ficar bêbada
 get.INF drunk.F
 ‘I wasn’t accustomed to go out and get drunk’
- b. eu num tava acostumada a isso
 I NEG COPTMP.IMP.1SG accustomed.F PRP this
 entende?
 understand.PRS.IND.2SG
 ‘I wasn’t accustomed to this, you understand?’ (Iboruna AC-150-NE)

The infinitival expression *sair e ficar bêbada* in the invented example (17a) could perfectly be referred to by the pronoun *isso* in (17b), which proves the clausal nature of this expression and thus the lexical character of the verb *acostumar*.⁹

The auxiliary construction with *costumar* is widely applicable: it occurs with animate entities, both in active (18) and in passive constructions (19). But the referent can also be an event (20) and (21):

- (18) *como que faz o macarrão que a_senhora*
 how that make.PRS.IND.2SG the pasta which you.POLITE
costuma fazer todo sábado
 HAB.PRS.IND.3SG make.INF every Saturday (Iboruna AC-136-RP)
 ‘How do you make the pasta that you make every Saturday?’
- (19) *Eles costumavam ser chamados de psicopatas.*
 they HAB.IMP.3PL COP.INF called PREP psychopaths
 ‘They used to be called psychopaths.’ (CdP Web/Dialects, Press)
- (20) *limão tem muito lá no sítio ...*
 lemon EXIST.PRS.IND much there in_the small_farm
costuma ter no sítio
 HAB.PRS.IND.3SG EXIST.INF in_the small_farm
 ‘There is much lemon there on the small farm... there usually is on the small farm’ (adapted from Iboruna AC-067-RP)
- (21) *quando a_gente vai pra praia costuma chover*
 when we go to_the beach HAB.PRS.IND.3SG rain.INF
o tempo todo né?
 the time all TAG
 ‘When we go to the beach it usually rains all the time, doesn’t it?’
 (Iboruna AC-133-DE)

The use of *costumar*, which we consider to be a clearly dedicated grammatical expression of habituality, with the existential SoA *ter limão* ‘there [is] lemon’ in (20), and with the meteorological verb *chover* in (20) confirms our idea mentioned

⁹ Interestingly, the distinction between *acostumar* and *costumar* (both based on Latin CONSUESCERE ‘be accustomed’) must be a relatively recent phenomenon. In the historical corpus Tycho Brahe we found evidence of the fact that until the end of the 17th century the highly frequent *costumar* fulfils both functions, while the infrequent *acostumar* appears mostly in its participial form with the adjectival meaning ‘usual’. It is only from the 19th century onward that the two verbs are consistently separated both in oral and written usage.

earlier that habituality does not necessarily involve human referents; in fact, it can occur without any referent at all. This means that Dik's definition "Habitual Aspect signals that the SoA (potentially) recurs due to a habitual propensity of the participant involved" (Dik 1997: 236), which is shared by Bertinetto & Lenci (2012: 854), is not entirely satisfying.¹⁰ We will return to this issue in Section 6.

As regards the grammatical context in which *costumar* is used, the 66 cases in our Iboruna corpus all appear in the present tense or in the IMPF. In written press texts, we also found some examples of *costumar* in the PS, typically with *nunca* 'never' and *sempre* 'always', which, as we showed in Sections 2 and 4, requires the PS in Portuguese, when universal perfect meaning is being expressed:

(22) [O perfil do secretário é o principal parâmetro para as ações do setor.]

Personalismo nunca costumou dar em boa coisa.
personalism never HAB.PS.3SG give.INF in good thing

'[The profile of the secretary is the main guideline for the actions taken by the sector.] Personalism has never used to lead to good results.'
(CdP NOW, *O Povo* 11-7-2017)

In respect of mood selection, *costumar* appears only very rarely in the subjunctive, such as in the following counterfactual conditional clause:

(23) *A acusação de comercialismo é ridícula –*
the accusation of commercialism COP.PRS.IND.3SG ridiculous

como se Cézanne ou Renoir costumassem pintar de graça
as if Cézanne or Renoir HAB.PST.SBJV.3PL paint.INF for free

