Demonstrativos neutros não-argumentais na periferia esquerda da frase
Non-argumental neuter demonstratives in the left periphery

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about

- discourse-related and left peripheral nature of non-argumental / "expletive" demonstratives in a Null Subject language
  - in comparison with non-argumental / "expletive" personal pronoun
- empirical focus: European Portuguese
  - dialect corpus: CORDIAL-SIN
  - non-argumental neuter demonstratives (+ pers. pron. ele)
  - contribution of non-standard varieties to comparative syntactic theory

aims

- argue that non-argumental neuter demonstratives in European Portuguese (EP) are not regular, though weird, expletive subjects in a Null Subject language
- compare them to other apparent expletive subject in EP, arguably related to discourse marking in the left periphery of the sentence (pt. expletive ele)
  - from a comparative perspective empirically grounded in a dialect corpus, provide additional evidence for (parts of) the fine structure of the left periphery and the syntactic codification of discourse aspects

some questions:

- Are these pronouns really expletive subjects (i.e. English or French-type expletive subjects: there are…, il y a…)?
  - The puzzle: Null Subject languages – or at least their standard varieties – do not display expletive subjects
  - [...] I am not convinced that the expletive one gets in French is of the same sort as the expletive in archaic dialects [Portuguese, Galician and Leonese, EC], the French one being a consequence of the impossibility of pro-drop.
  - (Uriagereka 1992, 1995: 16)

- If not, what is the locus and status of these pronouns?
  - ele beyond expletive subjects
    - in the left peripheral space before the sentential structure that typically encodes propositional meaning:
      - syntactic distribution beyond impersonal contexts in EP non-standard varieties
      - discourse effects in connection with illocutionary force
    - (Carrilho 2005)

In "near-standard" European Portuguese (EP):

**Isto** há cada uma!
DEM "this" has such one

"There are such things!"

**Ele** há cada uma!
EXPL=pron.3sg.masc has such one

- pervasive in non-standard EP varieties
  - also known in other null subject languages
  - (Henríquez Ureña 1939, Hinzelin 2009)
Rizzi 1997 proposes a highly articulated structure for the sentential left periphery.

the left periphery encodes interactions between sentence and context (e.g. Topic, Focus)

- Is there a locus for expletive pronouns in the left periphery?
- How can we properly characterize the relationship between syntax and discourse in this respect?

Empirical survey: data from CORDIAL-SIN

- Syntax-oriented Corpus of Portuguese Dialects
  an annotated corpus of Portuguese dialects available online:

- A geographically representative body of selected excerpts of spontaneous and semi-directed speech

- Oral interviews gathered by the Dialectology Research Group at Centro de Linguística da Universidade de Lisboa within the scope of several linguistic atlases

dialect corpus
CORDIAL-SIN

- 600,000 words
- 42 locations

Informants:
- aged
- low instruction
- rural
- born and raised in place of interview

1. BACKGROUND:
Emphatic ele in EP dialects

sporadic: 298 tokens /corpus 200,000 words
"optional"

(1) É a estrela-da-manhã (...) e há a estrela... Bom, is the morning star and has the star... well
ele há várias estrelas, não é? (AAL92)
ELE has several stars NEG is
±"That's the morning star (...) and there is the star... Well, there are several stars, aren't there?"

(2) Ah, se chover era melhor, mas ele não chove amanhã.
INTJ if rain/FUT.SBJU was better but ELE NEG rain tomorrow
±'Oh, it would be better if it rains, but it won’t rain tomorrow.'

(3) [...] ele falta-me aqui umas peças do tear [...]  
ELE miss-3SG-to.me here some pieces of.the loom
±'I need here some pieces of the loom'

(4) Ele lá vinham os rapazes e as raparigas
ELE there came the boys and the girls
±"There came the boys and the girls.'
**ELE AS A LEFT PERIPHERAL ELEMENT:**

**ARGUMENTS FROM SYNTACTIC DISTRIBUTION**

... and subject clause extraction & subject relative clause

(5) [...] mas ele é raro quando se vê.
   but ELE is rare when SE sees

±‘... but it is rare when you see one of them’

(6) É aquelas correias grandes que ele nasce nas pedras.
   is those "straps" big that ELE grows in the stones.

±‘That’s those big "straps" that grow from the stones.’

**ELE AS A LEFT PERIPHERAL ELEMENT:**

**ARGUMENTS FROM SYNTACTIC DISTRIBUTION**

> Argumental null subjects

(7) Ele – voltámos, lá todos a ver.
   ELE went back there all A seeINF

±‘We all went back there to see…’

(8) Esses não morreram. Ele - escaparam.
   those NEG died ELE escaped

±‘Those didn’t die. In fact, they escaped’

**ELE AS A LEFT PERIPHERAL ELEMENT:**

SYNTACTIC DISTRIBUTION

> peripheral position

- above preverbal subjects, preposed constituents...

(9) Mas ele o nosso governo não protege nada a agricultura.
   but ELE the our government NEG protects nothing the agriculture

±‘But our government doesn’t really protect agriculture’

(10) Tu sabes bem que ele em Paçô eles viram ...
   you know well that ELE in Paçô they turn...

