

Brazilian English: An Unscientific Survey – Part I

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Before I retired from *Reviews of Modern Physics*, one of my responsibilities was to polish the English of papers from countries other than the United States and to train copymarkers to do the same. RMP differed from other journals of the American Physical Society in featuring review articles of about 50 pages, with a long half-life as archival references. We wanted them to be as good as humanly possible. And with only five or six articles per issue, four issues per year, we could afford to give them extra care.

Other APS journals have not had this luxury, as (a) they come out more frequently, (b) they contain many more papers per issue, and (c) they receive a huge number of submissions. When you submit an article to *Physical Review B* or *Physical Review Letters*, they might accept it, but—judging from the evidence of my survey—they will give it only minimal editing. If you are lucky, your referee might point out errors in grammar or usage. Otherwise, the article will go straight into production, including its flaws and—you may later discover—embarrassing errors in English.

Your readers are smart people, who will generally be able to figure out what you are saying, even if you don't say it very clearly. And the equations can almost speak for themselves. But the matrix of words in which you present your results strongly influences how the work is received. Smooth, correct language gains the confidence of your readers from the opening sentence and will earn their respect as you proceed, whereas awkward constructions and not-quite-right sentences raise doubts about the quality of the institution where the work was done as well as of the science.

So, the question arises, Are there particular errors that native speakers of Portuguese commit more often than others? And if so, which kinds of problems do you need to watch out for? As an editor who has worked with some of you on papers you were writing, I had some idea of the answers, but was curious to examine a set of published articles in a systematic way. I conducted a very small survey of 16 recent articles in PRB and PRL by the following authors. At least one author for each paper, and usually all, give their affiliations at institutions in Brazil.

Articles Surveyed

1. Alcaraz, F. C., and M. A. Rajabpour, Phys. Rev. Lett. **111**, 017201
2. Bragança, Helena, Eduardo Mascarenhas G. I. Luiz, C. Duarte, R. G. Pereira, M F. Santos, and M. C. O Agular, Phys. Rev. B **89**, 235132
3. Caracanhas, M. A., V. S. Bagnato, and R. G. Pereira, Phys. Rev. Lett. **111**, 115304
4. Egues, J. Carlos, Phys. Rev. Lett. **80**, 4578
5. Herazo Warnes, Jesus, and Eduardo Miranda, Phys. Rev. B **85**, 214532
6. Hrahsheh, Fawaz, José A. Hoyos, Rajesh Narayanan, and Thomas Vojta, Phys. Rev. B **89**, 014401
7. Landi, Gabriel T., Phys. Rev. B **89**, 014403
8. Levin, A. D., Z. S. Momtaz, G. M. Gusev, and A. K. Bakarov, Phys. Rev. B **89**, 161304(R)
9. Lima, William C. C., and Daniel A. T. Vanzella, Phys. Rev. Lett. **104**, 161102
10. Obispo, Angel E., and Marcelo Hott, Phys. Rev. B **89**, 165405

Articles Surveyed

11. Paula, F. M., I. A. Silva, J. D. Montealegre, A. M. Souza, E. R. deAzevedo, R. S. Sarthour, A. Saguia, I. S. Oliveira, D. O. Soares-Pinto, G. Adesso, and M. S. Sarandy, Phys. Rev. Lett. **111**, 250401
12. Prado, F. O., E. I. Duzzioni, M. H. Y. Moussa, N G. de Almeida, and C. J. Villas-Bôas, Phys. Rev. Lett. **102**, 073008
13. Rezende, S. M., R. L. Rodríguez-Suarez, R. O. Cunha, A. R. Rodrigues, F. L. A. Machado, G. A. Fonseca Guerra, J. C. Lopez Ortiz, and A. Azevedo, Phys; Rev. B **89**, 014416
14. Silva, I. A., D. Girolami, R. Auccaise, R. S. Sarthour, I. S. Oliveira, T. J. Bonagamba, E. R. de Azevedo, D. O. Soares-Pinto, and G. Adesso, Phys. Rev. Lett. **110**, 140501
15. Teodoro, M. D., V. L. Campo, Jr., V. Lopez-Richard, E. Marega, Jr., G. E. Marques, Y. Galvão Gobato, F. Iikawa, M. J. S. P. Brasil, Z. Y. AbuWaar, V. G. Dorogan, Yu. I. Mazur, M. Benamara, and G. J. Salamo, Phys. Rev. Lett. **104**, 086401
16. Vernek, E., P. H. Penteado, A. C. Seridonio, and J. C. Egues, Phys. Rev. B **89**, 165314

