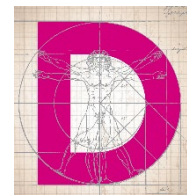


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A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ONLINE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DICTIONARIES AND ONLINE PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE DICTIONARIES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF LEARNING PORTUGUESE AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

UN ANÁLISIS COMPARATIVO DE DICCIONARIOS EN LÍNEA DE LENGUA INGLESA Y DE LENGUA PORTUGUESA DESDE UNA PERSPECTIVA DEL APRENDIZAJE DE LA LENGUA PORTUGUESA COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA

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Abstract

There are studies that have analysed Portuguese language dictionaries and that have highlighted the importance of the presence of examples in dictionaries (Santiago, 2012; Lu, 2018). Owing to this importance, it was decided to compare the frequencies of examples of two sets of words, namely, contrastive words and verbs that may convey recommendation or advice. These frequencies were obtained from a sample of the main body of Portuguese language dictionaries that are available online and from a sample of the main body of online English language dictionaries that have an orientation towards learning English as a foreign language. This comparison was carried out by using a search bar and a software application created by the author. From the analyses of the data which had been collected, it was argued that, in some cases, learners of Portuguese as a foreign language would have to make use of other sources of examples to learn to use the target words. On the other hand, in similar cases, the need to use sources of examples apart from those presented in the main body of the target English language dictionaries, while learning the English language, could be reduced. The pedagogical implications of this argument for learning and teaching Portuguese as a foreign language were presented. The limitations of the present study and future research possibilities were also discussed.

Keywords: online dictionaries; frequencies of examples in dictionaries; English language; Portuguese language; contrastive words and verbs that may convey recommendation or advice

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Resumen

Hay estudios sobre diccionarios de lengua portuguesa que han subrayado la importancia de la presencia de ejemplos en diccionarios (Santiago, 2012; Lu, 2018). Debido a esta importancia, se decidió comparar las frecuencias de ejemplos de dos grupos de palabras, a saber: palabras adversativas y verbos que pueden expresar recomendación o consejo. Se obtuvieron estas frecuencias de una muestra del cuerpo principal de diccionarios de lengua portuguesa que están presentes en la web y de una muestra del cuerpo principal de diccionarios en línea de lengua inglesa que tienen una orientación hacia el aprendizaje de la lengua inglesa como lengua extranjera. Esta comparación fue realizada empleando una barra de búsqueda y un programa de aplicación desarrollado por el autor. A partir de los análisis de los datos, se podría sostener que, en algunos casos, los estudiantes de portugués como lengua extranjera tendrían que hacer uso de otras fuentes de ejemplos para aprender a usar las palabras meta. Por otro lado, en casos similares, la necesidad de buscar ejemplos además de los presentes en el cuerpo principal de los diccionarios de lengua inglesa analizados en el aprendizaje de esta lengua podría ser menor. Las implicaciones pedagógicas de este razonamiento en referencia al aprendizaje y a la enseñanza de la lengua portuguesa como lengua extranjera, las limitaciones del presente estudio y la posibilidad de futuras líneas de investigación en la presente área de estudio fueron tratadas.

Palabras clave: diccionarios en línea; frecuencias de ejemplos en diccionarios; lengua inglesa; lengua portuguesa; palabras adversativas y verbos de recomendación o consejo

1. INTRODUCTION

In a discussion and review of the use of dictionaries, Welker (2008) mentioned a sample of fifteen books whose titles were all written in English and in which there was no mention of dictionaries, even though their topic was second or foreign language teaching. Nevertheless, where teaching and learning English as a foreign language is concerned, there is a selection of online dictionaries that are available at the time of writing. Indeed, despite the fact that dictionaries may not have been dealt with in several books on second or foreign language teaching, some publishers of English language dictionaries have not hesitated to offer online dictionaries on sites which have a focus on English language learning. In an article on mixed dictionary genres, for example, Hartmann (2005) mentioned the category *dictionary cum textbook* and illustrated it with the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*. The online version of the *Macmillan English Dictionary* was launched in 2009.

As far as learning Portuguese as a foreign language (PFL) is concerned, it is a well-known fact that there is a range of online Portuguese language dictionaries that are also available. Nonetheless, it may be observed that whereas the above-mentioned selection of online dictionaries are hosted on sites that focus on teaching and learning English and that appear to consider the language needs of learners of English whose first language is not English, a variety of online Portuguese language dictionaries that could be defined as general language dictionaries are on sites that do not necessarily focus on teaching and learning PFL. The existence of online dictionaries that show an interest in English as a foreign language (EFL) learning may be explained by the large number of EFL learners internationally. On the other hand, it could be argued that the smaller number of PFL learners internationally as compared to the number of EFL learners worldwide would not justify the creation and maintenance of an array of online PFL dictionaries.

