0. Introduction

Brazilian Portuguese (BP) has been shown by Tarallo, in his seminal work on relatives (Tarallo 1983), to exhibit a decrease in null pronominal subjects and an increase in null pronominal objects. Besides being descriptively interesting, this apparent asymmetric behavior of subjects and objects is also theoretically intriguing.

If null subjects are licensed by "rich" morphology (Taraldsen 1979; Jaeggli & Safir 1989; Roberts 1993), and if BP's agreement inflection has been undergoing a change in the direction of a poorer morphology\(^1\), the decrease of null subjects is justified\(^2\). But it is a mystery why the null object should have undergone the opposite trend over time.

If, on the other hand, null subjects and objects in BP are like those in Chinese (see Huang 1984), in that they are not identified by inflection, but rather "controlled" by a co-referent (which can be a null discourse Topic), one might expect that, for functional reasons, one or the other, or both, could be null. However, one would not expect the asymmetry found in BP.

In this paper, Tarallo's puzzle will be investigated, using as a data base the facts found in two independent studies working specifically with the diachronic distribution of null and full pronouns in subject position (Duarte 1993, 1995) and in object position (Cyrino 1993, 1994). In the second section of the paper, we will discuss what categories personal pronouns can stand for in European Portuguese (EP), a null subject language, and in English, a non-null subject language. In section three, BP will be contrasted with English and EP to show how the null subject came to have such a restricted range in the history of BP. In section four, the diachronic history of the increasing range in the distribution of null objects in the same dialect of Portuguese will be presented. In the fifth section, these facts will be interpreted globally rather than separately, as in the studies mentioned. Though the changes have resulted from different triggers, their spread will be shown to have been subject to the same hierarchical default lexicalization, in which the less referential items were the first to become (or the last to remain) phonetically null, while the more referential items were the first to become (or the last to remain) phonetically substantive. A syntactic analysis will also be presented in which strong and weak pronouns have different structural positions (see Soriano 1989; Cardinaletti & Starke 1994). The puzzling asymmetry found by Tarallo in BP will be explained by relating strong pronouns to referentiality and weak pronouns to "deficient" referentiality, along the lines proposed by Cardinaletti & Starke (C & S). The concluding remarks will address the consequences of this analysis for language acquisition.

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\(^{1}\) According to Duarte’s (1993) hypothesis, the loss of tu (the direct second person pronoun and its exclusive verb inflection) and its replacement by the indirect second person você, formerly an address form and which requires third person agreement, reduces the inflectional paradigm. In most dialects that retain tu, the agreement is also third person. So, it seems that what really counts is the reduction of the inflectional paradigm, independently of pronoun replacement.

\(^{2}\) This is the thesis defended by Duarte (1993, 1995).
1. What pronouns can stand for and the referential hierarchy

1.1. Pronouns in subject position in natural languages can have a noun phrase [NP] or a sentence [CP] as their antecedent. Compare the following English sentences and their European Portuguese (EP) counterparts:

[1]  
a. Charles, said that he, is sick.  
a'. Carlos, disse que __, está doente.  
b. Charles said [Simone is pregnant], but it, is not true.  
b'. Carlos disse que [Simone está grávida], mas __, não é verdade.

Instead of a full subject pronoun, as in 1a and 1b in English, pro-drop languages, like EP, can have an empty category in the corresponding sentences 1a' and 1b'.

1.2. Pronouns in object position can have NPs, CPs or predicates as antecedents. Compare the EP sentences in (2) with their English counterparts:

[2]  
a. Charles didn't try on the coat, before buying it,  
a'. Carlos não experimentou o casaco, antes de comprá-lo,  
b. Charles said [Simone is pregnant], but she doesn't know it.  
b'. Carlos disse que [Simone está grávida], mas ela não (o), sabe __

c. Charles wants [to marry a rich woman] and Bill wants (it), too.  
c'. Carlos quer [casar-se com uma mulher rica], e Bill também (o), quer.

d. Charles is intelligent, and Bill is __; too.  
d'. Carlos é inteligente, e Bill também (o), é.

EP has a clitic when the antecedent is an NP and a clitic or a gap when the antecedent is a CP, a VP or an AP. English requires a pronoun if the antecedent is a CP; it can have either a pronoun or a gap if the antecedent is a VP and must have a gap if its antecedent is an AP. Pronouns can, moreover, refer to a [+human] element and again, in subject pro-drop languages, a gap can appear instead of a pronoun:

[3]  
a'. [The Queen of England], says she, wants her son divorced.  
a'. A rainha da Inglaterra, disse que __ quer seu filho divorciado.

