

A recipe on how to save a derivation: The Locative impersonal in Brazilian Portuguese

Janayna Carvalho
Universidade de São Paulo/ Universität Stuttgart

Introduction

In partial pro-drop languages, it is common to find impersonal sentences without impersonal morphology. This is one of the phenomena that classifies a language as partial pro-drop. In this work, these sentences are termed **locative impersonals**.

1. Na casa da Maria vende fruta. *Brazilian Portuguese*
In.the house of.the Mary sell fruit.
'One sells fruits in Mary's house.'

2. Tässä istuu mukavasti. *Finnish*
Here sits.3sg comfortably.
'One can sit comfortably here.'

•In this presentation, I focus on Brazilian Portuguese (BP) data.

The interpretation of sentence (1) is compatible with the interpretation for impersonal sentences with impersonal morphology (*se*).

3. Neste país se trabalha muito. *Brazilian Portuguese*
In.this country se works a lot.
'One works a lot in this country.'

The clitic *se* is in a process of disappearing from the BP grammar in a variety of contexts, impersonal sentences included. This is the reason why sentences such as (1) are so widespread in colloquial speech.

Proposal

Extending some proposals about the interaction between locatives and bare nouns (cf. Borer (2010), my proposal is that, since the locatives can close variables, they are available for this operation in absence of a better candidate.

Also, the use of a locative to generate an arbitrary human reading reflects a change in T. In some contexts (3rd person), the INFL category in BP is INFL location and not INFL tense.

Previous approaches

Locative inversion?

Avelar and Cyrino (2008)

For these authors, these sentences can be explained if it is assumed that BP is more permissive in relation to locative inversion than other languages.

•**Romance:**

→ only unaccusatives allow locative inversion in Romance

•**BP:**

→ unergatives and transitives would also allow locative inversion

Pro?

Barbosa (2011, 2013) – Partial pro-drop as null NP-anaphora

In locative impersonals, there is a *pro* that enters in an anaphoric relationship with the locative and this gives rise to the impersonal reading.

Holmberg (2005)

A phi-pronoun that did not enter in a relationship with a D, a T feature in pro-drop languages.

D+ phi-pronoun = 3rd referential person

phi-pronoun = non 3rd referential person

(when not bound by a higher DP)

For Holmberg, the fact that impersonal pronouns are usually non-overt in partial pro-drop languages is a PF matter.

Analysis

The aforementioned previous analysis are problematic to BP because **only transitive stage level verbs get the arbitrary human reading with a locative and the locative is in complementary distribution with the external argument. Consider the examples below.**

4. Na casa da Maria chegou algumas cartas.
In.the house of.the Mary arrived some letters.
'Some letters arrived in Mary's house.'

5. Naquele quarto dorme várias pessoas (AC, adapted)
In.that bedroom sleep several people.
'Several people slept in that bedroom.'

The absence of an arbitrary human reading with (4) shows that locative impersonals are not an instance of locative inversion. In the presence of a external argument, this reading does not arise (5).

-> In order for this reading to arise, **locatives have to be in complementary distribution with the external argument. A constraint that does not apply to locative inversion.**

Analogously, if there is a *pro* in locative impersonals, **these sentences should be possible with any kind of verb (as se-impersonals are) and not with a subset of stage level verbs.**

6. No Brasil *(se) adora samba. (Barbosa 2013, adapted)
In.the Brazil SE loves samba.
'In Brazil, they love samba.'

The attachment of locatives

Maienborn (2001, 2003) identifies two targets for locative modification in the VP/vP area.

•**Event internal modifier:** locative relation within the event

7. Eva signed the contract on a separate sheet of paper.

•**Event external modifier:** location for the whole event

8. Eva signed the contract in the office.

Event external modifiers attach to VP, whereas event internal modifiers attach to V.

9. Subject > **event-external modifier** > direct object > **event-internal modifier** > V

External modifiers are only licensed if the verb provides an event argument => **only stage level verbs.**

Event-external modifiers are merged right before the subject (if there is a subject).

The complementary distribution with the agent argument in order for the arbitrary human reading to arise shows that the locative is occupying the spec of VoiceP.

The locative existentially closes the external argument variable in these constructions.

•**Locatives can existentially close predicates (Freeze 1992)**

-> Locatives are systematically implicated in the derivation of existential meaning. The existential meaning arises when the locative is in subject position. (10) exemplifies this claim.

