

Dialect, language, variety, or koiné? Outlining Brazilian Venetan

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ABSTRACT

Dialect, Language, Variety, or Koiné? An Outline of Brazilian Venetan: In this paper, we discuss a possible classification for Brazilian Venetan, also known as Talian: a linguistic phenomenon developed and employed by Italian immigrants and their descendants in the southern region of Brazil. Brazilian Venetan is the result of the continuous contact between distinct languages and varieties brought from Italy to Brazil in addition to Brazilian Portuguese. Therefore, Brazilian Venetan is a linguistic phenomenon born and developed due to language contact, and to just acknowledge it as, for instance, one of the several dialects of standard Italian doesn't seem adequate to describe it. Thus, our main focus here is to seek more suitable sociolinguistic definition(s) for this linguistic manifestation.

Keywords: Brazilian Venetan, Sociolinguistics, Variation, Epistemology, Nomenclature

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, the majority of the northern Italian immigrants settled in the Brazilian southern states, mainly in parts of Espírito Santo, Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Paraná, Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul. This happened by the time due to different push and pull economic factors, that is, socioeconomic elements that encouraged migrants to leave their homeland (push), while there were incentives from another region to draw this population (pull) (Lee 1966; cf. Sanderson 2012). An important push factor was the general agricultural crisis in the northern Italian region during the period (Fenoaltea 2005). As a relevant pull factor, we may also consider the overall Brazilian government's interest in bringing the workforce, especially, European ones to work in its most economically active regions, that is, the Brazilian southern states (Lima 2021; Dall'Ava, 2023).

Particularly in the case of the northeast region of Rio Grande do Sul and western parts of Santa Catarina, these communities were constituted mainly of migrants of the Italian Veneto region, and when they settled in Brazil, they were relatively isolated from other parts of the country. This certainly facilitated the preservation and development of the local Venetan culture and language in those areas, more so than in other Brazilian regions (Bernardi 2005).

Brazilian Venetan (also known as Talian) is a heritage northern Italo-Romance variety (D'Alessandro & Frasson 2023) spoken by approximately 500,000 people (Guzzo 2023), and mainly employed in the southern region of Brazil by the descendants of those northern Italian migrants. It is in the spectrum of the Romance languages, which includes, among many others, Portuguese, Spanish, French, Romanian, and Italian. Therefore, it shares grammatical structures and lexical features with all these languages, particularly, with Italian. As happens with other minority languages, it is not much used for formal instruction, although significant written material has been promoted and produced (Garcia and Guzzo 2023).

To better illustrate all this and give the reader a general impression of this linguistic phenomenon, we will present a text fragment of it. The following fragment was composed by Brasil Talian, a free and public website

that produces news in Brazilian Venetan regarding the cultural, historical, and linguistic significance of Italian immigration, mainly, in Rio Grande do Sul (Brasil Talian 2021):

Ntela prima stimana de setembre son stato a Trêš Palmeiras, Ronda Alta e Constantina, cità situade nel norte del Rio Grande do Sul. El obietivo ze stato far una serie de vîdii che mostra la imigrassion taliana nela region.

Come go fato la prima stimana de giugno nel sul de Santa Catarina (i vîdii i ze quasi tuti sul canal Brasil Talian) adesso pian pian li meto tuti (1 o 2 a settimana) rento del canal. I ze stati vîdii bellissimoi, inediti, e diversi, valtri ndé piaser tanto. Par non perder nganca un, clicca qua e iscriviti sul nostro canal ativando le notificassion.¹⁾

We can observe throughout the literature that Brazilian Venetan presents a range of different nomenclatures, as well as some distinct classifications. The issue of defining Brazilian Venetan will be investigated here from a Sociolinguistics perspective, which overall relates linguistic traits to social factors (Wardhaugh and Fuller 2021). Such a theoretical framework will support us in evaluating, for instance, if common sense is accurate when it attributes the idea of dialect to Brazilian Venetan, a term that certainly covers different meanings. Or yet, if it is a koiné, that is, if it resulted from the mix of languages/dialects/varieties primarily spoken by the Italian immigrants who first arrived in Brazil. Although terms such as these are broadly employed to describe Brazilian Venetan, we believe there is still a

1) English translation based on Brazilian Venetan (Talian), Brazilian Portuguese and Italian versions, which were all provided by public and free access website Brasil Talian. Retrieved on April 15, 2024:

<https://www.brasiltalian.com/2021/09/documentario-mostra-imigracao-italiana.html>

“In the first week of September, I was in Trêš Palmeiras, Ronda Alta and Constantina, which are all cities located in the north of Rio Grande do Sul. The objective was to make a series of videos showing Italian immigration in the region.

