

The singular case of clitic doubling in Brazilian Portuguese

Johnnatan Nascimento, Université du Québec à Montréal

Background: Corpus studies have attested clitic doubling constructions in the *Mineirês* dialect of Brazilian Portuguese (Rocha 2010; 2011). According to them, doubling is optional and occurs only in the object position for first and second person singular. Rocha & Ramos (2016) argued that those constructions are in fact instances of ϕ -agreement and are based-generated in a Clitic Phrase that may or may not be present, hence the optionality.

The data: In the object position, first and second person singular clitics and full pronouns are both alternatively optional. (1) below shows how it works for second person. In (3), the third person complement can be either a full pronoun or a clitic, while clitic doubling is ungrammatical:

- (1) *Ana te viu você*
Ana 2SG .CL see.PAST.3SG 2SG
Ana te viu
Ana 2SG.CL see.PAST.3 2SG
Ana viu você
Ana see.PAST.3SG 2SG
'Ana saw you'
- (2) a. *Eu a vi*
1SG 3SG.CL see.PAST.1SG
b. *Eu vi ela*
1SG see.PAST.1PS 3SG
c. **Eu a vi ela*
1SG 3SG.CL see.PAST.1SG 3SG
'I saw her'

Claims: I propose that sentences in (1) are true instances of clitic doubling and not of pure ϕ -agreement, as proposed by Rocha & Ramos (2016), based on tests from Nevins (2011), Kramer (2014) and Preminger (2009; 2014). I propose that first and second person singular clitics are generated in a big- ϕ P structure (Uriagereka 1995; Déchaine & Wiltschko 2002; Roberts 2010) and move to vP due to a probe π that searches for [PARTICIPANT], but not for [NUMBER]. I adopt Deal's (2015) proposal that probes can be specified for particular ϕ -features and Preminger's (2014) simplified feature geometry based on Harley & Ritter (2002), in which a [PARTICIPANT] feature is not dependent on the presence of [NUMBER], so they can probe separately. As a consequence, third- person and plural doubled clitics result in ungrammatical sentences.

Puzzle: First person plural objects seems to be a challenge to the claim above and to many accounts for clitic doubling and clitic generation:

- (3) a. *Ana nos viu*
Ana 1PL.CL see.PAST.3SG
b. *Ana viu nós/a gente*
Ana see.PAST.3SG 1PL
c. **Ana nos viu nós/a gente*
Ana 1PL.CL see.PAST.3SG 1PL
'Ana saw us'

The fact that clitic doubling of a [PARTICIPANT] pronoun is ungrammatical raises questions to how this SINGULAR>PLURAL hierarchy can be explained since it has been argued that the relevant syntactic feature is [PLURAL] (Nevins, 2011). These data are a challenge to Preminger's (2019) proposal that all instances of clitics are in fact clitic doubling, and also Coon & Keine's (2018) perspective on feature gluttony, by which clitic doubling is generated through a probe that is applied to more than one goal, successively. A different solution would be to adopt Nevins (2011) proposal that for some constructions the big-DP would not be available, which seems to be very *ad hoc* in this case. In my presentation, I will discuss these possible analyses and where this research has already led in terms of analysis and explanation.

Contribution: This work contributes against the scarcity of publications on clitic doubling in Brazilian Portuguese and its dialects. It presents a challenging hierarchy effect phenomenon combining person (1st, 2nd) and number that could help us understand better how clitics are generated and how clitic doubling works.

References

- Coon, Jessica & Stefan Keine. 2018. Feature gluttony. *Ms. McGill University, University of Southern California*.
- Deal, Amy Rose. 2015. Interaction and satisfaction in ϕ -agreement. In *Proceedings of NELS*, Vol. 45.
- Déchaine, Rose-agreemeMarie & Martina Wiltschko. 2002. Decomposing pronouns. *Linguistic Inquiry* 33(3). 409-442.
- Harley, Heidi & Elizabeth Ritter. 2002. Person and number in pronouns: A feature-agreement geometric analysis. *Language* 482-526.
- Kramer, Ruth. 2014. Clitic doubling or object agreement: The view from Amharic. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 32(2). 593-634.
- Nevins, Andrew. 2011. Multiple agree with clitics: Person complementarity vs. omnivorous number. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 29(4). 939-971.
- Preminger, Omer. 2009. Breaking agreements: Distinguishing agreement and clitic doubling by their failures. *Linguistic Inquiry* 40(4). 619-666.
- Preminger, Omer. 2011. Asymmetries between person and number in syntax: a commentary on Baker's SCOPA. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 29(4). 917-937.
- Preminger, Omer. 2014. *Agreement and its failures* Vol. 68. MIT Press.
- Preminger, Omer. 2019. What the PCC tells us about "abstract" agreement, head movement, and locality. *Glossa: A Journal of General Linguistics* 4(1).
- Roberts, Ian G. 2010. *Agreement and head movement: Clitics, incorporation, and defective goals* Vol. 59. MIT Press.
- Rocha, Ricardo Machado. 2010. Morfossintaxe de Caso nos Pronomes Pessoais do PB/MG atual. *Ph.D. Thesis, UFMG, Brazil*.
- Rocha, Ricardo Machado. 2011. A reanálise de clíticos redobros como prefixos de concordância em falares mineiros. *Anais Do SILEL*. Vol2 (2). 1-17.

Rocha, Ricardo Machado & Jania Martins Ramos. 2016. Clitic doubling and pure agreement person features. *Revista de Estudos Da Linguagem* 24(2). 378-416.

Uriagereka, Juan. 1995. Aspects of the syntax of clitic placement in Western Romance. *Linguistic Inquiry* 26(1). 79-123.