VP ellipsis in European and Brazilian Portuguese: a comparative analysis

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Abstract

European and Brazilian Portuguese have VP ellipsis licensed by auxiliary and main verbs. However, these varieties of Portuguese show some differences concerning the licensing and identification of the elliptical constituent whenever sequences of verbs including the main verb are involved. We will claim that these differences are mainly due to the functional projections required as licensers of the elliptical VP.

0. Introduction

In contrast with other Romance languages, European and Brazilian Portuguese (EP and BP) have VP ellipsis. In both varieties of Portuguese, this construction displays the same general pattern of behaviour: it may occur both with auxiliary and main verbs and it requires that the verb licensing the elliptical constituent also appears in the antecedent VP.

Yet, whenever sequences of verbs are involved, specially when they include the main verb, standard EP and BP exhibit differences concerning the identification of the elliptical constituent as VP ellipsis or not. This contrast correlates with the distribution of *também* 'too' within these verb sequences: in BP, in opposition to what happens in EP, this adverb may asymmetrically c-command the whole sequence of verbs, or just the last verb, and still keep the VP ellipsis interpretation. We will try to show that these differences are mainly due to the functional categories required in each variety to license the elliptical constituent.

This work is organised as follows: in the first section we present empirical evidence for VP ellipsis in European and Brazilian Portuguese, as an elliptical construction distinct from Stripping and Null Object; in section two we will try to characterise the configuration minimally required for the licensing of the elliptical VP; in the third section we will deal with the differences in both

varieties; finally, in the final remarks, we will summarise the main points of this study.

1. VP ellipsis, Stripping and Null Object

In many Romance languages, VP Ellipsis is not an available option. So, some studies on predicate ellipsis tend to relate it across Romance to other elliptical constructions. In this section we will provide some empirical arguments to distinguish VP ellipsis in European and Brazilian Portuguese from Stripping and Null Object.[1]

1.1. VP ellipsis vs. Stripping

In contrast with other Romance languages, European and Brazilian Portuguese present VP ellipsis, as shown by the examples in (1) and (2):

(1)   a.   A Ana já tinha lido o livro à irmã mas a Paula não tinha [-].
            the Ana already had read the book to-the sister but the Paula not
            had [-]
            'Ana had already read the book to her sister but Paula had not.'
       b.   O João é simpático para todas as pessoas e a Ana também é [-].
            the João is nice for all the people and the Ana too is [-]
            'João is nice to everybody and Ana is, too'
       c.   Ela só vai visitar os amigos se a Ana também for [-]
            she go.IND.3SG visit the friends if the Ana too go.SUBJ.3SG
            'She will visit her friends if Ana will, too'

(2)   a.   *Susana había leído Guerra y Paz pero María no había [-].[2]
            Susana had read War and Peace but Maria not had
       b.   *On a demandé si ils ont déjà mangé et ils ont [-].[3]
            One has asked if they have already eaten and they have [-]
       c.   *Claudine est une bonne étudiante, et Marie est aussi.[4]
            Claudine is a good student and Marie is too

In Spanish and French the usual strategy of predicate ellipsis is Stripping, illustrated in (3) and (4).

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[1] We will leave the distinction between VP ellipsis and Null Complement Anaphora
for future work.
[2] López (1999: 265).
[3] Lobeck (1999: 99).
[4] Lobeck (1999: 99).

(3)   a.   Luis no habla inglés, pero yo sí [-].[5]
            Luis not speaks English, but I yes [-]
            'Luis does not speak English but I do'
       b.   Susana leyó *Guerra y Paz* pero María *no* [-].[6]
            Susana read War and Peace but Maria not
            'Susana reads War and Peace but Maria does not'

(4)   a.   John était critiqué, mais Mary non.[7]
            John was criticised but Mary not
       b.   Marion boit du rhum, et Raquel aussi.[8]
            'Marion drinks rum, and Raquel too.'

In European and Brazilian Portuguese the Stripping examples in (5) correlate with the VP ellipsis cases in (1a) and (1b):

(5)   a.   A Ana já tinha lido o livro à irmã mas a Paula não [-].
            the Ana already had read the book to-the sister but the Paula not [-]
            'Ana had already read the book to her sister but not Paula.'
       b.   O João é simpático para todas as pessoas e a Ana também [-].
            the João is nice for all the people and the Ana too [-]
            'João is nice to everybody and Ana too'

At first glance, VP ellipsis differs from Stripping only by the occurrence vs. absence of the verb adjacent to the elliptical constituent. However, this distinction correlates with a different distribution of the two constructions. In particular, VP ellipsis always implies the presence of a DP subject, overt or covert, while Stripping admits other constituents as the remnant of the ellipsis, as shown in (1a) and (1b) vs. (6):

(6)   a.   A Ana já tinha lido esse livro à irmã mas essa revista não [-].
            the Ana already had read that book to-the sister but that magazine not [-]
            'Ana had already read that book to her sister but not that magazine.'

       b.   Por la mañana podría ir de compras, pero por la tarde no [-].[9]
            by the morning I-could go of shopping, but by the afternoon not [-]
            'I could go shopping in the morning, but in the afternoon (could) not.'