Just as I did in the first week of June in the south of Santa Catarina (almost all of the videos are on the Brasil Talian website), now I will also gradually post them all (1 or 2 per week) on this channel. They were beautiful new videos with random themes that you will really like. To make sure you don’t miss anything, click here right now and subscribe to our channel by activating notifications.”

need to better explain and explore these ideas. The originality of this work lies in exactly how these terms may either conflict or complement each other, mostly depending on the researchers' background and the overall methodological perspective employed.

As we will further explore, it is important to keep in mind that notions such as language, dialect, variety, and koiné are not for granted, that is, ultimately, we understand that the adopted theoretical framework defines, whether or not, Brazilian Venetan might be comprehended as any of those notions. Those concepts are not exclusionary either, which means that a given linguistic manifestation may encompass more than one concept simultaneously. Either way, we will take examples from Brazilian Venetan to try to support our viewpoint and promote a possible classification for it. Firstly, though, we need to briefly present and discuss the range of names this linguistic phenomenon might assume.

SAME PHENOMENON, DIFFERENT NOMENCLATURES

Brazilian Venetan is just one example among a range of nomenclatures used to address this linguistic phenomenon. We can find the following terminology in the literature: i) Talian or Taliàn (Luzzatto 1994; Faggion 2012; Ribeiro and Maggio 2019; Cunha and Gabardo 2020); ii) Italian Immigration Area Veneto or IIA-Veneto (Guzzo and Garcia 2020); iii) Sul-Rio-Grandense²⁾ Venetan or Rio-Grandense Venetan, originally and respectively, in Portuguese, as Vêneto Sul-Rio-Grandense (Miazzo 2011; Dal Picol 2013) and Vêneto Rio-Grandense (Paniz 2005; Horst 2014); iv) Southern Brazilian Venetian (Faggion and Luchese 2016; Faggion and Luchese 2019) or Brazilian Venetian (Faggion and Frosi 2010); v) Brazilian Veneto (Garcia and Guzzo 2023; Guzzo 2024a; Guzzo 2024b); and vi) Brazilian Venetan (Frasson 2021; Frasson 2022; Frasson 2023; D'Alessandro and Frasson 2023).

2) *Sul-rio-grandense* is a gentilic used to refer to someone born in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, the most southern region of Brazil. It is a synonym for the more broadly known and informally used term *gaúcho*. Still, it is important to note that *gaúcho* in Brazilian Portuguese or *gaucho* in Rioplatense Spanish may also acquire other historical and cultural interpretations. See Freitas and Silveira (2004) and Skura (2007).

In this paper, we opt to employ Brazilian Venetan as the main nomenclature. We believe that is the clearest term, which does not entail definition issues. For instance, we tried to avoid any nomenclature that identified the language Venetan as Venetian. Much in agreement with what is found in the online versions of Linguasphere (2024) and Encyclopedia Britannica (2024), we take Venetian as a dialect of Venetan, which is spoken within and in the surroundings of Venice, and not as an autonomous and separate language in a stricter sense (see next section)³. So, we ruled out all options that referred to it as Venetian, such as Brazilian Venetian and Southern Brazilian Venetian. We also opted to use its name in English (Venetan) and not in Italian (Veneto), so we may also exclude Brazilian Veneto and IIA-Veneto. Venetan is also spoken in Brazilian regions beyond Rio Grande do Sul, such as Santa Catarina and Paraná, and therefore, we believe a gentilic such as *sul-rio-grandense* may restrict the scope of the linguistic phenomenon.

Lastly, there is Talian/Taliàn. Although it is a common jargon both in Brazilian and Italian literature and a popular choice within the local community to refer to Brazilian Venetan, it may also be considered somewhat ambiguous. For instance, in the Venetan language, Taliàn means Italian, as the Italian language or something related to Italy (Boerio 1867; Oro and Strapazzon 2015; Wiktionary 2024), and specifically in Brazilian Venetan, it may also acquire the connotation of something related to northern Italy (Luzzatto 2000; cf. Ribeiro and Maggio 2019). Besides, Talian is commonly comprehended either as a dialect in the traditional sense or as a language, influenced, but apart from Venetan; viewpoints that we contest and will further address in the next two sections.