The antecedent NP can be either specific or non-specific, depending on the internal structure of the nominal rather than on the inherent categorial features like [+N], [+human]. In English and other non-null subject languages, the pronoun is obligatory in all the contexts below. In pro-drop languages, the subject tends to be null in all of them; moreover, in 4?c., the full pronoun is banned.

[4]  
a. This man, thinks he, is smart. [+specific]  
a'. Este homem, acha que __, é esperto.

Object pronouns behave the same in both English and EP when the antecedent is an NP: pronouns or clitics are obligatory whether the antecedent is specific or not, and whether it is human or not.

[5]  
a. This boy, thinks his parents love him/*__.[+specific]  

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3 Gaps in post-verbal position have generally been analyzed as ellipsis, but the possibility of pronouns in similar sentences and in many languages led Cyrino (1994) to analyze these cases as differences at spell-out.

4 No distinction between NPs and DPs is being made here.
Moreover, both English and EP license null objects with an arbitrary reading (Rizzi 1986):

[6] a. This leads __ arb to thinking that we are wrong.
   a’. Isso leva __ arb a pensar que estamos errados.

Both languages also allow null objects in the parasitic gap position:

[7] a. Which coat did you buy __ without trying __ ?
   b. Que casaco, você comprou __ sem experimentar __ ?

These comparisons show that a non-pro-drop language like English has a full subject for any referential antecedent. A pro-drop language like European Portuguese, on the other hand, can have either a full subject pronoun or a null pronoun _pro_ (the choice being due to functional factors) except when the subject is bound to a non-specific quantified NP, in which case the pronoun is necessarily null.

Object pronouns with referential antecedents are always overt in both types of languages, although they can be null if they (a) refer to arbitrary humans or (b) are bound to a wh-element or its variable or (c) have a predicate or a proposition as their antecedent. English, however, does not allow pronouns to have APs as antecedents.

From these contrasts, it can be concluded that, cross-linguistically, referentiality is highly relevant for pronominalization. For a language that has the internal option of either full or null variants, one of the factors which is influential in the choice of one form or the other is the referential status of the antecedent.

Under the present hypothesis, [+N+human] arguments are the highest in the referential hierarchy, while non-arguments are the lowest. For pronouns, since the speaker (eu 'I') and the addressee (você 'you') are inherently human, first and second person pronouns are the highest in the hierarchy, while the third person pronoun which refers to a proposition is the lowest, with the [-animate] entity in between. The feature [+specific] interacts with all the other features:

I. Referential Hierarchy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>non-argument</th>
<th>proposition</th>
<th>[-human]</th>
<th>[+human]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3rd p.</td>
<td>3rd p.2nd p.1st p</td>
<td>+specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-specific</td>
<td>&lt;=</td>
<td>&lt;-----------------------------</td>
<td>&gt; [+ref]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. The Implicational Mapping Hypothesis:

a. The more referential, the greater the possibility of a non-null pronoun.

b. A null variant at a specific point on the scale implies null variants to its left in the referential hierarchy.

BP is gradually becoming a non-null subject language, but also a null object language. Even though these processes have occurred independently, they seem to have been guided by the referential hierarchy and implicational mapping. Internal variation and change are thus merely a reflection of what governs cross-linguistic variation (Tarallo & Kato 1989).

2. From null to full subject pronouns in BP

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5 See, for instance, Calabrese (1986); Benincà (1993); Salvi & Vanelli (1992); de Oliveira (1996).
Modern BP exhibits full subject pronouns where *pro* would be expected in null subject languages:

- a. Eu estou doente.
  
  I  be -1st sick

- b. O Carlos, disse que ele, está doente.
  
  Carlos said that he is sick

- c. [A Rainha da Inglaterra], disse que elai quer seu filho divorciado.
  
  The Queen of England said that she wants her son divorced

- d. [A capa do meu dicionário], parece como se ela, tivesse sido deliberadamente rasgada.
  
  The cover of my dictionary looks as if it has been deliberately torn

The null subject construction can also appear instead of indefinite constructions with the clitic *se* and the third person singular verb form (see Kliffer 1981; Galves 1987; Kato & Tarallo 1987; Nunes 1990).