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[5] Brucart (1987: 134).
[6] López (1999: 275).
[7] Zribi-Hertz (1986: 466).
[8] Chao (1987: 180).
[9] López (1999: 266).

Additionally, VP ellipsis contrasts with Stripping in being able to appear in island domains (see (1c) vs. (7)):

(7)   a. *Ela só vai visitar os amigos se a Ana também [-].
            she just go.IND.3SG visit the friends if the Ana too [-]
        b. *O João não vai ao cinema hoje mas perguntou quem sim [-]
            the João not goes to the movies but (he) asked who yes [-].
        c. *Tendré que hacerlo yo porque Susana no [-].[10]
            will-have that to do it I because Susana not [-]

Thus, the data from European and Brazilian Portuguese show that in those languages VP ellipsis and Stripping are two different constructions.

1.2. VP Ellipsis vs. Null Object

One of the most significant differences between VP ellipsis in English and Portuguese is that, in the latter, in addition to the canonical cases where the elliptical category is licensed by an auxiliary (cf. (8a)=(1a)) or a copulative verb (cf. (8b)=(1b)), there are instances of VP ellipsis locally identified by the main verb (see (9)).

(8)   a. A Ana já tinha lido o livro à irmã mas a Paula não tinha [-].
            the Ana already had read the book to-the sister but the Paula not
            had [-]
            'Ana had already read that book to her sister but Paula had not'
        b. O João é simpático para todas as pessoas e a Ana também é [-].
            the João is nice for all the people and the Ana too is [-]
            'João is nice to everybody and Ana is, too'

(9)   A Ana não leva o computador para as aulas, porque os amigos tam-
        bém não levam [-].
        the Ana not brings the computer to the classes, because the friends
        too not bring [-]
        'Ana does not bring her computer to the classes because her friends
        do not either'

In fact, assuming, as usual, that Portuguese is a language with generalised Verb Movement, the movement of the main verb to Inflection will leave a copy, to be deleted, inside the VP. In the cases where the complements (and the adjuncts) are overtly missing, a VP ellipsis construction arises. This is illustrated in (10), for the subordinate clause in (9):

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[10] López (1999: 268).

(10)   porque os amigos também não levam$_i$[$_{VP}$ [$_V$ ~~levam$_i$~~] ~~the computer to the classes~~]

The existence of these cases in both varieties of Portuguese, raises the problem of distinguishing VP ellipsis licensed by main verbs from Null Object.[11]

A classical distinction between these constructions relies on the fact that typical cases of Null Object only involve the direct object of the verb, while VP ellipsis includes all the complements of the verb and sometimes the VP adjuncts (cf. Raposo 1986).[12] Accordingly, while the example in (11) is ambiguous between a VP ellipsis or a Null Object interpretation due to the fact that the main verb selects only the direct object, the one in (12) is clearly interpreted as a case of Null Object.

(11)   O João leu esse livro e a Ana também leu [-].
        the João read that book and the Ana too read [-].
        'João read that book and Ana did too'
        'it too.'

(12)   Ela trouxe o computador para a Universidade e ele trouxe [-] para o escritório.
        she brought the computer to the University and he brought [-] to the office
        'She brought the computer to the University and he brought it to the office'

Another property distinguishes VP ellipsis from Null Object in Portuguese: as shown in the following examples, VP ellipsis in Portuguese requires strict identity between the verb licensing the elliptical constituent and one of the verbs in the antecedent VP. This requirement applies with auxiliary verbs (see (13)) as well as with main verbs (cf. (14)).[13]

(13)   a. Ontem ele não tinha ainda lido esse artigo, mas hoje, quando telefonei, já tinha [$_{VP}$-].
           yesterday he not had yet read that paper, but today, when phoned, already had [$_{VP}$-]

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[11] As far as Portuguese is concerned, see, among others, the studies of Raposo (1986, 1998), Costa & Duarte (2001), for EP, and Farrel (1990), Kato (1993), Cyrino (1997), for BP.
[12] But see Costa e Duarte (2001), for an alternative analysis.
[13] The apparent exception to this requirement occurs with modal verbs, as in (i).
      (i) Ela comprou esse dicionário, mas não devia/queria.
          she bought that dictionary, but not ought/wanted
      However, this cases are often assumed as instances of Null Complement Anaphora (see Matos, 1992, for EP, and Brucart, 1999, for Spanish)