So, how did I conduct this survey? First, with a yellow highlighter in hand, I read printouts of the articles, marking the incorrect words and phrases and labeling them as to type, for example, subject-verb agreement, preposition, tense, etc. Then, I totaled the number of occurrences in each category and ranked the errors from most frequent to least frequent. Finally, I assembled many examples, by type, to be used in discussion and practice.

Several considerations make this method “unscientific.”

Why the Survey is Unscientific

1. Small size of the sample
2. Over-representation of condensed matter physics
3. Sample “adulterated” by foreign co-authors
4. Results skewed by better English at IFSC?
5. Same error multiple times in one paper was weighted the same as single occurrences in multiple papers.

First, of course, is the small size of the sample. Second, half of the 16 articles came from *Physical Review B*, so the condensed matter community is over-represented. It is conceivable that writers in other subfields of physics would have different problems with English—but whether they would do better or worse, I leave for you to predict.

Third, four of the articles had foreign co-authors—from institutions in Chile, India, Jordan, and Russia, respectively, while other co-authors had foreign-sounding names, though at Brazilian institutions. I had no way of knowing which were native speakers of Portuguese or which co-authors were responsible for the errors. We can probably assume, though, that all members of the group would have seen the final version, so that the Brazilian co-authors at least bear some responsibility for allowing the errors to remain.

Fourth, 11 of the articles had at least one co-author at this Institute. These included the three best-written papers of the sample and did not include the worst one, which was so bad I was surprised it got published. Therefore the IFSC writers may be skewing the sample towards a better quality of writing than a broader survey would show.

Fifth, when a particular paper had multiple occurrences of the same error, I counted every time it appeared, thus increasing the overall count for that type of problem. With a small sample, we can't say with certainty that Problem A is really as widespread as the totals imply. However, the errors that occurred multiple times in one article also appeared in other articles, so there was no doubt that they signaled a problem. Only their ranking within the list of problems was in question.

With these caveats in mind, what can we say about so-called Brazilian English? Well, first, that it is quite good. Fifteen of these papers conveyed their information and discussed their findings clearly. In only one article was the intended meaning obscured by inadequate command of the language.

Rather, the most frequent types of errors were those that detracted from a polished presentation and were just “off” enough to announce “English is not my native tongue.” This would be OK if it weren't for the prejudice on the part of many readers that awkward language signals institutions out of the mainstream or untrustworthy science. We want to inspire confidence and respect. Hence our interest in rooting out as many of these flaws as possible.

So, **here, in order of frequency, are the types of problems** I found in the surveyed articles. As you will note, they include both errors in grammar or usage, and habits or tendencies that, while not outright wrong, work against the favorable impression you wish to make.

The eleven most common problems

1. Word Choice (44 occurrences)

a) Wrong word, e.g.,

<i>then</i>	in place of	<i>thus</i>
<i>indicate or demonstrate</i>	in place of	<i>show</i>
<i>vast</i>	in place of	<i>widespread</i>

b) Wrong use, e.g.,

<i>apparently</i>	when you mean	<i>clearly or obviously</i>
<i>measure as a noun</i>	when you mean	<i>measurement</i>
<i>previous works</i>	when you mean	<i>previous work or earlier studies</i>

As you might expect, when your dictionary or Google Translate offer several choices, some of them are going to be wrong, at least, wrong for your context. You can test this statement for yourself by looking up a Portuguese word like hot, *quente*. Several synonyms will be offered: *morno*, *caloroso*, *calido*, *ardente*. But you know that each is different and they have different uses. They are not interchangeable.

