

# Non-Topicalized Preverbal Subjects in Brazilian Portuguese, Compared to Italian

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**Abstract** This paper investigates the syntax of non-topicalized preverbal subjects in Brazilian Portuguese (BP). In BP, both locative PPs and locative DPs can occur in preverbal position: *Na escola do Pedro aceita cartão de crédito*; *A escola do Pedro aceita cartão de crédito*. In the latter case, the verb agrees with the locative. In BP, it is also possible to find non-argument constituents triggering verbal agreement, as in *Essa estante cabe muitos livros*. These sentences have been analysed as innovative constructions restricted to BP. This paper shows that some of the above structures are also present in other languages, e.g. Italian; not all of them are therefore innovative constructions of BP, and subcases need to be differentiated. The hypothesis is that sentences with preverbal non-argumental subjects have the same syntax as sentences with argumental subjects. What seems to occur in some cases is a modification in the verb thematic grid. We interpret BP's "flexible diathesis" patterns as revealing that in this grammar, a variety of verbs have undergone a modification of their thematic grid which their counterparts in European Portuguese and other Romance languages did not.

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## 1 Introduction

In this paper, we investigate the syntax of non-topicalized preverbal subjects of Brazilian Portuguese (henceforth BP) in a comparative perspective with Italian.<sup>1</sup> The basic word order of BP is SVO, with the initial position

1 We would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for comments and helpful suggestions. Needless to say, all errors are ours.

usually being filled. BP is classified as a partial null subject language (Kato, Negrão 2000).

We first show that in BP, preverbal subject DPs behave differently from topics. The discussion about the syntax of non-topicalized preverbal subjects in BP will be useful to analyse sentence-initial locative PPs and DPs. We show that they occur in the preverbal subject position on a par with non-topicalized logical subjects and are not left-dislocated. Examples of constructions with preverbal locative PPs are provided in (1) (Avelar 2009; Avelar, Cyrino 2008; Avelar, Galves 2011, 2013). The locative PP occurs in preverbal position, and the verb may be singular or plural. In both cases, an arbitrary interpretation of the subject is obtained, an interpretation that occurs in other Romance languages only in the plural.

- (1) a. Naquela loja vende/vendem livros.  
in that store sells/sell books  
b. Na rádio da universidade toca/tocam as minhas músicas prediletas.  
on radio of.the university plays/play my songs favorite

The locative phrase can also appear in preverbal position without the preposition, i.e. as a DP (2). In this case, number agreement with the preverbal DP is obligatory.

- (2) a. Aquela loja vende/\*vendem livros.  
that store sells/\*sell books  
b. A rádio da universidade toca/\*tocam as minhas músicas prediletas.  
the radio of.the university play/\*play my songs favorite

Some authors classify sentences (1)-(2) as innovative constructions of BP (cf. Pontes 1987; Galves 2001; Negrão, Viotti 2008, 2011, 2014; Avelar 2009; Avelar, Galves 2011, 2013; Munhoz, Naves 2012). They also argue that this type of sentences is restricted to topic-prominent languages and classify BP as a discourse-oriented language, as opposed to subject-prominent languages like European Portuguese, Italian, English, etc. The contrast between (1) and (2) suggests that preverbal locative PPs should not receive the same syntactic treatment as preverbal 'locative' DPs. The preverbal DP can also be a 'possessive' phrase (examples (3) from Avelar, Galves 2013, 113).<sup>2</sup>

2 Costa (2010, 134 fn.1) notes that sentences such as *Os meus vizinhos morreram a mãe* ('my neighbors died-3pl the mother') and *As minhas duas árvores apodreceram a raiz* ('my two trees rotten-3pl the root') are not natural to some BP speakers. According to him, this marginality questions the productivity of this process in BP. The first author of this paper has different grammaticality judgments from Avelar and Galves (2011, 2013) with respect to some of the sentences discussed. In general, we think that preverbal 'locative' DPs are

- (3) a. As crianças estão nascendo o dentinho.  
 the children are being born the tooth-DIM  
 b. Os carros acabaram a gasolina no meio da viagem.  
 the cars finish the gasoline in.the middle of.the trip

The authors follow Pontes (1987) in classifying preverbal DPs that are not logical subjects as 'subject-topics' in A'-position (Avelar, Galves 2011). We will show that this analysis makes wrong empirical predictions about BP. There is no evidence that the structural position of the subject is of type A' and the DP in (3) occurs in topic position. On the contrary, these data support the hypothesis that in addition to the default subject position, related to the Case-agreement system, one further subject position exists, as suggested by Cardinaletti (1997, 2004) on the basis of Italian data.

The goal of this paper is to analyze the different instances of non-topicalized preverbal subjects found in BP. We first show that licensing conditions for preverbal subjects and topics are different, which is presumably connected to their different syntactic positions. We also propose a non-uniform analysis for preverbal locative PPs and DPs, both different from topics in BP. All data are compared with Italian in order to show that some of the structures analysed as innovative and restricted to BP in previous literature are indeed also present in this language and that the two languages share a similar syntax but differ in the lexical properties of different classes of verbs.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2 we give a general description of the status of preverbal subjects in BP and show that preverbal subjects and topics occur in different positions. Section 3 presents their different semantic properties. Section 4 discusses the two preverbal subject positions. In section 5 we discuss the properties of preverbal locative PPs in BP and show that they are not left-dislocated, but occur in the highest subject position SpecSubjP. In sections 6 and 7, we present the properties of preverbal locative DPs in BP. In sections 8 and 9, preverbal possessive and theme DPs are discussed. Sections 5 to 8 also contain the comparison with Italian. Section 10 concludes the paper.

more natural than preverbal genitive/possessive DPs, which are restricted to the class of unaccusative verbs. A sentence with the displacement of the theme/patient DP (*Meu jardim destruiu todo com a reforma* 'my garden has destroyed all with the reform', see (76a) below) is more natural, as Negrão and Viotti (2014) show.

## 2 The Position of Preverbal Subjects in BP: Left-Periphery or SpecTP?

In BP, subjects appear in preverbal position with all verbs: transitive (4a), unergative (4b), and unaccusative verbs (4c).

