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Conclusion

This book sheds light on language variation and change from a generative syntactic perspective, based on a case study of relative clauses in the synchrony and diachrony of Portuguese. Furthermore, it contributes to the theoretical debate on the structural analysis of RRCs, ARCs, and extraposition. Two important findings are (1) that competing theoretical analyses need not be either false or true universally, but could be instrumental in explaining language variation (both diachronically and synchronically); and (2) a comparative analysis of phrasal discontinuity can provide an invaluable window into the syntax of different languages (and different stages of the same language).

The research methodology adopted involves comparative syntax (see Cinque and Kayne 2005, among others), both in the diachronic and the synchronic dimensions: CEP is systematically compared with earlier stages of Portuguese; moreover, Portuguese is compared with other languages, in particular Latin, English, Dutch, and Italian.

Such methodology provided precious insights into the diachronic contrasts found in Portuguese. Of particular interest is the finding that earlier stages of Portuguese, contrary to CEP, are to a large extent Germanic-like, at least with respect to the linguistic phenomena scrutinized. The comparative approach also proved to be an invaluable way of overcoming the limitations of historical inquiry. In this respect, it was shown that studying the behavior of other contemporary languages might provide the means to overcome the difficulties posed by the limited nature of written sources and the impossibility of manipulating data.

The linguistic facts are analyzed in the light of the Minimalist version of the Principles and Parameters framework (see Chomsky 1981; Chomsky 1993, 1995, and subsequent work). The interpretation and explanation of grammatical changes is developed within the model proposed by Lightfoot (1991, 1999, and subsequent work), which associates diachronic change with language acquisition. It also benefits from the insights of the competing grammars hypothesis originally proposed by Kroch (1989, 1994, 2001).

The benefits of using theoretical linguistics in studying diachronic (and synchronic) phenomena are substantial. To single out but a few, theoretical linguistics

provided important tools to organize, describe, and explain the data. It also oriented the inspection of large-scale corpora in an advanced phase of the research: with the predictions made by the theory, it was possible to search corpora for specific and theoretically informed purposes.

It may be the case that some readers have certain reservations about the methodological option of combining rich empirical documentation (from contemporary and old languages) with the insights of theoretical linguistics. As Devine and Stephens (2006) note, those with a primarily philological background may not appreciate the technical details of the discussion and “pure” syntacticians may become impatient with the rich philological documentation. However, note that the subject of this book does not permit choosing between philology and linguistics. Each discipline makes its own contribution and the present research demonstrates, I hope, that our understanding of language can benefit from this association. As Devine and Stephens (2006: 6) put it: “If there are no data, there cannot be any theory. If there is no theory, there can hardly be any understanding.”

The present book is organized around three main linguistic phenomena: remnant-internal relativization; RRC-extrapolation; and ARCs. The selection of these phenomena was determined by these criteria: (1) the contrasting properties of the relevant structures in earlier stages of Portuguese with respect to CEP; (2) their novelty (i.e. constructions/properties not yet reported in the literature), and (3) the theoretical relevance of the facts uncovered.

The study on *remnant-internal relativization* (see Ch. 2) is dedicated to the analysis of RRCs in which the head noun and some modifier/complement related to it appear discontinuously, as in (232) and (233), repeated here as (775), from earlier stages of Portuguese.

- (775) a. os livros que eu compus da philosophia
the books that I wrote of.the philosophy
b. os livros que da philosophia eu compus
the books that of.the philosophy I wrote

From a theoretical point of view, I show that this phenomenon provides important new evidence for the raising analysis of RRCs. From a diachronic perspective, I hypothesize that the loss of remnant-internal relativization with the modifier/complement in the left periphery of the relative clause (see (775b)) might be due to a restriction on movement that emerges inside the DP, which blocks the extraction of the modifier/complement to the left periphery of the RRCs.

Considering this change in the light of recent findings on the history of Portuguese, the global picture that emerges is that until the sixteenth century, Portuguese had more structural positions available to generate phrasal discontinuity. With the

loss of a position dedicated to fronted-unmarked/information focus in the clausal left periphery from the thirteenth to the fourteenth century (see Martins, Pereira, and Pinto forthcoming), the loss of IP-scrambling after the sixteenth century (see Martins 2002), and the loss of modifier/complement fronting within the noun phrase (which blocks further step movements to a position outside the noun phrase), the possibilities of displacement operations decrease and discontinuity configurations start to involve a more restricted range of clausal positions.