'Yesterday he had not read that paper yet, but today, when I phoned, he already had'

  b. *Ontem ele não tinha ainda lido esse artigo, mas hoje vai [ᵥₚ-].
     yesterday he not had yet read that paper, but today goes [ᵥₚ-]
     'Yesterday he had not read that paper, but he will today'

  c. *Ele vai ler o jornal agora, porque quando lhe telefonei ainda não tinha [ᵥₚ-].
     he goes read the newspaper now, because when him phoned yet not had [ᵥₚ-]
     'He will read the newspaper now, because when I phoned him he had not'

(14) a. Quando a Ana pôs os óculos na mesa, a Maria também pôs [ᵥₚ-].
      when the Ana put the glaces on the table, the Maria too put [ᵥₚ-]
      'When Ana put the glaces on the table, Maria did too'

  b. *Quando a Ana colocou os óculos na mesa,a Maria também pôs [ᵥₚ-].
     when the Ana placed the glaces on the table, the Maria too put [ᵥₚ-]

No such requirement constrains Null Object, as shown in (15):

(15) a. Ela tirou o anel do dedo e guardou [-] no cofre.
      she took off the ring from the finger and put [-] in the safe
      'She took off the ring from her finger and put it in the safe'

  b. Olhou para a fotografia daquele homem. Reconheceu [-] imediatamente: era o João.
     looked at the picture of that man. Recognised [-] immediately: was the João
     'He/she looked at the picture of that man. He/she recognised him immediately: it was João.'

Moreover, in contrast with the canonical cases of Null Object (cf. (16)), VP ellipsis cannot alternate with an overt pronominal, as shown in (17):[14]

(16) a. Ela tirou o anel do dedo e guardou-o no cofre.
      she took off the ring from the finger and put it in the safe
      'She took off the ring from her finger and put it in the safe'

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[14] The only cases where the pronoun apparently alternates with VP ellipsis are those where the elliptical VP is licensed by a main verb which, independently of this construction, selects a single nominal complement.
     (i) O Pedro disse isso, mas a Maria não disse [-]/ mas a Maria não o disse.

b. Olhou para a fotografia daquele homem. Reconheceu-o imediatamente: era o João.
looked at the picture of that man. Recognised him immediately: was the João
'He/she looked at the picture of that man. He/she recognised him immediately: it was João'

(17) a. Nenhum de nós tinha votado nesse candidato nem admitíamos que alguém (*o) tivesse
none of us had voted in that candidate nor admitted that someone (*it) had
'None of us had voted for that candidate or admitted that someone had (*it)'

b. A Ana pensa muito nos amigos, enquanto o Pedro não (*o) pensa.
the Ana thinks very much about the friends, while the Pedro not (*it) thinks
'Ana thinks a lot about her friends, but Pedro does not (*it)'

Summarising the properties presented in this section, the following descriptive pattern emerges for VP ellipsis in European and Brazilian Portuguese: VP ellipsis in EP and BP is an elliptical category, selected by a sentence functional projection, headed by an overt verbal element, which must be identical to (one of) the verb(s) of the antecedent VP.

2. The licensing of VP ellipsis

Chomsky & Lasnik (1993), Chomsky (1995) consider that ellipsis must be analysed as a Deletion process operating at PF. A Parallelism Requirement applying at LF would ensure that the phrase to be deleted receive an interpretation similar to its antecedent. At the level of PF, the constituents to be deleted present a low-flat intonation (Chomsky & Lasnik, 1993; Chomsky, 1995) and are deaccented (Tancredi, 1992), which constitutes an indication for Deletion to apply.

Despite the relevance of the Parallelism Requirement for setting which linguistic expression may be deleted, it is not a sufficient condition as shown in (19a) vs. (19b). In these examples there are lexical expressions that could act as the antecedent of the elliptical phrase and deletion should be unrestrictedly permitted, assuming that it operates over a structure as (18c). However only (18a) is well formed.

(18) a. John is reading that book and Mary is [-], too
b. *John starts reading that book and Mary starts [-], too
c. John is/starts reading that book and Mary is/starts [*reading that book too*]

These contrasts show that some licensing condition must be met, whatever analysis we assume for ellipsis either Deletion at PF or Interpretation at LF. We can view these licensing conditions as structural clues for the identification of the constituent to be deleted or recovered.

Within the Minimalist Program, some proposals have been put forward to account for the licensing and identification of VP ellipsis, both in English and in Portuguese (Lobeck, 1999; López, 1999; Martins, 1994; Matos & Cyrino, 2001). We will concentrate on the analyses which focus on Portuguese.