- a. No Brasil, circula-se à direita. (EP)
  
  In Brazil, drive-3rd-CL on the right

- b. No Brasil, circula à direita. (Kliffer 1981) (BP)
  
  In Brazil, drive-3rd on the right

But arbitrary subjects can also be represented by the second person *você* ('you'), a former term of address (*Vossa Mercê*), or the semantically first person plural, *a gente* ('one'), both of which require the unmarked third person singular verb form:

- a. A gente no Brasil circula à direita.
  
  One in Brazil drives on the right

- b. No Brasil você circula à direita. (6)
  
  In Brazil you drive on the right

Examples will now be given to show that, until the middle of the 20th Century, referential subjects were predominantly null, as in other pro-drop languages.

I. Null and full pronouns for [+human] subjects

18th Century

(11) - __ Sou capaz de beber o mar.

(I) am able to drink the sea

- Não zombem com ele, que __ não só beberá o mar mas tudo quanto se lança na praia.

Don’t mock him for (he) will not only drink the sea but everything thrown on the beach

(12) - Ora, quanto apostá vossa mercê, que não __ bebe o mar?

Nonsense, how much bet you that (you) not drink the sea?

- Aposto tudo quanto __ possuo

(I) bet everything that (I) own.

[Antônio José, *A Vida de Esopo*, 1734]

19th Century

(13) __ Falei ontem com seu tenente-coroné, e ele, disse-me que __ havia de vir com Sinhá Perpétua e com Sinhá moça Rosinha.

(I) spoke yesterday with the lieutenant-colonel and he told me that (he) would come with Miss Perpetua and with young miss Rosinha

[França Junior, *Como se fazia um deputado*, 1882]

20th Century

(14) *Eu só estou repetindo o que eu li.*

I am only repeating what I have read

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6 The order in relation to the locative is irrelevant in both cases.

7 We will be reporting Duarte's (1993) findings based on popular plays.
You don't understand my heart because you are always looking at the sky and looking for rain.

When she woke up she was in Hong Kong.

M. Falabella, *No coração do Brasil*, 1992

Full [+human] subject pronouns have increased from 33% in the 18th century to 72% in the second half of the present century. If one considers only embedded contexts with coreferential subjects (an obligatory context for null subjects in pro-drop languages), the use of a full pronoun, which varied from 0% to 10% in the past two centuries, reaches 44% in the present one. Until the beginning of this century, the use of a full pronoun clearly represented emphasis or disambiguation. In the present century, however, even the full first person pronoun is found as frequently as the others, even though the subject can be inequivocally identified by its distinctive agreement suffix.

In the same way, [+human /-specific] subjects, invariably null in the past, have started to be phonetically represented in the present:

If the child isn’t properly fed, she (=it) is handicapped for the rest of her (=its) life.


II. Null and full pronouns for [-human] subjects

Up to the 1950’s, full pronominal subjects with [-human] reference had very marginal use, their frequency ranging from 0% to 7%, and being restricted to emphasis or personification:

(I) didn’t catch it. It came by itself

Gastão Tojeiro, *O Simpático Jeremias*, 1919

In the second half of the century, however, such subjects start to be expressed with full pronouns (without restrictions), reaching 20% in the written sample:

- Why didn’t you get the meal ready on time
  - He’s ready. Só que eu não vou botá-lo na mesa.


III. Full pronouns with arbitrary reference

Subjects with arbitrary reference were almost categorically null until the first half of the 19th Century.

In the markets sells-CL, and in the classes argues-CL

Antônio José, *A Vida de Esopo*, 1734

Since the first half of the present century, the use of a full pronominal form for arbitrary subjects has increased from a low of 0% and 3% to a high of 55%:

One has to learn to wait for the future

And this tea, if you drink (it) very hot, works wonders
Eles deveriam ensinar amor às crianças. They should teach love to the children

Mas nós temos que nos virar. But we have to find a way out of this

[M. Falabella, No Coração do Brasil, 1992]

IV. Null and demonstrative pronouns referring to a proposition. When the antecedent of a subject is a proposition, the use of an empty category has always been preferred over the use of the neuter demonstrative in BP:

[25] - [O senhor ficará mais perto do Carlos].
    You will be closer to Carlos
    - Será uma grande vantagem para ele.
    (That/it) will be a great advantage for him

[26] - [Sua situação é toda especial].
    Your situation is very special
    - Mas isso, agora não vem ao caso.
    But that/it doesn’t matter now
    - Não vem propriamente ao caso, concordo.
    (That/it) doesn’t matter, (I) agree

[T.A. Gonzaga, O hóspede do quarto n.º 2, 1937]

There seems to have been an increase in the use of the demonstrative -- 28% now in comparison to an average of 12% in the last century-- even though the null subject alternative continues to be the preferred strategy in the language of the plays analyzed.

