

Chapter 5

Case and agreement in Brazilian Portuguese: Between Bantu and Romance

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This chapter presents some syntactic peculiarities of Brazilian Portuguese which differentiate it from European Portuguese and, from a typological point of view, put it apart in the Romance and even in the Indo-European domain. We argue that this is due to the influence of the African languages (mostly from the Bantu subgroup) that were taken to Brazil by the slave trade during three centuries. We propose that this change affected T(ense), more exactly T's EPP condition, which ceased to be ϕ -dependent, with the consequence that SpecTP became an A-bar position. On the basis of the criteria proposed by Sheehan & van der Wal (2018), we discuss the status of syntactic Case in Brazilian Portuguese and depart from a previous analysis that argued that, in this language, DPs could enter the derivation without a case feature. In the analysis proposed in this chapter, Case and EPP nicely combine to account for the facts considered.

1 Introduction

In this paper, we argue that Brazilian Portuguese has undergone a typological change involving agreement and Case, under the influence of the African languages (mostly from Bantu subgroup) that were taken to Brazil by the slave trade. We propose that this change affected T(ense), more exactly T's EPP condition,



which ceased to be φ -dependent, with the consequence that SpecTP became an A-bar position in Brazilian Portuguese.

The paper is organized as follows. In §2, we present some syntactic peculiarities that make Brazilian Portuguese a typologically odd language. In §3, we introduce the issue of Bantu influence on Portuguese during the period in which millions of Africans were taken to Brazil by the slave trade. We show that some of the syntactic properties that distinguish Brazilian Portuguese from the other Romance languages are also found in Bantu languages. In §4, we discuss the proper analysis of Brazilian Portuguese syntax with respect to agreement and Case, presenting the previous proposal of Avelar & Galves (2011) and the discussion of *Vergnaud licensing effects* developed by Sheehan & van der Wal (2018). In §§5 and 6, we present a proposal alternative to Avelar and Galves', showing some advantages and consequences for the treatment of Case and agreement in Brazilian Portuguese. In §7, we conclude the chapter addressing some general questions about the analysis proposed.¹

2 Brazilian Portuguese: A typologically odd language

Since the pioneering work by Pontes (1987), it has been commonly accepted that Brazilian Portuguese exhibits properties of a topic-oriented syntax. The more prominent property linked with this status is the so-called *topic-subject construction*, exemplified in §2.1 below. In addition to this construction, Brazilian Portuguese presents other particularities involving the subject position, agreement variation and pronouns, which are also exemplified below.

2.1 Topic–verb agreement

Brazilian Portuguese (BP), in contrast with European Portuguese (EP), allows for non-canonical agreement between the verb and a pre-verbal phrase that is not the logical subject, but is generally interpreted as the topic of the sentence (cf. Duarte & Kato 2008; Avelar & Galves 2011; Toniette 2013; Munhoz & Naves

¹Since this paper proposes both a comparative and a diachronic approach, we mean by European Portuguese both the language brought by the Portuguese colonizers in the 16th century and the language still spoken in Portugal. In the traditional periodization of Portuguese (see Castro 2006: 73 for a survey), the former is called *Classical Portuguese* and refers to the period included between the first half of the 16th century and the end of the 18th century. Although the grammar of Classical Portuguese and the grammar of Modern European Portuguese are different in many aspects, they are similar concerning the phenomena considered in this chapter. They can therefore, for our purposes, be grouped under the term “European Portuguese”.

2012; Nunes 2017). At least two sub-types of non-canonical agreement can be distinguished: agreement with non-argumental locative constituents, as in (1), and agreement with non-argumental possessive constituents, as in (2).

- (1) Brazilian Portuguese
As ruas do centro não tão passando carro.
the.PL streets of-the downtown not are passing car
'No cars are passing through downtown.'
- (2) Brazilian Portuguese
Aquelas crianças já estão nascendo dente.
those children already are born tooth
'The teeth of those children are already growing in.'

2.2 Prepositional subjects

Another BP construction that is unusual in Romance is found in (3a), in which the first phrase is a PP, immediately followed by a verb in the third person singular (Avelar & Cyrino 2008). Such sentences are interpreted like the (b) example, in which the pre-verbal phrase is prepositionless.

- (3) Brazilian Portuguese
- a. Na minha escola aceita cartão de crédito.
in-the my school accept.3SG credit card
- b. A minha escola aceita cartão de crédito.
the my school accept.3SG credit card
'My school accepts credit cards.'

2.3 Hyper-raising constructions

In contrast with EP and other Romance languages, hyper-raising constructions, exemplified in (4a) below, are grammatical in BP (cf. Martins & Nunes 2010). Note that within the embedded clause, the subject position can be occupied either by an empty category *ec* or by the full pronoun *elas* 'they', both coindexed with the phrase *as crianças* 'the children' in the matrix subject position. In the sentences without raising, presented in (4b,c), the relevant phrase can be realized in an embedded left-peripheral position (whereas a coindexed full pronoun is in the embedded subject position), as in (4b), or in the embedded subject position, as in (4c).

(4) Brazilian Portuguese

- a. As crianças_i parecem [que (ec_i) / (elas_i) estão chorando].
the children seem.3PL that they are crying
- b. Parece que [as crianças_i, elas_i estão chorando].
seem.3SG that the children they are crying
- c. Parece [que as crianças estão chorando].
seem.3SG that the children are crying
'It seems that the children are crying.'

There are cases in which the hyper-raised phrase is subextracted from the constituent in the embedded subject position, as *esses carros* 'these cars' in (5a) below. Following the pattern in (4b) above, this same constituent can be realized in an embedded left-peripheral position, as in (5b). We will return to such cases in §3.

- (5) a. Esses carros_i tão parecendo que [o pneu t_i] não foi trocado.
these cars are seeming that the tyre not was replaced
- b. Tá parecendo que esses carros_i, [o pneu t_i] não foi trocado.
is seeming that these cars the tyre not was replaced
'It seems that the tyres of these cars were never replaced.'
literally: 'These cars are seeming that the tyres were never replaced.'

2.4 Variation in subject–verb agreement

Another important feature of BP is that subject–verb agreement is variable, as illustrated by the contrast between examples (6a) and (6b) below.

- (6) a. As criança(s) **brincavam** na varanda.
the.PL children played.3PL in-the veranda
- b. As criança(s) **brincava** na varanda.
the.PL children played.3SG in-the veranda
'The children played on the veranda.'