Martins (1994) and López (1999) assume that VP ellipsis is base generated as a null category licensed by the functional category Sigma, proposed in Laka (1990). Yet, they differ in the configuration proposed: while Martins assumes that ΣP heads the whole IP, as in (19a), López considers that ΣP is dominated by IP and selects VP, as in (19b).

(19)   a. $[_{\Sigma P} [_{AgrsP} [_{TP} [_{AgroP} [_{VP}]]]]$
       b. $[_{IP} \text{SU} [\text{I}^{\circ} [_{\Sigma P} \Sigma [_{AuxP} \text{Aux}^{\circ} \text{VP}]]]]$

In both accounts, the licensing and identification of the null VP is achieved by the checking of the features of the null VP in the domain of Σ with strong V-features. According to Martins, this licensing is obtained in a configuration akin to Spec-Head Agreement, by adjunction of the Null VP either to Spec, ΣP or to ΣP. The motivation for that movement would be the truth-value of the elided VP, which should be checked in the domain of Sigma. López (1999), proposes a different implementation of the licensing of the null VP. Accepting that the null VP is a pro-v, i.e., a category with no internal structure, presenting Σ-features, López assumes that it overtly moves like a head and adjoins to Σ° to check its strong Σ-features. In English and Portuguese this process may be mediated by Aux — pro-v adjoins to Aux, which inherits its Σ-features; then the complex head moves and adjoins to Σ° to check its strong features, as illustrated in (20):

(20) $[_{\Sigma P} \text{not} [_{\Sigma} \Sigma [_{AuxP} \text{Aux}^{\circ} \text{VP}]]]$.

The proposals of Martins (1994) and Lopez (1999) present a major problem: in opposition to the central hypothesis of these analyses, there is empirical evidence against a correlation between ΣP and the licensing of VP ellipsis.

In fact, as López (1999) remarks, the polarity items cannot by themselves license the elliptical VP in English. Thus, (21a) contrasts with (21b), due to the absence of a verb heading the licensing head. Similar contrasts occur in Portuguese, as shown in (22) — the polarity item in isolation is not able to license predicate ellipsis in an island domain, while VP ellipsis is allowed to do it.

(21) a. *Peter likes cauliflower, but John not.[15]
      b. Peter likes cauliflower, but John does not.

(22) a. *Ele perguntou quem tinha comido o bolo e ela perguntou quem
          não.
          he asked who had eaten the cake and she asked who not
      b. Ele perguntou quem tinha comido o bolo e ela perguntou quem
          não tinha.
          he asked who had eaten the cake and she asked who not had
          'He asked who had eaten the cake and she asked who had not'

López claims that the contrasts in (21) are due to the fact that in English the polarity item is a specifier of ΣP; therefore, in (21a) Σ° is lexically unfilled and cannot host the elliptical category, since elliptical constituents, like clitics, require phonetically realised hosts. Yet, taking into account the data of European Portuguese, this cannot be the correct explanation for the unacceptability of (22a), since in this language, the negative sentence marker is a head, as recognised by López. In fact, as shown in (23b), não 'not' may incorporate with the inflected verb in the sentence.

(23) a. Essas crianças [não têm] bebido leite.
          these children not have drunk milk
          'These children have not drunk milk'
      b. [CP Que [não têm] [IP essas crianças n̶ã̶o̶ ̶t̶ê̶m̶ bebido]]?
          what [not have] [these children n̶o̶t̶ ̶h̶a̶v̶e̶ drunk]
          'What have these children not drunk?'

Thus, these data strongly suggest that ΣP is not involved in the licensing of VP ellipsis.[16]

Moreover, López (1999) faces an additional problem in assuming that the elliptical VP must be a category with no internal structure This analysis fails to account for Portuguese, accepting the usual claim that in this language, all

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[15] López (1999: 293).
[16] Notice that the relevance of ΣP in the licensing of VP ellipsis in Portuguese is not systematically assumed in Martins (1994), since she claims that in negative sentences and in embedded affirmative sentences the verb remains in *AgrS°* as illustrated in (i) and (ii). However, VP ellipsis is possible in these contexts:
(i) a. Eu tinha-o visto ontem, mas ela não tinha [VP-].
         I had seen him yesterday, but she not had [VP-]
         'I had seen him yesterday, but she had not.'
     b. [ΣP [Σ não] [[AgrS tinha [-]]]
(ii) a. Eu não o tinha visto ontem, mas acho que ela tinha [VP-].
         I not him had seen yesterday, but think that she had [VP-]
         'I had not seen him yesterday but I think she had.'
     b. [CP [Σ[C que]] [ela [AgrS tinha] [VP −]]]]
In fact she admits that in negative sentences the polarity head remains stranded in Σ and assumes that in embedded sentences Σ raises to C° leaving the verb in Agrs°.

the verbs, be they main or auxiliary, are originally merged in VP and then raised to Inflection.[17]

An alternative analysis has been presented in Matos & Cyrino (2002), which, with some alterations will be adopted in this study.