Owing to the situation that online monolingual general Portuguese language dictionaries may be used by PFL adult learners, an analysis that centres on a comparison of these dictionaries and of online dictionaries that are hosted on sites that focus on English language learning and that have an interest in EFL seems to be a useful endeavour. Indeed, the study of general language dictionaries from a second or foreign language learning perspective has already been tackled. Welker (2008) mentioned Yorkey's (1969) examination of five North American desk dictionaries aimed at native speakers. In this study, Yorkey (1969) aimed to decide which of these dictionaries would be the most suitable one for a proficient speaker of English who was not a native speaker of English and who was a student in a North American university (Welker, 2008, p. 4). However, since the advent of the internet, online general language dictionaries have been brought into play and have proved to be of research interest as will be shown in the next section. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that in spite of the importance of research on the use of dictionaries, in the above-mentioned review, Welker (2008) also argued for studying dictionaries themselves, and went on to mention general monolingual dictionaries and learners' dictionaries, amongst others (p. 12).

Taking into consideration the context described above, the author of this paper has decided to focus on the following research objective: to compare a sample of online general Portuguese language dictionaries that may be used by PFL adult learners with a sample of online dictionaries which may also have an adult readership and which are hosted on sites that contain materials on English language learning that have a focus on EFL. This comparison will be carried out by looking at the following feature of the microstructure of dictionaries: frequencies of examples. The discussion of this paper will tackle important pedagogical implications of this micro structural aspect of dictionaries for learning and teaching PFL.

With respect to the structure of this paper, a literature review of research on lexicography will follow, and the methodology used will then be described. Afterwards, the findings will be presented and discussed, and conclusions will be drawn.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section has been divided into subsections that are relevant to the theoretical background of the present study. The first subsection will place this study within a general framework of categories and purposes in the study of dictionaries. The second subsection will discuss the use of examples from corpora in the making of dictionaries and will introduce the question of whether the target dictionary sections provide examples of the words that are dealt with in this paper. The third subsection will tackle the importance of having competence to deal with examples provided by dictionaries when teaching and learning a foreign language. It will also discuss the significance of this competence in reference to the words that are approached in this study. The fourth subsection will present concerns regarding the use of online dictionaries as discussed in previous research. The fifth subsection will look into previous research on dictionaries of the Portuguese language and will relate these studies to the present one.

2.1. Studies on lexicography: some categories and purposes

Welker (2006b) suggested three categories regarding recent studies that report research findings concerned with the use of dictionaries. In the first one research reflects users' opinions and habits regarding the use of dictionaries; in the second one research deals with real use of dictionaries; in the third one research tackles the effect of using dictionaries (Welker, 2006b, p. 177). However, Welker (2006b) argued that a fourth category could be added. This category tackles dictionaries as objects that can be accessed by potential users and includes studies that look into what users may see when using a given dictionary (Welker, 2006b, p. 177). To illustrate this category Welker (2006b) mentioned studies that analyse learners' dictionaries (p. 177). The present paper falls into this fourth category.

As advanced in the introduction, the analyses of this paper will focus on the comparison of two samples of online dictionaries. These analyses will tackle pedagogical implications of one aspect of the microstructure of dictionaries, namely frequencies of examples, for learning and teaching PFL. More specifically, these implications consider

adult learners of Portuguese who are taking international PFL examinations at an advanced or proficiency level. In an article which reports the findings of two studies concerning the use of electronic dictionaries, Leffa (2006) mentioned three purposes of using a dictionary: decoding, encoding and a pedagogical purpose. Decoding involves text comprehension, encoding entails the production of text, and the pedagogical purpose refers to lexical acquisition (Leffa, 2006, p. 335). Considering the wide range of language skills that may be required in the context that has just been mentioned, namely international PFL examinations at an advanced or proficiency level, two specific subskills will be borne in mind. These subskills may be required, for instance, to carry out some of the tasks that are present in the writing sections of sample tests of the following PFL examinations: *Diploma universitário de português língua estrangeira* and *Diploma avançado de português língua estrangeira* offered by *Universidade de Lisboa* (<https://caple.lettras.ulisboa.pt/exames>). Both subskills imply the use of dictionaries for encoding purposes. These subskills are contrasting ideas in writing and making suggestions in writing.

2.2. Studies on lexicography: dictionaries, corpora and examples

Biderman (2003) explained that, in modern dictionary making, a corpus that is computerized is used in the selection of dictionary entries (p. 62). In the *About* section of the online *Cambridge Dictionary*, for example, it is explained that two corpora have provided information in the construction of the publisher's dictionaries (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/about.html>). Another *About* section that is worth citing is that of the *Collins Dictionaries*. In it, the user is informed that the first *Cobuild Dictionary* for learners of English “was the first dictionary to be based in full on research carried out using the Collins corpus” and that this dictionary was published in 1987 (<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/about/>). Therefore, language samples from corpora that lexicographers use to make dictionaries are expected to be reflected in the examples that dictionaries contain.

