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## **LOCATIVE INVERSION AND AGREEMENT PATTERNS: PARALLELISMS BETWEEN BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE AND BANTU LANGUAGES**

*Juanito Avelar, Sonia Cyrino and Charlotte Galves  
University of Campinas*

### **1. Introduction**

Adopting the minimalist version of the Theory of Principles and Parameters (Chomsky 1995), this paper concentrates on some facts in non-standard Brazilian Portuguese involving locative phrases that may be associated with properties largely found in Bantu languages. These facts are illustrated by the sentences with the transitive verbs *vender* ‘to sell’ and *plantar* ‘to plant’ in (1) below, which reveal a prominent contrast between Brazilian Portuguese (BP) and European Portuguese (EP).

- |     |    |  |   |         |
|-----|----|--|---|---------|
| (1) | a. | Vende<br>sells<br>EP/*BP:                | muitos<br>many<br>'(S)he sells many books.'   | livros. |
|     | b. | Naquela<br>in-that<br>EP/*BP:<br>*EP/BP: | loja vende muitos<br>shop sells many<br>'In that shop, (s)he sells books.'<br>'That shop sells many books.'   | livros. |
| (2) | a. | Planta<br>plants<br>EP/*BP:              | todo tipo de legume.<br>all kind of legume<br>'(S)he plants all kinds of legumes.'  |         |
|     | b. | Naquela<br>in-that<br>EP/*BP:<br>*EP/BP: | fazenda planta todo tipo de legume.<br>farm plants all kind of legume<br>'In that farm, (s)he plants all kinds of legumes.'<br>'In that farm, one plants all kinds of legumes.' or<br>'In that farm, all kinds of legumes are planted.' |         |

In EP, the (a) sentences must correspond to constructions with referential null subject; by contrast, in out-of-the-blue context, these same sentences are ungrammatical in BP, a fact that is consensually analyzed as a result of restrictions on null referential subjects (Galves 1993, Duarte 1995, Figueiredo Silva 1996, Ferreira 2000, Rodrigues 2002, among others). The instances in (b), however, reveal that, in BP, a locative prepositional phrase can rescue a sentence without a phonological external argument from the ungrammaticality. Note that, in (1b)-(2b), the locative prepositional phrases *naquela loja* ‘in that shop’ and

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*naquela fazenda* ‘in that farm’, respectively, appear in preverbal position, in place of the external argument. BP speakers assign these sentences a value in which the locative phrase can be taken as a subject, whereas EP speakers interpret this same sentence as a construction with null referential subject.

Starting from a previous hypothesis presented in Avelar & Cyrino (2008), we will suggest that the relevant differences between BP and EP result from an influence of Bantu languages on the syntax of the Portuguese variety emerged in Brazil, given that Brazil received millions of African slaves along almost four centuries, and most of them were native speakers of Bantu languages. Adopting the framework of the Principles and Parameters Theory, we will show that locative prepositional phrases in BP present syntactic properties commonly observed in this language group.<sup>1</sup>

We will also compare Brazilian Portuguese facts with the ones detected in Mozambican Portuguese. According to Gonçalves & Chimbutane (2004), many properties found in Mozambican Portuguese are inherited from the native languages of learners of Portuguese as L2. It will be shown that, if we resort to this same idea in order to explain the particularities in (1)-(2), some of the contrasts between BP and EP involving the syntax of locative phrases can be straightforwardly explained.

This paper is divided as follow: in section 2, we present patterns of locative inversion in BP; in section 3, we point out some properties of locative inversion in Bantu languages, in order to compare them with properties identified in BP; in section 3, we discuss some parallelisms between Brazilian and Mozambican Portuguese concerning properties of locative phrases; in section 4, this paper is concluded.

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<sup>1</sup> The idea we are pursuing here is the same that Negrão & Viotti (2008) argue for about possible influences of African languages. According to Negrão & Viotti, the new syntactic patterns of impersonal sentences in Brazilian Portuguese may result from Kimbundu strategies of passivization. Although the technical approach we will suggested here is different from the one suggested by Negrão & Viotti, we think that both the analysis can reveal that the relevant innovations of Brazilian Portuguese cannot be attributed to a supposedly natural development of the European Portuguese in America. Rather, we share the idea that there are interesting aspects showing that the syntax of Portuguese was not free from the languages spoken by millions and millions of slaves who arrived here.