Developing previous work (Matos, 1992; Cyrino, 1997, 1999; and Matos & Cyrino, 2002), we will assume that the licensing of VP ellipsis is achieved in the following configuration.

> (24)   VP ellipsis is licensed under local c-command, by the lexically filled functional head with V-features that merges with the elliptical constituent.[18]

In Matos & Cyrino (2002) we have admitted that this functional category was T°. However, as we will see in the next section this may not be the case for Brazilian Portuguese.

According to this proposal the availability of VP ellipsis with auxiliary and main verbs is a consequence of verb raising to the relevant functional projection — while English has restricted Verb raising, Portuguese has generalised verb raising, perhaps due to the alternation between the weak vs. strong features, as suggested for *Agrº* in Chomsky (1995).

The condition proposed in (24) does not resort to Checking Theory. Instead, it assumes that the crucial licensing factor is local c-command. In fact, in the present framework only uninterpretable features have to be checked, and, as far as verbal elements are concerned, these features are restricted to the inflectional morphology associated to the verb, namely its φ-features. We admit, therefore, that in VP ellipsis just the verb moves to check uninterpretable features of the sentence functional projections, for reasons which are independent of the licensing of the elided category.

On the contrary, local c-command by a lexicalised V-functional head is required for the identification of the elliptical category. In particular, whenever the local c-commanding verbal head arises from Movement, it is enough to fully identify the elliptical category, as expected, according to the Bare Phrase hypothesis, which does not radically distinguish a Maximal Projection from its Head.

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[17]   Although Lobeck (1999) does not deal with Portuguese, the same problem arises if one tries to extend her proposal to this language.

[18]   In a framework that admits split Inflection the condition on the licensing of the VP ellipsis should be more accurately formulated as in (i):
(i) VP ellipsis is licensed, under local c-command, *by the chain* of the lexically filled functional head with V-features that merges with elliptical constituent.

3. VP ellipsis with verbal sequences in European vs. Brazilian Portuguese

Though obeying to the same licensing condition, VP ellipsis in EP and in BP often behave differently when verbal sequences occur in the elliptical sentence.

So, in sequences of *Progressive Auxiliary + main verb*, the following contrasts obtain: while in BP both (25) and (26) are interpreted as cases of VP ellipsis, in EP (27), the correlate of (26) in BP, is preferably interpreted as a sentence with a null indefinite object (i.e., *he is not reading anything*) and no indirect object, as illustrated in the partial representations of the VP. For the sake of visibility we will use a trace for the moved verb instead of a copy:

(25) a. Ela está a ler[19] / lendo[20] livros às crianças mas ele não está [$_{VP}$-].
          she is to read / reading books to-the children but he not is [$_{VP}$-]
          'She is reading books to the children but he is not.'
      b. EP=BP: [$_{VP}$-] = [$_{VP}$ t [$_V$ *reading*] [*books*] [*to the children*]]

(26) a. Ela está lendo livros às crianças mas ele não está lendo [$_{VP}$-].
          she is reading books to-the children but he not is reading [$_{VP}$-]
          'She is reading books to the children but he is not.'
      b. BP: [$_{VP}$-] = [$_{VP}$ t [$_V$ *reading*] [*books*] [*to the children*]]

(27) a. #Ela está a ler livros às crianças mas ele não está a ler [-]
          she is to read books to-the children but he not is to read [-]
          'She is reading books to the children but he is not reading.'
      b. EP: [-] =   a. ??/*[$_{VP}$ *t* [$_V$ *reading*] [*books*] [*to the children*]]
                       b. ok ... [$_V$ *reading*] ([$_{DP}$-])

The same behaviour may be seen in sequences of *Passive Auxiliary + main verb*, as shown by the interpretations (b) and (c) of the example in (29):

(28) a. O carro foi atribuído à Maria, mas os outros prémios não foram [$_{VP}$-].
          the car was given to-the Maria, but the other prizes not were [$_{VP}$-]
          'The car was given to Maria, but the other prizes were not.'
      b. EP= BP: [$_{VP}$-] = [$_{VP}$ *t* [$_V$ *given*] [*t*] [*to Maria*]]

(29) a. #O carro foi atribuído à Maria, mas os outros prémios não foram atribuídos [-].
          the car was given to the Maria, but the other prizes not were given [-]
      b. EP: [-] =   i. ??   [$_{VP}$ [$_V$ *t*] [*t*] [*to Maria*]]
                       ii. ok: [... [$_V$ *given*] [*t*]]
      c. BP: [-] = [$_{VP}$ *t* [$_V$ *t*] [*t*] [*to Maria*]]

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[19] EP.
[20] BP/EP.