'The accusation of commercialism is ridiculous – as if Cézanne or Renoir had used to paint for free' (CdP, Genre/Historical, Press)

Finally, *costumar* incidentally co-occurs with other auxiliary constructions, such as aspectual (24) or modal (25) constructions. Consider the following examples:

(24) *coloco toda água e eu costumo ficar*
put.PRS.IND.1SG all water and I HAB.PRS.IND.1SG COPLOC.INF

mexendo ali por uns dois minutos ainda ... né?
mix.GER there for some two minutes still TAG

'I add all the water and I usually go on stirring for two more minutes or so, right?' (Iboruna AC-088-RP)

¹⁰ The restriction of habituality to events with human or animate referents may be related to the fact that both Dik and Bertinetto & Lenci do not base their argumentation on authentic language use but rely exclusively on made up examples.

(25) [*Procurar pelos insetos já faz parte da rotina diária dela, que*]

costuma ter que arrastar os móveis para saber
 HAB.PRS.IND.3SG have.INF to drag.INF the furniture for know.INF

se tem algum animal escondido.
 if EXIST.PRS.IND some animal hidden

‘[Searching for insects already makes part of the daily routine of hers, so that] she usually has to shift around the furniture in order to find out if there is some hidden animal.’ (CdP NOW, *O Globo* 28-6-2018)

In (24), the habitual construction scopes over a construction with the locative copula *ficar* expressing a subcategory of progressive aspect¹¹ and in (25) over the grammaticalized expression of participant-oriented dynamic necessity *ter que* ‘have to’. In both cases, the scope relation confirms what one would expect. Whereas habituality scopes over a set of SoA’s, (i) progressive aspect forms part of phasal aspect, specifying the inner structure of a SoA (Dik 1987; Hengeveld 2011), and (ii) participant-oriented modality specifies the relation between the main participant and a single SoA (Hengeveld 2004, Dall’Aglio Hattner & Hengeveld 2016).

Note, finally, that we have not found any case of an operator scoping over the habitual construction.

5.2 Viver ‘live’ + *gerund*

As mentioned above, a crucial difference between the two periphrastic constructions is that, while *costumar* has an exclusively habitual meaning, *viver* is a lexical verb put to a grammatical use in the gerund construction. The meaning of the grammatical construction is in a hyperbolic relation to the lexical meaning of *viver* ‘live’:

(26) *meu vizinho vive me chamando para ajudar ele*
 my neighbour live.PRS.IND.3SG me call.GER for help.INF him

com o computador
 with the computer

‘My neighbour keeps calling me to help him with his computer’

(Iboruna AC-010-RO)

¹¹ In the function of progressive aspect, the gerund construction with *ficar* is more specific than the progressive with *estar* in that it indicates the continuation of the progression of a SoA. The gerund construction with *estar* is about twice as frequent as that with *ficar*: there are more than 1000 tokens of the former construction in Iboruna and 514 of the latter. As copula, *ficar* has a locative meaning as opposed to *estar*, which primarily indicates contingency in Portuguese. On the grammaticalization of *ficar* as a locative copula and *ficar* + gerund in analogy to *estar* + gerund, cf. Lehmann (2008).

In comparison to the *costumar* construction discussed above, *viver* + gerund is used much less frequently (10 occurrences in the Iboruna corpus).

The applicability of the *viver* construction is as wide as the one with *costumar*. Although in the corpus data we had access to, the *viver* construction occurs only with animate referents, it can also take inanimate referents (27) and also occur with existential constructions (28), both incompatible with the lexical origin of *viver* (cf. also Amaral 2013: 273–274).

- (27) *Os ônibus são velhos, vivem quebrando na*
 the busses COP.PRS.IND.3PL old.PL live.PRS.IND.3PL break.GER in_the
estrada, sujos e não cumprem horário.
 highway filthy.PL and NEG fulfil.PRS.IND.3PL time_table
 ‘The busses are old, they continually break down on the highway, they are
 filthy and don’t run according to the time table’
 (<http://www5.sefaz.mt.gov.br/>)

- (28) *A avenida é estreita, vive tendo*
 the avenue COP.PRS.IND.3SG narrow live.PRS.IND.3PL EXIST.GER
acidentes e atropelamentos.
 accidents and run-overs
 ‘The street is narrow, there are continually accidents and run-overs.’
 (<https://diariodonordeste.verdesmares.com.br>)

However, as the translations of (26)–(28) indicate, the meaning of the *viver* construction seems to be closer to frequentativity than to habituality, which confirms the view presented by Amaral in her (2013) study of this construction, according to which *viver* + gerund is a frequentative pluractional construction. At the end of this section, we will provide grammatical evidence of the fact that the construction does not express habitual aspect, an option which Amaral does not even consider.

