

Clitic-placement in the history of Brazilian Portuguese: a case of three-grammar competition

Zenaide Carneiro, Universidade Estadual de Feira de Santana, novaisz@ig.com.br

Charlotte Galves, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, galvesc@unicamp.br

In private correspondence written by educated and non-educated Brazilian people during the 19th century, we find variation between enclisis and proclisis in all syntactic contexts. This departs from both modern Brazilian and European Portuguese (henceforth respectively BP and EP) and for Classical Portuguese (henceforth CIP). Some examples of this variation can be found below:

- (1) Mando-**vos** 1 frigideira (CIP^{ok}, EP^{ok}, BP*)
(I) send-to-you a pan
- (2) **Me** foi entregue sua carta de 8 do vigente (CIP*, EP*, BP^{ok})
To me was delivered your letter from 8 of this month
- (3) Dr Urpia visita-**me** (CIP^{ok}, EP^{ok}, BP*)
Dr Urpia visits-me
- (4) Osorio **me** escreve (CIP^{ok}, EP*, BP^{ok})
Osorio to-me-writes
- (5) Não chegou-**nos** os benefícios da República (CIP*, EP*, BP*)
NEG arrived-to-us the benefits of Republic
- (6) Não **me** nego de forma alguma (CIP^{ok}, EP^{ok}, BP^{ok})
NEG myself-deny in any way
- (7) Foi o Freire que salvou-**me** (CIP*, EP*, BP*)
(it) was Freire that saved-me

In this talk, we shall argue that this variation is the effect of a competition between those three grammars. By grammars, we understand I-languages generating different structures, potentially instantiated as identical utterances. We use the notion of Competition of grammars as initially introduced by Kroch (1994).

We shall assume the following analyses of clitic-placement:

CIP enclisis derives from the Tobler Mussafia law, understood as a restriction on the alignment of clitics with the Intonational phrase boundary (cf. Salvi 1990, Benincà 1995 and Galves Britto & Paixão de Sousa 2005)

EP enclisis derives from the restriction on the alignment of clitics with the first X' of the clause (cf. Galves and Sândalo 2004)

BP generalized proclisis is due to the absence of such restrictions. Additionally, clitics in BP are attached to V, and not to INFL (cf. Galves, Moraes and Ribeiro 2005).

The basis of the analysis is a corpus of letters written by Brazilian people born between 1750 and 1850 edited by Carneiro (2005). Additional data is drawn from other corpora of Brazilian texts written in Brazil at the same period.

Comparing her corpus with the authors of the *Tycho Brahe Corpus* born at the same time, Carneiro observes an increase of enclisis in V2 context that is parallel to what happens in Portuguese texts, with roughly a 50-year delay. The same result is obtained by Pagotto (1992). This shows that Brazilian 19th c. texts instantiate the competition between CIP and EP observed in the Portuguese texts from 1700 on (cf. Galves Britto & Paixão de Sousa 2005).

But crucially, at the same time, we find evidence that the vernacular grammar, BP, is already active in written texts, since there are occurrences of proclisis in absolute first position, as in (2) above (7% of the cases for educated people and 15% for non-educated people), as well as non-ambiguous cases of AUX cl-PP, another Brazilian innovation, illustrated below:

- (8) ... tem por artimanha se apossado (CIP*, EP*, BP^{ok})
... has by trickery to-himself appropriated

We thus find two opposite tendencies in the texts written in Brazil in the 19th century: on one hand, the increase of enclisis, which mimics the evolution of European Portuguese at this time, and, on the other hand, the presence of proclisis in previously impossible contexts, which attests the emergence of the BP grammar in written texts. This produces a mixture of data, which cannot be accounted for without using the notion of competition of grammars proposed by Kroch (1994). Furthermore, the data shows that such a competition can occur between more than 2 grammars.

Interestingly, we also find utterances that are produced by none of the three grammars mentioned above, namely, enclisis in constructions in which proclisis is categorical in the whole history of European Portuguese, and which contradicts the BP generalized proclisis (cf. (5) and (7) above).

The existence of those utterances sheds a new light on the phenomenon of grammar competition. In effect, comparing educated and non-educated authors in her corpus, Carneiro (2005) finds that there is more enclisis in V2 configurations in the latter than in the former. This is an unexpected result since we would expect that less educated people use more proclisis in V2 as they use more proclisis in absolute first position. The fact that they use more enclisis in the contexts like (5) above (15% in negative sentences, vs. 3% for educated people) evidences the fact that they do not use enclisis according to the EP grammar. In fact, no known grammar generates sentences like (5) and (7). This allows us to hypothesize that the higher frequency of enclisis produced by non-educated people, even in grammatical sentences, is, paradoxically, due to their imperfect acquisition of the standard language.

To sum up, the history of clitic-placement in Brazilian Portuguese provides us with a more complex picture of grammar competition, which can be thought of as an embedding of competitions. Like in the simpler case, the vernacular eventually wins, as it can be seen in Pagotto's study: at some point - the beginning of the 20th century according to Pagotto - enclisis in V2 begins to decrease. But the course of the change is different. We shall discuss implications of this kind of changes for models of linguistic change.

References:

CARNEIRO, Z. 2005 *Cartas da Bahia: um estudo linguístico-filológico*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Unicamp.

GALVES, C. and Sândalo, F. 2004.. Clitic-Placement in European Portuguese and the Syntax-Phonology Interface. In A. Castro, M. Ferreira, V. Hacquard and A. P. Salanova. eds., *Romance Op. 47, Collected Papers on Romance syntax, MIT Working Papers in Linguistics 47*:115-128.

GALVES, C., Britto, H. and Paixão de Sousa, M. C. 2005 "The Change in Clitic Placement from Classical to Modern European Portuguese: Results from the Tycho Brahe Corpus", to appear in *Journal of Portuguese Linguistics*, <http://www.ime.usp.br/~tycho/papers>

KROCH, A. 1994. "Morphosyntactic variation", in K. Beals et al. (eds.), *Papers from the 30th Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistics Society: Parasession on Variation and Linguistic Theory*, vol. 2, pp. 180-201.

PAGOTTO, E. 1992 *A Posição dos Clíticos em Português: Um Estudo Diacrônico*. Unpublished MA Dissertation, UNICAMP.

SALVI, G. (1990). La Sopravvivenza della Legge di Wackernagel nei Dialettioccidentali della Penisola Iberica. *Medioevo Romano* 15:177-210.