There is an exception to these contrasts: the sequence of *Perfect Tense Auxiliary + main verb* is able to identify the whole elliptical VP in both varieties:

(30)   a.   Ela tem lido livros às crianças mas ele também tem [$_{VP}$-].
            she has read books to-the children but he too has[$_{VP}$-]
            'She has read some books to the children but he has too'
       b.   EP=BP: [$_{VP}$-] = [$_{VP}$ *t* [$_V$ *read*] [*books*] [*to the children*]]

(31)   a.   Ela tem lido livros às crianças mas ele também tem lido [$_{VP}$-].
            she has read books to the children but he too has read [$_{VP}$-]
            'She has read some books to the children but he has too'
       b.   EP=BP: [$_{VP}$-] = [$_{VP}$ t] [*books*] [*to the children*]]

(31) shows that the inclusion of the main verb in the verbal sequences is not a compelling factor for obtaining a Null Object reading, or it would not receive a VP ellipsis interpretation. Thus, we hypothesise that what really allows or precludes the interpretations of VP ellipsis is the functional projections where the verbal elements faces up at Spell-Out. The contrasts between European and Brazilian Portuguese also indicate that the functional projections that license VP ellipsis in these varieties may be not the same.

Current studies on the syntax of verbal sequences in European Portuguese (Matos, 1992; Gonçalves, 1996) have emphasised that there is a scale of gradation among auxiliaries in this language: while the auxiliary verb of the Perfect Tense is a prototypical auxiliary, most of the other auxiliaries are best characterised as defective verbs which, in certain respects, behave like main verbs and select non-finite sentential projections as complement.

Taking the presence of pronominal clitics and sentence negation in European Portuguese as an evidence for the projection of Tense (see, for instance, Rouveret, 1995; Gonçalves, 1996; Ambar, 1999; Duarte et al. 2001; Matos, 2001), the behaviour of the different auxiliaries show that they are in different stages of defectivity.

The most defective is the Perfect Auxiliary. It selects a Past Participle complement, which must be analysed as a Verbal Projection distinct from TP. Thus, the Auxiliary and the main verb belong to the same tense domain, and the Past Participle may not be negated nor act as a host for clitic pronouns:

(32)   a.   *Ele tem contado-lhes histórias.
            'He has told them-CL stories'
       b.   *Ele tem [não contado histórias aos miúdos].
            he has [not told stories to the kids]
            'He has not told stories to the kids'

The same does not happen with the complement of the Progressive Auxiliary in (33): the infinitival verb may host clitics, and the infinitival domain may accept negation.

(33)   a.   Ele (não) está a contar-lhes histórias
           he (not)is to tell them-CL stories
           'He is not telling them stories'
      b.   (?)Ele está a não lhes contar a história toda.
           he is to not them-CL tell the story whole
           'He is not telling them the whole story'

In fact, as argued in Raposo (1989), the Progressive aspectual verb in European Portuguese occurs in a Prepositional Infinitival Construction, i.e., it selects a small clause headed by a Preposition which takes as its complement a TP projection, as shown in (34b):

(34)   a.   Ele está a contar-lhes histórias.
           he is to tell them stories
           'He is telling them stories'
      b.   Ele [$_{TP}$ está [$_{VPaux}$ t [$_{PP/AspP}$ [$_{P/AspP}$ a] [$_{TP}$ contar-lhes histórias]]]

However, there is a competing construction in EP, in which the progressive aspectual and the main verb restructure, forming a verbal complex, and a single Tense domain occurs (cf. Matos, 1992; Gonçalves, 1996). In this case, the preposition is interpreted as an aspectual particle and the auxiliary subcategorize for an Aspectual Phrase (cf. Duarte, 1993). In this construction, as expected, Clitic Climbing is possible and the sentence negation defines as its scope domain the tensed domain of the whole verbal complex.

(35)   a.   Ele não lhes está a contar histórias.
           he not them-CL is to tell stories
           'He is not telling them stories.'
      b.   Ele [$_{TP}$ está [$_{VPaux}$ t [$_{AspP}$ [$_{Asp}$ a] [$_{vP}$ ...contar histórias]]]

The latter construction is privileged in VP ellipsis in European Portuguese (Matos, 1992). As shown in (37) vs. (38), whenever this VP ellipsis occurs, the splitting up of the verbal complex produces marginal results.

