

Crossover and ethical pronouns in Brazilian Portuguese

Ana C Bastos-Gee (University of Connecticut)

1. Introduction

The term *ethical constructions* is used here to refer to sentences in which a pronoun is used to express that someone is (negatively) affected by the content of the main assertion.

- (1) a. Scenario: Mary spent a whole week organizing a surprise birthday party for John. On the day before, she found out that John went to São Paulo.
b. Mary: o João ME foi pra São Paulo!
the John me went to São Paulo
'John went to São Paulo (and the speaker disapproves of it)
Alternatively: 'John went to São Paulo ON ME!'

In ((1)b), the pronoun *ME* is used to express that the speaker, *Mary*, is negatively affected by the fact that *John went to São Paulo*.

Ethical pronouns cannot co-refer with referential elements in the same clause in Brazilian Portuguese (BP), while co-reference with adjuncts is possible (originally observed by Borer and Grodzinsky 1986 for Hebrew.)

- (2) Indirect Object x ethical pronoun
O João (*ME) apresentou a Maria para **mim!**
The John (*ME) introduced the Mary to me
"John introduced Mary to me (and the speaker disapproves of it)"
- (3) Adjuncts x ethical pronoun
O João (ME) apresentou a Maria pro Paulo antes de **mim!**
The John (ME) introduced the Mary to-the Paul before of me
"John introduced Mary to Paul (on me) before me"

The goals of this paper are: a. provide a structure that captures the main properties of these constructions, and b. explain how the constraint on co-reference arises.

2. The structure of ethical pronouns

I propose that ethical constituents, such as the pronoun *ME* in BP, are merged into the derivation as specifiers of a low VP projection, and that they move up to the specifier of an A'-projection, higher than vP, as shown in (4) below.

I assume that *ME* is both a maximal and a minimal projection in the sense of Chomsky 1994, and therefore can be base-generated as a specifier and undergo A'-movement.¹ The final landing position of ethical constituents in BP will be argued to be a result of overt movement, driven by a strong feature [+S] related to speaker-orientation. I will call the relevant projection OrientP from now on. Tentatively, I will assume that this A'-projection correlates with sentential force; more precisely with the exclamative force of the sentence, and its meaning is tied to the speaker's attitude toward a presupposed content. I refer the reader to Bastos 2005 for further discussion of the meaning of ethical constructions.

¹ Another possibility for the internal structure of the ethical pronoun in BP is that *ME* is a PP with a null preposition [PP [P' Ø [DP [D' [NP [N' ME]]]]]]. Its structure would be then very similar to the English PP ON ME in its ethical-like interpretation. This analysis makes the same predictions as the maximal-minimal projection hypothesis, if we assume that the PP always moves up as a whole.

- (4) [_{orientP} ETH₁ [_{orient'} Orient^o ... [_{vP} DP3 [_{v'} v [_{vP} PP2 [_{v'} V [_{vP} DP1 [_{v'} V [_{vP} t₁ [_{v'} V]]]]]]]]]]]]]

where DP3 = usually the subject, PP2 = usually the indirect object; DP1 = usually the direct object.

Essentially following the spirit of Koizumi 1993, 1995 and Lasnik 1995, I assume an argumental structure in which each argument is base-generated in an independent VP layer. Different from their system, I am assuming that vP is the projection where case assignment/checking takes place for internal arguments, and not Agr_oP. The analysis presented above is actually compatible with any argumental structure as long as the ethical pronoun is based generated internally to the VP, as discussed in the text.

Evidence for the ethical pronoun base-generation in the VP system, not vP, comes from their compatibility with unaccusative constructions, as shown below.

- (5) Unaccusative constructions

a. As flores (ME) caíram no chão!

The flowers (ME) fell on-the floor

'The flowers fell on-the floor (and the speaker disapproves of it)'

Evidence for the ethical landing in an A'-projection is shown in (6). Ethicals cause relativized minimality effects (Rizzi 1990) blocking all kinds of A'-movement, for instance, wh-movement, as shown below.