2.5 Morphological uniformity in nominative and non-nominative positions

Finally, a last oddity of BP with respect to EP and other Romance languages is that there is a morphological uniformity between pronouns in nominative and

non-nominative positions. We illustrate this fact below with the second person singular pronoun *você* ‘you’ (cf. (7)). It must be noted that there is variation in object position between the nominative form *você* (8a) and the accusative form *te* (8b).

- (7) Brazilian Portuguese
Você foi visto na escola.
you.NOM was seen in-the school
‘You were seen in the school’
- (8) Brazilian Portuguese
- a. A Maria viu **você** na escola.
the Maria saw you.NOM in-the school
 - b. A Maria **te** viu na escola.
the Maria you.ACC saw in-the school
‘Mary saw you in the school.’

3 Grammars in contact: Portuguese and African languages in Brazil

Taking into account the relevant properties of BP, one question that arises is how the changes exemplified in previous section were triggered. This particular issue can be addressed within a broader debate, which has to do with the question of whether BP properties emerged from a natural drift of the language or if they result from changes induced by inter-linguistic contacts. Issues of this nature have led to a polarization of hypotheses about the origins of BP peculiarities. However, this polarization does not seem to take place when the discussion focuses on the patterns of locative inversion and possessor raising: since the clausal patterns exemplified in (1–2) are unusual in Romance, we see no reason to explore the hypothesis that we are faced with a change caused by a natural drift. As we intend to show, there are strong reasons to believe that such patterns result from changes triggered by linguistic contact involving Portuguese and African speakers of Bantu languages.²

²The hypothesis that African languages played a crucial role in the emergence of a new variety in Brazil has been recently discussed in different frameworks (cf. for instance Negrão & Viotti 2011). It is outside the scope of the present paper to present and discuss those analyses, and the theories of contact they rely on. For a survey and a discussion of the issues raised in connection to this debate, we refer the interested reader to Avelar & Galves (2014).

From a socio-historical perspective, the first point concerns the number of native speakers of African languages brought to Brazil. Historical-demographic surveys show that between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, most of the population in different Brazilian regions was formed by Africans and Afro-descendants. Mussa (1991: 163) suggests that the contingent of Africans and Afro-descendants in the seventeenth century represented half of the population, as we can see in Table 5.1. Even suffering a decrease in the following centuries, the percentage of those groups remained relatively high (between 30% and 40%) until the mid-nineteenth century, when the so-called *mestiços* (mixed-race) came to be the most numerous part of the population.

From a linguistic perspective, the main aspect is the fact that sentences with locative agreement, such as that exemplified in (1), are widespread in Bantu languages, which also exhibit properties related to “orientation to the discourse” (Morimoto 2006). Such sentences, exemplified in (9–11) below with data from different Bantu languages, have been considered a specific type of locative inversion (Salzmann 2004), in which a constituent interpreted as a place or direction agrees with the verb, instead of the argumental subject.³ As pointed out by Baker (2008), clausal patterns of this type are not found in Indo-European languages, but are common in Niger-Congo languages, including those of the Bantu group.^{4,5}

- (9) Kinande (Baker 2003: 119)
Omo-mulongo **mw**-a-hik-a (?o-)mu-kali
LOC.18-village **18.SM-TNS**-arrive-FV (AUG)-CL1-woman.1
‘At the village arrived a woman.’
- (10) Otjiherero (Marten 2006: 98)
mò-ngàndá **mw**-á-hití òvá-ndú
18-9.house **18.SM-PST**-enter 2-people
‘Into the house/home entered (the) guests.’

³In the examples of Bantu sentences, the numerical characters introduced in the glosses represent noun classes or agreement markers on the verb.

⁴It is important to emphasize that, according to Baker (2008), the properties we are considering here are not exclusive to Bantu languages, but extend to all Niger-Congo languages, which constituted the overwhelming majority of the African languages brought to Brazil by the slave trade. There is therefore no issue regarding the question of whether Bantu languages were or were not more important than other African languages with respect to the emergence of Brazilian Portuguese.

⁵Melo (2014) contradicts the Bantu influence arguing that genitive inversion constructions came from a change undergone by fronted genitive constructions which are possible in EP with dative resumptive clitics. This however does not undermine our analysis, which focuses on the agreement between the moved genitive phrase and the verb, possible in both in BP and in Bantu languages and impossible in EP.

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Table 5.1: Population groups in Brazilian territory from 1583 to 1890 (adapted from Mussa 1991: 163)

	1583–1600	1601–1700	1701–1800	1801–1850	1851–1890
Africans	20%	30%	20%	12%	2%
Afro-descendants	–	20%	21%	19%	13%
Mestiços	–	10%	19%	34%	42%
Euro-descendants	–	5%	10%	17%	24%
Europeans	30%	25%	22%	14%	17%
Integrated Natives	50%	10%	8%	4%	2%

- (11) Kimbundu (Avelar & Galves 2016: 244)

Mu njibela **muala** ni kitadi?

LOC.18 pocket **LOC.18.be** with money

‘There is money in the pocket?’

It is important to note that Kimbundu is included among the languages that have the relevant locative inversion pattern (cf. (11)). In the literature on slavery in Brazil, Kimbundu is referred to as the language spoken by most of the slaves brought to the Brazilian territory. The *Grammatica Elementar do Kimbundo ou Língua de Angola* (Chatelain 1888–1889) mentions the fact that Kimbundu allows locative agreement, noting that “when, by inversion, the locative precedes the verb, the verbal inflection agrees with it [...]. Conversely, the logical subject loses all influence on the verb, no matter to which class the subject belongs [...]” (Chatelain 1888–1889: 89).

With respect to possessor raising sentences exemplified in (2), analyses of such clausal pattern in Bantu languages are not as frequent as the ones about locative inversion, but possessor raising sentences similar to the ones found in BP are also detected in Bantu languages, as in the examples below.

- (12) Chichewa (Simango 2007: 23)

Mavuto a-na-f-a maso

Mavuto **SM-PST-die-FV** eyes

‘Mavuto became blind’, literally ‘Mavuto died eyes’

- (13) Swahili (Keach & Rochemont 1992: 83)

mtoto a-li-funik-wa miguu
1child 1-PST-cover-PASS 4.legs

‘The child’s legs were covered’, literally ‘The child was covered the legs’

Another similarity between BP and Bantu languages concerns the morphological uniformity observed in Case marking. In the previous section, we mentioned the fact that in BP, nominative pronouns can be used in non-nominative positions (cf. examples in (7) and (8)). This possibility can be analyzed as reminiscent of a property widely observed in Bantu languages. As noted by Creissels (2000: 233), “in the majority of African languages, both subjects and objects are unmarked for case, that is they do not exhibit any marking (affix, adposition or prosodic contour) distinguishing noun phrases in subject and object function from noun phrases quoted in isolation. This is in particular true of the overwhelming majority of Niger-Congo languages”. About Kimbundu in particular, Padre Dias’ grammar points out that “personal pronouns don’t have declinations, nor the variety of cases as Latin pronouns do. They are used in the nominative and in other cases without varying” (Dias 2006 [1697]: 8).