The eleven most common problems

2. Articles (37 occurrences)
 - a) Use of an article (*the, a, an*) when none is needed
 - b) Lack of an article when one *is* needed
 - c) Choice of the wrong article

The eleven most common problems

3. Prepositions (27 occurrences), e.g.,

<i>analysis of</i>	not	<i>analysis for</i>
<i>associated with</i>	not	<i>associated to</i>
<i>dependence on</i>	not	<i>dependence with</i>
<i>related to</i>	not	<i>related with</i>

Prepositions can quickly identify you as a non-native speaker. Words like *to*, *for*, *from*, and *of* are usually linked with customary partners, the problem being that English and Portuguese use different partners.

The most common error involving a preposition in the surveyed articles? ***associated to***, which in English should be *associated with*. If you forget everything else in this talk, I hope that, when you leave today, you will have *associated with* indelibly imprinted on your memory.

The eleven most common problems

4. Idioms (27 occurrences), e.g.,

For sake of simplicity when you mean *For simplicity*

In most of the cases when you mean *In most cases*

Up to the moment when you mean *Up until now*

I am happy to see authors using English expressions. These show confidence and establish greater rapport with English-speaking readers. But only when they are done just right. With these expressions, almost right is not good enough.

The eleven most common problems

5. Relative Pronouns (25 occurrences)

- a) Overuse of *where*, under-use of *in which*
- b) Confusion of *which* and *that*

The eleven most common problems

6. Tense (17 occurrences)
 - a) Change of tense in mid discussion, which is distracting and disorienting to the reader.
 - b) Inappropriate use of past tense or present perfect, e.g., *we have shown* and *we showed*

The eleven most common problems

7. Subject-verb Agreement (16 occurrences), e. g.,

Our results strongly suggests

The area of the loops reach a maximum

In an inflected language like Portuguese, you have many more verb endings to remember than does English. Nonetheless, I found a surprising number of examples like these.

The eleven most common problems

8. Wordiness (16 occurrences), e. g.,

It consists of directing the focus of attack towards the determination of the probability density distribution function of local SF order parameters.

This is a somewhat subjective count. The problem is more pervasive than its ranking indicates, but I counted only the extreme cases.

One symptom of wordiness in this sentence is the repeated preposition “of.” Another is high density of multisyllabic Latinate words. Sentences like this are not incorrect, but tend to obscure their intended meaning and sound pompous. They most often occur in abstracts and opening paragraphs, a kind of throat clearing before the authors get underway.

The eleven most common problems

9. Comparisons (15 occurrences)
 - a) Problems when describing similarities and differences.
 - b) Misuse of *like* and *as*.

The eleven most common problems

10. Choice between Infinitives and Gerunds (11 occurrences)

Overuse of infinitives, e.g.

We would suggest to take the limits ...

in place of gerunds,

We would suggest taking the limits ...

or in place of simple verbs,

We would suggest that you take the limits ...

The eleven most common problems

11. Dangling participles. (10 occurrences), e. g.,

Calculating the correlation functions, the qubit ...

Phrases that use a word ending in –ing, calculating, looking, focusing, need to be immediately followed by an agent who is doing the looking, focusing, etc. In this example, the agent who is calculating should be named after “functions.” It is probably *we*, not the qubit.

Other weaknesses showed up in smaller numbers. I will list them without comment, though they are certainly not off the table for discussion if you are interested in them.

Other Problems

Redundancy, especially multiple uses of *also* or *moreover-plus-also*

Unidiomatic word order

Plural modifiers where English uses singular, e.g.,

<i>zero-modes excitations,</i>	which should be	<i>zero-mode excitations</i>
<i>parameters changes,</i>	which should be	<i>parameter changes</i>
<i>fermion numbers densities,</i>	which should be	<i>fermion number densities</i>

References to *this*, *these*, *it* without a clear antecedent

Awkward descriptions of figures or of the article's organization

Incorrect or missing punctuation (a universal weakness, not unique to Brazilian scientific writing)

In today's talk I propose to look at the first four types of problem, if time permits, using examples drawn from the surveyed articles. I will spend the most time on the early items in the list, as they occurred so often, and then go more quickly through the remainder.

To give you some practice for editing your own articles, I have distributed a problem set made up entirely of sentences from the surveyed articles and will be asking you to try your hands at avoiding or correcting selected types of errors as we go along. Tomorrow's talk will pick up where we left off. If we have time, we might get into the less numerous, but still very interesting, writing pitfalls listed as "Other Problems."