- (4) a. Maria comprou uma casa.  
Maria bought a house  
b. João canta nos fins de semana.  
João sings on the weekends  
c. Pedro chegou.  
Pedro arrived

Some authors argue that in BP, preverbal subjects are left-dislocated in a position of the CP domain (Galves 2001; Kato, Negrão 2000), on a par with what has been proposed for null subject languages (Alexiadou, Anagnostopoulou 1998; Barbosa 2000, 2006; Ordóñez 1997). Other authors however argue that in null subject languages, preverbal subjects occupy a position in the TP domain (Cardinaletti 1997; Costa, Duarte 2002; Goodall 1999, 2001; Suñer 2003).

Cardinaletti (2004) argues that it is not possible to distinguish null and non-null subject languages on the basis of the position of preverbal subjects: a topic position (A'-position) in the former and a 'real' subject position (A-position) in the latter. Such a parametric difference would make wrong empirical and theoretical predictions, since it implies a semantic difference between simple sentences in the two types of languages, contrary to fact. Both (5) and (6) may appear in out-of-the-blue contexts and may answer the question *What happened?*, while sentences with left-dislocated topics cannot (see (7a) and (22) below). No topic analysis of the subject seems to be motivated for (5) and (6), and no structural difference should hence be stipulated between Italian (5) and English (6).

- (5) Un bambino ha rotto il vetro.  
(6) A child broke the window.

We argue that preverbal subjects in BP behave like preverbal subjects in Italian (Cardinaletti 1997, 2004), Spanish (Suñer 2003), European Portuguese (Costa, Duarte 2002) and English (Cardinaletti 1997, 2004; Rizzi 2005). Preverbal subjects may be topics, as in (7a), but need not be, as in (7b).

- (7) a. A Maria, ontem, ela comprou uma casa.  
the Maria, yesterday, she bought a house  
b. A Maria comprou uma casa.

Sentence (7a) cannot be used to answer the question *What happened?*, while (7b) can. In (7a), we take the preverbal subject DP *a Maria* to occupy SpecTopP, while the resumptive pronoun *ela* 'she' occupies the canonical subject position SpecTP. We take the non-topicalized subject *a Maria* in (7b) to occur in this position. An argument that *ela* indeed occupies the subject position is provided by (8a), where both the subject and the object are dislocated and the resumptive pronoun follows the object; if *ela* precedes the dislocated object, the sentence is ungrammatical (8b).<sup>3</sup>

- (8) a. A Maria, esse livro ela comprou.  
the Mary, this book she bought  
b. \*A Maria, ela esse livro comprou.  
the Mary, she this book bought

Pires (2007) notes that the contrast between the full and the reduced form of *você(s)* 'you' in BP can be naturally cast in terms of the strong/weak pronoun distinction along the lines of Cardinaletti and Starke (1999). While the strong pronoun *você* may be left-dislocated (9a) and precede a topicalized object (10a), the reduced pronoun *cê* cannot (9b) and (10b) and must occur in a lower position, internal to the sentence, as clearly shown by sentence (10c), which we add to Pires' (2007, 132) examples (9) and (10a-b):

- (9) a. Você, (vo)cê pode convidar o seu pai.  
you, you can invite the your father  
b. \*Cê, cê pode convidar o seu pai.  
you, you can invite the your father  
(10) a. Você, o seu pai cê pode convidar.  
you, the your father you can invite  
b. \*Cê, o seu pai cê pode convidar.  
you, the your father you can invite  
c. \*Você, cê o seu pai pode convidar.  
you, you the your father can invite

Consider now Italian sentences with Aux-to-Comp and complementizer-deletion. Preverbal subjects are allowed ((11a) and (12a)), while left-dislocated elements are not ((11b) and (12b)) (Cardinaletti 1997, 43-4).

3 *Ela* in (7) behaves like Italian weak pronoun *egli*, which cannot be left-dislocated (Cardinaletti, Starke 1999, 68).

(i) \*Egli a Gianni [pro non gli ha parlato].  
he to Gianni not to-him has spoken

- (11) a. Avendo Gianni telefonato a Maria,...  
having Gianni called to Maria,...
- b. \*Avendo a Roma vissuto per venti anni, conosce un pò tutto.  
having in Rome lived for twenty years, [it] knows a little all
- (12) a. Credevo Gianni avesse telefonato a Maria.  
[I] believed Gianni had called to Maria
- b. ??Credevo a Roma Gianni (ci) avesse vissuto per venti anni.  
[I] believed in Rome Gianni (there) had lived for twenty years

The contrast between the a. and b. sentences indicates that the preverbal subject *Gianni* should not be in the same position as the fronted PP *a Roma*. If preverbal subjects were left-dislocated, contrasts like these would remain mysterious.

A similar argument can be built for BP. Subject-verb inversion occurs in conditional subordinate sentences without complementizer (13a); this type of inversion is an instance of verb movement to C. The subject follows the raised verb and cannot precede it ((13a) vs (13b)), unless it is left-dislocated (13c). Other complements have the opposite distribution: they cannot follow the raised verb ((14a) and (15a)) and must precede it ((14b) and (15b)).<sup>4</sup>

- (13) a. Tivesse o João dado o livro para Maria...  
had the John given the book to Mary...
- b. \*O João tivesse dado o livro para Maria...  
the John had given the book to Mary...
- c. O João tivesse ele dado o livro para Maria...  
the John had he given the book to Mary...
- (14) a. \*Tivesse o livro o João dado (ele) para Maria...  
had the book the John given (it) to Mary...
- b. O livro tivesse o João dado ele para Maria...  
the book had the John given it to Mary...
- (15) a. \*Tivesse para Maria o João dado o livro...  
had to Mary the John given the book...
- b. Para Maria tivesse o João dado o livro pra ela...  
to Mary had the John given the book to her...

Wh-extraction also provides evidence to differentiate between a left-dislocated position (SpecTopP) and an A-position (SpecTP) for preverbal subjects in BP. The contrast between (16a) and (16b-c) can be explained in terms of minimality. The movement of the wh-phrase is possible in (16a) because the preverbal subject *Ana* is in an A-position. The wh-phrase which

4 Sentence (14a) ameliorates if the fronted object *o livro* is a contrastive focus.



mate to conclude that the preverbal subject in (20b) occurs in a lower position than the object in (21b).