Another property that BP shares with Bantu languages is the hyper-raising constructions, exemplified in (14) below with a sentence from Lubukusu. According to Carstens, “hyper-raising appears to be quite widespread in Bantu”, whereas “IE [Indo-European] languages systematically prohibit raising out of any but an infinitival clause”.

- (14) Lubukusu (Carstens 2011: 725)

Chisaang’i chi-lolekhana chi-kona
10.animal 10.SM-seem 10.SM-sleep.PRS

‘The animals seem to be sleeping.’

The comparison between the syntactic specificities of BP presented in §2, and the Bantu patterns illustrated in (9–14), strongly suggest that the changes undergone by Portuguese in Brazil were, to a great extent, induced by contact with African languages. This is coherent with the demographic data presented above, which show that Africans and Afro-descendants corresponded to 60% of the population from the beginning of the 17th century up to the middle of the 19th. However, it must be stressed that the proportion of European and white Brazilians was never less than 30%, which explains why, contrary to what was argued by Guy (1981), a Portuguese-based creole did not emerge in Brazil, except in very marginal cases (Lucchesi 2009: 70).

4 Deriving the grammatical properties of BP

4.1 φ -independent EPP

In this section, we will present a formal proposal to account for the BP facts listed in §2, taking into consideration Avelar & Galves' (2011; 2016) analyses based on Chomsky's (2008) *On Phases*. We will also analyze BP properties from Sheehan & van der Wal's (2018) discussion on effects of *Vergnaud licensing* involving structural Case in Bantu languages (cf. §4.2.2). Exploring such discussion, we will propose an alternative analysis for BP, in order to account for some aspects not captured by Avelar & Galves (2011; 2016) (cf. §5).

Avelar & Galves (2011; 2016) derive the instances of topic–verb agreement in BP from two abstract properties. First, they argue that EPP in BP is φ -independent, in the sense of Holmberg (2010). Exploring Chomsky's (2008) framework, Avelar and Galves argue that in BP, in contrast with EP and other Romance languages, SpecTP is created as soon as T is projected, independently of the valuation of T's φ -features, which are inherited from C. In EP, by contrast, SpecTP is created only after C is connected into the structure, and T inherits φ -features from C. The representations in Figure 5.1 show the point of the derivation in which C is connected to TP, and φ -features are transferred from C to T, respectively in EP and BP. Note that, in BP, but not in EP, the position of SpecTP is already created at this point and filled by the external argument DP moved from SpecvP.

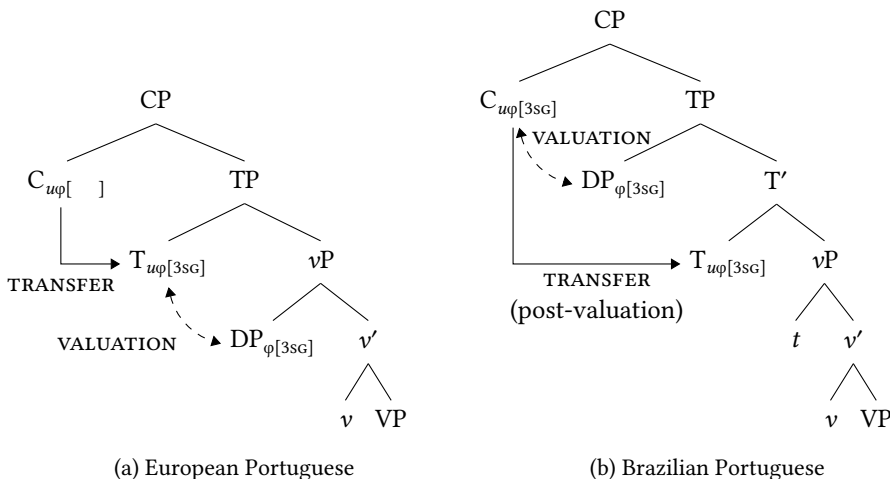


Figure 5.1: Transfer and valuation of φ -features in European and Brazilian Portuguese. Solid and dashed lines symbolize transfer and valuation, respectively.

Adopting Chomsky's (2008) proposal that A-positions are created by the action of φ -features, we conclude that, since SpecTP in BP can be created without the action of such features, it works as an A-bar position in this language. Assuming that only uniform movements (A-to-A and A'-to-A' positions) are possible, as proposed in Chomsky (2008), this explains why non-argumental DPs can agree with T's φ -features in BP, but not in EP: since SpecTP is an A-bar position in BP and can be created without the action of a φ -feature probe, non-argumental DPs can occupy this position in BP and agree with the φ -features of C-T domain.

This analysis accounts for not only the constructions with topic-verb agreement in BP (and its ungrammaticality in EP) presented in (1) and (2), but also the hyper-raising sentences exemplified previously in (4) and (5). Let us consider the one presented in (5), reproduced below:

(15) Brazilian Portuguese

- a. Esses carros_i tão parecendo que [o pneu t_i] não foi trocado.
 these cars are seeming that the tyre not was replaced
- b. Tá parecendo que esses carros_i, [o pneu t_i] não foi trocado.
 is seeming that these cars the tyre not was replaced
 'It seems that the tyres of these cars were never replaced.', literally
 'These cars are seeming that the tyres were never replaced.'

Our analysis straightforwardly derives the claim by Martins & Nunes (2010) that in BP instances of hyper-raising, DPs can be moved from SpecTopP or SpecTP in the embedded clause to SpecTP in the matrix clause, as represented in (16). This is possible because, due to the fact that SpecTP is an A-bar position in BP, the movement from the embedded SpecTopP (or SpecTP) to the matrix SpecTP is uniform (A'-to-A' movement).

- (16) [TP [DP [T' parecem ... [CP que [TopP t_i Top [TP [DP o pneu t_i]j [T' não foi trocado t_j]]]]]]]

Another property that distinguishes BP from EP as well as from the other Romance languages and English has to do with the fact that *tough sentences* like (17) have two possible interpretations. Interpretation (a), by which *João* is the object of *agradar* 'please', is the only one allowed in languages like English and EP. By contrast, interpretation (b), with *João* being interpreted as the subject of *agradar*, is also available in BP (Galves 1987).

