

## From European to Brazilian Portuguese: a Parameter Network Approach

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One of the main differences between Brazilian Portuguese (henceforth BP) and European Portuguese (henceforth EP) has to do with agreement. In BP, but not in EP, non-arguments in pre-verbal position can agree with the verb (cf. 1). Moreover, agreement in colloquial BP is very much variable, even when the subject is in pre-verbal position (cf. 2). Finally, with arbitrary null subjects, the verb can also bear either a 3rd singular or a 3rd plural ending (cf. 3).

In this talk, we address the issue of the change from a language like EP to a language like BP. Note that, although the language we observe in the 16th and 17th century Portuguese documents displays several syntactic properties that distinguish it from the language spoken in Portugal in the modern times, it behaves in the same way as far as agreement is concerned. We can therefore assume that the parametric values of 16th-17th century Portuguese are, with respect to the phenomena considered in this presentation, the same as those of the modern language. Therefore, for the purposes of this talk, EP will also refer to the language that was carried to Brazil by the Portuguese colonists.

Our analysis takes into consideration the fact that the change from EP to BP was strongly contact-induced, since Portuguese was learned as a second language by millions of African slaves, who were native speakers of Niger-Congo languages, with a great predominance of Bantu languages in the first period of the slave traffic. It is important to emphasize that these speakers were the main agents of the spreading of Portuguese in the Brazilian territory. The emergence of BP is therefore a neat illustration of the so-called "irregular linguistic transmission". However, at the same time, native speakers of Portuguese never ceased to come to the colony, in particular during the 18th century, when the gold fever attracted hundred of thousand Europeans to Brazil. From an acquisitional point of view, this must have created a situation in which the Primary Linguistic Data became both strongly p-ambiguous and weakly p-ambiguous (Roberts 2007). In the network model of parameters this author has been developing (cf. Roberts and Holmberg 2010), the effect of such an acquisition strategy is that the dynamics of language change, induced by acquisition, is in the direction of the top of the parameter tree, because the higher a language is, the less marked it is, since the expression of the parameter is simpler at the top, than deeper in the tree. We shall argue that this model is able to shed a new light on the change from EP to BP, and that conversely, the history of Portuguese in Brazil strongly supports it, as the same time it enables us to address the role of linguistic contact in this framework.

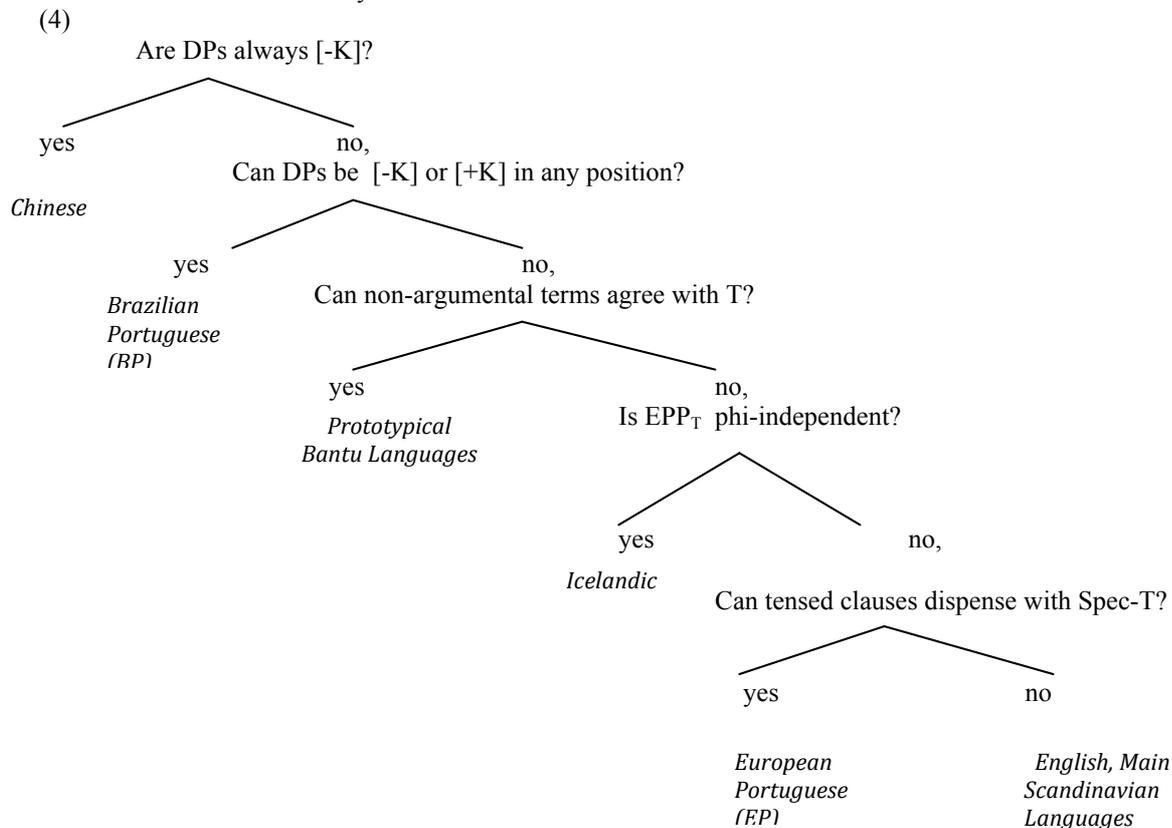
We will show that the different behavior of EP and BP with respect to agreement, as well as to several other syntactic differences, is due to the opposite value the two languages assign to two parameters. One is the  $[-/+K]$  marking of nominals, that is, whether DPs can be inserted in the derivation without a Case feature to be valued, set to *yes* in BP and to *no* in EP. The other property is the phi-independence of the EPP feature of T (cf. Holmberg 2010), also set to *yes* in BP and to *no* in EP. We construct the parameter tree in (4) taking into consideration the fact that those two parameters strongly interact, since in the languages in which nominals are, or can be  $[-K]$ , T's EPP-features must be phi-independent. Therefore, the positive answer to the  $[-K]$  marking implies a positive answer to the phi-independence of the EPP features of T, and the question of whether the EPP features of T are phi-independent or not is relevant only for the languages that cannot be  $[-K]$ . This means that the languages in which the DPs cannot be  $[-K]$  need a longer description and are more marked in Roberts (2007)'s sense. This model therefore assigns to BP a position higher than EP, in accordance with the prediction made by the acquisition model.