There seems to be no perfect nomenclature. We opted here to employ Brazilian Venetan⁴, which has some advantages. It is quite a transparent

3) If we have chosen the nomenclature Venetian, we could face some problems when referring to the dialect spoken in the surrounding of Venice. For instance, Ethnologue (2024), Glottolog (2024) and Pecoraro (2022) do so and identify the language as Venetian, and to work around it, label its respective dialect spoken in Venice as Venetian Proper. We believe this may be somewhat troublesome or confusing, and thus, we have taken what we believe to be a more suitable terminology solution. For a similar discussion, see Brunelli (2007).

4) For a counterpoint to the perspective presented here, see Loregian-Penkal & Dal Castel

and straightforward term since it refers both to the language as Venetan and to the area which is chiefly spoken, that is, Brazil. It avoids terminology problems commonly raised when selecting or composing nomenclatures, such as ambiguity and translation issues (Cole 1987; Dall’Ava 2021), it is easily translatable to other languages (e.g. IT: Veneto Brasiliano; PT: Vêneto Brasileiro)⁵, and it is in tune with the way languages and varieties are officially tagged by repositories designed to language taxonomy or description (Linguasphere 2024). It also seems to have increased its popularity among some of the most recent academic articles written in the English language (see Frasson 2021; Frasson 2022; Frasson 2023; D’Alessandro and Frasson 2023)⁶. Altogether, we believe it is a more fitting description of the concept, and it better synthesizes the whole idea.

In the end, though, we understand that it still is an open debate. The local community and the academy, each one influencing the other, are the referees that will determine which nomenclature will be taken in each context (Dall’Ava 2021), either Brazilian Venetan, Talian or any other terminology.

After addressing possible terminology issues and taking Brazilian Venetan as our main nomenclature, in the next section, we will present and discuss some categorizations that are commonly associated with it.

LANGUAGE, VARIETY, DIALECT, AND KOINÉ: EXAMPLES, SIMILARITIES, AND INTERSECTIONS

In this section, we will introduce and discuss some ideas that are pertinent to fully comprehend and analyze what we call Brazilian Venetan. In the literature, it has received many distinct labels: it has already been designated as a language of its own (Cunha and Gabardo 2020); a variety and a dialect of either Italian (Cortelazzo 1995) or Venetan (Frasson 2021); or yet, as a result of mixing different northern Italian languages, that is, a koiné (Bernieri 2017).

(2023) offering a well-founded discussion in favor, otherwise, to the term Talian.

5) EN: General American English; IT: Standard Italian; PT: Standard Brazilian Portuguese.

6) Some authors opt to make use of multiple nomenclatures. See Guzzo and Garcia (2020), Garcia and Guzzo (2023), and Guzzo (2023).

Notions such as these might somewhat be taken for granted in Linguistics, when in fact it is highly dependent on the researcher's theoretical approach. In Linguistics, as in any other field of knowledge, the view(s) regarding an object of study meticulously depends on the theory covered (Jowett 1888; Davis et al. 2015; Saxe 2016; Dall'Ava 2023). In this paper, we will discuss those elements in a sociolinguistic fashion, much in agreement with the studies of Trudgill (1986), Trudgill (2003), Trudgill et al. (2000), and Britain (2012); and also considering some contributions from Philosophy of Language, particularly, from Borges Neto (2004).

In Sociolinguistics, especially in its Variationist branch, language is understood as a shared property of a speech community holding regular and typical patterns that represent a correlation between linguistic features and social factors. It covers, among other aspects, the background of the speakers and the variability of speech (Swann et al. 2004). Thereby, language is comprehended through a socially conditioned distributional arrangement considering, for instance, different configurations and productions of rhotic sounds with respect to the age distribution in a community (Coupland 2001; Carranza 2017). In a language such as English, we could identify at least two different pronunciations for the word *farmer*: /'fɑ:məɹ/ and /'fɑ:mə/. Among other variables, we might associate each pronunciation with different age strata: younger and older speakers (Labov et al. 2006). In short, language is a broad concept and includes well-known and well-documented linguistic systems such as Italian, Portuguese, or Arabic, to minority and understudied ones, such as Kaingang (Bandeira 2014), Angolar (Bouchard 2022) or Venetan (Garcia and Guzzo 2023).