- (17) Brazilian Portuguese
 O João é difícil de agradar.
 the João is tough of please
 a. 'It is tough to please João.'
 b. 'It is tough for João to please somebody.'

Interpretation (b) of (17) derives from the possibility of the embedded subject position to raise to the matrix subject position passing through the embedded Spec-C, since this movement is from an A'-to-A', as represented in (19).⁶

- (18) [CP [T [T' T ... [CP t_i [C' de [TP [vP t_i agradar]]]]]]]

4.2 Case in Brazilian Portuguese

4.2.1 A Caseless approach

Furthermore, in order to account for the optionality of subject agreement and Case marking on pronouns (cf. §2.1 and §2.3), Avelar & Galves (2011; 2016) propose that in BP, DPs can be inserted in the derivation without a Case [K] feature.⁷ In this condition, pronouns are realized in their default form, and the verbal inflection does not agree, being spelled-out as the morphologically unmarked morpheme of third person singular. Note that this property is independently required to license the post-verbal DP in sentences like (1) and (2), in which there is a unique source of Case for two DPs.

The interaction of the two relevant properties (ϕ -independence of T's EPP and caseless DPs) explains another difference between BP and EP. In infinitival clauses introduced by the preposition *para* 'for', as exemplified in (19), the lexical subject can only be morphologically marked as nominative in EP, while it can be either nominative or dative in BP.

- (19) a. BP: ok – EP: ok
 Ele fez isso para **eu** ficar feliz.
 he did that for 1SG.NOM stay happy
 b. BP: ok – EP: *
 Ele fez isso para **mim** ficar feliz.
 he did that for 1SG.DAT stay happy
 'He did that for me to be happy'

⁶We leave unexplained the possibility of the a.-interpretation in all languages. The classical analysis involves a null operator in Comp that is not easily transposable in the current model (cf. Moreno 2014 for more details on tough-constructions in BP).

⁷For other approach dealing with abstract Case in BP sentences with topic-subject agreement, see Nunes (2017).

Within Avelar and Galves' analyses, this contrast can be accounted for by the condition of φ -(in)dependence of T's EPP feature in connection with the status of the pronouns with respect to Case. The derivation of the sentences in (19) is shown in (20), respectively, where the preposition *para* 'for' is the head of the CP projection. Given that T's EPP is φ -independent in BP, the first person pronoun occupies SpecTP before C is merged. Assuming that the pronoun can be [+K] or [-K], the variation can be explained as follows. When 1SG is [+K], the φ -features of the preposition agree with the pronoun, whose Case is valued as oblique and spelled-out as *mim* 'me', the oblique form of 1SG. When the pronoun is [-K], the preposition cannot agree with the pronoun, which is therefore spelled-out as the default form identical to the nominative *eu* 'I'.

- (20) a. [_{CP} pra [_{TP} 1SG_{K[OBL]} (= mim) [_{T'} T [_{v-VP} t ficar feliz]]]]
 b. [_{CP} pra [_{TP} 1SG (= eu) [_{T'} T [_{v-VP} t ficar feliz]]]]

The derivation of the sentence in EP is represented in (21). In this language, SpecTP is projected only after C enters the derivation. The φ -features inherited from C by T detect the pronoun in SpecvP. In this situation, given that Case is assigned by T and not by C, the pronoun is necessarily valued as nominative.

- (21) [_{CP} para [_{TP} [_{v-VP} 1SG_{K[NOM]} (= eu) ficar feliz]]]

In the next section, we revise Avelar & Galves' (2011; 2016) approach based on Sheehan & van der Wal's (2018) discussion of the *Vergnaud licensing* effects.

4.2.2 Problematicizing the Caseless approach

Sheehan & van der Wal (2018) propose grammatical criteria for attesting the existence of abstract Case in languages, which they call *Vergnaud licensing*. The motivation of Sheehan & van der Wal's discussion comes from particular properties of Bantu languages, normally described as a set of languages without Case effects. The characterization of Bantu as a subgroup of caseless languages arises empirical issues to theoretical models in which abstract Case is analyzed as a universal feature involved in different grammatical operations, as movement and agreement. As we show below, BP is positive for several of the properties that, according to the authors, evidence the relevance of abstract Case in a given language. This result imposes a challenge for Avelar & Galves' (2011; 2016) analysis, in which the Case feature is presented as optional on BP DPs.

According to Sheehan & van der Wal (2018), the validity of *Vergnaud licensing* (abstract Case system) in a given language can be attested by the attribution of

a positive value (Yes) to the following properties: ungrammaticality of infinitival clauses with subjects; agreement with subjects; activity condition, as proposed in Chomsky (2000; 2001); obligatory preposition in passive agents; grammatical functional-based asymmetry; distinctive pronominal morphology; absence of subject anaphors; and Case assigners for complements of nouns.

Taking BP into consideration, we find the following situation with respect to *Vergnaud licensing*.

4.2.2.1 Non-finite clauses: Yes

Although to a lesser extent than EP, BP does display restrictions on the occurrence of nominal phrases in subject position of infinitival clauses. Out of the three contexts listed by Sheehan & van der Wal (2018), two clearly exclude lexical subjects:

- (22) Complements of raising verbs, Brazilian Portuguese
 *Parece [o João comer panquecas]
 seems the João eat pancakes
- (23) Complements of control verbs, Brazilian Portuguese
 *Nós esperamos [o João comer panquecas]
 we wait.1PL the João eat pancakes

The third context allows for lexical subjects, but this is due to the fact that it is a context in a which personal/inflected infinitive is licensed both in EP and in BP.

- (24) Sentential subjects without a complementizer
 [O João comer panquecas] seria bom
 the João eat pancakes would.be good
 ‘It would be good for João to eat pancakes.’

4.2.2.2 Agreement with subjects: Yes/No

As we saw above (cf. examples in 6), subject–verb agreement is variable in BP. In Avelar & Galves (2011; 2016), this fact was taken as a piece of evidence that in this language, DPs can enter the derivation without Case-feature. Below we shall propose an alternative explanation for such a variation.

4.2.2.3 Activity: No

Examples of hyper-raising presented in §1 (examples 4–5) show that BP allows for movement from the subject position of a tensed clause to another subject position (see Martins & Nunes 2010). Such a movement violates the *activity condition* of Chomsky (2000; 2001), which prevents movement from a position in which Case has already been valued. This property can be analyzed as one of the main pieces of evidence that *Vergnaud licensing* is not active in a given language.

4.2.2.4 Passive agents: Yes

In BP, like in EP, a preposition is obligatory to license the agent of a passive sentence.