This scenario opens the way to new research directions. The phrasal discontinuities that emerge in relative clauses seem to be the tip of an iceberg of noun phrase discontinuities found in earlier stages of Portuguese. Hence, a more global approach to the phenomenon, considering a wider range of configurations exhibiting discontinuity, will contribute to tracing other changes taking place in the diachrony of Portuguese and enhance our knowledge of the interaction between information structure and word order.

The second study presented in the book deals with RRC-extraposition (see Ch. 3). From a descriptive point of view, I show that different languages and different stages of the same language may differ with respect to the three main properties of extraposition: definiteness effect; extraposition from pre-verbal positions; and extraposition from prepositional phrases. The main descriptive findings are: (1) that earlier stages of Portuguese contrast sharply with CEP with respect RRC-extraposition; and (2) the extraposition of RRCs in earlier stages of Portuguese is, to a large extent, Germanic-like, unlike CEP.

From a theoretical point of view, I show that one and the same structural analysis cannot alone derive the contrasting properties of RRC-extraposition. To account for the variation found in the diachronic and cross-linguistic dimensions, I argue that the extraposition of RRCs might involve two different structures, one of them derived from specifying coordination plus ellipsis (De Vries 2002), the other the result of stranding (Kayne 1994). See (776)–(777).

(776) ...[CoP [XP₁ antecedent YP] [Co [XP₂ [~~antecedent~~ RRC] YP]]] (specifying coordination)

(777) ...[antecedent_i YP [t_i RRC]] (stranding)

In the diachronic dimension, I establish that RRC-extraposition in earlier stages of Portuguese is generated by specifying coordination plus ellipsis (and possibly by stranding), whereas the extraposition in CEP is derived from VP-internal stranding. Two different scenarios suggest themselves to account for this change. The first hypothesis is that the change affecting RRC-extraposition might have involved the reanalysis of extraposition from a specifying coordination plus ellipsis structure to a stranding structure (see Lightfoot 1991, 1999). The second

hypothesis builds on the competing grammars hypothesis originally proposed by Kroch (1989, 1994). The idea is that there were two structures in competition to derive extraposition in earlier stages of Portuguese: the specifying coordination and the stranding structures. The stranding structure was available for: (1) cases in which it led to the same overt results as the specifying coordination plus ellipsis structure; and (2) cases that could not be derived from the specifying coordination structure. Conversely, the specifying coordination plus ellipsis structure might have been used in the cases that could not be derived from stranding. Under this view, the change affecting RRC-extraposition in the diachrony of Portuguese might simply have involved the loss of extraposition derived from specifying coordination plus ellipsis. The reanalysis need not be postulated because RRCs were already generated by the stranding structure in earlier stages of Portuguese.

The grammars competition hypothesis has at least three important advantages with respect to the reanalysis hypothesis. First, under the reanalysis hypothesis, it is a mystery why movement operations, independently available in the grammar, could not derive extraposition until the sixteenth century. This question receives a straightforward explanation under the competing grammars hypothesis because movement operations could in fact give rise to contexts of extraposition derived from stranding.

Secondly, the competing grammar hypothesis can provide a simpler explanation for the change affecting RRC-extraposition by assuming that it results from the loss of the specifying coordination structure. No reanalysis process need be stipulated because the stranding structure was already available in the grammar.

Finally, the competing grammars hypothesis provides important insights into the articulation between diachronic change and synchronic cross-linguistic variation. Building on the hypothesis that the diachronic change affecting extraposition ultimately gives rise to the loss of the abstract specifying coordinator ϕ , I suggest that two different types of language can be identified:

(778) Type I. Languages that lack the specifying coordinator ϕ : (e.g. CEP and possibly Italian, Spanish, and French).

Type II. Languages that have the specifying coordinator ϕ : (e.g. English and Dutch).

Interestingly, this formulation leaves open the possibility that Type-II languages also make use of the stranding structure to derive extraposition. Hence, similarly to earlier stages of Portuguese, which have different structures in competition to generate extraposition, some contemporary languages generate extraposition by the specifying coordination plus ellipsis structure and the stranding structure. Moreover, similarly to historical Portuguese (after the sixteenth century), which ceases to have the specifying

coordinator *e*-, some contemporary languages lack this abstract coordinator (cf. Type-I languages).

The third and last study of the book investigates a case of micro-variation in the syntax of ARCs (Ch. 4). It focuses on the dissimilar behavior of ARC introduced by the complex relative pronoun *o qual* in CEP and earlier stages of Portuguese.

From a descriptive point of view, eight contrasting properties are identified, relative to: (1) additional internal head; (2) extraposition; (3) pied-piping; (4) clausal antecedents; (5) split antecedents; (6) coordination of the *wh*-pronoun with another DP; (7) illocutionary force; and (8) coordinator.