- (20) a. Quem comprou o carro?  
who bought the car  
b. A Maria comprou o carro.  
the Mary bought the car
- (21) a. O que a Maria comprou?  
what did the Mary buy  
b. #O carro a Maria comprou.<sup>1</sup>  
the car the Mary bought  
c. \*O carro comprou a Maria.  
the car bought the Mary

<sup>1</sup> The # sign indicates that the sentence is well formed, but inappropriate in that question-answer context. If the focus has the contrastive interpretation, correcting a previous statement, the sentence is possible (*O CARRO Maria comprou, não a casa* 'THE CAR Mary bought, not the house').

### 3 The Semantic Import of Preverbal Subjects Versus Topics

Preverbal subjects share the aboutness property with topics: the described event is presented as being about the fronted argument. Rizzi (2005) shows that preverbal subjects however differ from topics in that they do not require discourse-linking. Preverbal subjects are fully felicitous when they express new information in out-of-the-blue contexts ("What happened?") (22A, A'); in this context, a (CILD) topic is not felicitous (22A'', A''') (Rizzi 2005, 210) (also see (5)-(7) above).

- (22) Q: Che cosa è successo?  
What happened?  
A: Un camion ha tamponato un autobus.  
A truck bumped into a bus.  
A': Un autobus è stato tamponato da un camion.  
A bus was bumped into by a truck.  
A'': # Un autobus/l'autobus per Roma, un camion lo ha tamponato.  
A bus/the bus for Rome, a truck bumped into it.  
A''': # Un autobus/l'autobus per Roma, lo ha tamponato un camion.  
A bus/the bus to Roma, bumped into it a truck.

In the out-of-the-blue context in (22), an indefinite (new information) initial subject is fine both in active and passive sentences (22A, A'), while a topic is not felicitous, whether definite or indefinite, whether in preverbal or postverbal position (22A'', A'''). In conclusion, a topic involves aboutness and D-linking, while a subject only involves aboutness. This is clear



evidence that a full functional unification of the notion of subject and topic is not possible.

Another aspect that distinguishes preverbal subjects from topics is related to the class of elements that can occur in the two positions. Quantifiers, for instance, can occur as subjects but cannot be topicalized. See the contrast for Spanish in (23), from Goodall (2001). The same contrast arises in BP (24) and Italian (25). A negative quantifier cannot be topicalized (a), but it can occur in subject position (b).

- (23) a. \*A nadie Juan lo ha visto.  
to no one Juan him has seen  
b. Nadie ha visto a Juan.  
no one has seen to Juan
- (24) a. \*Ninguém, o João (não) viu.  
to nobody, the João (not) saw  
b. Ninguém viu o João.  
nobody saw the João
- (25) a. \*Nessuno, Gianni lo ha visto.  
no one, Gianni him has seen  
b. Nessuno ha visto Gianni.  
no one has seen Gianni

These facts are usually interpreted as showing that the left-dislocated position and the subject position should be kept distinct even in null subject languages like Italian and Spanish (see Barbosa 2000 for a different analysis).

According to Barbosa (2000), the embedded subject is left-dislocated in apparent cases of hyper-raising (26). The author points out that specific indefinites (27) are impossible in this type of construction because they are incompatible with the topic interpretation, while definite DPs (26a) and bare nouns (26b) are possible.

- (26) a. As crianças parece que gostam de sorvete.  
the children seems that like ice cream  
b. Livros de romance parece que se esgotaram.  
books of novels seems that cl-3 sold out-pl
- (27) \*Umás crianças parece que estão perdidas.  
some children seems that are lost-pl

If preverbal subjects were left-dislocated to a topic position, it would be expected that this same contrast appears in 'regular' SV clauses. Duarte and Figueiredo Silva (2016, 236) note that this contrast does not hold.<sup>6</sup>

- (28) a. Os perfumes franceses esgotaram-se.  
the perfumes French sold out-pl-cl-3  
b. Uns perfumes franceses esgotaram-se.  
some perfumes French sold out-pl-cl-3

These facts confirm that the preverbal subject of BP is not left-dislocated and should not be interpreted as a topic in 'regular' SV clauses.

#### 4 More Than One Preverbal Subject Position

Belletti and Rizzi (1988) observe that in Italian, nominals bearing an inherent (dative) Case with the so-called *piacere* class of psych-verbs occur in subject position; they do not interfere with movement, while a movement chain which crosses over a dislocated topic determines a (weak) degradation, as observed by Rizzi (2005, 207).

- (30) a. Le idee che a Gianni piacciono di più sono queste.  
the ideas that to Gianni please most are these  
b. ?(?) Le idee che a Gianni Maria raccomanda sono queste.  
the ideas that to Gianni Maria recommends are these

Cardinaletti (1997; 2004, 122-5) shows that the pattern is more general. In addition to preverbal datives, other preverbal XPs such as locatives and predicates in inverse copular constructions occur in preverbal position and behave as subjects against topics:

- (31) a. A Gianni è piaciuto il regalo.  
to Gianni is pleased the gift  
b. Su Gianni è caduta una grande disgrazia.  
on Gianni is fallen a big misfortune  
c. La causa della rivolta sono Gianni e Maria.  
the cause of the riot are Gianni and Maria

The preverbal constituents in (31) (dative, locative and predicative, respectively) behave like preverbal DP subjects in that they enter Aux-to-Comp

<sup>6</sup> Although in BP, proclisis is generalized at the beginning of sentences, speakers still accept sentences with enclitic *se* as in (28) (cf. Reis 2017).

and complementizer-deletion constructions, which do not allow left-dislocated items, as shown in (11) and (12) above (examples from Cardinaletti 1997, 2004):