In the present paper, for example, two very specific sets of words will be targeted: contrastive words and verbs that may convey recommendation or advice. Examples of the former are *nonetheless* and *however* in English and *contudo* and *todavia* in Portuguese. Examples of the latter are *suggest* and *advise* in English and *sugerir* and *aconselhar* in Portuguese. These language items have been selected for three reasons. One is the idea that some complexity in the use of contrastive words and verbs that may convey recommendation or advice in both English and Portuguese, namely in word order as regards the former and in patterns as regards the latter, makes them interesting features that justify observing ways in which they are covered in dictionaries. More specifically, these observations may be useful to learn about the component of the microstructure of dictionaries that can illustrate these complexities and that is tackled in this paper: the use of examples.

Indeed, it is known that dictionaries contain data from corpora, but it would be interesting to observe whether dictionaries also provide the user with a corpus of examples that come from these corpora or from other sources. Leffa (2006), for example,

highlighted the possibility of including examples of language use in a pedagogic dictionary even though the electronic dictionary used in Leffa's (2006) research is different from those that are analysed in this paper. Within the context of the present paper, it would be interesting to discuss what pedagogical implications the observation regarding the presence of examples in the target dictionaries may have for learning and teaching to develop the above-mentioned subskills, namely contrasting ideas in writing and making suggestions in writing in the Portuguese language.

2.3. Studies on lexicography: dictionaries, language learning, language teaching and the use of examples

It has also been shown that dictionaries have been a useful instrument to learn a language. Duran (2008) explained that the lexical approach (Lewis, 1993) has introduced the use of dictionaries as a supplementary tool in teaching methods and that in this approach activities centre on the notion of learning sets of words that co-occur (p. 200). Furthermore, owing to the possible benefits of teaching foreign language learners to use this tool, Duran (2008) also argued for the inclusion of training in the use of dictionaries in foreign language teaching training courses. This training should be thought to enhance the development of various skills. Pontes and Santiago (2009), for example, had argued that a language teacher should be able to compare dictionaries critically (Santiago, 2012, *Considerações finais* section). As regards the topic of this paper, namely examples, Duran (2008) cited Nesi (1999) and mentioned acquiring the skill of obtaining information from them (p. 206). It can be claimed that one type of information that can be obtained from dictionaries is that which the examples these dictionaries contain provide.

The notion of considering a dictionary a learning tool that may provide useful examples and that requires teachers' and learners' competence to deal with these examples leads to the second reason why contrastive words and verbs that may convey recommendation or advice have been selected for analysis: they are likely to be necessary in the performance of the above-mentioned subskills, namely, contrasting ideas in writing and making suggestions in writing in the Portuguese language. As a result, it is thought that learners can profit from examples that illustrate the patterns and collocations of verbs while learning to make suggestions in the Portuguese language, as well as from examples that indicate the possible place or places of contrastive words within a sentence while learning to contrast ideas also in this language. Nonetheless, the last reason why these words have been targeted still needs to be discussed. This reason also concerns the use of examples and will be dealt with below.

2.4. Studies on lexicography: concerns regarding the use of online dictionaries

In Biderman's (2003) review of Portuguese language dictionaries, it is also asserted that dictionaries should include vocabulary from a given speech community while recording meanings and uses of this community's linguistic norm (p. 61). Nonetheless, contrastive words and verbs that may convey recommendation or advice have come under

scrutiny because they may be employed by PFL learners in exam practice for the above-mentioned context, namely international PFL examinations at an advanced or proficiency level, regardless of the geographical location where this exam practice takes place. Consequently, examples from different online Portuguese language dictionaries will be examined irrespective of the linguistic norm these dictionaries record.

So far, it can be deduced that, in the context of the present paper, an online dictionary can be seen as a learning tool which, by providing examples, can help users in the process of learning to contrast ideas in writing or to make suggestions in writing. However, several disadvantages of using electronic dictionaries have been presented. Finger-Kratochvil and Carvalho (2016) mentioned the wrong selection of a meaning in a given entry and also possible fast searches owing to the fact that electronic dictionaries may include much information (pp. 299-300). Leffa (2006) cited Cobb (1997), who also argued that online dictionaries or dictionaries on CD-ROM may have more information than paper dictionaries and that this may increase the amount of information that dictionaries users skip (Leffa, 2006, pp. 334-335).