(25) Brazilian Portuguese

A Maria foi atropelada *(por) um motorista bêbado.
the Mary was run.over by a driver drunk
'Mary was run over by a drunk driver'

4.2.2.5 Grammatical function-based asymmetry: No

Beyond the absence of subject–object asymmetry in long WH-extraction typical of pro-drop languages, BP displays the symmetry exemplified in (17), repeated in (26) below, in contrast with EP, other Romance languages, and English.

(26) Brazilian Portuguese

O João é difícil de agradar.
the João is tough of please
a. 'It is tough to please João'
b. 'It is tough for João to please somebody.'

4.2.2.6 Morphology: Yes/No

As we saw previously in (7–8), one of the peculiarities of BP is that the same pronoun can be used in subject and object position, in contrast with EP, where only case-marked clitic pronouns can occur in the latter. In the case of the third person pronoun, this yielded the disappearance of the clitic pronoun *o/a* 'him/her', 'it', which is replaced either by the tonic pronoun *ele/ela* 'he/she' or by a null object. In second person, clitics and tonic pronouns co-exist, producing what is likely to be a stable variation (Galves 2019).

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4.2.2.7 Subject anaphors: Yes

As other Romance languages, BP has an anaphoric clitic *se* that cannot occur in subject position of a subordinate clause.

- (27) Brazilian Portuguese
*O João acha que se é inteligente
the João think that himself is intelligent

4.2.2.8 Assigners: Yes

Prepositions are obligatory to introduce nominal complements, as shown in (28)–(29).⁸

- (28) Brazilian Portuguese
*O João tem medo *(de) fantasmas
the João has fear of ghosts
'João fears ghosts'
- (29) Brazilian Portuguese
o amor *(de) João *(por) Maria
the love of João by Maria
'João fears ghosts'

4.2.2.9 Assignees: Yes

The last test proposed by Sheehan & van der Wal concerns how DPs and CPs are licensed. If DPs require Case and clauses do not, we expect a contrast between the conditions of their licensing. BP requires prepositions to introduce nominal complements, which suggests that it obeys *Vergnaud licensing*.

⁸However, some BP dialects license double object constructions (Scher 1996; Lucchesi & Mello 2009, among others):

- (i) Brazilian Portuguese
Dei o pai um presente
gave the father a gift
'I gave a gift to my father'

BP double object constructions are different from English double object constructions in that both orders involving direct and indirect objects (DO–IO and IO–DO) are possible. This can be interpreted as evidence that in such BP dialects, both DPs are licensed independently of their position in the structure, simply because no Case marking is required. Unfortunately, such dialects are not fully described. It is therefore not possible to check whether this property is correlated with others in such a way that it could be argued that they do not instantiate *Vergnaud licensing*.

4.3 Partial conclusions

We have brought empirical evidence that contact with African languages, mainly from the Bantu subgroup, played an important role on the development of syntactic features that distinguishes BP not only from EP, but also from other Romance and Indo-European languages. We have seen that Portuguese was learned by millions of Africans taken to Brazil by the slave traffic, and that some morphosyntactic properties of BP are found in several Bantu languages. From a purely grammatical point of view, we have proposed, following our previous claims, that a central property of Brazilian syntax is that T's EPP is independent of C, which means that, as soon as T is projected in the derivation, it attracts some phrase from inside vP/VP . The ϕ -independence of the position created by T's EPP makes this position an A-bar position, and this has a crucial role in the possibility of subsequent movements to other A-bar positions, namely in the phenomenon known as hyper-raising.

The application of the tests proposed by Sheehan & van der Wal (2018) leads us to conclude that abstract Case is, in great part, active in BP. As we will show below, the fact that two criteria do not attend the detection of *Vergnaud licensing* in BP – *activity* and *grammatical function-based asymmetry* – does not have to do with effects of abstract Case marking, but with particularities involving the status of SpecTP as an A-bar position.

Further evidence of the effect of Case requirements is given by a remarkable exception in the parallelism with some Bantu languages like Kirundi with respect to the agreement phenomenon observed in §2. In Kirundi, the direct object of a transitive verb can occur in preverbal position and agree with the verb, in presence of the external argument in post-verbal position, as illustrated in (30) below. In BP, as shown in (31), this is impossible.

- (30) Kirundi (Carstens 2011: 723)
 Ibitabo bi-á-ra-somye Johani
 8.book 8.SM-PST-read.PFV John
 'John (not Peter) has read (the) books'
- (31) Brazilian Portuguese
 *os livros leram o João
 the.PL book.PL read.3PL the John
 intended: 'John read the books.'

A natural explanation for the agrammaticality of (31) is that in BP, abstract Case is active, and the DP *o João* has no way to get its Case feature valued once another phrase in SpecTP agrees with T, blocking the agreement between T's ϕ -features and the external argument in Spec vP .

However, BP departs from other Romance languages with respect to the licensing of pronouns (cf. *v* in §2) and displays some properties that are incompatible with the theory of Case as it currently stands (cf. §2.3). In the next section, we propose an alternative analysis to Avelar & Galves (2011; 2016), assuming *Vergnaud licensing*, but deriving BP particularities from another aspect linked with SpecTP's properties.

5 An alternative proposal

In order to account for the properties of *Vergnaud licensing* in BP, we will explore the proposal of Avelar & Galves (2011; 2016), presented in §4.1, in particular regarding the creation of SpecTP before the connection of C into the structure. The main difference with the previous analysis is that all DPs in BP will be analyzed as having a Case feature.

We will combine Chomsky (2008)'s framework with the proposal of Pesetsky & Torrego (2004) about the nature of the Case feature. We assume, in particular, that nominative Case is an uninterpretable version of T(ense) feature on DPs. We will also assume that the agreement relation via probe–goal does not result in *feature deletion*, but in *feature sharing*, which means that when a probe detects a relevant goal, both occurrences of the feature involved in the relation become two instantiations of a single feature. This means that, when a feature A probes a feature B, A and B become a single occurrence of the same feature (or two instantiations of a single feature). A consequence of this assumption is that an unvalued feature can probe another unvalued feature and become two instantiations of an unvalued single feature. If one of the instantiations is valued, another instantiation is automatically valued too.

Turning back to the sentences exemplified in (32) below, the derivation goes in the following way: before DP2 *as crianças* 'the children' is moved to SpecTP, its unvalued Case feature agrees via probe–goal with the unvalued Case feature of DP1 *o dentinho* 'the tooth', as illustrated in (33). The result is the sharing of the unvalued Case feature *uK* between DP1 and DP2. The index [Y] appearing in both instances of *uK* indicates feature sharing. Case agreement involving DP1 and DP2 is possible because, if we assume that D is the head with *uK*, the head of DP1 must c-command the head of DP2 in some derivational point, which creates the condition for any D1's feature to probe DP2.

