

Discontinuous noun phrases and remnant-internal relativization in the diachrony of Portuguese

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In the syntactic literature, the notion of a phrase is used to refer to a group of words that behave syntactically (and semantically) as a single unit. More often than not, the elements that make up a phrase are continuous, i.e., they involve words that appear next to one another. However, phrases may also surface in a discontinuous manner, split up into two or more parts. This can be observed in different phrase types (e.g., noun phrases, prepositional phrases) and in different linguistic environments.

This study focuses on discontinuous noun phrases that arise in the context of restrictive relative clauses (RRC), as illustrated in (1)-(4), from earlier stages of Portuguese. In this construction, an element that is thematically dependent on the head noun (either as a complement or as a modifier) does not appear adjacent to it but rather in an RRC-internal position.

- (1) Casos que Adamastor contou futuros
cases:MASC.PL that A. told future:MASC.PL
'(the) future events that Adamastor foresaw'
(L. de Camões, *Os Lusíadas*, Book V, 60, 16th century, cited in Lausberg 1972§331)
- (2) os livros que eu compus da philosophia
the books that I wrote of.the philosophy
'the books of philosophy that I wrote'
(D. Pedro, *Livro dos Offícios*, 15th century, in Pádua 1960: 70, cited in Martins 2004)
- (3) e qualquer que de nos primeiro morer
and any that of us first die:FUT.SUBJ
'and whoever of us first die'
(Martins 2001; *Doc. Portugueses do Noroeste e da Região de Lisboa*; year 1266)
- (4) e esto por prool e verdade de hũa Licença
and this by favor and truth of a license
que do dito senhor pera ello tenho
that from.the mentioned man for that have:1SG
'... and (I wrote this document) under the benefit and truth of a license from the aforementioned man that I have to (make) it.'
(Martins 2001; *Doc. Portugueses do Noroeste e da Região de Lisboa*; year 1540)

In (1) and (2), the modifier/complement surfaces in the rightmost position of the noun phrase. For this reason, it can be structurally analyzed as occurring either in an RRC-internal position or in an RRC-external position as a second modifier following the RRC. However, the fact that the modifier/complement may occur in other positions than the rightmost one, namely in the left periphery of the relative clause (see (3)-(4)), shows that it is structurally RRC-internal.

The present study shows that the constructions displayed in (1)-(4) (henceforth referred to as *remnant-internal relativization*) are of particular interest from a theoretical, typological and diachronic point of view.

Theoretically, I submit that remnant-internal relativization can illuminate the long-standing debate between the right adjunction analysis of RRCs (originally proposed by Ross 1967, Chomsky 1977 and Jackendoff 1977) and the raising analysis of RRCs (originally proposed by Schachter 1973 and Vergnaud 1974, 1985, and more recently revived by Kayne 1994, Bianchi 1999 and De Vries 2002), providing evidence in favor of the latter. Two main arguments are provided to support this claim. First, if the head and its modifier/complement

were base-generated together in an RRC-external position (as proposed by the right adjunction analysis), the pattern in (3)-(4) could not be derived as it would require lowering the modifier/complement to a non-c-commanding position (see Fiengo 1977). Second, if the head and its modifier/complement were generated separately (the head being CP-external – as proposed by the adjunction analysis – and the modifier/complement being CP-internal), the semantic dependency between the head and its modifier/complement (requiring that these elements be in a structural relation at some point of the derivation) would not be satisfied.

From a typological perspective, cross-linguistic systematizations have yielded evidence for the idea that discontinuous noun phrases are frequently found in the world's languages, although they are quite uncommon in Western European languages (see Fanselow and Féry 2006). This study contributes to elucidate this issue, by showing that the areal distribution of discontinuous noun phrases changes considerably when we look at Latin and earlier stages of Romance languages (see Pinkster 2005, Devine and Stephens 2006).

Diachronically, I will show that Contemporary European Portuguese (CEP) contrasts with earlier stages of Portuguese with respect to remnant-internal relativization. As illustrated in (5), this construction is possible with the modifier in the rightmost position, but not with the modifier in the left periphery of the RRC.

- (5) a. uma filha que eu tenho pequena
 a daughter that I have young
 lit. 'a young daughter that I have'
- b. *uma filha que pequena eu tenho
 a daughter that young I have

I submit that the contrast between CEP and earlier stages of Portuguese can be reduced to an independent change that took place in the history of Portuguese, namely the loss of a focus-dedicated position in the left periphery of embedded clauses. In earlier stages of Portuguese there is a focus position available in the left periphery of dependent and non-dependent clauses, whereas in CEP this position is no longer available in dependent clauses or, at least, in some types of dependent clauses. This hypothesis is consistent with the quantitative results of Martins (1994, 2001), which indicate that the frequency of preposed contrastive foci structures decreased significantly after the 17th century.

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