In its turn, a language variety, speech variety, or yet concisely known as variety is comprehended as an umbrella term encompassing any specific kind or subgroup of languages, such as language clusters or dialect continua, e.g., North Germanic linguistic branch: Danish, Norwegian and Swedish (Gooskens 2020); and the Alemannic Swiss German continuum: Basel, Zurich and Bernese German (Scherrer and Rambow 2010). Furthermore, it also comprises lects, which include: a) dialect, a regional speech of a language, e.g., Uruguayan Portuguese near Brazilian and Uruguayan borders (Douglas 2004); b) sociolect, a form of the language articulated by certain socioeconomic classes or social groups, such as Dekasegi Portuguese employed

by Brazilian blue-collar workers and other members of the Latin American community in Japan (Dall’Ava 2022a; Dall’Ava 2022b), or the urban prestigious Portuguese varieties employed by educated Brazilian due to social factors, such as formal school instruction, and influence from family and peers (Holm, 2004); and c) *ethnolect*, a language variety of a particular ethnic group, for instance, *Vaupés Portuguese* spoken by *Tariana* people, an autochthonous group in the Amazon basin (Aikhenvald 2020). Sometimes, variety is taken as an alternative terminology: a way of circumventing the struggle of making a cut-clear distinction between language and dialect (Haugen 1966; Trudgill 2003; Swann et al. 2004; Richards and Schmidt 2010).

Dialect is probably the most puzzling of those terms. As a common sense in certain regions (e.g. Italy, France, Central Europe, Middle East, Greater China) and also in some academic literature (see Kamusella 2015), a dialect is usually viewed as a regional or minority language, socio-politically attached and overshadowed by a related and more institutionalized language from the same linguistic group (e.g. Occitan regarding French in France; Cantonese in relation to Mandarin in China; Venetan towards Italian in Italy). This definition may also hold a pejorative connotation since it commonly indicates a non-official or non-national language with low prestige status and/or lack of institutional support.

In other linguistic frameworks, mainly, in Sociolinguistics, dialect, also called regional dialect, holds a rather different meaning. It is understood as a language variety that differs grammatically and lexically from other varieties, mainly due to geographical elements (Trudgill 2003; Swann et al. 2004; Hinskens et al. 2005; Adams 2007; Richards and Schmidt 2010). In consonance with Trudgill (2003, 35): “The term is often used to refer only to nonstandard dialects or to traditional dialects. Strictly speaking, however, standard varieties such as Standard English are just as much dialects as any other dialect.”

Accordingly, Brazilian Portuguese and European Portuguese are dialects of the same language, that is, Portuguese (Escudero et al. 2009; Pires et al. 2011; cf. Sanches 1940; Guy 1981). The same applies to Northern Italian (Milanese Italian, Venetian Italian, etc) and Southern Italian (Palermitan Italian, Neapolitan Italian, etc) regional varieties: in this sense, they are both

(sets of) Italian dialects. Yet, following this reasoning, for instance, Venetan, Friulian, Lombard, Sicilian, and Sardinian would be languages of their own, somehow related to Standard Italian, but not dialects of it.

Lastly, there is also the notion of koiné.⁷⁾ We will adopt here the concept developed by Siegel (2001, 175):

A koiné is a stabilized contact variety which results from the mixing and subsequent leveling⁸⁾ of features of varieties which are similar enough to be mutually intelligible, such as regional or social dialects. This occurs in the context of increased interaction or integration among speakers of these varieties.

To characterize a koiné formation, Siegel (1985) and Siegel (2001) also present the idea of ‘linguistic subsystems’: which includes ‘mutual intelligibility’ and/or ‘genetically related linguistic system’.⁹⁾ According to the author, to develop a koiné, the languages in contact¹⁰⁾ should be typologically similar enough to the point that they are mutually intelligible and/or genetically related. Altogether, a koiné is a composite dialect, a mixture of distinct characteristics of varieties in contact (Siegel 2001). Some examples of koiné varieties explored in the literature in a range of diversified contexts include: a) New Zealand English and Australian English in Oceania with both receiving huge contributions from British varieties (Trudgill et al. 2000;

7) Koiné is a terminology broadly employed throughout different outlooks within Sociolinguistics. For other discussions of this concept, see Colvin (2010), Regis (2011), Kerswill (2013).