Nonetheless, as explained above, the potential target user in the present paper learns PFL in an advanced or proficiency international PFL examination context, and this user needs to have access to complex language. This would considerably reduce the disadvantages of using electronic dictionaries that were mentioned above, and justify the usefulness of the analyses of the microstructure of online dictionaries as approached in the present paper. Three studies that deal with Portuguese language dictionaries and whose findings are thought to be relevant to the present research will be cited.

2.5. Studies on lexicography: dictionaries of the Portuguese language

The first study and the present paper share methodological features. In the former, Santiago (2012) compared aspects of the microstructure of two Brazilian school dictionaries. The author compared a set of individual entries of both dictionaries representing different semantic fields. In the entry for *grampo*, for example, it was noted that there were no examples, in spite of the fact that examples may come in useful in the production of written language (Santiago, 2012, *Metodologia e análise das microestruturas* section). In the comparisons, Santiago (2012) observed that the aim of the study was not for a dictionary to be marked as the best or worst one, but to analyse dictionaries while regarding them as important didactic tools (*Considerações finais* section). The use of these tools in specific language areas has been asserted by other authors. Welker (2006a), for example, cited Höfling et al. (2004) to show that the authors had suggested activities in the domain of pronunciation and grammar (p. 233). Rodrigues Liska (2015) suggested that learners use one of six dictionaries which are available online to do activities that deal with aspects of lexical items.

The second study reports aspects of the inclusion of dictionary entries that it is thought are relevant to the present paper. In this study, Barbosa (2021) reported on the findings from an internship at a company that provides an online Portuguese language dictionary: *Dicionário Priberam da Língua Portuguesa*. These findings are concerned with the influence and role of dictionary users in the making of dictionaries (Barbosa,

2021, p. 5). Barbosa (2021) observed that 660 of the users' suggestions regarding the inclusion of new entries were accompanied by information (p. 19). Within this subcategory, Barbosa (2021) reported that users made use of different means to support their suggestions, and one of these was examples (p. 20). It was explained that the pedagogical implications of the present paper consider adult learners of Portuguese who are taking international PFL examinations at advanced or proficiency level. Nonetheless, it could be claimed that the findings of the present paper are interesting where the use of the target dictionaries by other dictionary users is concerned. This is because Barbosa's (2021) study, which examined a large number of suggestions that had been provided by users of an online dictionary, indicated that these users themselves may make use of examples to substantiate their requests. However, it needs to be highlighted that the exact number of suggestions that had been accompanied by examples out of the 660 suggestions was not provided in this study.

The following study will be cited for the same reasons that the previous two studies were included. Like Santiago's (2012) study, Lu's (2018) work dealt with features of the microstructure of dictionaries. Indeed, Lu (2018) not only examined aspects of the use of Portuguese language dictionaries by Chinese learners, but also analysed Portuguese language dictionaries themselves. Like Santiago (2012), Lu (2018) looked into specific dictionary entries to make some interesting observations. For example, in the entry of *escola* in two monolingual dictionaries, Lu (2018) pointed out that the absence of examples may confuse Chinese learners regarding the meanings of this noun (p. 84). In the entry of the verb *entender*, Lu (2018) argued that the lack of examples and collocations in one of the monolingual dictionaries can make it difficult to learn to use this verb (p. 82). Like Barbosa (2021), Lu (2018) collected data which are relevant to the present paper and which refer to the users of the dictionaries under scrutiny.

Lu (2018) found out that examples are the third element amongst ten categories that are searched for the most in a dictionary when a word is looked up, whereas examples are also the third element that the learners search for but cannot find in the dictionaries they often use (amongst seven categories). It is worth highlighting that this data came from 132 participants, in order to be aware of the dimension of Lu's (2018) study. Lu (2018) also observed that the frequency of use of monolingual dictionaries is higher amongst advanced than amongst elementary learners (p. 57), and this preference agreed with several studies that Lu (2018) cited and that indicated that advanced learners tended to use monolingual dictionaries more often than bilingual ones.

The last three studies present information that can justify the objective of the present research. The first justification is how important it is that dictionaries provide examples that come in useful when learners consult them for written production in the Portuguese language. Therefore, to find out if the target dictionaries contain examples may prove to be an interesting endeavour. Moreover, the decision to analyse monolingual Portuguese language dictionaries in the present paper by envisioning advanced or academic Portuguese language learning contexts is thought to be justified by previous findings regarding the use of monolingual dictionaries of the Portuguese language by more proficient users (cf. Lu, 2018, p. 58). In the next section, the methodology of the present research will be described.

3. METHODOLOGY

In the introduction, it was explained that the objective of this paper is to compare a sample of online general Portuguese language dictionaries that may be used by PFL adult learners with a sample of online dictionaries which may also have an adult readership, which are hosted on sites that contain materials on English language learning and that focus on EFL. In order to place these dictionaries in a given typology, the following will be borne in mind.