(36)   Q: Alguém está a ler livros às crianças?
           someone is to read books to the children?
           'Is anybody reading any books to the children?'
      A: Está a Maria.
           is the Maria.
           'Maria is'
           [$_{TP}$ [$_T$ está$_i$] [$_{VP}$ [$_V$ t$_i$] [$_{AspP}$ a Maria [-]]]]

(37)   Q: Alguém está a ler livros às crianças?
           'Is anybody reading any books to the children?'

A: Está a ler a Maria [-].
   is to read the Maria
   'Maria is reading.'
   [$_{TP}$ [$_T$ está_a ler$_i$] [$_{VP}$ [$_v$ t$_i$]. [$_{AspP}$ a Maria [$_{Asp}$ t$_i$] [[$_v$ t$_i$]]]]]

(38)   Q: Alguém está a ler livros às crianças?
           'Is anybody reading any books to the children?'
        A. ?? Está a Maria a ler [-].
           is the Maria to read
           [$_{TP}$ [$_T$ está$_i$] [$_{VP}$ [$_v$ t$_i$]. [$_{AspP/PP}$ a Maria [$_{Asp/Pj}$ a] [ler$_j$ [$_v$ t$_j$]]]]

So, these data suggest that in European Portuguese, it is T° lexicalized by the whole verbal complex that licenses the elliptical VP in sentences with verb sequences.

However, this generalisation seems to be contradicted by exemples like (29), above. Although Clitic Climbing and sentence negation indicate that the Passive Participle forms a verbal complex with the Passive auxiliary verb in T° (see (39)), the Passive Participle is not an adequate licenser of VP ellipsis (cf. (29)).

(39)   O carro não lhe foi atribuído.
        the car not her was given
        'The car has not been given to her'

We believe that this is due to its non fully verbal status. In fact, the Passive Participle has not been classically characterised by the categorial features [+V, -N], but only by the feature [+V]. European Portuguese corroborates this claim and aditionally suggests that in this variety of Portuguese, the Passive Participle has a quasi-nominal nature. In fact, it can be denoted by the invariable clitic *o* 'it' which cannot substitute the VP, as we have seen in section 1 of this paper.

(40)   O carro foi atribuído à Maria, mas os outros prémios não o foram.
        The car was given to-the Maria, but the other prizes not it-CL were

Thus, we conclude that in European Portuguese, in sentences presenting verbal sequences, it is T° lexically filled by a verbal complex that canonically licenses VP ellipsis. Besides, in order to qualify as an adequate licenser of the VP ellipsis, this verbal complex must have a fully verbal status.

Considering now Brazilian Portuguese, the examples in (41) vs. (42), which are grammatical in BP (but unacceptable in EP), suggest that the Verbal Complex formation is not at work in verbal sequences in this variety of Portuguese, or otherwise Clitic Climbing would be available:

(41)　a.　Ele tem, creio, te lido essas histórias.
　　　　　he has, guess, you-CL read these stories
　　　　　'He has, I guess, read you these stories.'
　　　b.　Ele está, creio, te lendo essas histórias.
　　　　　he is, guess, you-CL reading these stories
　　　　　'He is, I guess, reading you these stories'
　　　c.　Esses presentes foram, creio, te dados em criança.
　　　　　these gifts were, guess, you-CL given in child
　　　　　'Those gifts, I guess, have been given to you during your child-hood'

(42)　a.　*Ele te tem lido essas histórias.
　　　　　he you-CL has read these stories
　　　b.　*Ele te está lendo essas histórias
　　　　　he you-CL is reading these stories
　　　c.　* Esses presentes te foram dados em criança.
　　　　　These gifts you-CL were given in child
　　　　　'Those gifts, I guess, have been given to you during your child-hood.'

Assuming that in Brazilian Portuguese, as well as in European Portuguese, sentence negation correlates with the presence of T°, the following examples suggest that the functional projections selected by the Auxilary verbs in BP are systematically distinct from TP:[21]

(43)　a.　*Ele tem não visto os filmes da semana.
　　　　　he has not seen the movies of the week
　　　b.　*Ele está não vendo os filmes da semana.
　　　　　he is not seeing the movies of the week
　　　c.　*Esses filmes foram não vistos por Maria.
　　　　　these movies were not seen by Maria

So, we will adopt the usual view that Perfect, Progressive and Passive auxiliaries select functional projections different from TP (Aspectual and Passive voice projections, respectively). As a consequence, we have to admit that in Brazilian Portuguese both clitics and VP ellipsis may be licensed by functional heads distinct from T° (cf. (41) and (44)-(45)):