- (32) Brazilian Portuguese
 As crianças nasceram o dentinho.
 the children born the tooth.little
 'Children's teeth were born.'

(33) $[_{DP1} \text{ o dentinho } [_{DP2} \text{ as crianças }]_{uK[Y]}]_{uK[Y]}$

When T enters the derivation, DP2 is attracted by T's EPP and is internal-merged as SpecTP,⁹ as represented in Figure 5.2. From this position, DP2 Case feature probes its c-command domain, and detect the valued interpretable Case feature of T (in fact, an interpretable valued Tense feature, as proposed by Pesetsky & Torrego 2004). As a result of feature sharing, the Case features in DP1 and DP2 become instances of the same valued Case feature of T (i.e., nominative).

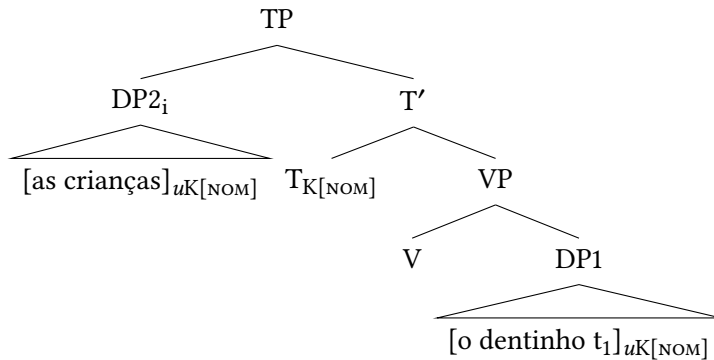


Figure 5.2: Case feature sharing in Brazilian Portuguese topic-subject structures

C is then merged with TP, as in Figure 5.3, and its unvalued φ -features probe DP2's valued φ -features. As a consequence, T inherits C's φ -features already valued, as represented below.

⁹If we consider that DP2 is connected into an escape hatch position within DP1 (cf. Avelar 2006), both DP1 and DP2 are available to satisfy T's EPP. This implies that DP1 could be attracted to SpecTP instead of DP2. In this case, the whole DP1 (including DP2) would be moved to SpecTP, resulting in the sentence in (i) below, which is grammatical in Brazilian and European Portuguese.

- (i) Brazilian Portuguese
 O dentinho das crianças nasceu.
 the tooth-little.SG of-the.PL children born.PST.3SG
 'The children's tooth was born.'

According to Avelar (2006), the preposition *de* 'of' introducing DP2 in this situation is a dissociated morpheme, which means that its insertion does not occur during the narrow syntactic derivation, but post-syntactically, in the morphological component (cf. also Raposo 2002). If that analysis is on the right track, the relevant question is why the preposition is obligatory if DP2 is spelled-out inside DP1, taking into account that the preposition is not necessary to satisfy casual requirements. We leave this tricky question for further research.

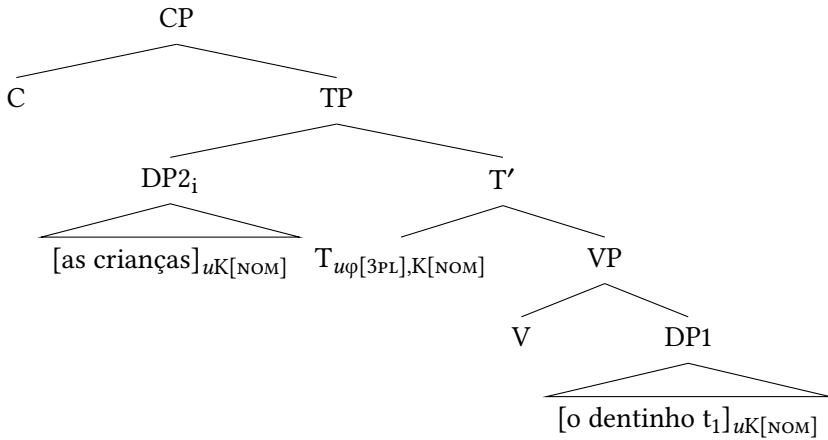


Figure 5.3: ϕ -feature transfer from C to T and feature sharing Brazilian Portuguese topic-subject structures

Note that this derivation is also possible in cases in which DP2 is not a modifier of DP1, but a locative adverbial adjunct modifying VP, as previously exemplified in (1), reproduced in (34a) below. In such sentences, DP2 *as ruas do centro* ‘downtown streets’ is initially adjoined to VP and, from this position, c-commands and can probe DP1 *carro* ‘carro’ before it moves to SpecTP.

- (34) a. *As ruas do centro não tão passando carro.*
 b. [TP T [VP [DP2 *as ruas do centro*]_{uK}[Y] [VP [V' V [DP1 *carro*]_{uK}[Y]]]]]

A prediction of this analysis is that also in EP, DP2 and DP1 can share a Case feature, which implies that in sentences with possessor raising like (32), DP2 can be moved from inside DP1 without a preposition, as in BP. But, in contrast with BP, DP2 cannot be internal-merged as SpecTP in EP, which explains why DP2 does not agree with T’s ϕ -feature in the European variety. This fact is captured by our proposal, since SpecTP in EP can only be created after T inherits the unvalued ϕ -features from C: in this configuration, what determines the creation of SpecTP is a probe triggered by C–T’s unvalued ϕ -features, which means that SpecTP is a typical A-position in EP; as DP1 is locally closer to T than DP2 to satisfy ϕ -feature requirements, only the former can be detected by the probe and internal-merged as SpecTP. However, the prepositionless DP2 can be moved to a topic position in EP (given that such movement does not involve locality conditions determined by ϕ -feature requirements), as well as in BP, as in (35) below (cf. Costa 2010; Avelar & Galves 2011).

- (35) BP: ok – EP: ok
- a. As crianças, nasceu o dentinho.
the children born.3SG the tooth
- b. [_{TopP} [_{DP} as crianças]_i Top [_{TP} pro_{EXPL} T [_{VP} nasceu [_{DP} o dentinho t_i]]]]
‘About the children, their teeth are born.’