The role of the proposed referential hierarchy in the course of the change from null to full pronominal subjects for the past two centuries is shown in Figure 1 below:

Fig.1  Full Pronominal Subjects and the Referential Hierarchy
The spread of the change, as can be seen, confirms our hypothesis: the more referential items were the first to become phonetically substantive. Subjects referring to a proposition or to a non-human entity have been more resistant to change. The referentially low expletive pronouns (both "there" and "it" types) are still categorically null. However, Duarte (this volume), in her analysis of speech (?), shows some strategies which suggest the beginning of a process of filling such subjects, among them the use of demonstratives, locatives and topicalizations.

3. **Diachronic distribution of null objects**

Modern BP exhibits the following unexpected behavior concerning referential objects: when the antecedent is referential, the pronoun can be either full or null.

[27] a. Eu comprei o casaco, sem experimentar (ele); I bought the coat without trying (it) on.
   b. O Presidente indicou o ministro, sem consultar (ele); The President appointed the minister without asking (him)

How sentences like [(27), which obligatorily required a clitic, have come to have variants, one with a null object and the other with a strong pronoun, is what will now be seen from the results of Cyrino's (1994) diachronic study.

This analysis showed not only that the change observed exhibited the reverse pattern of that found for subjects, as initial pronominal clitics were gradually replaced by a null object pattern, but also that the change started much earlier: in the 17th Century, null object pronominals were already found in variation with clitics when the antecedent was a proposition or a predicate.

I. Null pronouns in object position with a propositional or a predicative antecedent

17th Century

[28] Também satirizaras, se souberas __ (You) also satirize-PERF-2nd(?) if (you) know-PERF-2nd.

[29] Na substância é sempre o mesmo, In essence (it) is always the same
   Se em quantidade não é __, If in quantity (it) is not __
   [Gregório de Matos, *Obras Completas*, 1655-1690]

II. Null pronoun in object position with a [-human] antecedent

Null objects with non-human antecedents underwent an increase from 5.7% in the 17th Century to 88.3% in the 20th:

18th Century

[30] ...tem uma quinta, tão grande que é necessário 24 horas para se correr __, toda there is a farm so big that (it) is necessary 24 hours for one to cover __ all
   [Antonio José, *Guerras do Alecrim e da Manjerona*, 1737]

III. Null pronoun objects with [+human] antecedents

Null objects with [+human] antecedents have increased much less during this period, from 2.3% to 14.3%.

20th Century

[31] E quem, não quiser é bom avisar já, que assim dá tempo de substituir __

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8Except for propositional referents, one can say that this hierarchy is maintained in speech. Duarte's (1995) synchronic analysis reveals the following rates for full pronominal subjects according to the referential feature of the antecedent: 68% [+human], 65% [+arb], 56% [-human] and 44% [+hum/-spec].
And he who doesn’t want (it) is good to inform now, so that (it) gives time to replace __

[G. Guarnieri, *Um grito parado no ar*, 1973]

As the 3rd person clitic is no longer in the paradigm (see Duarte 1989 for spoken Portuguese), anaphoric objects with [+human] antecedents are often expressed by the strong pronouns *ele* (‘he’) and *ela* (‘she’). This shows that the proposed lexicalization hierarchy once again makes valid predictions, as regards the avoidance of null expression for highly referential elements, as shown in Figure 2 below for the past three centuries:

Fig. 2: Null Objects and the Referential Hierarchy

![Graph showing null objects and the referential hierarchy](image)

Currently, objects with [-human] or propositional antecedents are almost categorically null. Subjects bearing these features are still resistant to the full pronoun change underway (see Figure 1).

So far, we have demonstrated how the complementary distribution of full and null pronominals occurred along the referential hierarchy. What will be shown in the following section is the syntactic status of lexical and null pronominals.

4. The syntactic status of lexical and null pronominals

4.1. Strong and weak pronouns in Romance languages

Recent studies on pronouns have shown that their distribution is better understood if the distinction between strong and weak is taken into account (see Soriano 1989; Cardinaletti & Starke 1994, among others).

