

## **Abstract**

The aim of the present thesis is to describe lexical characteristics of Portuguese spoken in the island of Madeira and to study proliferation of lexical regionalisms among its users whose speech is not as likely to carry dialectal traits. We first introduce the Madeiran dialects in the context of the European Portuguese variant and observe their evolution not only from the perspective of Portugal's past and present, but also the history of Portuguese linguistics. Chapter 2 focuses on describing commonly recognized characteristic traits of the Madeiran dialects on all planes of language – phonetic, morphosyntactic, and lexical. The lexical aspect comes into focus in the final part of the thesis where we present our own research regarding knowledge and use of regionalisms among Portuguese speakers in Madeira who have concluded secondary or college education. Their speech is typically perceived to be less likely to exhibit traits of dialects in comparison to their less educated counterparts. As societies develop and change however, they may play an essential role in preserving the dialects so typical for Madeira. Our research was therefore designed to find out how alive regionalisms are among these speakers.