With regard to hyper-raising constructions, Avelar & Galves’ (2011; 2016) explanation is preserved in this new proposal: since SpecTP is an A-bar position in BP, movement from a position within the embedded clause (SpecTP, SpecTopP or SpecCP) to the matrix SpecTP is always licensed. Even though we consider that the uninterpretable instances of Case feature are deleted during or at the end of the embedded clause phase, all DPs from the embedded clause are, in BP, available to be moved to the matrix T and probed by C–T’s ϕ -features (since it occupies an escape hatch position in the lower phase). Note that not only external argument DPs can be raised from embedded clauses, but also internal arguments, as in (36), and even non-argumental phrases (cf. (5)).

- (36) Brazilian Portuguese
- Esses livros_i parecem que a biblioteca ainda não catalogou t_i.
these books seem.3PL that the library yet not catalogued.3SG
‘It seems that the library haven’t catalogued these books yet.’

6 Prepositional locative subjects, pronominal morphology and active-passive alternation

Avelar & Galves (2011; 2016) do not consider the case of (3), reproduced in (37) below, in which the verb is preceded by a locative PP.

- (37) Brazilian Portuguese
- Na **minha escola** aceita cartão de crédito.
in-the my school accept.3SG credit card
‘My school accepts credit cards.’
‘One accepts credit cards in my school.’

Avelar & Cyrino (2008) give arguments that this locative PP behaves like a subject, which led the authors to assume that it occupies SpecTP. According to Avelar (2006), some instances of locative PPs in BP can be analyzed as projections of an adverbial pronoun, which can be phonologically null or be spelled-out as an adverbial demonstrative like *aqui* ‘here’ or *aí/ali/lá* ‘here’, as in the bracketed

(41) Brazilian Portuguese

- a. No hospital trata você bem.
in-the hospital treats you well
- b. *No hospital te trata bem.
in-the hospital you.ACC treats well
'In hospitals one takes care of you well'

Things are different if the verb bears a plural mark, as in (42), which yields a referentially indeterminate interpretation for the subject: in this case, the variation between *ocê* and *te* is again possible. This is because there is a null external argument (an indefinite third plural person *pro*) that bears nominative Case, and the pronoun in complement position is accusative.

(42) Brazilian Portuguese

- a. No hospital tratam você bem.
in-the hospital treat.3PL you well
- b. No hospital te tratam bem.
in-the hospital you.ACC treat.3PL well
'In hospital, they treat you well.'

The proposed analysis explains the difference in the interpretation of the third person singular and plural with no phonologically explicit subject. We straightforwardly derive it from the fact that only when the verb has plural number does a null subject really occur.¹⁰ Sentences like (41a) have no null subject, and they are in fact a kind of ergative sentences, in which the projected argument in complement position bears nominative Case. If this argument remains post-verbal, an extra position is available in SpecTP. It can be occupied by a LocP/PP like in (41a), or by the verbal complement, like in (43) below. In the latter, also impossible in EP, the verbal complement *a revista* 'the journal' is attracted to SpecTP, where it Case-agrees with T, as represented in (44).

(43) Brazilian Portuguese

- A revista xerocou.
the journal photocopied.3SG
'The journal was photocopied.'

(44) [CP C [TP [DP a revista]_{φ[3SG]/K[NOM]} [T' T_{φ[3SG]/K[NOM]} [VP V t]]]

¹⁰In generic sentences with no pre-verbal DP or PP, like *Não usa mais saia* 'One no longer wears skirts', we suggest that SpecTP is occupied by a null locative expletive, equivalent to English 'there'.

The hypothesis that no external argument is projected in (41) and (43) is reinforced by the fact that no adverbial phrase semantically associated with an agentive argument can be inserted in this kind of sentences (cf. Galves 2000):

- (45) Brazilian Portuguese
 #A revista xerocou **com cuidado / para ganhar tempo.**
 the journal photocopied.3SG with care to gain time

Finally, we have to account for the variation in morphological agreement between the verb and its subject (cf. iv in §2), which was linked with the presence or absence of Case feature on DPs in the former analysis (cf. §4.1). In the present analysis, the possibility of no agreement on the verb is no longer imputable to the absence of Case-feature on the subject DP. An alternative analysis comes from the parallelism that can be done between the nominative–dative alternation attested in pronominal subjects of embedded infinitival sentences (cf. 20) and the alternation involving agreement and no-agreement in tensed sentences.

Regarding embedded infinitival clauses, as exemplified in (46) below, the analysis proposed in this paper yields two different derivations according to whether non-finite Tense has or not a Case feature. This is a possibility in BP as well as in EP, since both varieties license inflected infinitives (Raposo 1987; Modesto 2016). Like in tensed sentences, T’s EPP of infinitival sentences attracts the external argument to SpecTP. There are then two possibilities in BP, according to whether T has Case or not. If T has Case, as represented in (48a), DP in SpecTP probes it, and is marked as nominative. If T does not have Case, as in (47b), DP in SpecTP can receive dative Case from the preposition *para* ‘for’, and then be spelled-out as the oblique pronoun *mim* ‘me’.¹¹ Both derivations can be derived from the basic assumption of our analysis, i.e. the fact that DPs are moved to SpecTP before the merge of C into the structure.^{12,13}

- (46) Brazilian Portuguese
 Ele fez isso pra mim / eu ficar feliz.
 He did that for me I to.stay happy
 ‘He did that to make me happy’

¹¹It is not clear for us how the pronoun in SpecTP receives its dative Case from the preposition *para* ‘for’ within Pesetsky & Torrego’s (2004) proposal. A possible analysis is that dative Case is transferred from the preposition (which may be in C) to non-inflected T, and then be probed by the pronoun. A full account of this question is outside the scope of this paper.

¹²This assertion is not true in the case of null subjects as we discuss below.

¹³In EP, the pronominal external argument is probed by T and internal-merged to SpecTP only after T receives φ -features from C. In non-inflected/impersonal infinitival clauses, C does not have φ -features to be inherited by T, and the pronoun cannot be moved to SpecTP. As a consequence, the pronoun cannot probe T’s Case feature and does not receive nominative Case, which yields an ungrammatical sentence.

- (47) a. [CP pra_{K[DAT]} [TP [1SG = **eu**]_{K[NOM]} [T' T_{φ[1SG],K[NOM]} [VP ficar feliz]]]]
 b. [CP pra_{K[DAT]} [TP [1SG = **mim**]_{K[DAT]} [T' T [VP ficar feliz]]]]

Regarding the variation in subject–verb agreement in finite sentences, we can explore two possibilities involved in the C–To–T transfer of features. In our proposal, since SpecTP is already created when C is connected into TP, φ-features can be transferred valued to T in BP. The two possibilities are then the following: (i) C transfers its valued φ-features to T, or (ii) C retains its φ-features. The situation in (i) produces sentences in which the morphological mark of agreement is on the verb, as in (48). In the second situation, C cannot be morphologically inflected in BP, and the verb is spelled-out with the default mark of third singular person – cf. (49).¹⁴

- (48) Brazilian Portuguese
 a. As crianças dormiram.
 the.PL children slept.3PL
 ‘The children slept.’
 b. [CP C [TP [DP as crianças]_{φ[3PL]} [T' T_{φ[3PL]}[_v-VP ...]]]]
- (49) Brazilian Portuguese
 a. As crianças dormiu.
 the.PL children slept.3SG
 ‘The children slept.’