Let me say now that I do not mean to hold anyone's words up for ridicule. Indeed, I thank all the authors whose papers contributed data and examples for this survey. My main purpose was, first, to identify the most common weak spots. As they say, "*Forewarned is forearmed*" (*Um homem prevenido vale por dois*). And second, to illustrate these with sentences taken from real articles.

If you recognize among the examples something that you wrote, take comfort in the fact that you are in good company. And besides, your article was published.

1. Word Choice (44 occurrences)

As a poet, I am free to be intoxicated by words, always looking for more colorful, more musical, and more lively choices. As scientists, you do not enjoy the same freedom. I can attack a problem, while you merely address it. A poet might speak of the vast, starry sky (not I, but some poets), while you will get more use out of a modest adjective like “widespread” or “broad” to describe interest in your topic or work on a particular problem. The vocabulary of science is traditionally one of understatement.

Faced with a broad variety of choices (not vast), how does one know which words will best serve the meaning? Fortunately, the physics literature helps to establish a vocabulary for each subfield, and merely reading articles in your field provides some guidance, especially when the articles are by native English speakers. But it helps, also, to be forewarned about some words that frequently lead physicists astray. These all appeared in the survey.

a. Wrong Word

Words to Watch Out For

dub	in place of	call
indicate or demonstrate	in place of	show
monotonous	in place of	monotonic
notion	in place of	concept
then	in place of	thus
vast	in place of	widespread, broad

Taking these in order, what is wrong with saying “this was dubbed the negativity of quantumness”? Dubbed is an archaic word, used when conferring knighthood. The king would tap his loyal subject on the shoulder with a sword and say “I dub thee Sir Lancelot,” or whatever. Dub is occasionally used today in a tone of mock seriousness, but is inappropriate for a scientific article. If you find it offered as a synonym for the verbs “to call” and “to name,” ignore it. To call and to name are better. My choice would be “call.”

“Indicate,” “demonstrate,” and “show” are close cousins, but not synonymous. To indicate is to point towards, that is, to hint or suggest, but not to confirm. To demonstrate, in a scientific context, is to show that something is true by an experimental or theoretical proof. To show is somewhere between its cousins, to make evident, to reveal. When talking about a figure, you are most likely to say that it shows something.

Confusion of “monotonous” (boring) with “monotonic” may have been an error committed by a non-Brazilian. Although this error keeps popping up in the literature, I am not sure that a native Brazilian would ever make it because the two words have direct equivalents in both English and Portuguese.

“Notion” in English often appears with a derogatory adjective—a childish notion, a wild notion, a ridiculous notion. It is an idea that is probably unsound and that is likely to be abandoned in time. Or it is a tentative idea, as in “I have a notion to quit this job and become a hermit.” When you wish to talk about the ideas on which your subject is based, the word you want is probably **concept**, as in “the basic concept behind this approach.” Sometimes **idea** works equally well.

“Then” is used—or should be used—when describing a sequence in time, logic, or a calculation. It is not synonymous with thus or therefore, which refer to a conclusion based on the preceding information. Beware of using “then” when summing up your conclusions, which really require the use of thus or therefore.

“Vast” is what I would call overkill when you want to describe widespread interest, a large body of research, an active literature, or a broad range of applications. The Latin root *vastus* means empty or immense, like the reaches of outer space. Synonyms for vast include enormous, mammoth, colossal, immeasurable, and endless. Do you really want to describe the work output of your colleagues in this manner?

b. Frequently Misused Words

Good words used inappropriately

apparently, evidently
evidences
measure as a noun
namely
previous works
the one, the ones

Here are a few words that were misused in our sample. There are, of course, many other tricky words, but they did not come up in this particular set of papers ... and anyway, we have time for only a selection. Let's look at them quickly.

Evidently, Apparently

Evidently ≠ It is evident that
Apparently ≠ It is apparent that

Better choices: Clearly, Plainly, Obviously, It is evident that ...