8) Leveling, dialect leveling or koineization should be understood as a process whereby dialects in regular contact with each other in a certain context may lose some of their features, which are not commonly shared with the others dialects. Most commonly, phonetic structures are reduced or simplified in favor of features that are more widespread in the different dialects. All this process frequently results in the formation of a koiné (Trudgill 2003; Swann et al. 2004; Richards and Schmidt 2010).

9) We may comprehend Friulian, Lombard, Piedmontese, Venetan and Portuguese as linguistic systems that are closely related and typologically similar, that is, all Romance languages with a decent level of mutual intelligibility. Taking this into account will be of most importance for our argumentation in the following section.

10) Language contact might be understood as interactions between different languages, and due to this proximity, languages might influence one another (Matras 2020). For a further analysis regarding this concept, see Hickey (2010), Grant (2019), and Matras (2020).

Siegel 2001); b) Quebec French in Canada, which was historically highly influenced by French urban center varieties (Wittmann 1997); c) Chicano Spanish in the USA, which was chiefly derived from Mexican Spanish rural varieties (Sánchez-Muñoz 2017); d) Central Asian Korean in Russia and other former Soviet states, which developed from different North Korean dialects (Pak 2020); and e) Dekasegi Portuguese in Japan, composed and influenced by various Southern/Southeastern Brazilian Portuguese dialects (Matsumoto and Okumura 2020).

It is important to highlight that all these previously presented notions share some similarities and they aren't exclusionary. This means that a linguistic system might be comprehended through a range of these concepts. As we may imply from the earlier discussion in this section: a) the definitions of language and variety are intrinsically associated; b) a dialect might be considered a kind of variety; and c) the definition of koiné is very dependent on variety and dialect concepts. Bearing these elements in mind, for instance, Italian and French might be considered languages of their own, and concurrently, varieties of the Romance linguistic group (Adams 2007; Ledgeway 2012).

Something similar happens when we analyze Brazilian Venetan. In the next section, we will examine these four concepts, and check how they are essential for addressing this linguistic phenomenon.

IS BRAZILIAN VENETAN A LANGUAGE, A VARIETY, A DIALECT, OR A KOINÉ?

As we may predict from the discussion in the previous section, the answer to it might be quite volatile. It highly depends on the authors' epistemological stance and which literature they are prone to follow. In Brazilian literature, it is commonly regarded as a language (Paniz 2005; Cunha and Gabardo 2020) and/or a koiné (Luzzatto 1994; Curioletti and Battisti 2022); whereas instructions and information in the Italian language frequently present it as a dialect, mainly, aligned to its traditional sense (Marcato 2007; Botelho 2020), or yet, as a variety of Venetan (Belloni 2006; Tomasin 2013). As we previously addressed, we seek to define it according to a Sociolinguistic

framework.

In a broader sense, Brazilian Venetan is definitely a language, since it holds ‘shared property’ and ‘typical patterns’ between linguistic and social elements in a speech community (Coupland 2001; Carranza 2017). For instance, we may observe in sentences that indicate movement and make use of a verb such as *ndar* (EN: to go; IT: andare; PT: ir) possible different usages of auxiliary verbs. See the following examples (Faggion 2012, 3; Dal Picol 2013, 102):

(1a) Mi son ‘ndato a Garibaldi.¹¹⁾

(1b) Mi go ‘ndato a Garibaldi.

(1-EN) I went to Garibaldi.

(1-IT) Io sono andato a Garibaldi.

(1-PT) Eu fui a Garibaldi.

Whereas older speakers of Brazilian Venetan usually opt for the auxiliary particle *esser* (cognate to EN: to be; IT: essere; PT: ser) conjugated as *son* in (1a); younger speakers mainly rely on *aver* (cognate to the EN: to have; IT: avere; PT: ter) conjugated as *go* in (1b) to yield a sentence with the same meaning (Faggion 2012). As with other linguistic systems, Brazilian Venetan holds a clear distinction between the language employed by elder and younger speakers. In this case, it is exemplified by a different functional/grammatical structure, that is, the auxiliary verbs *esser* and *aver*.

