

## Language contact in diachrony: identifying non-prestige grammars/grammar competition

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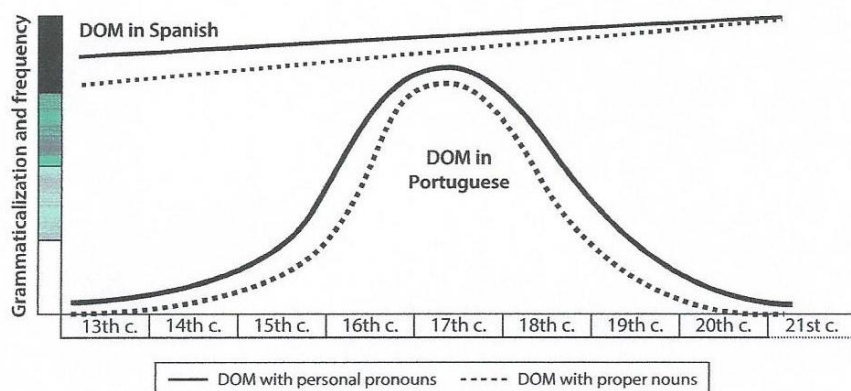


Figure 1. Grammaticalization and frequency of DOM in Spanish and Portuguese concerning personal pronouns and proper nouns.

Figure 1 is taken from Döhla (2014), who sees the evolution of differential object marking (DOM) in Portuguese as consequence of the convergence towards Spanish in the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> c. period (Portugal was under Spanish ruling between 1580 and 1640, but the strong cultural influence of Spain upon the Portuguese literate upper-class started much earlier and did not immediately disappear after 1640; this is the period of Portuguese-Spanish bilingualism among writers and the aristocracy).

“Whereas in Spanish we notice a steady increase and high degree of grammaticalization of DOM, the graph for the degree of grammaticalization of DOM in Portuguese resembles a standardized normal Gaussian distribution with its peak in the 17<sup>th</sup> c. The increase of object marking until the 17<sup>th</sup> c. is in consequence of convergence towards Spanish due to the high prestige of the latter language. From the 18<sup>th</sup> c. onwards divergence due to the building of an own national and linguistic identity finally led to the disappearance of DOM in modern Portuguese”. (Döhla 2014: 265)

There is an alternative interpretation for Figure 1: there was never a bell-shaped change in Portuguese with respect to DOM, but instead two grammars in competition during the period in which the prestige/literate standard converged towards Spanish whereas nothing was happening in the grammar of common people relative to DOM and other phenomena (see Postma’s 2010 on *failed changes*). In this talk I will focus on another case of syntactic change in Portuguese that appears to display a similar bell-shaped curve as represented in Figure 1, and I will propose that because extant texts are largely a product of the prestige grammar, they mask the complexity of the linguistic situation of the relevant historical period and create the illusion of a line of continuity between different objects. The subject to be addressed is clitic placement in finite clauses, specifically in those contexts where in 13<sup>th</sup> century as in modern Portuguese enclisis is the regular position of clitic pronouns.<sup>1</sup> Proclisis, however, is the highly dominant pattern of clitic placement in the relevant contexts through the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> c. period. Textual evidence shows an increase in proclisis from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup> c. followed by a quasi-symmetric decrease, like in Figure 1. As for Spanish, it displays the same increase in proclisis as Portuguese until the 17<sup>th</sup> c. but stabilizes generalized proclisis in finite clauses from then on.

Most studies on the evolution of clitic placement in Portuguese have assumed a traditional perspective on linguistic change and provide accounts for syntactic change in one single grammar (e.g. Martins 1994, 2005; Galves/Brito/Sousa 2005, among others). Can we make a case for grammar competition between two social dialects instead? Not an easy task because current theoretical models can easily accommodate the bell-shaped change (as well as the wide variation in clitic placement among 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> c. writers and texts). Therefore, syntactic theory cannot by itself be invoked to exclude the single grammar approach in favor of the grammar competition approach. Based on the tradition of Romance Philology, I take here the view that certain types of texts are more likely to provide historical access to non-prestige grammars (recall, for example, the restricted set of generally accepted textual sources for