- (32) a. Essendo a Gianni piaciuto il regalo,...  
being to Gianni 'pleased' the gift...  
b. Credevo a Gianni piacesse il regalo.  
[I] believed to Gianni 'pleased' the gift
- (33) a. Essendo su Gianni caduta una grande disgrazia,...  
being on Gianni fallen a big misfortune...  
b. Credo su Gianni sia caduta una grande disgrazia.  
[I] believe on Gianni is fallen big misfortune
- (34) a. Essendo la causa della rivolta Gianni e Maria,...  
being the cause of the riot Gianni and Maria...  
b. Credevo la causa della rivolta fossero Gianni e Maria.  
[I] believed the cause of the riot were Gianni and Maria

Cardinaletti (1997, 2004) argues that the requirements of the Case-agreement system are insufficiently general to motivate XP movement to the subject position and that some kind of interpretive requirement linked to the subject position may be the factor motivating movement to subject. The author proposed a multiple subject position approach, according to which subject-related features are encoded in two heads in the Inflectional domain below Fin: Case and phi-features are checked in SpecTP, where weak subjects occur; the Subject of Predication feature is checked in SpecSubjP, where DP subjects and strong pronouns occur. Dative and locative PP fronting found with unaccusative verbs targets the highest preverbal subject position, SpecSubjP, which hosts full subject DPs, as shown in (35).

- (35) a. [<sub>SubjP</sub> a Gianni<sub>i</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> è [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> piaciuto il regalo ]]]  
to Gianni is pleased the present  
b. [<sub>SubjP</sub> su Gianni<sub>i</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> è [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> caduta una grande disgrazia]]]  
on Gianni is fallen a big misfortune

In inverse copular sentences, in which the predicative DP moves to the preverbal position and the grammatical subject remains postverbally, a difference between Italian and English emerges in subject-verb agreement.

- (36) a. Gianni e Maria sono la causa della rivolta.  
b. La causa della rivolta sono Gianni e Maria.
- (37) a. John and Mary are the cause of the riot.  
b. The cause of the riot is John and Mary.

Cardinaletti (1997, 2004) proposed that in English, the predicative DP checks both the subject-of-predication feature and case/phi-features, which results in verb agreement with the fronted predicate DP, as shown in (38a). In Italian, the predicative DP moves directly to SpecSubjP, where it checks the subject-of-predication feature. Because of the pro-drop status of Italian, the grammatical subject remains in postverbal position and checks nominative case and phi-features covertly, as shown in (38b).

- (38) a. [<sub>SubjP</sub> The cause of the riot<sub>i</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> is [<sub>SC</sub> John and Mary t<sub>i</sub>]]]  
 b. [<sub>SubjP</sub> La causa della rivolta<sub>i</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> *pro*<sub>expl</sub> sono [<sub>SC</sub> Gianni e Maria t<sub>i</sub>]]]

BP shows the same behavior as Italian. The predicative DP moves to the preverbal position, and the verb agrees with the postverbal subject.<sup>7</sup>

- (39) a. Os jovens são o futuro da nação.  
 the young-pl are the future of the nation  
 b. O futuro da nação são os jovens.  
 the future of the nation are the young-pl  
 c. [<sub>SubjP</sub> O futuro da nação [<sub>TP</sub> *pro*<sub>expl</sub> são [<sub>SC</sub> os jovens t<sub>i</sub>]]]

These sentences confirm that the requirements of the Case-agreement system are not general enough to motivate movement to the subject position. In this analysis, the semantic property of subjects is encoded in the syntax through a morphosyntactic feature ('Subject of predication').

In conclusion, the notion of subject of predication differs from the notion of topic. The subject of predication pertains to the logical structure of the sentence (subject–predicate), while topic refers to the information structure of the sentence (given–new). As we saw in section 3, DPs that are subjects of predication are not topics and may occur in out-of-the-blue sentences with transitive verbs. Moreover, SpecSubjP is a position reserved for specific types of XPs and does not cause minimality effects.

## 5 Preverbal Locative PPs in BP

In BP, it is common to find sentences with locative PPs in preverbal position with no grammatical subject, as in (40) (cf. Avelar 2009; Avelar, Cyrino 2008; Avelar, Galves 2011, 2013).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> In BP, the verb can also agree with the fronted predicate: *O futuro da nação é os jovens*. We analyse this sentence as the English case in (38a).

<sup>8</sup> Example (40b) is from Avelar, Galvez 2013, 111. We adapted the other examples.

- (40) a. Naquela loja vende livros.  
in that store sells books
- b. Na escola aceita cartão de crédito.  
at school accepts credit card
- c. No computador imprime fotos.  
on the computer prints photos
- d. Na rádio da universidade toca as melhores músicas.  
on radio of the university plays the best songs

Two analyses have been proposed for (40). On the one hand, Pontes (1987) and Galves (2001) take the PP to be left-dislocated and suggest that the existence of sentences like (40) is related to the topic-prominent status of BP. On the other hand, Avelar (2009) argues that the locative PP in (40) occurs in SpecTP, the same position occupied by subject DPs. For Avelar and Galves (2011), SpecTP is an A'-position.

Fronting of locative PPs is not motivated by Case, since the preposition is already a case marker. It also does not occur due to the need of checking phi-features, since PPs do not agree with the verb (see sentence *Nas rádios da universidade toca as melhores músicas* 'on-the radios of the university plays the best songs', where the DP inside the PP is plural but the verb is singular). What motivates the occurrence of PPs in preverbal position? Avelar (2009, 243) discusses raising constructions to show that like DPs, locative PPs cannot stop in the subject position of the infinitive clause because they would not be assigned Case.

- (41) a. Parece trabalhar muita gente naquele shopping.  
it seems to work a lot of people in that mall
- b. Naquele shopping parece trabalhar muita gente.  
in that mall seems to work a lot of people
- c. \*Parece naquele shopping trabalhar muita gente.  
it seems in that mall to work a lot of people

The author assumes that preverbal locative PPs have a nominal behavior. According to Avelar (2009, 241), the head of the locative phrase is not the preposition, but the adverbial pronoun that precedes it, which can be phonologically null or realized: (*aqui*) *na sala* ('(here) in the room'), (*aí*) *embaixo da mesa* ('(there) under the table'), (*lá*) *na cidade* ('(there) in the city'). The locative PP is originated as an adjunct and undergoes movement to SpecTP when the adverbial pronoun requiring Case enters the derivation.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See Alexiadou and Carvalho (forthcoming) for a different analysis of the sentences with preverbal locative PPs. For these authors, the locative PP is the external argument of the verb in impersonal constructions in BP.