¹⁴But if the subject is the first singular person pronoun *eu* ‘I’, agreement marking is obligatory in some tenses of indicative mode (Present, Future and Perfect). One possible hypothesis is that the obligatory agreement does not result from the syntactic C–To–T transfer, but from a morphological adjustment triggered by the presence of the first-person pronoun in the immediately preverbal position. A piece of evidence in favor of this hypothesis is the fact that, when the pronoun is phonologically null, agreement is no longer necessary in many conversational contexts. For instance, a question like *Você fez o café?* ‘Did you make coffee?’ can be answered as in (ii), with the verb inflected in the third singular person if the subject pronoun is null. If the pronoun is inserted, the agreement is obligatory, as in (iii).

- (i) Eu falo / *fala.
 I speak.1SG speak.3SG
 ‘I speak.’
- (ii) Fez / Fiz.
 made.3SG made.1SG
 ‘Yes, I made it.’
- (iii) Eu (*fez) / fiz.
 I made.3SG made.1SG
 ‘Yes, I made it.’

- b. [_{CP} C_{φ[3PL]} [_{TP} [_{DP} as crianças]_{φ[3PL]} [_{T'} T [_{v-VP} ...]]]]

The other property of BP explained by the absence of Case in the former analysis was the morphological invariance of personal pronouns. This can be independently accounted for by the morphological reorganization of the pronominal paradigm due to language contact (cf. §3), which includes, among other things, the loss of the third person clitic, and the variation between second person clitic and its non-clitic counterpart. In particular, a consequence of the loss of the accusative clitic is that accusative non-clitic pronouns emerge in the paradigm. Third person pronoun *ele* ‘he’ and second person pronoun *você* ‘you’ can therefore be either nominative or accusative. A full account of this question is outside the scope of this paper.

7 Concluding remarks

The analysis proposed here departs from our previous accounts of Brazilian morphosyntax in what concerns Case. In Avelar & Galves (2011; 2016), we argued that DPs could enter the derivation with or without a Case feature. This accounted for the free variation between agreement and non-agreement with subjects, on the one hand, and between tonic pronouns and clitics on the other hand. It also accounted for the fact that sentences with topic–verb agreement, like the ones in (1–2), seem to have only one source of Case for two DPs. Moreover, this was likely to be a nice claim from the contact effects with African languages since it has been argued that syntactic Case in Bantu languages is not active (cf. Diercks 2012). We gave this hypothesis up for two main reasons. On the one hand, we are forced to acknowledge the fact that BP displays many of the morphosyntactic properties classically associated with abstract Case (or *Vergnaud licensing* in Sheehan & van der Wal’s 2018 proposal). On the other hand, recent papers convincingly argued that not all Bantu languages lack the effects of syntactic case (cf. van der Wal 2015 and references therein), which makes Avelar & Galves’s (2011) proposal for BP less attractive from a diachronic point of view.

One of the advantages of the new approach is also that Case and EPP nicely combine to account for the facts, while they were rather disconnected in the previous analysis. Assuming feature sharing as in Pesetsky & Torrego’s (2004) proposal, we derive the constructions with topic–verb agreement from the way Case and ϕ -features interact with the ability of T in BP to enter in nominative-Case-valuing with both the pre-verbal DP that c-commands it and the post-verbal DP c-commanded by it. This nicely solves the question of one Case source for two DPs. As for the other facts that the lack of Case was intended to account for, it

is worth coming back to the connection between Case and hyper-raising. One of the tests proposed by Sheehan & van der Wal (2018) involves hyper-raising, since it is largely assumed in minimalist approaches that only DPs with valued Case-feature are frozen in place. The existence of hyper-raising has been therefore considered as an empirical argument against the relevance of syntactic Case in languages in which it is observed (for Bantu languages, see Diercks 2012). It is therefore important to stress that our claim that Case is active in BP grammar has no consequences on our analysis of hyper-raising, which we continue to derive from the φ -independence of T's EPP and the A-bar status of SpecTP position in this Portuguese variety.

Some facts recently discussed in the literature about Bantu languages seem to support this analysis. Van der Wal (2015: 127), for instance, claims that some Bantu languages like Makhuwa and Matengo display many phenomena showing that their grammar activate abstract case. In those languages, for instance, the verb agrees with its post-verbal subject in locative inversion, behaving therefore like Indo-European languages with respect to Baker's (2008) agreement parameter, i.e., evidencing sensitiveness to nominative Case. Still, such languages have hyper-raising (hyper-agreement, in van der Wal's terms). The comparison between Bantu languages in which the verb agrees with the post-verbal subject and Bantu languages in which the verb agrees with the pre-verbal locative phrase, leads one to question Baker's (2008) claim that the agreement parameter is a macro-parameter that distinguishes large families of languages. On the basis of this data, and if our analysis can be extended to Bantu languages, it rather looks like a morphological micro-parameter involving the way in which the φ -features are transferred in the C–T domain, in the spirit of Ouali (2008).¹⁵ We have claimed that in BP, φ -features are already valued when they are transferred to T. One could suggest that, in some languages, C is blind to the constituent in SpecTP and transfers unvalued φ -features to T. In this case, agreement is established with the post-verbal subject.

Finally, we have proposed that part of the debated question of Case parameterization has to be put at the level of the morphological realization of Case. This is not new, as we know that languages differ with respect to the presence vs. absence of morphological Case-marking on DPs. BP is a language in which there is intra-linguistic variation inside the pronominal paradigm, possibly due to its history of contact.

¹⁵For an implementation of Ouali's ideas to explain aspects of Brazilian syntax, see Toniette (2013).

Abbreviations

1	first person	LOC	locative
3	third person	NOM	nominative
ACC	accusative	OBL	oblique
BP	Brazilian Portuguese	PASS	passive
DAT	dative	PFV	perfective
DO	direct object	PL	plural
EP	European Portuguese	PRS	present
EPP	extended projection principle	PST	past
EXPL	expletive	SG	singular
FV	final vowel	SM	subject marker
IO	indirect object	TNS	tense

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