In a study on the histories of dictionary types, Podhajecka (2009) argued that “many researchers dealing with lexicographical typologies have commented on the complex task of matching dictionaries to the typological scheme” (p. 162). For example, it can be argued that some of the dictionaries that are analysed in this study belong to more than one of the hybrid dictionary genres presented by Hartmann (2005): An online dictionary may contain aspects of the *dictionary cum dictionary* genre because it includes information from different dictionaries and of the *print dictionary cum electronic dictionary* because it uses information from previously printed dictionaries in an electronic form. Nonetheless, the sample of Portuguese language dictionaries can be defined as predominantly general and monolingual, whereas that of English language dictionaries have the following in common: they are hosted on sites that contain English language learning sources and have an EFL learning orientation. Consequently, the sample of Portuguese language dictionaries and the sample of English language dictionaries will be regarded as two different varieties of the same genre: online dictionaries.

The former are *Dicionário Online Caldas Aulete*, *Dicionário Online de Português (Dicio)*, *Dicionário Priberam Online de Português Contemporâneo*, *Dicionário Infopédia da Língua Portuguesa (em linha)* and *Dicionário Michaelis On-line*. The latter are *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, *English Cambridge Dictionary*, *Collins English Dictionary*, *Macmillan Dictionary*, and *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online*. These dictionaries have an important presence on the Web, where their amount of content is concerned. Moreover, the presence of these dictionaries in the first decades of existence of the Web makes them a significant landmark in the history of English lexicography and Portuguese lexicography.

In the introduction, it was also said that the objective of this paper would be achieved by looking at the following feature of the microstructure of dictionaries: frequencies of examples. In the *Literature Review* section, it was added that two sets of words would be targeted: contrastive words and verbs that may convey recommendation or advice. The following contrastive English words will be tackled: *nonetheless*, *nevertheless*, and *however*. As for the contrastive Portuguese words, the following will be dealt with: *todavia*, *porém* and *contudo*. The following English verbs will be analysed: *recommend*, *advise* and *suggest*. As regards the Portuguese verbs, these are *recomendar*, *sugerir* and *aconselhar*.

Like Santiago’s (2012) study, this paper does not aim to select the worst or the best dictionary. Indeed, the following data will not provide details about any dictionary in particular, as it will aim to reveal whether PFL learners who are proficient in Portuguese

can obtain information regarding the use of the target words from the sets of Portuguese language dictionaries by means of examples all together. In addition, the pedagogical implications of these data for learning and teaching PFL will be discussed. As a result, the analyses will be carried out in the following way.

Firstly, it has to be clarified that an example was a sentence or phrase containing a target word. If the same sentence or phrase contained the same target word more than once, this was regarded as one example. These examples were spotted by using the *ctrl + f* search bar in the analyses of each dictionary site. However, it was observed that some examples were used in the same dictionary more than once. Whenever the number of examples on a given dictionary site was too large, a software application that eliminated the frequencies of the repeated examples from the total frequencies was used. This application was created by the author of this paper using *Python* programming language and the *Tkinter* interface. The total number of examples of each entry corresponding to a contrastive word in each of the dictionaries was calculated. These figures were then added to calculate the total frequencies of each word in a dictionary set. For example, the total number of examples of *nevertheless* in the five English language dictionaries was $n = 47$. On the other hand, the total frequency of examples of *contudo* in the five Portuguese language dictionaries was $n = 8$. Comparisons between the frequencies in the English language dictionaries and in the Portuguese language dictionaries were made by using ratios. The same steps were followed in the analyses of the target verbs.

Secondly, the total number of definitions of each entry corresponding to a contrastive word in each of the dictionaries was calculated. These figures were then added, to calculate the total frequencies of definitions corresponding to each word in a dictionary set. For example, the total number of definitions of *nevertheless* in the five English language dictionaries was $n = 10$. On the other hand, the total number of definitions of *contudo* in the five Portuguese language dictionaries was $n = 8$. Mean values corresponding to the number of examples per definition were worked out. For example, the arithmetic mean of *contudo* was $\bar{x} = 1$. This gave a clearer idea of the distribution of contrastive words in both dictionary sets. The same steps were followed in the analyses of the verbs that may convey recommendation or advice.

The data obtained from the operations described in the last two paragraphs provided a picture of differences between the English language dictionaries and the Portuguese language dictionaries where the frequencies of examples are concerned, and made it also possible to discuss possible pedagogical implications of these frequencies for learning and teaching PFL. Nonetheless, several items need to be clarified regarding the limitations of the present study.