In what follows, we show that preverbal locative PPs are not left-dislocated, but pattern with non-topicalized preverbal subjects. Exploiting the two preverbal subject hypothesis, we will suggest that there is no need to postulate an adverbial head and that preverbal locative PPs occur in SpecSubjP.

### 5.1 The Fronted PP Is not Left-Dislocated

In this section, we show that in BP, preverbal locative PPs pattern with preverbal subjects and do not occur in the CP domain.

First note that BP sentences with preverbal locative PPs are different from English sentences with locative inversion. Rizzi and Shlonsky (2006, 344) observe that long extraction of a temporal adjunct is ill-formed over a topic (42a) and over a preposed locative (42b) while being perfectly grammatical over an embedded subject (42c).

- (42) a. \*When did he say that into the room Jack walked t?  
 b. \*When did he say that into the room walked Jack t?  
 c. When did he say that Jack walked into the room t?

Rizzi and Shlonsky (2006) also observe that I-to-C movement cannot apply across locative inversion. This would be unexpected if the PP locative were spelled out in subject position.

- (43) a. \*Is in the room sitting my old brother?  
 b. \*Did down the hill roll the baby?

In (43), the Top head blocks movement of the verb to Force (Rizzi 1997). Rizzi and Shlonsky (2006) conclude that in English locative inversion, the fronted locative moves to a final landing site in the left periphery.

In BP, preverbal locative PPs behave differently from both fronted locatives in English and left-dislocated objects in BP. Long extraction of a temporal adjunct over the preverbal locative PP (44a) is possible (differently from (43a)), while long extraction of a temporal adjunct over a (non-focalized) dislocated object is not (44b-c). The same contrast is found with relative clauses in (45), where the preverbal locative PP does not cause any interference (45a), whereas the dislocated PP does (45b).

- (44) a. Quando ele disse que na escola aceita cartão de crédito?  
 when did he say that at school accepts credit card  
 b. ??Quando ele disse que cartão de crédito na escola aceita?  
 when did he say that credit card at school accepts  
 c. ??Quando ele disse que para os alunos a escola dá cartão de crédito?  
 when did he say that to the students the school gives credit card

- (45) a. O cartão de crédito que na escola aceita/aceitam é o Visa.  
the credit card that at school accepts is the Visa  
b. ??O cartão de crédito que para os alunos dão é o Visa.  
the credit card that to the students give is the Visa

Although constructions such as Aux-to-Comp are not fully productive in BP, a contrast is indeed found between (46), which contain a preverbal locative PPs, and the sentences (14a) and (15a) above, which contain a left-dislocated XP.

- (46) a. Tivesse na rádio tocado as melhores músicas,...  
had on radio played the best songs  
b. Tivesse no computador impresso as fotos,....  
had on the computer printed the photos

The ungrammaticality of sentences like (14a) and (15a) arises from the fact that the TOP head activated by the dislocated object blocks the movement of the auxiliary to C (as in English (43)). The contrast between (46) and (14a) and (15a) suggests that in BP, preverbal locative PPs do not occur in left-dislocated position.

Although preverbal locative PPs are not left-dislocated and pattern like subjects structurally, they clearly do not check phi-features or Case. In the hypothesis that there is more than one preverbal subject position in the inflectional domain (Cardinaletti 1997, 2004), fronted PPs are taken to occur in SpecSubjP, as shown in (47). The subject position specTP is occupied by impersonal, generic *pro* (Negrão, Viotti 2011).<sup>10</sup>

- |         |  |  |  |
|---------|--|--|--|
| (47) a. | [ <sub>SubjP</sub> Naquela loja <sub>i</sub><br>in.that store                          | [ <sub>TP</sub> <i>pro</i> <sub>genérico</sub> vende<br><i>pro</i> <sub>generic</sub> sells    | [ <sub>VP</sub> t <sub>i</sub> livros]]<br>books                       |
| b.      | [ <sub>SubjP</sub> Na escola <sub>i</sub><br>at school                                 | [ <sub>TP</sub> <i>pro</i> <sub>genérico</sub> aceita<br><i>pro</i> <sub>generic</sub> accepts | [ <sub>VP</sub> t <sub>i</sub> cartão de crédito]]<br>credit card      |
| c.      | [ <sub>SubjP</sub> Na rádio da universidade <sub>i</sub><br>on radio of the university | [ <sub>TP</sub> <i>pro</i> <sub>genérico</sub> toca<br><i>pro</i> <sub>generic</sub> plays     | [ <sub>VP</sub> t <sub>i</sub> as melhores músicas]]<br>the best songs |

**10** This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that the null subject cannot be coindexed with the subject of the matrix sentence (i).

- (i) O Pedro<sub>j</sub> disse que na escola *pro*<sub>j</sub> aceita cartão de crédito.  
the Pedro said that at school \_\_\_ accepts credit card

Coreference is possible when the locative is a contrastive focus (Avelar, Cyrino 2008, 56). The grammatical sentence in (ii) does not contain an instance of preverbal locative PP.

- (ii) O Pedro<sub>j</sub> disse que NAQUELA LOJA (e não em outra), *pro*<sub>j</sub> / ele<sub>j</sub> vende livros.  
the Pedro said that IN THAT STORE (and not in another), (he) sells books

The possibility of 3rd person singular agreement is related to the fact that BP is losing impersonal *se*.<sup>11</sup> This is considered to be a relevant parameter of variation between BP and European Portuguese (Galves 2001, Cyrino 2007). The European Portuguese counterparts of (47) display impersonal *se* (48a), on a par with Italian (48b):

- (48) a. Na escola aceita-se cartão de crédito.  
at school accepts-cl-3 credit card  
b. A scuola si accetta le carte di credito.  
at school *si* accepts the credit cards

Note that BP generic sentences also allow plural agreement on the verb (49), a possibility also found in European Portuguese and Italian (50):

- (49) a. [<sub>SubjP</sub> Naquela loja<sub>i</sub> in.that store [<sub>TP</sub> *pro*<sub>genérico</sub> vendem [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> livros]]]  
*pro*<sub>genérico</sub> sell books  
b. [<sub>SubjP</sub> Na escola<sub>i</sub> at school [<sub>TP</sub> *pro*<sub>genérico</sub> aceitam [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> cartão de crédito]]]  
*pro*<sub>genérico</sub> accept credit card  
c. [<sub>SubjP</sub> Na rádio da universidade<sub>i</sub> on radio of the university [<sub>TP</sub> *pro*<sub>genérico</sub> tocam [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> as melhores músicas]]]  
*pro*<sub>genérico</sub> play the best songs
- (50) a. Na escola aceitam cartão de crédito.  
at school [they] accept credit card  
b. A scuola accettano le carte di credito.  
at school [they] accept the credit cards

According to Cinque (1988), the interaction between the type of verb and tense (generic or specified) triggers the arbitrary interpretation of the subject pronoun.