<sup>1</sup> This excludes negative and subordinate clauses, as well as affirmative clauses where quantifiers, *wh*- phrases and certain adverbs precede the verb, which are contexts of obligatory proclisis at all times.

the study of Vulgar Latin). I will therefore discuss the data found in a Portuguese 16<sup>th</sup> c. kitchen book with interesting features (Barros 2013). The book is a collection of recipes assembled from different (unidentified) sources, but it displays quite uniform 16<sup>th</sup> century orthographic and grammatical features. Crucially, there are no traces of transmission of medieval sources at any level of grammar (i.e. phonology, morphology, syntax), differently from what is commonly found in 16<sup>th</sup> c. copies of earlier medieval manuscripts. So, it seems legitimate to consider that what we see in the book represents 16<sup>th</sup> c. Portuguese. With respect to clitic placement, the book displays significant variation that cannot be due to differences in text genre (as the whole book is a collection of recipes). The important observation to be discussed is that different chunks of the book exhibit either a dominance of enclisis or a dominance of proclisis in the relevant contexts, as shown in Table 1. This allows us to formulate the hypothesis that the different (textual) sources collected in the book were not uniformly the product of a single grammar. Relevantly, the book’s compiler did not standardize across the book.

Table 1: Variation Proclisis/Enclisis in affirmative root clauses in different segments of the 16<sup>th</sup> c. kitchen book

Recipe #	1-25	26-106	107-151	152-220	221-283	1*-20*	Total
<b>Enclisis</b>	22	126 <b>64,3%</b>	34	382 <b>84,1%</b>	66	72 <b>73,5%</b>	702 <b>68%</b>
<b>Proclisis</b>	49 <b>69%</b>	70	85 <b>71,4%</b>	72	128 <b>66%</b>	26	430 <b>32%</b>

In support of the hypothesis that the book reveals two coexistent grammars is the fact that some crucial syntactic features relative to clitic placement are restricted either to the more proclitic texts or to the more enclitic ones. In the latter, we find marginal cases of enclisis in subordinate clauses (like in medieval or contemporary Portuguese), as shown in (1). In the former, we find clitics in first position, like in (2), and cases of enclisis in negative gerund clauses, as in (3). Both these features are totally excluded in medieval and contemporary Portuguese (a *failed change*), but are the rule in Spanish, where proclisis is general with finite verbs and enclisis is general with infinitive and gerund.

- (1) a. noue dias no fim dos quaes *deitalaõ* em hũ tacho  
 nine days in-the end of which put-it<sub>ACC-FUTURE</sub> in a pan  
 b. per que se naõ esfriem porque *pisamse* melhor quentes  
 so that *SE<sub>REFL</sub>* not cool-down because smash-*SE<sub>PASSIVE</sub>* better warm
- (2) a. *Se* *lhe* *iraõ* lançando muito em fio que se naõ aiuntem  
*SE<sub>PASSIVE</sub>* it<sub>DAT</sub> will pour very in threads that *SE* not merge-together [the eggs]  
 b. [Aratel de gingias sem caroso,]<sub>j</sub> *o*<sub>j</sub> *deitaraõ* em hũ alguidar (Clitic Left Dislocation)  
 [one pound of cherries without pits]<sub>j</sub> it<sub>j</sub> will-throw in a bowl
- (3) *estaõ* cosidas o que se vera pondo a maõ ensima e *naõ achandoas* molles  
 ‘it is cooked, which can be checked by touching it’ and not finding-it<sub>ACC.PL</sub> soft

In the presentation other specific types of texts (comedy and informal letters) will be considered, and some theoretical consequences of the proposed line of reasoning discussed. If the grammar competition approach proves to be on the right track, clitic placement in what concerns the distribution of proclisis and enclisis in finite clauses is, after all, a case of continuity from medieval to 21<sup>st</sup> century Portuguese. Under this perspective, sociopolitical factors are behind the decline and evanescence of the prestige upper-class grammar that pervades the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century texts (a *failed change* in the sense of Postma 2010). Future research should identify other syntactic changes displaying the same bell-shaped curve possibly attributable to chronologically limited and socially constrained Spanish influence.

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