

## Clitic Doubling in non-standard Brazilian Portuguese does not encode specificity but overt case and illocutionary force: evidence from agreement mismatches

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This talk explores the syntactic and interpretive roles of clitic doubling (CD) in non-standard varieties of Brazilian Portuguese (BP). Contrary to claims in the literature, we show that CD does not encode specificity in its restriction to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns and propose that it is an overt realization of structural case. Diniz (2007), Machado Rocha (2012) and Machado Rocha & Ramos (2016) show that the variety spoken in the state of Minas Gerais (MB) has developed a form of non-obligatory CD featuring the accusative clitics *me* and *te* with the bare nominative strong pronouns *eu* and *você* respectively, as in (1a, b).

- (1) a. Eu **te**<sub>i</sub> esperei **você**<sub>i</sub> um tempão.  
I you.ACC.2sg waited you.sg a time  
"I waited for you for a while." (Diniz 2007: 49)
- b. Foi essa doida que **me**<sub>i</sub> pôs **eu**<sub>i</sub> aqui.  
was this crazy that me.ACC.1sg put I here  
"It was this crazy woman that put me here." (Diniz 2007: 49)

Since, in BP, precisely 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronouns can be used in generic contexts while the 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns *ele/ela* always have a specific referent, Machado Rocha (2010; 2011) argues that CD might have surfaced as a means to exclude any potential generic interpretation, thereby rendering the pronoun specific. This would also explain why doubling appears to be ungrammatical for 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns. Consequently, according to Machado Rocha & Ramos (2016), the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person clitics *me* and *te* may be undergoing a process of grammaticalization from pronouns to pure person agreement markers that carry one single bivalent feature, namely [ $\pm$  speaker]. Evidence for the claim that the clitic *te* might only encode [-speaker] and neither case nor number is based on examples like (2), where *te* doubles the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural (2a) and a nominal form of address that demands 3<sup>rd</sup> person agreement in Standard Portuguese (2b) and would thus be expected to be doubled by *lhe*:

- (2) a. Ô zé, ô **te**<sub>i</sub> conta p'cê*s*<sub>i</sub> qui...  
hey guys let.me you.DAT.2sg tell for=you.pl that  
"Hey guys, let me tell you that..." (Machado Rocha & Ramos 2016: 403)
- b. Eu **te**<sub>i</sub> dou este livro para **[a Senhora]**<sub>i</sub>.  
I you.DAT.2sg give this book to def lady  
"I give you this book." (Galves 2020: 30)

While we agree that this can be taken as evidence for the lack of a number feature (which is confirmed in our data), we see no reason to assume the same for case since there is no mismatch. Furthermore, new evidence found on social media such as X (formerly Twitter) reveals that the phenomenon occurs with other clitics as well, such as the 1<sup>st</sup> plural *nos* and the 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> singular dative *lhe*, the latter of which has been reanalyzed in BP as accusative (3a, b). Thus, CD occurs with 3<sup>rd</sup> person as well. Furthermore, it can be used in generic sentences (4).

- (3) a. **Nos**<sub>i</sub> chama **[a gente]**<sub>i</sub> no privado pra conversarmos melhor [...]  
us.ACC.1pl call we in private for talk better  
"Call us in privat in order for us to better communicate..." (@oi\_oficial)
- b. Você **lhe**<sub>i</sub> deixa **ela**<sub>i</sub> extremamente feliz [...]  
you her.ACC.3sg leave she extremely happy  
"You make here extremely happy..." (@apegonathane)

- (4) Não tenha medo do inimigo que te ataca, mas sim do  
 not have fear of=the enemy that you.ACC.2sg attacks but yes of=the  
 amigo falso que **lhe**<sub>i</sub> abraça **você**<sub>i</sub>  
 friend false that you.ACC.2sg embraces you  
*"Don't fear the enemy that attacks you but the false friend that embraces you."*  
 (@davidsimplesmen)

These observations suggest that clitics in these varieties still encode more features than the binary [ $\pm$  speaker], calling for a different analysis. We follow the proposal by Losavio (2024) that spoken BP appears to be readjusting its pronominal system to one single strong form for each person lacking overt inflection for case. The fact that clitics still do occur might thus point to the competition of two distinct grammars speakers acquire (Galves 2019, among others), and that CD is an interference phenomenon in which the clitic acts as an overt reflex of structural case. Additional evidence for the interference analysis from competing grammars comes from a comparison to CD in Standard Spanish. In this language, the obligatory clitic has been analyzed as an agreement marker which is licensed by an overt case-marker on the object ("Kayne's Generalization", Jaeggli 1982). In non-standard BP, however, the clitic is not licensed by such a marker, is optional and occurs rather infrequently. Thus, since the strong pronoun itself is not marked for case, the clitic, being an inflected form, overtly encodes case in the doubled structure.

We furthermore observe that all examples in our corpus occur in the context of strong speaker involvement (Cornille 2018), i.e. implying higher degrees of illocutionary force. This is due to their personal and immediate nature as well as technical constraints (e.g. character limits), leading speakers to express themselves in a more direct and intentional way. Therefore, besides encoding overt case, doubling seems to be used as a means of illocutionary reinforcement of the speech act. If true, this would explain why we do not find examples like (5).

- (5) a. ?Não sei se eu **te**<sub>i</sub> amo **você**<sub>i</sub> .  
 not know if I you.ACC.2sg love you  
*"I don't know whether I love you."*  
 b. ?Ontem alguém **te**<sub>i</sub> inscreveu **você**<sub>i</sub> para a prova.  
 yesterday someone you.acc2sg inscribed you for the exam  
*"Someone inscribed you for the exam yesterday."*

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