It should be pointed out that the impersonal interpretation of sentences with locative PP of BP should not be associated with the preverbal position of this constituent, since it also arises when the locative occurs in sentence final position.

- (51) a. Vende(m) livros naquela loja.  
sells(3pl) books in that store  
b. Aceita(m) cartão de crédito na escola.  
accepts(3pl) credit card at school  
c. Imprime(m) fotos no computador.  
prints(3pl) photos on the computer  
d. Toca(m) as melhores músicas na rádio da universidade.  
plays(3pl) the best songs on the radio of the university

11 The process is not complete yet. The sentences in (47) are also possible with impersonal *se* (cf. (54c)).



Sentences without the locative PP are however ungrammatical, cf. *\*Aceita/\*Aceitam cartão de crédito* (accept(s) credit card). For the discussion of the contribution of locative PPs in BP sentences like (47) without *se*, see Negrão and Viotti (2008). As discussed by Cardinaletti and Starke (1999, 158), locative PPs are necessary to provide a range-restriction to impersonal generic subjects, whether null or realized by weak pronouns.<sup>12</sup> See Alexiadou and Carvalho (forthcoming) for a different analysis in which the PP is the subject of the clause and no null subject is involved.

In conclusion, movement of locative PPs to the preverbal subject position is triggered by the property of being the subject of predication, as happens with dative and locative PP fronting in Italian. The facts presented so far show that sentences with preverbal locative PPs in BP should not be compared to English locative inversion, in which the moved PP occupies a position in the left periphery of the sentence (Rizzi, Shlonsky 2006). These facts also allow us to question the classification of BP as a topic-prominent language. This classification is presumably not necessary. That it may indeed be wrong for BP is argued for by Kenedy (2014) on the basis of experimental data. We refer the interested reader to this work.

## 6 Preverbal 'Locative' DPs Are 'True' Subjects

Avelar and Cyrino (2008) observe that the preposition can be eliminated from the sentences we discussed in section 5, without resulting in any apparent change in the meaning of the sentence or in the thematic role attributed to the constituent in preverbal position. All sentences in (40) above have a counterpart with a preverbal DP:

- (53) a. Aquela loja vende livros.  
 b. A escola aceita cartão de crédito.  
 c. O computador imprime fotos.  
 d. A rádio da universidade toca as melhores músicas.

Preverbal 'locative' DPs behave differently from preverbal locative PPs. The latter can appear at the end of sentence (54a), do not agree with the verb (54b), can cooccur with impersonal *se* (54c) and do not allow subject resumptive pronouns (54d). With preverbal 'locative' DPs, the situation is the opposite (55):

12 A locative PP is not necessary in sentences with impersonal *se*:

- (i) a. Aceita-se cartão de crédito.  
 b. Si accettano carte di credito.

- (54) a. Toca/tocam as melhores músicas na rádio da universidade.  
[it] plays/play the best songs on radio of the university  
b. Na rádio da universidade toca/tocam as melhores músicas.  
on radio of the university plays/play the best songs  
c. Na rádio da universidade toca-se/tocam-se as melhores músicas.  
on radio of the university plays-cl/play-cl the best songs  
d. \*Na rádio da universidade, ela<sub>i</sub> toca as melhores músicas.  
on radio of the university she plays the best songs
- (55) a. \*Toca as melhores músicas a rádio da universidade.  
plays the best songs the radio of the university  
b. \*A rádio da universidade tocam as melhores músicas.  
the radio of the university play the best songs  
c. \*A rádio da universidade toca-se as melhores músicas.  
the radio of the university play-cl the best songs  
d. A rádio da universidade, ela<sub>i</sub> toca as melhores músicas.  
the radio of the university she plays the best songs

In (55), the 'locative' DP cannot appear in final position because BP does not allow VOS; agreement is obligatory; impersonal *se* is impossible as it is always incompatible with realized subjects; the resumptive pronoun is possible because the subject can be left-dislocated (cf. (7a) above). According to Munhoz, Naves (2012, 251 fn. 1), in these sentences the subject is thematically labeled as 'agent' or 'cause'. In other words, the sentences in (53) with preverbal 'locative' DPs have the same properties as transitive sentences. Munhoz and Naves (2012, 253-4) also show that the transitive verbs in (56) have a canonical behavior with respect to passivation and cliticization.

- (56) a. A Livraria do Chiquinho vende livros acadêmicos.  
the Chiquinho's bookstore sells academic books  
b. Livros acadêmicos são vendidos na/pela Livraria do Chiquinho.  
academic books are sold at/by the Chiquinho's bookstore  
c. A Livraria do Chiquinho os vende/vende eles.  
the Chiquinho's bookstore them sells/sells them

What differentiates a sentence like *Aquela loja vende livros* ('That store sells books') from *A Ana vende livros* ('The Ana sells books') is the animacy feature of the preverbal subject DP. The preverbal DPs of the sentences in (53) all bear the following set of features: [-human], [-animate], [+specific], [+definite].