In English, Apparently and Evidently are not simply another way of saying that something is evident or apparent. They introduce an element of doubt. When the detective at the crime scene says, “Apparently the victim knew her assailant,” it is still conjecture. The evidence seems to support it, but the case is not yet closed. For a more forceful statement, choose clearly, obviously, or plainly, or spell out “It is evident that ...”

“Evidence” is what linguists call a mass noun. Like soup or courage, it can’t be counted. Therefore you can’t have evidences, plural, or an evidence. The plural form “evidences” was in use during the 19th century, but is now obsolete. The only people who continue to use it are, interestingly, Creationists. When you want to talk about evidence for something, you can refer, collectively, to the body of evidence, a piece of evidence, or much or little evidence, as well as to signs, indications, and data that signal, suggest, or support a hypothesis.

What is a measure?

- a) an official action taken to achieve a desired result, as in "They are taking tougher measures to combat crime."
- b) a division of music
- c) a standard for judging something, as in "Sending flowers is a measure of how much you care."
- d) a unit used for stating the size, quantity or degree of something, as in "The Richter Scale is a measure of ground motion."

None of these is the same as a measurement.

When you measure something, you obtain a measurement, which may then become the subject of an academic paper. One of the errors that recurred in this survey was reference to a measurement as a measure. This is confusing, because there is also a legitimate noun, measure, which has several meanings, one of which is close to measurement but not the same.

Choose measurement when that is
what you mean.

Entanglement measurements have emerged recently as
powerful tools for the study of quantum many-body systems

Follow “namely” with a noun or other specific thing.

Right: This study has a serious limitation, namely, the small sample size.

Wrong: This circumstance allows us to regulate the transition temperature, namely by adjusting the tilt angle α .

The next misused word on our list is Namely. It means “specifically” or “to be specific” and allows you to add emphasis by placing the most important part at the end of your sentence. To work properly, it must be preceded by a general statement and followed by a noun, a number, or some other named thing that raises the level of specificity .

The error I found in several papers was to follow “namely” by something other than a named thing. In the second sentence, “namely” does not fulfill the function of a transition from general to specific. In fact, I don’t see that it fulfills any function. The sentence would be better without it.

“Previous works” is the next misused term. We still talk about the works of Shakespeare and works of art. Why not “previous works” when discussing the physics literature? Because the language has evolved since Shakespeare’s time. A writer’s work is now a mass noun like evidence, soup, and courage and therefore no longer has a plural. We can refer to the writer’s previous work collectively or use other alternatives—earlier studies, an earlier article, or perhaps just Reference numbers.

Use the Pronouns That and Those.

In the continuum limit, the above Hamiltonian is the one of a simple scalar free field theory.

The final misused pair of terms on our list is “the one,” “the ones.” Two pronouns, “that” and “those,” are available to help you refer back to something you just described. For example, consider this sentence.

Use the Pronouns That and Those.

In the continuum limit, the above Hamiltonian is **that** of a simple scalar free field theory.

Not only does “the one” sound clunky, it is grammatically incorrect. When you replace it with the pronoun “that,” you both correct and streamline the sentence.

Use the Pronouns That and Those.

In the continuum limit, the above Hamiltonian is **that** of a simple scalar free field theory.

For fields up to a few kilooersteds, x_0 is small and the numerical integration of Eq. (8) gives a value close to the ones above.

For plurals, use “those” in place of “the ones.”

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That sums up the first category of English problems, Word Choice, which accounted for the most errors in the survey. Time for an exercise in choosing the right word. Please look at the first exercise on your Problem Set. It contains sentences taken directly from the surveyed articles, with blanks to fill in from the choices below. I hope you will recognize both the original error and a correct alternative in each set of choices. We will pause for a few minutes while you do the exercise.

2. Articles (37 occurrences)

When Brazilian writers have problems with articles, the most frequent error is to put “the” before a noun when it is not needed. Not needed in English, that is, but commonly used in Portuguese. How do you identify such nouns?