For Soriano, English subject pronouns are weak pronouns and are positioned as subjects of IP. In Spanish, a pro-drop language, the weak pronoun is null and, therefore, pro is what appears in subject position, where it is assigned case. The appearance of the lexical pronoun is equivalent to clitic doubling. The full pronoun appears in left dislocation, where case cannot be assigned, but this is irrelevant since the strong pronoun has inherent case.

Instead of the division of pronouns into strong and weak, Cardinaletti & Starke propose a division into three types: (a) strong pronouns, (b) weak, or deficient pronouns (including pro) and (c) clitics, or severely deficient pronouns. They consider both weak pronouns and clitics to be syntactically "deficient", as neither can occur in
coordinate structures [Esse (*e quelle accanto)], nor can they be modified by adverbs [seulement lui (*il)], or occur in peripheric positions [pro arriverà presto, *essa; lei; Maria]. They are also semantically deficient (or dependent), as their antecedent must be prominent in the discourse. They are, moreover, the only possibility in a non-referential context [On t'a vendu un livre pas cher; Ils m'ont vendu un livre trop cher; *Eux m'ont vendu un livre trop cher]. Contrary to what happens with strong pronouns, weak pronouns and clitics can refer to [-human] entities.

Clitics and weak pronouns differ in the following aspects: (a) clitics are heads, while weak pronouns are XPs; (b) clitics can be doubled, though weak pronouns cannot (a view distinct from Soriano's); clitics can appear in ordered clusters, weak pronouns cannot. Weak pronouns share some properties with clitics and others with strong pronouns. For Cardinaletti & Starke, morphological reduction has a structural counterpart: weak pronouns lack CP and clitics lack Σ, with the structure being reduced to IP.

Soriano's more simplified structural version will be used here. According to her representation, the strong pronouns are in adjunction, and this is compatible with C&S's idea that strong pronouns are more peripheral while pro is in the Spec of IP. For Soriano, the relation between subject pro and Yo is of the same nature as that between the clitic lo and a él. Thus, doubling is not restricted to clitics, as shown in Figure 3 below:

Fig. 3:

Though Soriano's simplified syntactic version has been adopted, we shall see that the diachronic analysis and the referential hierarchy hypothesis strongly support C&S's thesis of the semantic and morphological deficiency of weak pronouns and clitics.

4.2. Strong and weak pronouns in BP

Kato (1996a) points out that strong pronouns can have different types of case, depending on the languages involved. Thus, in French they have dative case, while in English their case is oblique (accusative or dative) and in Italian, Portuguese and Spanish, it is nominative. This led Kato to speculate whether it might not be the

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9Thus, clitics and weak pronouns appear in derived positions: they lack referential autonomy and they undergo prosodic restructuring.

10The three classes are considered idealizations, so that real items in a language may have overlapping properties of two types.
case that pro was simply the deletion of one of the members in a homophonous pair of strong and weak pronouns.

b. Me, I don’t think I can do it.
c. Yo, yo lo vi ayer.
↓
Ø
Yo, ___ lo vi ayer.

Differently from Spanish, where doubling is invisible, BP presents a subject doubling phenomenon, where the homophonous pair appears with high frequency (Duarte 1995). Kato (1996a) shows that the indirect second person você ('you') has already been reduced to 'cê as a weak pronoun, which may be a sign that the null subject is the result of total reduction to a phonetically zero element.

   I feel too much this, don’t I
b. Você, 'cê não me pega! (Kato 1996a)
   you you not me catch

During the process of change, however, the weak lexical pronoun tends to alternate with the zero variant. The existence of the homophonous weak pronoun paradigm explains why BP, still a pro-drop language, has such a high occurrence of subject pronouns, violating the "Avoid Pronoun Principle", or C & S's "Minimal Structure" postulate. The referential hierarchy also explains why the lexical variant is more productive for the first person and less so for the third person.

4.3. Doubling with arbitrary subjects

In C & S's theory, if the subject has an arbitrary reading [On t’a vendu un livre pas cher; Ils m’ont vendu un livre trop cher], the pronoun cannot be strong [*Eux m’ont vendu un livre trop cher], and, though weak, cannot be doubled by a strong pronoun [*Eux, ils m’ont vendu un livre trop cher].

Kato (1999) claims that the null arbitrary subject in BP is doubled by a PRO. The conventional analysis for indefinite se constructions has PRO as subject, since se is supposed to absorb case. With the disappearance of se, the Spec of IP becomes governed, and PRO can no longer occur there. Kato’s analysis is that the subject is pro, but, instead of being doubled by a strong lexical pronoun, it is doubled by PRO. The arbitrary reading of both sentences in [9] is, thus, equally attributed to PRO.