To confirm that preverbal 'locative' DPs occur in subject position, we take up two of the tests we used in section 3: extraction and Aux-to-Comp movement. With respect to the first test, the sentences with preverbal

'locative' DPs are not islands for extraction ((57a) and (58a)), while extraction in clauses with PP topics is degraded ((57b) and (58b)).<sup>13</sup>

- (57) Pedro sabe quais livros aquela loja vende para as crianças.  
 Pedro knows which books that store sells to the children  
 ??Pedro sabe quais livros para as crianças aquela loja vende.  
 Pedro knows which books to the children that store sells
- (58) Os livros que aquela loja vende para as crianças são caros.  
 the books that that store sells to the children are expensive  
 ??Os livros que para as crianças aquela loja vende são caros.  
 the books that to the children that store sells are expensive

As already pointed out, the constructions with movement of the auxiliary to the CP-domain are not common in BP, but are possible (cf. (13a)). The preverbal 'locative' DP does not block the movement of the auxiliary to the left periphery (59a). If this DP were in a topic position, the sentence should be degraded on a par with (59b).

- (59) a. Tivesse aquela loja vendido os livros, o gerente estaria feliz.  
 had that store sold the books, the manager would be happy  
 b. ??Tivesse os livros aquela loja vendido, o gerente estaria feliz.  
 had the books that store sold, the manager would be happy

Assuming the double subject structure, we propose the following representation of sentences with preverbal 'locative' DPs:

- (60) a. [<sub>SubjP</sub> A escola<sub>i</sub>                      [<sub>TP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> aceita    [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> cartão de crédito]]]  
           the school                                      accepts                      credit card
- b. [<sub>SubjP</sub> Aquela loja<sub>i</sub>                      [<sub>TP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> vende    [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> livros]]]  
           that store                                      sells                                      books
- c. [<sub>SubjP</sub> A rádio da universidade<sub>i</sub>    [<sub>TP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> toca    [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> as melhores músicas]]]  
           the radio of the university                      plays                                      the best songs

The 'locative' DP checks Case and phi-features in SpecTP and the subject-of-predication feature in SpecSubjP. Differently from the representation of sentences with preverbal locative PPs, in (60) there is no space for a generic *pro*. Unlike sentences with preverbal locative PPs, the sentences in (60) lack the semantics of impersonal constructions.

Note that preverbal 'locative' DPs as in (53) are not specific to BP, but are found in other Romance languages, e.g. Italian.

<sup>13</sup> In (57b), the topic intonation should be given to both constituents *quais livros* and *para as crianças*.

- (61) a. Questo negozio vende libri antichi.  
this store sells books old
- b. La scuola accetta le carte di credito.  
the school accepts credit cards
- c. Il computer stampa le foto.  
the computer prints photos
- d. La radio dell'università riproduce le più belle canzoni.  
the radio of the university plays the best songs

It is thus not necessary to associate the existence of sentences with preverbal locative subjects to a discourse macroparameter, classifying BP as a topic-prominent language. To accommodate preverbal 'locative' DPs, it is also not necessary to stipulate that SpecTP is an A'-position in BP.

## 7 Other Preverbal Locative DPs

Avelar and Galves (2011, 2013) suggest that BP is a topic-prominent language also on the basis of what they call 'locative agreement'. Constituents with locative interpretation can agree with the verb, as in the examples provided by Avelar and Galves (2013, 107).

- (62) a. As ruas do centro não tão passando ônibus.  
the downtown streets are not passing bus
- b. Não tá passando ônibus nas ruas do centro.  
is not passing bus in the downtown streets
- (63) a. Aqueles quartos só cabem uma pessoa.  
those rooms only fit-3pl one person
- b. Só cabe uma pessoa naqueles quartos.  
only fits one person in those rooms

The preverbal locative DPs occurring in (62a) and (63a) are interpreted by the authors as sentential topics with the function of adverbial adjuncts. This is clearly shown by the paraphrases in (b), in which the locatives contain the preposition. These constructions resemble the so-called 'subject-topic' sentences discussed by Pontes (1987, 34-5), which also occur with biargumental unaccusative verbs.

- (64) Essa casa bate sol.  
that house hits sun

The locative DP occurs in subject position and is not left-dislocated, as shown by the fact that it allows extraction (65) and can appear in out-of-the-blue contexts (66).

- (65) a. O que João disse que as ruas do centro não tão passando?  
what did John say that the streets of downtown are not passing?  
b. Quando João disse que as ruas do centro não tão passando ônibus?  
when did John say that the streets of downtown are not passing buses?
- (66) a. O que aconteceu?  
what happened?  
b. As ruas do centro não tão passando ônibus.  
the downtown streets are not passing bus

Although the locative DP occurs in subject position, we argue that the sentences in (62a), (63a) and (64) should receive a syntactic-semantic treatment different from the sentences in (53) above. We thus disagree with Avelar and Galves (2013), who treat the two types of sentences as belonging to one and the same construction.

Munhoz and Naves (2012, 253-4) show that the unaccusative verbs that license the 'subject-topic' construction behave differently from the transitive verbs in (56) with respect to passivation and cliticization, as shown in (67).

- (67) a. Essa casa bate bastante sol.  
that house hits a lot sun  
b. \*Bastante sol é batido por essa/nessa casa./ \*Essa casa é batida por bastante sol.  
a lot sun is beaten by that/in that house/ that house is beaten by a lot sun  
c. \*Essa casa o bate/bate ele./ \*O sol a bate/bate ela.  
that house it hits/ hits it / the sun it hits / hits her

We agree with Negrão and Viotti (2008) that a change in the thematic grid of the verb is what makes the locative argument become the external argument of the verb. The authors observe that it is not possible to correlate this change with the loss of unaccusative *se*, since in these contexts its use renders the sentence ungrammatical, cf. \**As ruas do centro não se tão passando ônibus* (The downtown streets are not passing bus). These sentences do not have the same semantics as the sentences with preverbal locative PPs analysed in section 5.

Note that in Italian, the counterparts of (62a), (63a) and (64) all contain a preverbal locative PP (68). This PP occurs in SpecSubjP, as shown by the fact that Aux-to-Comp is allowed (69).

