The study discusses the properties of causatives constructions in Brazilian Portuguese (BP). Romance causatives have been widely studied in the generative literature (cf. Kayne 1975; Guasti 1996, 1997, among others). Since Kayne (1975), they have been described in terms of the distinction between the so-called ‘faire-infinitif’ (FI) causative, in which the causee is realized either as a post-verbal DP or as an oblique dative phrase (with transitive predicates), and the ‘faire-par’ (FP) causative, in which a passive configuration is postulated, the causee being realized as an adjunct by-phrase, as illustrated, respectively, in (1) Maria mandou/ fez varrer o chão aos empregados (Lit.: M. made sweep the floor to-the employees – ‘Maria made the employees sweep the floor’) and (2) Maria fez/ mandou varrer o chão pelos empregados (Lit.: M. made sweep the floor by the employees – ‘Maria made the employees sweep the floor’), from Portuguese.

A relevant fact in the development of complementation in BP is the loss of the FI variant – due to a linguistic change affecting the syntax of datives (cf. Bittencourt 1995; Salles 1997). The FP construction in turn is found in BP – although the by-phrase is obligatorily unrealized, as in (3) Maria mandou varrer a casa (cf. Borges 2008). Following Kayne’s (1975) and Guasti’s (1997) analyses, we assume that the by-phrase in the FP construction is an adjunct, as in passives: if no by-phrase is inserted, the causee is syntactically represented as an implicit argument with an existential interpretation, as in passives. A piece of evidence for this analysis is the requirement that the embedded predicate be transitive, as shown in the ungrammaticality of (4a) *Maria fez chorar (M. made [someone] cry)/ (4b) *Maria fez sair (M. made [someone] leave)/ (4c) *Maria fez trabalhar (M. made [someone] work), as opposed to (1).

As extensively discussed in Gonçalves (1999), FI and FP causatives are projected in a clause union configuration in EP (cf. Wurmbrand 2001). A piece of evidence for this analysis is the occurrence of long object movement with these constructions, as in (5) Os professores mandaram-na[a sala] limpar aos alunos (The teachers made=3s.CL[a the room] clean to-the employees) and (6) As paredes foram mandadas pintar aos meninos (The walls were made paint to-the boys). Long object movement in (5) and (6) is analyzed in terms of the absence of an intervenient subject position in the embedded predicate. In PB in turn, although (5) is not found, due to the absence of (3rd person) object clitics in this language, (6) is found – provided that the causee is not syntactically realized by the by-phrase – (6’) O quarto foi mandado/feito varrer.

In EP and BP, causatives are found in two other configurations, namely one in which the causee is realized as an accusative (henceforth, the ECM causative), as in (7a) Maria mandou/ fez os empregados varrer o chão (M. made the employees sweep the floor); and another in which the embedded infinitive is inflected and the causee is nominative (henceforth the Nominative causative), as in (8) Maria fez os empregados varrerem o chão (M. made the employees sweep.3pl the floor). As shown by Gonçalves (1999), differently from FI and FP causatives, long object movement is not found in ECM and nominative
causatives, as illustrated in (9) *Maria fê-lo/ mandou-o[=o chão] os empregados varrer(em) (M. 3.CL[=the floor] made the employees sweep.(3pl)), a bi-clausal analysis being proposed.

The development of causatives in BP is thus a confirmation of the distinctive properties of FI and FP causatives: while the former is lost, the latter is still found. Moreover, the occurrence of long-object movement with both FI and FP constructions, which is analyzed in terms of the notion of restructuring, indicates that this operation is at stake in BP with causatives predicates. Other conclusions regarding the parametric expression of causatives can be advanced. In particular, the implication between the projection of FI causatives and the syntax of indirect objects confirms Kayne’s (2000) proposal according to which the parametric conditions determining the occurrence of double object constructions in English, as opposed to French, conversely determine the occurrence of the FI construction in French, but not in English. In fact, English and BP are argued in Salles (1997) to be parametrically related with respect to the syntax of indirect objects (in connection with the absence/loss of the morphological distinction between accusative and dative case in the pronominal system). However, the English counterpart of (3) in which the causee is implicit is not found in English, as in (10a) *Mary made sweep the house, suggesting that the conditions disallowing (10a) are independent. Instead, the EPP argument is necessarily projected, giving rise to the ECM configuration, as in (10b) Mary made the builders paint the house. The ungrammaticality of (10a) in English suggests that the EPP feature on the (embedded) T is obligatorily found in the projection of causatives in this language.

References