It is important to emphasize that we do not comprehend it as an autonomous/separate language from Venetan but as a language variety of it. We believe it does encompass a ‘specific kind or subgroup of a language’ (as argued in the previous section) that is, the Venetan language as uttered in Brazil. Therefore, Brazilian Venetan is as much a variety of Venetan as, for example, Venetian Venetan in Italy (Pecoraro 2022) or Chipilo Venetan in Mexico (MacKay 1992).

We also consider it to be a dialect of the Venetan language, since it “[...] differs grammatically and lexically from other varieties, mainly due to

11) Garibaldi is city in the northeast region of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. As most cities in the area, there is a high concentration of individuals with Italian ancestry.

geographical elements” (Trudgill 2003; Swann et al. 2004; Hinskens et al. 2005; Adams 2007; Richards and Schmidt 2010). To illustrate this, consider the following example (Frasson 2022, 91):

- (2a) No'l me ga dito gnente.
 (2b) El no me ga dito gnente.
 (2-EN) He did not tell me anything.
 (2-IT) Non mi ha detto niente.
 (2-PT) Ele não me disse nada.

Both (2a) and (2b) are sentences in Venetan. As we may observe, the position of the clitic *no* is realized differently in each sentence, that is, before the subject pronoun in (2a), but after it in (2b). Whereas (2a) illustrates an example of an Italian Venetan dialect¹², (2b) represents Brazilian Venetan. According to a previous and ongoing comparative grammatical and dialectal work in the Venetan language, other syntactical distinctions may be found between these dialects when considering, for instance, the use of *wh*-words (Pappis et al. 2022).

There is also dialect variation at the lexical level. We present here a few examples¹³ (adapted from Faggion and Frosi 2010; Zortéa 2019; Trevisan 2024):

Table 1: comparative board of lexical entries in Brazilian Venetan, Italian Venetan, American English, Italian and Brazilian Portuguese

Brazilian Venetan	Italian Venetan	American English	Italian	Brazilian Portuguese
algodón	bonbàso	cotton	cotone	algodão
bengala	bastón	cane	bastone	bengala
cartera	taculìn	wallet	portafoglio	carteira
galignero	ponàro	henhouse	pollaio	galinheiro
grama	pra	grass	prato	grama

12) Central Venetan, which includes Paduan and Trevisano Venetan dialects. See Frasson (2021).

13) For further examples or discussions considering the historical linguistic landscape, which includes Brazilian Portuguese, Brazilian Venetan, and northern Italian languages, see Seimetz (2019), Guzzo (2024a), and Guzzo (2024b).

Due to the influence of Brazilian Portuguese, some words from this language variety were adapted and attached to the Brazilian Venetan lexicon, diverging from Italian Venetan dialects. Moreover, several authors already discussed variation between Brazilian and Italian Venetan dialects, examining either lexical (Luzzatto 2000; Faggion and Frosi 2010; Oro and Strapazzon 2015) or grammatical (Luzzatto 1994; Paniz 2005; Dal Picol 2013) features.

Regarding the historical and linguistic relation between Italian and Venetan languages, we consider those two as different languages with their own lexicon, grammar, and orthography¹⁴⁾ (Brunelli 2007; Krämer 2009). They also hold their respective varieties/dialects. Therefore, we understand that Venetan is neither a variety nor a dialect of Italian.

Lastly, we must include a discussion of Brazilian Venetan as a koiné.¹⁵⁾ We introduced it as a “[...] contact variety which results from the mixing and subsequent leveling of features of varieties which are similar enough to be mutually intelligible” (Siegel 2001). Following Siegel’s idea of a ‘genetically related linguistic system’ (Siegel 1985; Siegel 2001), we comprehend languages such as Portuguese, Italian and Venetan are all closely related and typologically similar, that is, Romance languages with some level of mutual intelligibility. Following this reasoning and taking into account the influence of those languages, koiné characteristics might be detected through the analysis of the Brazilian Venetan lexicon. This is confirmed by: a) the previous comparative board and the establishment of words of Brazilian Portuguese origin in the Brazilian Venetan lexicon; b) the evidence or documentation of Brazilian Venetan regarding the influence of not only Brazilian Portuguese (Faggion and Frosi 2010) but also Friulian, Lombard, Piedmontese and other northern Italian languages during its formation as a contact variety (Luzzatto 1994; Paniz 2005; Marcato 2007; Dal Picol 2013; Frosi 2013; Zortéa 2019; Bernini 2021).