As for Bantu languages, they are in an intermediate position since subjects in Spec/TP must agree with the phi-features of Tense while DPs in internal argument positions can be  $[-K]$  as shown by the invariant pronominal morphology. But they also have agreement with non-argument in Spec/TP (cf. Baker 2003). Their position in (4) is also in accordance with the prediction made by the acquisition model in the special case in which linguistic change is caused by language contact: we expect the new emerging language to be higher in the parameter tree than both languages in contact.

An interesting consequence of the analysis proposed here is that it allows us to include the properties of null subjects in (4). Recall that EP is a *consistent* null-subject language whereas BP is a *partial* null-subject language. According to Holmberg (2010), partial null subject languages are languages in which the EPP-features of T are phi-independent. If we assume conversely that all the phi-independent EPP features languages have partial null subjects (which is true for the languages mentioned in (4)), partial null subject languages are less marked than consistent null-subject languages, since only for the latter is the null subject property a matter of independent choice. In this model, we therefore predict that languages change from complete null subject languages to partial null subject languages, rather than to non null subject languages, unless the property of null subject is dependent on a parametric choice absent from (4), as has been argued for Old French (cf. Adams 1987). Note also that the proposal in (4) seems, w.r.t null subjects, more empirically grounded than the proposal

in Roberts and Holmberg (2010), which predicts change from both non-pro-drop and pro-drop languages to polysynthetic languages, and from polysynthetic languages to radical pro-drop languages. It also looks more consistent than the proposal in Holmberg (2010) with the study of change in the framework considered so far, which gives markedness a crucial role.

- (1) Os carros furaram o pneu (BP<sup>OK</sup>/EP\*)  
*the cars punctured.3PL the tire*  
 ‘The cars’ tire has punctured.’
- (2)a. As crianças brincavam na varanda. (BP<sup>OK</sup>/EP<sup>OK</sup>)  
*the.PL children played.3PL in-the veranda*
- (2)b. As crianças brincava (na varanda. (BP<sup>OK</sup>/EP\*)  
*the.PL children played.3SG in-the veranda*  
 ‘The children played in the veranda.’
- (3)a. Naquele restaurante fazem pro<sub>generic(3PL)</sub> pratos maravilhosos (BP<sup>OK</sup>/EP<sup>OK</sup>)  
*in-that restaurant do.3PL meal marvelous*
- (3)b. Naquele restaurante faz pro<sub>generic(3SG)</sub> pratos maravilhosos. (BP<sup>OK</sup>/EP\*)  
*in-that restaurant do.3SG meal marvelous*  
 In that restaurant they do marvelous meals



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