[34] a. [p.PRO [I V + se [ t, à direita]]
b. [p.PRO] [p.pro, [p V [ t, à direita]]

If sentence (34b) is embedded as a complement clause, the "controlled" reading of pro is also due to PRO.

[35] Eu prometi ao Pedro que [PRO, [pro, viria]
   I promised Pedro that (I) would come

It is interesting that PRO, like the strong pronouns, always has the feature [+human], cannot be an expletive, and cannot be doubled (or cannot be visibly replaced by an NP). Like strong pronouns, PRO can be modified, provided that the modifier is stressed / has its own stress:


Coordination is out because each of the members has to have its own stress.

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What was proposed in Section 2, was that the third person pronouns, including [-animate] entities and propositions, would be less likely to be lexicalized than those referring to 1st and 2nd person / than 1st or 2nd person pronouns, since these persons are inherently human..., which are inherently human and, therefore, located at the highest position in the referential hierarchy. Arbitrary pro adds to the quantity of null subjects in the third person.

4.4. Null objects and doubling

Regarding the increase of null objects in BP, it will be assumed as in Kato (1993) that the null referential third person object is a null clitic\(^{12}\), forming a paradigm with the still existing first and second person clitics, me and te/lhe\(^{13}\), respectively. The strong third person pronoun ele/ela, which can occur in object position, would, like the strong subject pronoun, be in a doubled (right dislocated) position (cf. Kato 1996b)\(^{14}\).

\[37\] — Quando você encontrou Pedro?
   when (have) you met Pedro
   Eu[ pro[ O[-encontrei ec]] ele[ ] hoje.
   I (I) met he today

There is no asymmetry in relation to the visibility of the subject and the object in sentence [37]. Both pronouns are in a doubled position, with the deficient forms being null, and the subject admitting a weak homophonous pronoun. Both pronouns also have a [+human] interpretation, a standard feature of strong pronouns.

Asymmetry will often be found, however, if the complement is a [-human] object or a clause, since doubling tends to occur only with human referents:

\[38\] — Onde você encontrou o carro?
   where did you find the car
   Me (I) it found __ on the beach

Since objects are often [-human] or a clause, what occurs in complement position is mainly an NP of low referentiality, which accounts for the high rate of null subjects in BP.

5. Concluding remarks

A linguistic analysis in the Principles and Parameters framework is useless if it cannot shed some light on matters of language acquisition. The referential hierarchy and the strong/weak distinction of pronouns provide the unmarked mapping between LF (meaning) and PF (form). If the input exhibits null subjects for highly referential entities (EP), the child deduces that subjects lower in the hierarchy will also be null. Moreover, if an overt nominative pronoun is present, it will be as having an external, functionally-marked case. On the other hand, if the input exhibits a lexical expletive (as in English), the child will deduce that subjects higher in the referential hierarchy will also be lexicalized, and that the pronoun is thus weak, with no peripheral role. The lexicalization hierarchy does not exclude the possibility of null referential subjects. What it does rule out is the existence of a language with null referential pronouns and full non-referential pronouns.

As for the object, if the input exhibits a pronoun or a clitic in lower positions of the referential hierarchy, the child will consider it a weak pronoun in either a head or argument position, and will assume that all higher positions will also exhibit lexical pronouns or clitics (as in English and in EP). If the language exhibits a null

\(^{12}\) The null object of BP has to be a pronoun, as shown by Galves (1984) and Farrell (1991), because it is not sensitive to syntactic islands.

\(^{13}\) The variant lhe, which is dative, is also used as the accusative clitic in Rio and in the northeast dialect, when the referent is [+human] (see Araujo Ramos 1999).

\(^{14}\) In C & S’s view the strong pronoun implies that CP is projected. If we have only the null clitic, the projection would close in IP. We have problems with this analysis, but we will not deal with them here.
object for a referential entity, the child will assume that all lower positions can be null (as in BP). Moreover, if a strong pronoun is present, it will be assigned a dislocated position.

BP also exhibits doubling with homophonous pronouns in the subject position, a clue for the child that weak pronouns can be lexical or null. Again, the choice between a full or null pronoun in the position of a weak pronoun is subject to the referential hierarchy, which will lead the child to leave null the clear cases of non-referentiality (expletives), while using the lexical variant for other cases, even arbitrary ones.

References