- (6) Wh-questions involving **internal arguments**

a. *Pra quem* que o João (*?ME) vendeu a casa da Marta?

To whom that the John ME sold the house of-the Martha?

'To whom did John sell Martha's house?'

3. Crossover and the constraint on co-reference

In this section I pursue an analysis for the constraint on co-reference in terms of a crossover effect. I discuss cases that could be characterized as strong crossover violations, and show similarities between them and the classical cases discussed in the literature. Strong crossover is a violation involving A'-movement of one phrase over a co-indexed phrase (see Postal 1971, Wasow 1972, Lasnik 1976). One example of the relevant configuration is in (7), and the general schema of the violation is provided in (8).

- (7) * Who_i does he_i like?

* Who_i [_{TP} he_i [_{vP} e_i [_{vP} like e_i]]]

- (8) *[_{ZP} XP₁ ... [_{YP} ... [... t₁ ...]], where spec-ZP is an A'-position

The following BP constructions involving WH-movement, focus movement and clefting provide additional illustration.

- (9) *Quem_i ele_j t_j gosta t_i ?

Who_i he_j t_j like t_i

- (10) *[_{FocP} A MARIA_i (e não o Pedro) [ela_i viu t.]]

[_{FocP} THE MARY_i (and not Peter) [she_i saw t]]

- (11) * Foi [_{FocP} a Maria_i [que [ela_i viu t]]

Was the Mary_i that she_i saw t.

My proposal is that, when the ethical pronoun undergoes A'-movement to the specifier of OrientP crossing a co-indexed phrase, it causes a strong crossover violation.

For subjects and direct objects, this is straightforward.

- (12) * **Eu** [_{OrientP} ME [apresentei [_{VP} **eu** o João para a Maria **ME**!
I ME introduced I the John to-the Mary ME.
“I introduced John to Mary (*on me)”
- (13) * O João [_{OrientP} (ME) apresentou **eu** para a Maria **ME**!
The John (*ME) introduced I to Mary.
“John introduced me to Mary (*on me)”

As for indirect objects and locatives, in which the preposition is completely transparent to c-command, we obtain similar effects.

- (14) Indirect object
O João falou pra ela_{*i} que a Maria_i foi demitida.
The John told to her_{*i} that the Mary_i was fired.
‘John told her that Mary was fired’.
- (15) Locative
O João tatuou nela_{*i} que a Maria_i é bonita.
The John tattooed on her_{*i} that the Mary_i is a flower.
‘John tattooed on her that Mary is a flower’
Meaning: he tattooed the phrase “Mary is a flower”

The pronoun *ela* inside the PP in (14)-(15) cannot be co-referent with the referential expression *a Maria* in the embedded clause, which indicates that the pronoun *ela* c-commands the referential expression *a Maria*. Since the preposition is apparently syntactically vacuous in indirect/ locative PPs, we can extend the analysis of strong crossover to indirect objects and locatives.

Further evidence for an analysis in terms of a crossover violation comes from the fact that other first person pronouns are equally subject to the constraint on co-reference if they undergo A'-movement crossing a co-indexed constituent.

- (16) **Eu** apresentei **eu** pra plateia
I introduced I-acc to-the public.
‘I introduced me to the public’.
- (17) Focus movement without co-indexed pronouns
EU (e ninguém mais) a Maria apresentou t_i pra plateia.
I_i (and nobody else) the Mary introduced t_i pra plateia.
- (18) Focus movement
***EU** (e ninguém mais) eu apresentei t_i pra plateia.
I_i (and nobody else) I introduced t_i pra plateia.

The example in (17) shows that first person accusative pronouns can undergo focus movement. However, first person accusative pronouns cannot undergo focus movement crossing other first person pronouns, as shown in (18). These facts support the analysis in terms of strong crossover for the constraint on co-reference, and indirectly the proposal that the ethical pronoun in BP moves to the specifier of an A'-position.