The first one is that the examples were obtained from the main body of each entry. Indeed, the contents of hyperlinks to other web pages or any possible presence of examples on these pages were ignored. The second is that no generalisations can be made about the whole content of the dictionaries under scrutiny. Indeed, the analyses of the present paper apply only to the target words in the present research context. The third limitation lies in the circumstance that different languages may require focus on different parts of speech and that this hinders comparisons between entries from different language dictionaries. For example, the spelling of the plural forms of Portuguese adjectives may

be significant in a Portuguese language dictionary, whereas this does not apply to an English language dictionary. However, in this study, this limitation has been reduced in the following way: it was made sure that the sets of words could be comparable in at least one respect. On the one hand, the target verbs are used in patterns that are thought to bring about some complexity where both PFL learning and EFL learning are concerned. On the other hand, the target contrastive words may be thought to raise doubts about the nuances of meaning they convey and the position they may have in a sentence in comparison to frequent contrastive words such as *but* in English or *mas* in Portuguese. Several findings and observations regarding the target words were discussed in the following section.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section will have two parts. The first part will deal with contrastive words and the second part will look into verbs that may convey recommendation or advice.

4.1. Contrastive words

Table 1 will show the frequencies of examples of contrastive words in the online English language dictionaries. Since the objective of this paper is not to choose the best dictionary, and since this research is meant to discuss pedagogical implications regarding the content of Portuguese language dictionaries as a whole after comparing this content with content of English language dictionaries also as a whole, no reference will be made to any dictionary in particular. Therefore, the English language dictionaries will range from ED1 to ED5 and the Portuguese language dictionaries will range from PD1 to PD5.

Table 1

Frequencies of examples of contrastive words in the OELD

	ED1	ED2	ED3	ED4	ED5	Total
nonetheless	3	7	9	2	12	33
nevertheless	8	22	10	2	5	47
however	8	39	32	17	23	119
Total	19	68	51	21	40	199

Note. OELD (Online English Language Dictionaries)

The presence of examples containing at least one of the three contrastive words in the five English language dictionaries may be observed. However, if learners were using ED4 and wanted a variety of examples of the use of *nonetheless* and *nevertheless*, they would have to make use of other sources as well. It is also interesting to highlight that the total frequency of examples of *however* ($n = 119$) is much higher than that of *nonetheless* ($n = 33$) or *nevertheless* ($n = 47$). The reason for this is that the entry of *however* does not only include the contrastive adverb but also includes other uses. Nonetheless, the figures for *however* have been kept as is since a similar situation may be observed in the case of

porém in the Portuguese language dictionaries. Indeed, in the set of Portuguese language dictionaries, *porém* is described not only as a conjunction or as an adverb that expresses contrast, but also as a noun that conveys inconvenience. As explained below, examples of all the uses of *porém* have also been kept. Table 2 will present the frequencies of examples of contrastive words in the online Portuguese language dictionaries.

Table 2

Frequencies of examples of contrastive words in the OPLD

	PD1	PD2	PD3	PD4	PD5	Total
contudo	1	0	0	0	7	8
todavia	0	1	1	0	8	10
porém	3	0	3	0	9	15
Total	4	1	4	0	24	33

Note. OPLD (Online Portuguese Language Dictionaries)

Several interesting issues may be pointed out regarding Table 2. On the one hand, the high frequencies in PD5 as compared to the other dictionaries. On the other hand, the absence of examples of the three words in PD4 and in some cases in PD1, PD2 or PD3. This would indicate that a learner learning to use any of these three words to contrast ideas, say, in an essay in Portuguese, who was not using PD5, and who wanted a range of examples, might have to consider looking for sources of reference in addition to PD1, PD2, PD3 or PD4. It may also be noted that the frequencies of *porém* ($n = 15$) are higher than those of *contudo* ($n = 8$) and of *todavia* ($n = 10$). This is due to the fact that the entry of *porém* includes examples of the noun *porém*.

By comparing the figures from Table 1 and Table 2, it may be noted that the ratio of the total frequency of English examples to Portuguese examples stands at 6.03:1. If the skewed figures were eliminated, namely those of *however* and of *porém*, this ratio would still reflect a much higher frequency in the English language dictionaries, i.e. 4.44:1. This shows that, in total, the main bodies of the English language dictionaries which are hosted on sites that have an English language learning focus and an EFL learning orientation contain a larger number of examples of the target words than those of the online Portuguese language dictionaries. Therefore, if PD5 were left out, it could be argued that a PFL learner learning to use contrastive words in writing in Portuguese would need more training with regard to using alternative sources of examples than EFL learners. This claim is also supported by the fact that, leaving aside PD5, the totals in the Portuguese language dictionaries range from $n = 0$ to $n = 4$ (or from $n = 0$ to $n = 1$ if *porém* were omitted), whereas the totals in the English language dictionaries range from $n = 19$ to $n = 68$ (or from $n = 4$ to $n = 29$ if *however* were omitted). Nonetheless, another factor that needs to be taken into consideration is the number of definitions and, consequently, the mean values of the number of examples by the number of definitions. Table 3 shows the mean values of examples by the number of definitions of contrastive words in English language dictionaries and Portuguese language dictionaries.

