

NULL SUBJECTS IN BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE AND FINNISH: THEY ARE NOT DERIVED BY MOVEMENT*

1. INTRODUCTION

It is well known that some languages, despite permitting null subjects, do not display the full array of characteristics usually associated with the Null Subject Parameter as proposed by Rizzi (1982, 1986). In the 1980s, there was much debate about languages such as Chinese, which display no overt verbal agreement and still allow for the subject position to be null. More recently, languages like Brazilian Portuguese (BP) and (colloquial) Finnish have been discussed. In those languages, third person null referential subjects are not allowed in matrix contexts, which has been related to the fact that (at least in BP) verbal agreement is ‘poor’.¹

However, third person null referential subjects are productive in embedded contexts in both languages, which is problematic for theories which try to explain the Null Subject Parameter.

In a series of works (Modesto 2000a, b, 2004, 2007), I have demonstrated that embedded null subjects in BP show all the properties that are characteristic of obligatorily controlled subjects of nonfinite clauses. Rodrigues (2004) has demonstrated that the same also applies to Finnish. The properties are as follows: they must have an antecedent (1); the antecedent has to c-command the subject empty category (2); the antecedent has to be local (3); the antecedent may not be split (4); in VP ellipsis contexts, only a sloppy reading is possible (5); and only a covariant interpretation is possible with ‘only NP’ antecedents (6):

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| (1) a. * <i>e</i> telefonou.
called | BP |
| b. *Parece que <i>e</i> telefonou.
seems that called | BP |
| c. * <i>e</i> oli soittanut.
called | Finnish |
| d. *Vaikuttaa siltä että <i>e</i> oli soittanut.
seemsit it that called | Finnish |

- (2) a. [O amigo do Feco₂]₁ disse que $e_{1/*2/*3}$ ganhou a competição. BP
 the friend of Feco said that won the championship
 'Feco's friend said that he had won the championship.'
- b. [Veljeni₂ vaimo]₁ oli niin iloinen, ettei $e_{1/*2/*3}$ voinut nukkua. Finnish
 Brother-GEN wife was so happy that-not could sleep.
 'My brother's wife was so happy that she could not sleep.'
- (3) a. O Feco₁ disse que a Dani₂ acha que $e_{*1/2}$ ganhou na loto. BP
 the Feco said that the Dani thinks that won in.the lottery
 'Feco said that Dani thinks that she won the lottery.'
- b. Jukka₁ sanoi että Liisa₂ ajattelee että $e_{*1/2}$ oli voittanut arpajaisissa. Finnish
 Jukka said that Liisa thinks that had won lottery
 'Jukka said that Liisa thinks that she won the lottery.'
- (4) a. *O Feco₁ disse que a Dani₂ acredita que e_{1+2} vão morar juntos.
 the Feco said that the Dani thinks that will live together
 'Feco said that Dani thinks that they will live together.'
- b. *Jukka₁ kysyi vaimoltaan₂ e_{1+2} voivatko mennä Espanjaan Finnish
 Jukka asked his.wife can go to.Spain
 lomalle.
 for.vacation
 'Jukka asked his wife if they can go to Spain for vacation.'
- (5) a. O Pedro₁ acha que e_1 é inteligente e o Paulo também. BP
 the Pedro thinks that is intelligent and the Paulo too
 'Pedro thinks that he is intelligent and Paulo does too.'
- b. Jukka₁ sanoi että e_1 oli voittanut arpajaisissa, ja niin Pekkakin. Finnish
 Jukka said that had won the.lottery and so Pekka.also
 'Jukka said that he had won the lottery and Pekka did too.'
- (6) a. Só o Maluf acha que e vai ganhar as eleições. BP
 only the Maluf thinks that will win the elections
 'Only Maluf thinks that he will win the elections.'
- b. Vain Jukka ajatteli että e oli voittanut arpajaisissa. Finnish
 only Jukka thought that had won the.lottery
 'Only Jukka thought that he had won the lottery.'

The fact that null subjects in BP and Finnish present obligatory control-like characteristics led Rodrigues (2004) to propose a movement analysis of null subjects in those languages following a trend initiated by Hornstein's (1999) analysis of control. In this paper, I will show that a movement analysis of null subjects of finite clauses in BP and Finnish is not a good analysis for two reasons: (i) it leaves some of the data unaccounted for, and (ii) it is not the simplest analysis. After proving that this is truly the case, although the data to be presented here is not actually related to the control vs. raising issue, I will speculate if the movement analysis of control may also be mistaken. In turn, I will propose, following Modesto (2007), a modification