To sum it up: as thoroughly presented in this paper, Brazilian Venetan can be regarded, simultaneously, as a language, a variety (of Venetan, but not of Italian), a dialect, and a koiné.

14) In fact, there is even a recent spelling proposal specific for Brazilian Venetan. See Dal Castel et al. (2021) and Loregian-Penkak & Dal Castel (2023).

15) For a discussion regarding the koinization process of northern Italo-Romance varieties in a different context and historical period, see Brown (2020).

FINAL REMARKS

Our objective in this article was to find an adequate classification for a linguistic phenomenon found in Brazil. Through some examples, we were able to verify that Brazilian Venetan underwent considerable language change¹⁶⁾ since its initial development in the 19th century, which made it a language variety different from its Italian counterpart(s).

Brazilian Venetan, under the label of Talian, is recognized as a co-official language in at least 18 cities in the country (IPOL 2022). Therefore, it might definitely hold the status of a language. On the other hand, at least in some contexts, Venetan might be also considered a dialect of standard Italian.

Evaluating Brazilian Venetan proved to be troublesome. In part, this might be explained by the fact that Venetan was the language of, roughly, 60% of the contingent of Italian immigrants that arrived in Brazil by the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century (Margotti 2004). It changed when came into contact with other languages brought by immigrants from other Italian regions, making it a contact language, a *koiné*. Hence, it became something else: a different variety of Venetan. Of course, we must also add to this the massive influence of Brazilian Portuguese. Given such a complex setting, a thorough discussion was fundamental to better define Brazilian Venetan. Taking all that into consideration, we proposed in this paper a classification that aggregates rather than excludes concepts. Thus, we promoted the idea that Brazilian Venetan isn't restricted by the boundaries of a single nomenclature or classification.

In addition, we believe that the analysis in this article also presents an opportunity for a concise epistemological discussion. According to Borges Neto (2004), in science (including Linguistics), it is important to make a distinction between observational and theoretical objects. Our observational object, Brazilian Venetan, is a linguistic phenomenon, whose classification goes beyond the different theoretical objects proposed up to date. In other

16) According to Bybee (2015), language change might be understood as a linguistic phenomenon that embraces innovations in any linguistic level: lexical, phonological, morphological, syntactical, and semantical. It reveals the dynamic aspects of languages through different periods of time and distinct regions or contexts, presenting language users as not only passive recipients of their language and culture, but also the speakers' creativity within communication.

words, the phenomenon in the world, the observational object in question, does not properly fit into a proposed theoretical classification to explain what this linguistic phenomenon is. At least, not solely to one of them. Since the theoretical model adopted here (Sociolinguistics) understands that linguistic variety is an intrinsically related phenomenon to language/variety/dialect/koiné; we believe that a classification proposal including all of those concepts is utterly possible and reasonable.

Evidently, we understand that as with any theoretical and methodological approach, the one we have taken has its limitations. Other linguistic perspectives would certainly embrace the phenomena through different paths: either leaning on in distinct theoretical framework and paraphernalia, which would clearly cut and bind the phenomenon in different concepts or segments, such as the case of Generative Grammar (Borges 2021); or yet bring a more general or holistic point of view towards the phenomena, as it happens to Translanguaging (Li 2018). Future research in the area might consider how linguistic phenomena such as Brazilian Venetan are comprehended through the lenses of other theories, and check how these methodological frameworks may deal with the phenomenon.¹⁷⁾

Ultimately, in addition to discussing a pertinent classification for an understudied linguistic phenomenon, we also added a brief epistemological argument. When trying to categorize Brazilian Venetan to be as appropriate as possible according to a sociolinguistic framework, we also posed a question to this scientific methodology paradigm. Hence, concepts to define Brazilian Venetan were put to a test in the face of a multifaceted phenomenon that might be simultaneously classified as a language, a variety, a dialect, and a koiné.

17) We would like to thank to the anonymous reviewers to point out the need to clarify and emphasize these matters.

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