Brazilian authors - Take care to use no article (the, a, or an) before these types of words

Abstractions	diffusion, orthogonality, disorder
Most plural nouns	correlations, positive-energy states
Plural nouns that follow <i>such</i>	such spin filters, no such spectra
Nouns that follow <i>type of</i> , <i>pair of</i> , <i>choice of</i> , etc.	type of analysis, number of profiles
Eq., Sec., or Fig. numbers	Eq. (5), not the Eq. (5)

Many are abstractions, which are by nature general. They represent a whole category, not a specific case. And of these, many, like Diffusion and Orthogonality, shown here, end in -ion or -ity, which makes them easy to spot.

Plurals rarely take an article, especially not those used in a general sense, as in the expression, "People will talk," which refers to no particular person, just unspecified people out there. This includes plural nouns that follow "such," but I give them their own line because they seem to cause confusion. Singular nouns that follow "such" are preceded by "a" or "an," as are most singular nouns. So, you would say "such spin filters" plural, but "such a spin filter," singular.

However, when you do refer to something plural that is specific, like "the probes in our experiment," you will need to add "the."

Another instance in which you use no article is that of words that follow "choice of," "number of," "pair of," and "type of." That is, you would say "type of regime," not "type of a regime." I think this is because regime shares whatever article precedes "type of," and to say "a type of a regime," would be redundant. Or this may qualify as an English idiom, which is another way of saying, Just do it this way.

Equation, section, and figure numbers are treated like proper names, which take no article in English.

You already know instinctively when to use "a" or "an," and I found only a few instances in which Brazilian writers went wrong on this. Most singular nouns take "a" or "an" by default, the exceptions being when they are an abstraction, as we just saw, and when they are very specific. So, when you are talking about a honeycomb lattice in a general sense, it is preceded by "a," but when it is the honeycomb lattice in your experiment, it is *the* honeycomb lattice.

Finally, you should of course use "the" in front of anything of which there is only one—the best candidate, the final section, the Bethe ansatz.

Unfortunately, the use of articles is not an exact science. There are right uses, wrong uses, and optional uses. The context is a factor in your decision. For example, in a figure caption, greater economy is justified, and even legitimate uses of "the" are often dropped.

One more comment about the Brazilian tendency to use too many "the's": A sentence that contains three or more uses of the article "the" may suffer from **wordiness**. Even though each use is defensible and correct, the overall sentence is likely to be clumsy and inelegant. There are two possible ways to address this problem. One is to consider whether you can remove some the's or perhaps replace one with a or an. Another is to rewrite the sentence entirely. I will have more to say about this tomorrow when we discuss Wordiness.

This is probably more than you wanted to know about articles, which are such small words that they seem trivial. But the numbers do not lie. They are a problem for speakers of Portuguese. In the hope that doing an exercise will help to clarify the subject, I've given you in your Problem Set a page of sentences that use articles incorrectly. This time there will be no multiple choice. Please read the sentences—all taken from the surveyed articles—and correct as needed. We'll pause for a few minutes while you work on this.

3. Prepositions (27 occurrences)

Certain nouns are always followed by “of,” others by “from,” “for,” or “to.” There are enough of these noun-plus-preposition pairings to fill a whole lecture, if we could stay awake long enough to hear it. But we do not have that much time, so I have chosen a few that gave the most trouble in the surveyed articles. They are based on four prepositions, With, Of, To, and On. Here are those using With and Of:

Learn These Useful Expressions, Part I

Expressions Using With

associated with
in agreement with
in contact with

Expressions Using Of

investigation of
analysis of
study of
understanding of

Notice our friend “associated with”. Using your knowledge of these expressions, can you spot the errors in these sentences?

Can you spot the incorrect prepositions?

1. See Ref. [23] for a critical study on more general states.

Can you spot the incorrect prepositions?

1. See Ref. [23] for a critical [study of](#) more general states.

Can you spot the incorrect prepositions?

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2. Our results are in agreement to those of Adams *et al*.