(44)　a.　Ela está lendo livros às crianças mas ele não está lendo [VP-].
　　　　　She is reading books to the children but he not is reading [VP-]
　　　　　'She is reading books to the children but he is not'
　　　b.　BP: [VP-] = [VP t [V *reading*] [*books*] [*to the children*]]

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(45)   a.   O carro foi atribuído à Maria, mas os outros prémios não foram atribuídos [-]
       the car was given to the Maria, but the other prizes not were given[-]
       'The car was given to the Maria, but the other prizes were not.'
       b.   BP: [-] = [$_{VP}$ t t [*to Maria*]]

In sum, while in EP the licenser of VP ellipsis is always T°, in BP it may be any functional sentence category below T°.

This analysis seems to be corroborated by another contrast: the distribution of *também* 'too' within these verbal sequences is less restricted in BP than in EP. In EP, for the VP ellipsis interpretation to be preferential, this adverb must asymmetrically c-command the whole sequence of verbs, as in (46); in BP, the VP ellipsis interpretation occurs in (46), but also in (47) and in (48) where *também* c-commands just the main verb. In EP, the VP ellipsis reading is lost in (47) as well as in (49).

(46)   Ela tem lido livros às crianças e ele também tem lido [$_{VP}$-].
       she has read books to-the children and he too has read
       'She has read books to the children and he has, too'

(47)   a.   Ela tem lido livros às crianças e ele tem também lido[-].
           she has read books to-the children and he has too read
       b.   BP: [-] = [$_{VP}$ [$_V$ t] the books to the children]
       c.   PE: [-] =   i ??[$_{VP}$ [$_V$ t] the books to the children]
                          ii. ok [$_V$ t] [-]

(48)   a.   Ele está mandando as cartas aos clientes e ela está também mandando [-].
           he is sending the letters to the costumers and she is too sending
           'He is sending the letters to the costumers and she is too.'
       b.   BP: [-]   = [$_{VP}$ [$_V$ t] the letters to the costumers]

(49)   a.   #Ele está a mandar as cartas aos clientes e ela está também a mandar [-].
           he is to send the letters to the costumers and she is too to send
       b.   PE: [-] =   i. ??[$_{VP}$ [$_V$ t] the letters to the costumers]
                          ii. ? [$_V$ t] [-]

Assuming that *também* 'too' is a focussing adverb, and that focussing adverbs are heads which select as complements different projections, as claimed in Cinque (1999), we can explain the contrasts in acceptability between EP and BP for the sentence in (47) and (48)-(49) — though in EP the auxiliary *ter* 'have' or *estar* 'be' and the main verb may form a verbal complex headed by the verb in T°, the interposition of the adverb *também* 'too' breaks this complex and the VP ellipsis interpretation is lost, as illustrated in (50):

(50) ... ele [$_{TP}$ tem [$_{AdvP}$ [$_{Adv°}$ também] [$_{VPaux}$ t [$_{Asp\text{-}perfP}$ lido [$_{vP}$ -]]

The contrasts between European and Brazilian Portuguese show that there is a difference concerning the licensers of VP ellipsis: in EP, it is always T°, in BP it is the closest functional head that merges with the elliptical VP.

This seems to show that, due to a diachronic change, in Brazilian Portuguese, all the functional projections, including the Passive Phrase, have been reanalysed as extended V projections with full V-features.

We hypothesise that this change correlates with another one: the loss of unrestricted Generalised Verb Movement in this variety of Portuguese. In fact, it has been often claimed that although Verb Raising to Inflection is available in BP, it is kept to a minimum.

Summarising

European and Brazilian Portuguese differ from other Romance languages in presenting two distinct predicate ellipsis constructions: VP ellipsis and Stripping. In both varieties of Portuguese, the elliptical VP may be identified either by an auxiliary or by a main verb. Nevertheless, in the latter case, there is empirical evidence to assume that the elliptical construction is not reducible to Null Object.

Some analyses of VP ellipsis in Portuguese within the Minimalist Program have tried to explain its licensing in terms of the properties of Σ, conceived as the functional category which is headed by the positive and negative polarity items in the sentence. However, the presence of these items is not enough to license the elliptical predicate in some contexts where the canonical configuration of VP ellipsis may occur.

Alternatively we admitted that VP ellipsis is licensed under local c-command of the overt sentence functional head that merges with the elliptical VP. In EP this head must be T°, or otherwise the VP ellipsis interpretation is lost; in BP it may be any functional head below T°.

We assumed that this difference of behaviour between EP and BP may be correlated with the loss of unrestricted generalised V-movement in the latter variety of Portuguese.

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