Table 3*Mean values of examples by the number of definitions of contrastive words*

	English language dictionaries			Portuguese language dictionaries			
	Examples	def.	\bar{x}	Examples	def.	\bar{x}	
nonetheless	33	9	3.66	contudo	8	8	1
nevertheless	47	10	4.70	todavia	10	6	1.66
however	119	41	2.90	porém	15	14	1.07
Total	199	60	3.31	Total	33	28	1.17

Note. (\bar{x} = mean value; def. = frequency of definitions)

Table 3 indicates that the mean values of examples by the number of definitions never goes over 1.70 in the sample of Portuguese language dictionaries, whereas in the English language dictionaries this value starts at 2.90 and goes up to 4.70. Consequently, the mean value of the total is much higher in the latter (\bar{x} = 3.31) than in the former (\bar{x} = 1.17). If *however* and *porém* were left aside, the mean in the English language dictionaries would still be higher than in the Portuguese language dictionaries: \bar{x} = 4.21 and \bar{x} = 1.28 respectively.

It is true that the data in Table 3 give no information about mean values in each dictionary. It is also true that examples may not always pertain to definitions in the target dictionaries: examples may be used to illustrate grammar points or collocations outside definitions, for instance. Nonetheless, these examples may still be used to illustrate and to understand definitions, and the mean values in Table 3 would indicate that if their frequencies were similar in both dictionaries, the Portuguese language dictionaries would need to have around 93 examples in total ($n = 28 * 3.31$).

Still, it could be argued that differences between the Portuguese language and the English language lead to a situation in which fewer examples are required in a Portuguese language dictionary than in an English language dictionary. Nonetheless, the comparisons with the English language dictionaries have been interesting, since they highlighted some differences between online dictionaries that have traditionally had a foreign language learning orientation (the English language ones) and dictionaries that are more general in nature (the Portuguese language ones). In this particular instance, it can be claimed that the figures presented in Table 2 and in Table 3 reveal that PFL learners who were using the main body of some of the target dictionaries to learn to use the three contrastive words to contrast ideas in writing in Portuguese would be at a disadvantage in comparison with EFL learners where the frequencies of examples are concerned.

Therefore, it could be claimed that PFL teacher training courses should also make trainee teachers aware of the possibility of, first, finding no examples or few examples accompanying some of the definitions of the target words and perhaps other words in some online Portuguese language dictionaries and, second, of having to get advanced learners of PFL ready to look for sources of examples beyond the main body of some of the online Portuguese language dictionaries that have been tackled in this paper. This

notion relates directly to Pontes's and Santiago's (2009) argument that a language teacher should be able to compare dictionaries critically (Santiago, 2012, *Considerações finais* section) and to Duran's (2008) reference to Nesi (1999) regarding the acquisition of skills to obtain information from them (p. 206).

4.2. Verbs that may convey recommendation or advice

Table 4 shows the frequencies of examples of the analysed verbs in the English language dictionaries.

Table 4

Frequencies of examples of verbs that may convey recommendation or advice in the OELD

	ED1	ED2	ED3	ED4	ED5	Total
Recommend	35	36	58	9	35	173
Suggest	43	39	64	19	40	205
Advise	35	37	30	13	33	148
Total	113	112	152	41	108	526

Note. OELD (Online English Language Dictionaries)

Table 4 displays a number of examples in the five English language dictionaries, even though in ED4 these frequencies are notably lower. As in the case of contrastive words, frequencies in the sample of Portuguese language dictionaries are much lower. As shown in Tables 4 and 5, totals range from $n = 7$ to $n = 26$ in the Portuguese language dictionaries and from $n = 41$ to $n = 152$ in the English language dictionaries.

Table 5

Frequencies of examples of verbs that may convey recommendation or advice in the OPLD

	PD1	PD2	PD3	PD4	PD5	Total
recomendar	9	0	10	3	7	29
sugerir	7	0	0	0	8	15
aconselhar	10	7	7	4	11	39
Total	26	7	17	7	26	83

Note. OPLD (Online Portuguese Language Dictionaries)

Like Table 2, Table 5 shows that there are entries where $n = 0$. However, as opposed to Table 2, in Table 5 all Portuguese language dictionaries contain examples of at least one entry. Like in Table 2, PD5 presents a relatively high frequency of examples. Nonetheless, in the case of the verbs, PD1 also has a relatively high frequency. If PD5 and PD1 were left out, in some cases, users of the other three dictionaries might have to

make use of sources of examples other than the main body of these dictionaries in order to learn to use one of the three verbs to make suggestions in writing in Portuguese. For example, PD2, PD3 and PD4 contain no examples of the verb *sugerir*. On the other hand, the need to supplement the examples of the target verbs reported in the main bodies of the target English language dictionaries with those included in other sources would be reduced considerably. Table 6 introduces interesting data regarding mean values of examples by the number of definitions of the analysed verbs.