- (68) a. Nelle strade del centro passa il tram.  
in the downtown streets passes the tramway  
b. In quelle stanze si adatta una sola persona.  
in those rooms fits one person  
c. Su quelle case batte il sole.  
on those houses hits sun

- (69) a. Essendo nelle strade del centro passato sempre il tram,...  
being in the downtown streets passed always the tramway,...
- b. Essendosi in quelle stanze adattata una sola persona,...  
being in those rooms fit one person
- c. Avendo su quelle case battuto il sole per tutto il giorno,...  
having on those houses hitten the sun for the whole day,...

The contrast between (62a), (63a) and (64) on the one hand and (68) on the other indicates that BP goes through a process in which the locative becomes a DP with argument properties in the subject position, while it remains a locative PP in subject position in Italian. Thus, the *location* is the subject of the sentence in both languages, but this happens with a partly different syntax.

## 8 Preverbal Genitive/Possessive DPs

The so-called 'subject-topic' sentences discussed by Pontes (1987, 34-5) also include sentences where the preverbal DP is a genitive/possessive, as in (70a) (cf. also Andrade, Galves 2014). Another example is (70b), taken from Avelar and Galves (2013, 113). These cases are typically restricted to monoargumental unaccusative verbs.

- (70) a. O carro furou o pneu.  
the car punctured the tire
- b. As crianças estão nascendo o dentinho.  
the children are being born the tooth-DIM

Once again, it is possible to show that the preverbal DP occurs in subject position (SpecSubjP) and is not dislocated.

- (71) a. Tivesse o carro furado o pneu, eles não teriam viajado.  
had the car punctured the tire, they would not have traveled
- b. Tivesse as crianças nascido o dentinho, elas estariam aborrecidas.  
had the children born the tooth-DIM, they would be bored
- (72) O que aconteceu?  
what happened?
- a. O carro furou o pneu.  
the car punctured the tire
- b. As crianças estão nascendo o dentinho.  
the children are being born the tooth-DIM

The genitive/possessive relation between the preverbal and the postverbal DP is realized in Italian via a preverbal dative PP in SpecSubjP.

- (73) a. Alla macchina si è bucata una gomma.  
 b. Al bambino sta nascendo un dentino.
- (74) Essendo al bambino nato un dentino,  
 being to the child born a tooth-DIM,...

As above, although the syntactic position of the fronted elements is the same (SpecSubjP) in the two languages, BP verbs have undergone a lexical change that is not found in Italian with the same verbs. In other words, thematic roles that are realized as dative PPs in Italian are externalized as DPs in BP. This change may be related to the loss of dative case in this language. Differently from European Portuguese (and Italian), BP dative complements are not realized with preposition 'a', but with the preposition *para* (examples from Figueiredo Silva 2007, 85).

- (75) a. A Maria deu o livro ao João.                   (°<sup>ok</sup> in EP, °<sup>?</sup>  in BP)  
 b. A Maria deu o livro pro João.                   (°<sup>?</sup>  in EP, °<sup>ok</sup> in BP)  
 the Maria gave the book to João

## 9 Preverbal Theme DPs

BP also displays sentences like (76), in which the theme/patient argument appears in preverbal subject position and agrees with the verb in number and person (examples from Negrão, Viotti 2010, 38-9).

- (76) a. Meu jardim destruiu todo com a reforma.  
 my garden destroyed every with the reform  
 b. O programa que eu queria não instalou.  
 the program that I wanted did not install

Negrão and Viotti (2008, 2010) call these sentences “absolute constructions” and suggest that the verb undergoes a process of ergativization, modifying its diathesis. According to the authors, there was a change in the quality of the thematic roles of the verb arguments. They also draw attention to the fact that all their examples come from spontaneous speech. As further evidence that these sentences are productive in BP, Negrão and Viotti (2014, 317) present an example taken from an advertising campaign, (78), in which plural agreement on the verb confirms that the theme/patient argument behaves as a subject.

- (78) A cada um minuto quatro coisas vendem.  
 to each one minute four things sell

In Italian, this type of sentences obligatorily display unaccusative *si*.

- (79) a. Il mio giardino si è distrutto tutto con la riforma.  
my garden destroyed all with the reform  
b. Il programma che volevo non si è installato.  
the program that I wanted did not install  
c. Ogni minuto si vendono quattro cose.  
each one minute cl sell four things

In both languages, the agentive, external argument cannot be expressed (sentence (80a) from Avelar, Galves 2013, 129).

- (80) a. \*Minhas casas tão construindo o arquiteto.  
my houses are building the architect  
b. \*Il programma che volevo non si è installato l'operatore.  
the program that I wanted did not install the operator  
c. L'operatore non ha installato il programma che volevo.  
the operator did not install the program that I wanted

The difference between BP and Italian is thus minimal and concerns the lexical representation of the verb. In Italian, most anticausative verbs are built with unaccusative *si*, in BP the process is more similar to English where no lexical item signals the anticausative status of the verb (cf. verbs like *break*, *sink*, *move*, etc.).<sup>14</sup> This phenomenon has been correlated by Galves (2001) and Cyrino (2007) to the fact that BP is losing unaccusative *se*. For a different analysis, see Negrão and Viotti (2008).

## 10 Concluding Remarks

In this paper, we have suggested that BP preverbal subjects do not occur in the left periphery. We have also provided compelling evidence against the analysis of preverbal locative PPs and DPs as left-dislocated topics. We have shown with a number of tests that these constituents occur in SpecSubjP, where they check the subject-of-predication feature. We have however argued for a non-uniform analysis of preverbal locative PPs and DPs: the former are related to an impersonal interpretation, the latter have the same behavior as the external arguments of transitive verbs. We have also discussed BP sentences where a change in the thematic grid of the verb allows locatives, genitives/possessives, and themes to be promoted to subjects.

<sup>14</sup> Note that English *destroy* and *build* do not have an unaccusative version (*\*the garden destroyed*, *\*the house built*). This should be related to the lexical properties of this language.



The Italian data presented in the paper show that not all instances of preverbal locative PPs and DPs are innovative constructions of BP, and subcases need to be differentiated. Moreover, the data show that it is not necessary to associate the existence of sentences with preverbal non-argumental subjects to a discourse macroparameter, classifying BP as a topic-prominent language. To accommodate preverbal locative DPs, it is also not necessary to stipulate that SpecTP is an A'-position in BP.

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