One potential counterargument for an analysis in terms of crossover is the behavior of non-argumental PPs, which are not subject to the constraint on co-reference. Under the assumption that non-argumental PPs are left-adjoined (or right-adjoined) to the VP, the movement of the ethical pronoun to OrientP crosses them, hence we should expect them to be subject to the constraint on co-reference.

One way of dealing with the asymmetry between arguments and non-arguments and keep the assumptions about crossover is to assume a more complex layered structure of VP in which arguments are always higher than the ethical pronoun, and the ethical pronoun is always higher than non-argumental PPs, as illustrated in the following representation.

(19) ... [_{VP} DP3 [_{V'} V [_{VP} PP2 [_{V'} V [_{VP} DP1 [_{V'} V [_{VP} ETHICAL [_{V'} V [_{VP} PP_{non-argument} [_{V'} V]]]]]]]]]]]]]]

In a structure like (19) above, the ethical pronoun does not cross the non-argumental PPs. Since in BP the ethical pronoun always move up, it is hard to see the linear order above. In other languages, for instance, English, the ethical pronoun can stay *in situ* and the word order in (19) is attested.

- (20) a. John watched an adult movie (ON ME) without permission (*ON ME).
 b. John left the classroom (ON ME) before the other kids (*ON ME)².

In English, the ethical constituent must follow all arguments, but it must precede adjuncts, which can be accounted for (19) above. In addition to capturing the asymmetry between arguments and non-arguments, a structure like this would also capture the facts about the linear order of arguments, ethical and non-argumental PPs in English, under a Larson (1988)-style analysis of traditional adjuncts, where sentence final adjuncts are lower in the structure than arguments.

4. Final remarks

In this paper I investigated the properties of ethical constructions in BP. My central discussion focused on the constraint on co-reference, which was analysed as crossover violation. In order to explain the constraint on co-reference, I discussed the structure of ethical constructions. I argued that ethical pronouns start in a low projection in the VP system and move to OrientP in the IP system in order to check a [+S] feature related to speaker orientation.

Selected References

- Bastos**, Ana. 2005. The structure of ethical constructions and the constraint on co-reference in Brazilian Portuguese. University of Connecticut, Ms.
- Borer**, H. and Y. Grodzinsky. 1986. Syntactic Cliticization and Lexical Cliticization. The Case of Hebrew Dative Clitics. In H. Borer (Ed.), *the Syntax of Pronominal Clitics*, Pp. 175-217. Academic Press. Syntax and Semantics; No 19.
- Chomsky**, N. 1994. Bare Phrase Structure. MIT Occasional Papers in Linguistics 5. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge: MITWPL.
- Koizumi**, Masatoshi. 1993. Object agreement phrases and the split VP hypothesis. In *Papers on Case and Agreement I: MIT working papers in linguistics* 18, 99-148.
- Koizumi**, Masatoshi. 1995. Phrase structure in minimalist syntax. Doctoral dissertation, MIT, Cambridge, Mass.
- Larson**, R. 1988. On the double object construction. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 19: 335-391.
- Lasnik**, H. 1995. A note on pseudogapping. In *Papers on minimalist syntax, MIT working papers in linguistics* 27, ed. Rob Pensalfini and Hiroyuki Ura, 143-163. MITWPL, Department of Linguistics and Philosophy, MIT, Cambridge, Mass.
- Lasnik**, Howard. 1976. Remarks on co-reference. *Linguistic Analysis* 2: 1-22.
- Postal**, Paul. 1971. Cross-over phenomena. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Rizzi**, L. 1990. *Relativized Minimality*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Wasow**, Thomas. 1972. *Anaphoric relations in English*. Doctoral dissertation, MIT, Cambridge, Mass.

² According to my informants, both ((20)a-b) are bad when the ethical follows the adjunct, but ((20)a) is slightly better than ((20)b). I have no explanation for the variation in the judgments, but I will still take the fact that they are not acceptable as evidence for the position of the ethical constituent.