In analogy to the procedure followed in the context of the infinitive construction with *costumar*, we will consider the grammatical contexts in which the construction occurs beginning with tense/aspect combinations: like *costumar*, present indicative and IMPF are the default with *viver*. Cases with the PS are rare, and moreover, *viver* then tends to be interpreted as a lexical construction (Amaral 2013: 274–275; Travaglia 2016: 210).

The infrequent interaction with modal auxiliary expressions is illustrated by means of the following example, in which *viver* co-occurs with a modal of necessity:

(29) [On the Bolsonaro administration]

os parlamentares do partido do presidente vivem
the parliamentarians of_the party of_the president live.PRS.IND.3PL

tendo que “apagar incêndios” da administração federal.
have.GER to extinguish.INF fires of_the administration federal

‘The members of parliament of the president’s party continually have to
“put out the fires” of the federal government.’

(CdP NOW, blogdarose.band.uol.com.br 4-6-2019)

Again, as in the case of (25) above, the expression *ter que* ‘have to’ of dynamic participant-oriented necessity occurs within the scope of the periphrasis, as one would expect: the *viver* periphrasis modifies a set of SoAs, but participant-oriented modality operates on the relation between the referent of the first argument and the SoA.

What is crucially different in relation to the habitual construction with *costumar*, becomes clear in the following instance:

(30) – *O_que você faria se ganhasse na loteria?*
what you do.FUT.ANT.2SG if win.PST.SBJ.2SG in_the lottery

– *Eu viajaria muito, eu viveria só viajando.*
go.IMP.1SG travel.INF much go.IMP.1SG live.INF only travel.GER

‘– What would you do if you won in the lottery?’

– I would travel a lot, I would do nothing but travel.’

(adapted from PEUL 2000 16-25 F2)

In this example, *viver* scopes over an analytic future within a hypothetical context. Although the future is probably inexistent in habitual contexts in spoken Brazilian Portuguese as far as we have seen,¹² it is not so much the future itself that is the problem here, but the fact that, in the context of first-person singular reference, the analytic future can additionally express intentionality, which is the case in the present context: the situation described entirely depends on the speaker’s will. In other words, as things are put here, the speaker would control his hypothetical ‘habitual’ behaviour, which is incompatible with the very notion of habituality. The reason for this incompatibility is nicely explained by Bertinetto & Lenci (2012: 862), who argue that, due to their characterizing function, “habitual sentences” are inherently stative; obviously, states defy agentivity.

¹² Bertinetto & Lenci (2012: 856) claim that the compatibility with all tenses, including the future, is what habituality distinguishes from iterativity. But this is not what we have seen confirmed in our data: we have considered a total of 143 tokens of *costumar* in different oral corpora (Iboruna, PEUL, NURC-RJ) without coming across any instance of *costumar* in the future tense.

This confirms our earlier conclusion that *viver* + gerund is indeed not a marker of habitual, but rather one of frequentative aspect. This does of course not exclude the theoretical possibility that the periphrasis with *viver* could acquire a habitual meaning in the long run. As mentioned earlier, ‘live’ has been identified as a possible source of habituality by Bybee et al. (1994: 154–156); in addition, Heine & Kuteva (2002: 197) consider “continuous” as a first step in the grammaticalization of ‘live’, which may be followed by “habitual” as its grammaticalization proceeds.