10. a. * Parece *naquela loja* vender bastante sapato. (AS)

Seem in.that store sell a.lot shoe.

b. *Naquela loja* parece vender bastante sapato. (AS)

In.that store seem sell a.lot shoe.

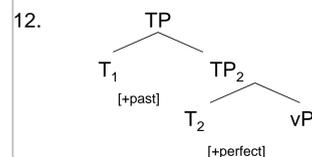
'One sells a lot of shoes in that store.'

T in BP and locative impersonals

Cyrino (2013), building on Ambar, Gonzaga and Negrão (2004), noticed that BP has lost the contrast between some temporal values. In some cases, it has led to analyticization (i.e. periphrastic future); in other cases, a former temporal value is employed for aspectual distinctions (i.e. past).

11. Eu estou feliz, porque eu vivi muito bem todos estes anos.
I am happy, because I lived very well all these years.
'I am happy because I have lived very well all these years.'

The past morpheme in (11) is not [+past, +perfect]; it is [+perfect]. It indicates that the verb in BP moves to T₂.



•But how is the utterance time expressed if the former temporal morphology fails to encode utterance time distinctions?

With the loss of verbal morphology, the language has resorted to other deictic relations to connect the event to the utterance time.

-> In locative impersonals, **there is a INFL location.**

This explain why PP locatives generate the arbitrary human reading, and it also fits nicely in the typology of INFL by Ritter and Wiltschko (2014).

Content of m-valuation	DP-marking
INFL _{tense}	DP _{tense} =case
INFL _{location}	DP _{location} =location marking
INFL _{participant}	DP _{participant} =person marking

-> In some occasions, a temporal element is responsible for the meaning to arise. In these cases, there is semantic tense. Again, this an example that the language has been resorting to other values of T in virtue of the loss of morphology.

13. Hoje em dia não usa saia. (Galves 2001)

Today in day not wear skirt.

'Nowadays people do not wear skirts.'

Summary

Locative impersonals should neither be analyzed as an instance of locative inversion nor structures in which a little *pro* is responsible to derive the arbitrary human meaning.

The arbitrary human reading is generated from a special locative relation. This locative PP behaves as a subject, as shown in (10).

We related the productivity of this impersonal strategy to a change in the features of T. This accounts for the productivity of this impersonal strategy in partial pro-drop languages.

References

Ambar, M., Gonzaga, M., & Negrão, E. (2004). Tense, quantification and clause structure in EP and BP. *Romance Languages and Linguistic Theory 2002: Selected papers from Going Romance 2002, Groningen, 28–30 November 2002*, 1-16.

Avelar, J., & Cyrino, S. (2008). Locativos preposicionados em posição de sujeito: uma possível contribuição das línguas Bantu à sintaxe do português brasileiro. *Revista de Estudos Linguísticos da Universidade do Porto-Vol. 3*, 56.

Barbosa, P. (2011). Partial prodrop as null NP-anaphora. Proceedings of NELS 41. Amherst, Mass.: GLSA Publications.

Barbosa, P. (2013). *Pro as a minimal NP: towards a unified theory of pro-drop*. Ms., Universidade do Minho. Available at <http://ling.auf.net/lingbuzz/001949>.

Borer, H. (2010). Locales. *Lexical Semantics, Syntax, and Event Structure*, 309-338.

Cyrino, S. (2013). On richness of tense and verb movement in Brazilian Portuguese. *Information Structure and Agreement*, 197, 297.

Freeze, R. (1992). Existentials and other locatives. *Language*, 553-595.

Galves, C. (2001). *Ensaio sobre as gramáticas do português*. Editora da UNICAMP.

Holmberg, A. (2005). Is there a little pro? Evidence from Finnish. *Linguistic Inquiry*, 36(4), 533-564.

Maienborn, C. (2001). On the position and interpretation of locative modifiers. *Natural language semantics*, 9(2), 191-240.

Maienborn, C. (2003). Event-internal modifiers: Semantic underspecification and conceptual interpretation. E. Lang, C. Maienborn und C. Fabricius-Hansen (eds.), *Modifying Adjuncts*. Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 475-509.

Ritter, E., & Wiltschko, M. (2014). The composition of INFL. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*, 32(4), 1331-1386.