Sticking to the comparative approach adopted in the book, data from other languages (in particular, English and Italian) were inspected in light of the same set of potentially contrasting properties. A finding of particular interest came out of this comparative scrutiny, namely that *o qual*-ARCs in earlier stages of Portuguese pattern with Italian (*il quale*) and English ARCs, unlike CEP.

In order to account for the grammatical contrasts found in the diachronic dimension, I raise two different hypotheses. First, I propose, in line with Lightfoot (1991, 1999), that *o qual*-ARCs might have been reanalyzed from a specifying coordination plus ellipsis structure to a stranding structure. Secondly, adopting the competing grammars hypothesis proposed by Kroch (1989, 1994), I submit that in earlier stages of Portuguese there could have been two structures in competition to derive *o qual*-ARCs in earlier stages of Portuguese: the specifying coordination and the head raising structures. The specifying coordination structure would be used in configurations that cannot be derived from the raising structure, namely *o qual*-ARCs with an additional internal head, generalized extraposition and pied-piping, clausal and split antecedents, coordination of the *wh*-pronoun with another DP, illocutionary independence, and a spelled-out coordinator. The remaining configurations could have been derived from the raising structure.

Under this hypothesis, the change affecting *o qual*-ARCs might have consisted in the loss of *o qual*-ARCs generated by specifying coordination. The reanalysis need not be postulated because *o qual*-ARCs derived from stranding would be independently available in the grammar. Moreover, the competing grammars hypothesis provides an important basis for the explanation of cross-linguistic variation. Building on the typological contrast in (778), I suggest that languages that have the specifying coordinator *e*:- might derive ARCs from specifying coordination or raising; in contrast, languages that lack the specifying coordinator *e*:- do not derive ARCs from the specifying coordination structure, making use of the raising structure instead.

Of course, it is not a coincidence that extraposition and *o qual*-ARCs cease to be derived from specifying coordination in the same period of the history of Portuguese. The changes investigated in the book (see Table 5.1) can be integrated in a cluster of

TABLE 5.1 Series of changes in the diachrony of Portuguese

Steps	Description	Date (ca.)
0.	Earlier stages of Portuguese: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two structures in synchronic competition to derive extraposition: the specifying coordination (plus ellipsis) structure and the stranding structure • Two structures in synchronic competition to derive <i>o qual</i>-ARCs: the specifying coordination structure and the head raising structure 	until 16th c.
1.	Loss of IP-scrambling (and PP-scrambling)	after 16th c.
2.	Loss of extraposition derived from the specifying coordination (plus ellipsis) structure	
3.	Loss of <i>o qual</i> -ARCs derived from the specifying coordination	
4.	Loss of the abstract specifying coordinator	

phenomena changing at the same time in the history of Portuguese, which might be taken as the result of a parameter change.¹

Concretely, I propose that the loss of IP-scrambling investigated by Martins (2002) gives rise to a series of changes whose major superficial effect is the reduction of word order patterns available in Portuguese. In more technical terms: (1) the functional head T loses the option of being associated with an Attract-all-F EPP-feature (Martins 2002); and (2) the specifying coordinator *o*: ceases to generate extraposition and (3) appositive constructions.²

Moreover, there are indications that a change parallel to that found at the clausal level (i.e. the loss of IP-scrambling) might have also affected the DP-level. As I show in Chapter 2, PP-complements/modifiers of the noun cease to target the higher specifier position within the DP; as a result, they cease to undergo other potential movements out of the DP. Importantly, Poletto (2014) investigates a similar syntactic change in the diachrony of Italian.

In this book I have demonstrated that this series of changes had the effect of transforming Portuguese from a “Germanic-like” language, with a wide range of phrasal discontinuities, to a “non-Germanic” type, with more restricted possibilities of phrasal discontinuity. This proposal is quite likely to be supported by other syntactic changes taking place in the history of Portuguese, but I leave this open for future research.

¹ Note that in Table 5.1, I adopt the competing grammars hypothesis (§§3.6.1.2 and 4.6.1.2) given its advantages over the reanalysis hypothesis (see the discussion presented earlier in this chapter).

² In this research I show that the specifying coordinator *o*: ceases to be involved in *o qual*-ARCs. The hypothesis that this change might have affected other appositive constructions requires further inquiry, which should include a deeper investigation of the typology of specifying coordinators and of the appositional/parenthetical structures available in the synchrony and diachrony of Portuguese and across languages.