6 Discussion

It has turned out that each of the habitual expressions we discussed in this paper also appears, albeit infrequently, with SoAs that are incompatible with habituality as defined by Dik (1997) and Bertinetto & Lenci (2012) as a ‘characteristic property of an individual involved in a given SoA’. This definition excludes *a priori* the possibility of having an inanimate referent or even no referent at all (in the case of meteorological predicates) and also the existence of habitual states. Although most of the instances in our main corpus do concern animate referents (194 of the 216 tokens of the lexical strategy with *sempre* ‘always’ in the past tense, and 60 of the 63 tokens of *costumar*), thus complying with this definitory restriction, some do not. First, in examples (6) and (9) in the IMPF the habitual expressions describe a state that is characteristic of a given period,¹³ rather than a characteristic of a human referent. Second, the dedicated grammatical expression of habituality *costumar* modifies a SoA that has *limão* ‘lemon’ as its referent in (20), in the context of a characteristic of a small farm; it operates on the meteorological predicate *chover* ‘rain’ to describe the characteristic of the week-ends on the beach of the speaker in (21). What is more difficult to account for is the use of *costumar* (22) where the referent is an abstract concept *personalismo* ‘personalism’; perhaps one could say that the negative evaluation of the concept in (22) is characteristic of ‘best practice’ in politics.

In our view, the authors quoted above describe a kind of ideal usage of habituality, based exclusively on made-up examples, to which, in practice, there will always be counter-examples. Therefore, we prefer the less restrictive definition by Comrie, according to which habituals “describe a situation which is a characteristic of an extended period of time” (Comrie 1976: 25–26) with the additional specification that habituality typically involves recurrent events characteristic of an animate participant in these events.

A further point to be discussed is what determines the speaker’s choice between the three strategies of the expression of habituality described in this paper. The most straightforward distinction is that between the habitual use of the

¹³ This implies that the SoA described is foregrounded, which excludes an imperfective aspect reading of the IMPF of the type illustrated in (3).

IMPF in past tense contexts on the one hand and the other two strategies on the other. As is obvious from the two examples of the habitual IMPF provided in Section 3, this strategy is typically used in longer stretches of discourse describing past events which are characteristic of the referent involved (example 5), or of a specific situation in the past (example 6). The other two strategies concern the incidental mention of habitual behaviour or situations in any type of context, as can be seen in the corresponding examples. As regards the distinction between the lexical strategy with the adverb *sempre* ‘always’ (Section 4) and the grammatical strategy with *costumar*, described in Section 5, our data reveal that the former is much more frequently used in the Iboruna corpus than the latter: there are 216 tokens of the lexical strategy and only 63 tokens of the grammatical strategy, a difference which is even more remarkable if we take into account that the lexical strategy is restricted to past contexts and the grammatical strategy is not. We therefore believe that the use of *sempre* in past tense contexts is probably a more informal choice than the use of *costumar*. But to solve that question we would need a more detailed study of both formal and informal texts.

7 Conclusion

We have presented three different strategies for the expression of (sets of) states of affairs that are characteristic of a given extended period. Two of these strategies are restricted to past tense contexts, and the third is a temporally non-restricted grammatical expression with the exclusive purpose of expressing habitual aspect. We have also discussed a fourth supposedly habitual construction, *viver* ‘live’ that combines with gerunds, which turned out not to be habitual because the *viver*-marked SoA can occur within the scope of an expression of agentive intentionality, which is incompatible with the inherently stative nature of habitual-marked sets of SoAs. On the other hand, we have shown that *costumar*, the only dedicated grammatical expression of habitual aspect in Portuguese, corresponds to event quantification and therefore scopes over grammatical formatives that are internal to the SoA. With regard to the further definitional properties of habituality, we have found that, although habituality often corresponds to the potential recursion of events, “due to a habitual propensity of the participant involved” (Dik 1997: 236), also non-recursive and non-agentive events, i.e. states, can be marked for habituality.

Uncommon abbreviations

ANT	anterior
COPLOC	locative copula (<i>ficar</i>)
COPTMP	contingent copula (<i>estar</i>)
EXIST	existential
GER	gerund
HAB	habitual
HES	hesitation
IMPF	<i>imperfeito</i> ‘imperfect’
PREP	(untranslatable) preposition
PS	<i>perfeito simples</i> ‘past simple’
SoA	state of affairs
TAG	question tag

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