

Multiple topics: patterns, violations and rescue

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Introduction: Brazilian Portuguese (BP) allows multiple topic constructions, such as (2) below. These constructions are characterized by a comma intonation separating each DP, and they are possible **only** when the modifiers form a sequence of themes or locatives, related by dominance.

(1) A of-B of-C: single topic with sequence of themes

[a reprodução da pintura da cidadezinha,] (foi) minha mãe_F (que) encomendou.
[the reproduction of-the picture of-the little-city,] (was) my mother_F (that) ordered
'As for the reproduction of the picture of the little city, (it was) my mother (that) ordered it.'

(2) C, B, A, multiple topics

[A cidadezinha, a pintura, a reprodução,] (foi) minha mãe_F (que) encomendou.
[the little-city, the picture, the reproduction,] (was) my mother_F (that) ordered
'As for the little city, as for the picture of it, as for the reproduction of the picture, (it was) my mother (that) ordered it'.

Goal: In this paper, I explain several properties of multiple topic constructions, such as *comma intonation patterns*, *possibility of resumptive pronouns*, and *preposition dropping*. I argue that all these properties can be explained by the anti-locality theory, the PIC (Chomsky 1999, 2000) and the impossibility of stranded prepositions in BP.

General properties of multiple topic constructions:

- Each topic is separated by a comma intonation.**
- Preposition dropping** is possible when the preposition is the very first element in the sequences of topics. (See table 1).
- Availability of resumptive pronouns:** Resumptive pronouns are optional, when referring back to a DP, and not available, when referring back to a PP.

Analysis: My analysis to explain the facts presented above is the following. In the nominal domain, modifiers of an N may have a [+Top] feature, which is a strong feature. The structure of the nominal domain has to contain at least the following: [_{TopP} Top [_{DP} D [_{NP} N (modifier)]]], i.e. there is a TopP projection in the nominal domain. Phrases with a [+Top] feature have to move up to the specifier of TopP in the nominal domain to check [+Top]. If they don't, the derivation crashes. However, the DP cannot move to the TopP that is right above it, because it causes an anti-locality violation, following Abels 2003's version of the Anti-locality theory, which states that the complement of a phase head cannot be moved. The only way of checking the [+Top] feature is to move the whole TopP that contains it to the next escape-hatch of the next phase. To put it schematically, in the plain sequence A B C, where both B and C have a [+Top] feature, C will move to escape-hatch of B, and then, B (with C in its specifier) will move to the escape-hatch of A. This is what generates the inverse sequence C, B, A, shown in (2). The presence of a PP will also play a crucial role if we make the additional assumption that PPs are phases. In that case, the movement of a TopP out of the PP right above it will also violate Anti-locality.

Rescue by Copy Spell Out Operation: However, anti-locality (and locality) violations may be rescued by Copy Spell Out, against Abels 2003: fn.53, following Grohmann 2003. Configurations that allow resumptive pronouns are configurations in that a TopP moves out of a PP leaving behind a stranded preposition. The resumptive pronouns prevent the preposition to stay stranded and rescue the anti-locality violation caused by the movement of TopP out of the PP. If, instead of a TopP, a PP is moved as a whole, there is no violation of anti-locality and therefore, no resumptive pronoun has to be generated. This explains why resumptive pronouns cannot refer to PPs in sequence of topics.