Table 6

Mean values of examples by the number of definitions of verbs that may convey recommendation or advice

	English language dictionaries			Portuguese language dictionaries			
	Examples	def.	\bar{x}	Examples	def.	\bar{x}	
recommend	173	33	5.24	recomendar	29	41	0.70
suggest	205	38	5.39	sugerir	15	26	0.57
advise	148	32	4.62	aconselhar	39	20	1.95
Total	526	103	5.10	Total	83	87	0.95

Note. (\bar{x} = mean value; def. = frequency of definitions)

From Table 3, it may be asserted that the ratio of number of definitions of contrastive words in English language dictionaries to Portuguese language dictionaries is 2.14:1. Table 6 indicates that the ratio of number of definitions of the verbs under scrutiny in English language dictionaries to Portuguese language dictionaries is more even: 1.18:1. As a result, the mean value of number of examples per definition is much lower in the Portuguese language dictionaries ($\bar{x} = 0.95$) than in the English language dictionaries ($\bar{x} = 5.10$). This is explained by the lower frequency of examples in the former than in the latter (0.15:1). The data on the number of examples of the target verbs reinforce the argument for raising trainee teachers' awareness in PFL teacher training courses of the possibility of encountering few or no examples accompanying some of the definitions of the target words and perhaps other words in some online Portuguese language dictionaries. In addition, the argument for training advanced learners of PFL to look for sources of examples beyond the main body of some of the online Portuguese dictionaries would be better grounded. Another interesting implication may be put forward.

Given that there may not be enough examples of the target words in the main bodies of the online Portuguese language dictionaries under scrutiny, PFL learners might have to rely more on the information and examples provided by textbook materials. This might be a disadvantage in a PFL course where teaching or learning beyond a textbook is considered. What is more, the examples presented in textbooks may not always compensate for the lack of examples in an online Portuguese language dictionary. For example, PFL learners may be doubtful whether the verb *recomendar* may be used in a pattern that is different from the one or ones that are presented in a textbook. This adds to the assumption that training learners to use corpora or other online learning resources

beyond the collection of textbook materials and the main body of online Portuguese language dictionaries might also have to be considered.

5. CONCLUSION

The comparison of a set of online English language dictionaries that have a foreign language learning orientation and that are hosted on sites that focus on language learning with a set of online Portuguese language dictionaries which could be defined as more general in nature has led to very interesting observations.

After looking at the data, it can be concluded that the following patterns may be established as far as the frequencies of the target words are concerned. This study observes that there are examples of all the target words in the main bodies of the online English language dictionaries, whereas these examples are sometimes missing in those of the online Portuguese language dictionaries. Furthermore, the mean of examples per definition in the former is higher than in the latter. Owing to this, advanced or proficient PFL learners who are learning to use the target Portuguese words by means of examples to contrast ideas in writing or to make suggestions in writing in Portuguese may sometimes have to consult other sources of examples depending on the target dictionary they use and on the target word they look up. Where EFL learners who are learning the target English words in the same situation are concerned, the possibility of having to use different sources of examples is more remote.

It has also been argued that this may also have pedagogical implications for PFL teacher training courses. The argument for raising trainee teachers' awareness in PFL teacher training courses of the possibility of encountering few or no examples accompanying some of the definitions of the target words and perhaps other words in some online Portuguese language dictionaries was also put forward. The few examples in some cases in the online Portuguese language dictionaries has also led to the assumption that PFL learners would have to rely more on the information and examples provided by textbook materials. Since both of these may not always be sufficient, it was assumed that training learners to use corpora or other online learning resources beyond the collection of textbook materials and online Portuguese language dictionaries might also be beneficial while learning to contrast ideas in writing or to make suggestions in writing in Portuguese.

Further research possibilities are open. It would be interesting to see how the frequencies of examples in online Portuguese language dictionaries can be sufficient to learn to acquire other skills that may also be required to take advanced or proficiency international PFL examinations. It would also be interesting to compare these frequencies with those in online language dictionaries that are more oriented towards learning foreign languages. In addition, research into the use of online dictionaries in real preparation courses for international PFL examinations would also be an interesting endeavour.

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Collins English Dictionary. <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/>

DICIO, Dicionário Online de Português. <https://www.dicio.com.br/>

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