

Review of “On Brazilian Portuguese 3rd person object full pronouns”

Recommendation: Revisions required.

Summary: The paper analyses the behavior of the 3rd person object pronouns *ele/ela* in Brazilian Portuguese. Concretely, it focuses on two important properties of these elements: (i) these pronouns do not allow sloppy readings but only strict readings, and (ii) only [+animate] *ele/ela* can be focalized and convey new information. As for the lack of sloppy readings, the author argues that this follows from the fact that these pronouns are inherently indexical. With respect to the focus patterns, the author proposes that [+animate] full pronouns are specified for [Person] and must move out of VP to check that feature. As a result, they escape the InnerAsp-phase and can move up to the low Focus head. On the contrary, [-animate] *ele/ela* have no [Person] feature and, in consequence, stay *in situ*. Therefore, they are trapped inside the InnerAsp-phase and cannot move to the low Focus head.

Evaluation: The paper is clearly written and well structured. The main patterns are nicely illustrated, and the proposal is transparently presented. However, I am not entirely convinced by the argumentation: there are some issues with the overall analysis that I find problematic. Maybe, they are not major problems, but I consider that they should be clarified for the paper to be accepted. In what follows, I include some unordered questions and observations that will hopefully be helpful to the author for revising the article:

- The author argues that [-animate] full pronouns in Brazilian Portuguese cannot be focalized because they stay *in situ* and, in consequence, they are trapped inside the vP -phase. Now, an immediate consequence that follows from this analysis is that it should not be possible to focus inanimate DPs: since they have no [Person] feature, they cannot move out of VP and, therefore, they cannot raise to low FocP. This prediction, however, is not borne out: DPs can be focalized irrespectively of their animacy.

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The author acknowledges this problem in footnote 17. They suggest that “DP objects may move to a low periphery Topic position and then be DOM marked depending on other requirements”. Unless I am missing something, I think that this solution is still problematic. Under the assumption that the low TopP dominates the vP (see page 16), DP objects should move out of VP before v is merged in order to escape the InnerAsp-phase. Nevertheless, given that [-animate] DPs are ‘person-less’, there is no motivation for that necessary movement. I think that the main text should state this problem and propose a solution.

- I was wondering whether the asymmetry between animate and inanimate *ele/ela* regarding focalization is also present when the pronoun occurs as the complement of a preposition, for instance, *João confia nela*. If yes, how could it be captured under the phase-based account?

- Besides focalization, is there independent empirical evidence for the claim that BP 3rd person object full pronouns move out of VP to check animacy features? I consider that the paper would become significantly stronger if the author includes some arguments supporting this assumption.
- The author assumes the following low left periphery for Brazilian Portuguese: [FocP [TopP [ν P]]]. This analysis predicts that inanimate full pronouns cannot move not only to Focus position, but also to Top (in both cases, the complement of the InnAsp phase will have been transferred to the interfaces after ν is merged). Is there any difference between animate and inanimate *ele/ela* regarding low topicalization?
- Following Cyrino & Ordoñez (2018), the author assumes a version of the Big DP hypothesis according to which the D clitic head has a DP as its complement. The author argues that “the complement DP may be either deleted or pronounced, in which case the DP would be doubled by the clitic”. Now, unless I am missing something, this assumption is problematic: the sentence corresponding to the structure in (32b) is ungrammatical in Spanish, that is, clitic doubling is unacceptable with DPs like *su tarea* ‘his homework’ (e.g. (B)).

(B) *Juan la entregó su tarea.
 Juan it.CL handed-in his homework

Given that this sentence is deviant, it is not clear to me how the sloppy reading in (33) can be obtained.

- In the Figure 1, the Spell Out domain after ν is merged should be the VP (i.e. the complement of phase head InnAsp), and not the InnAspP.