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Moving on, here are some expressions using To and On:

Learn These Useful Expressions, Part II

Expressions Using To

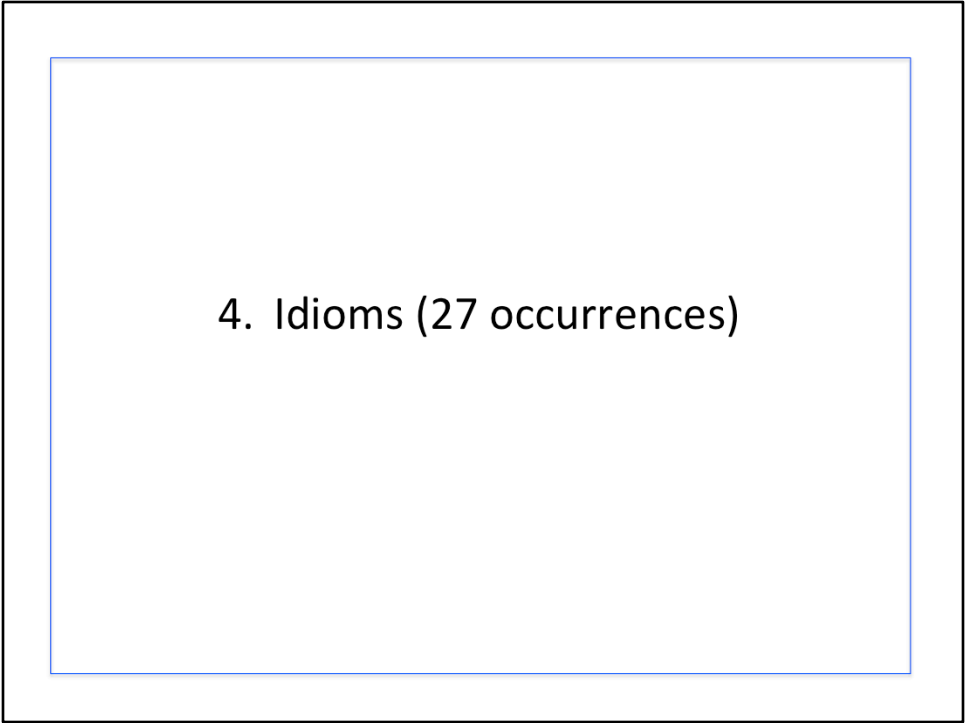
related to
close to
in contrast to
peculiar to

Expressions Using On

dependence on (not with)
effect on
report on

These are probably all familiar to you, with the exception of “peculiar to,” an expression that has nothing to do with oddness. It has the meaning “uniquely found in” or “characteristic of.” For example, Laughter is peculiar to the human species.

The next and last Problem Set for today features sentences from the surveyed articles that use---or should have used---the four prepositions With, Of, To, and On. Please take a few minutes to find and correct the errors.



4. Idioms (27 occurrences)

We are now up to the last item we'll look at for today, Item 4, Idioms. The remainder of the list we'll save for tomorrow.

English, like any other language, has some expressions or sayings that are peculiar to it. (Notice I did not say that they are peculiar, but peculiar to English—that is, uniquely English.). Some of these are quite colorful or slangy, as well as inappropriate for a scientific journal. We will not discuss them. Others, however, will help to make your writing style smoother and decrease the perceived distance between you and your reader—if you get them right. The surveyed articles contained 27 near misses, evidence that the authors were trying but did not quite produce what a native speaker of English would have said.

What are the correct versions of these idioms?

Wrong

in the view of this result

in most of the cases

for the sake of simplicity

up to the moment

we need not to consider

arguably considered the best

Right

in view of this result

in most cases

for simplicity

until now (or up to now)

we need not consider

arguably the best

Often where people go wrong with idioms is in adding words—not taking advantage of the economy of the original expression. To demonstrate this, let's look at some expanded (unidiomatic) phrases and their correct, more compact originals.

Well, you get the idea. Of course there are other expressions in which this principle does not apply. For some, it's a preposition that causes a stumble. Three that people confuse are *During* preparation, *Under* investigation, and *Upon* completion. But there are too many to cover in the time we have. I encourage you to use the idioms you know—they will add panache to your writing—but check them with a native English speaker if possible before submitting the article.

This completes today's look at Brazilian English, as represented by the 16 articles I surveyed. Tomorrow we will move a little faster and, I hope, have time for more questions and discussion. If you are an author of one of the papers in the survey, and you did not recognize a sentence from your paper in today's examples, perhaps tomorrow you'll be luckier. Until then, thank you for coming..