±‘You know well that in Paçô they turn out…”

**ELE AS A LEFT PERIPHERAL ELEMENT:**

SYNTACTIC DISTRIBUTION

> high peripheral position

- above different types of topics

(11) ele a fome não havia [- -],!
   ELE the hunger NEG had

±‘the hunger didn’t exist’

(12) Ele isso aqui a gente chamava [- -], um…
   ELE that here the people called a…

±‘That, we called a…”

**ELE AS A LEFT PERIPHERAL ELEMENT:**

SYNTACTIC DISTRIBUTION

> high peripheral position

- above different types of topics

(13) E ele eu, o homem leu aquilo diante de mim, !
   and ELE me the man read that in front of me

±‘And me, the man read that before me’

- above dislocated "affective" phrases (Raposo 1995, Klima1964)

(14) Que ele até com um pau se malha.
   QUE ELE even with a stick SE threshes

±‘Actually people thresh even with a stick.’

**ELE AS A LEFT PERIPHERAL ELEMENT:**

SYNTACTIC DISTRIBUTION

> high peripheral position

- Above wh-constituents (interrogatives, clefts)

(15) ele quem é que os come?
   ELE who is that they eat

±‘but who eats them?’

(16) Ele quem se casa são eles!
   ELE that here the people called a...

±‘It’s them who will marry!’
SYNTACTIC DISTRIBUTION

- In the left periphery: most examples involve a high position (above wh-, topics...)
  - Impersonal contexts = peripheral contexts
    1. ele há várias estrelas
       ELE has many stars 'There are many stars'
    1. ele [-] há várias estrelas
    7. Ele [-] voltámos lá todos a ver...
       ELE went.back1PL there all A seeINF 'We all went back there to see...'

- non-argumental ele in EP does not relate to information distribution patterns (topic/focus)
  - expletive ele appears in marked topic sentences …

- Exclamatives: emphasis on expressive value
  20. ele eu gosto de socorrer as pessoas, homem!
     ELE I like of helpNF the people man
cf. quasi-standard, always expressive:
  21. Ele é tanta a fita que tem de se ouvir que... eh pâ!
     ELE is so.much the tape that has of SE listen that...INTJ
     [newspaper]

- Discourse effects and clause type
  - The expletive has the effect of blocking the standard question interpretation:
  22'- Ele quem é que come estes bolos?
     EXPL who is that eats these cakes
     As crianças.
     the children
Imperatives: emphatic directive/suggestion

(23) Ele vamos embora!
   EXPL goPRES.SBJ.1PL away

Cf.
(23') Ele vamos {lá, já, mesmo} embora!
   there, now, indeed

(23'') Ele vamos embora {se não se importam, por favor}!
   'if you don't mind, please'

Declaratives: emphatic / assertive (strong evidentiality)

(24) É a estrela-da-manhã (...) e há a estrela… Bom, is the morning star and has the star… well
   ele há várias estrelas, não é? (AAL92)
   ELE has several stars NEG is
   'That's the morning star (...) and there is the star… Well, there are several stars, aren't there?'

Declaratives: emphatic / assertive (strong evidentiality)

(25) Ele antigamente comiam.
   EXPL in the past ate3PL

(26) (De facto, realmente…) antigamente comiam.
   in fact indeed

• non-argumental ele in non-standard EP
  >> relates to syntactic positions relevant for the syntax-discourse interface, in the sentential left periphery
  >> displays particular discourse effects, relating to illocutionary force
• peripheral non-argumental ele and neuter demonstratives behave alike
  (Carrilho 2005)

Parallel with other NSLs?

• Independent works on other Romance NSLs have pointed, at different moments, and under different formats, to the discoursively multifaceted nature of these elements

Other varieties of Romance NSLs
• Discourse nature relating to emphasis on illocutionary force?
  – exclamative el/ Cat.
  – assertive/evidential elo/ Cat.
  – assertive/evidential ello/ Sp.
  – exclamative, interrogative, assertive … el/ Ast.
  – emphatic elo/ exclamative, directive, assertive EP

2. Non-argumental neuter demonstratives

in quasi-standard EP:

Ele / isto – há cada uma!
  ELE DEM has such one  “There are such things!”

(27) Isto é noite.
  DEM is night  “It’s night.”

(28) Aquilo não há casas para alugar.
  DEM NEG has houses for rent
  “There aren’t any houses for rent.”

Expletive elo / Non-argumental neuter demonstratives

• Peripheral position

• Relating to discourse (non-argumental)

➢ Additionally: deictic import

 Differences in the distribution of isto / isso / aquilo

Neuter demonstratives in the left periphery

(29) Ai, isso [ ] gostei tanto daquela broa!
  INTJ DEM liked.1sg so much of that cornbread
  “Oh, I liked so much that cornbread!”

(30) Aquilo o forno levava ali três ou quatro tabuleiros […]
  DEM the oven took there three or four trays
  “The oven took three or four trays.”

(31) Isso o aequin faz-se também.
  DEM the aequin [type of fish] does-SE also
  “To aequin, people also do [that].”

(32) Isto por aqui já não há ninguém a aprender.
  DEM by here already NEG nobody A learn.INF
  “Here, nobody is learning [that] anymore.”

3. On the distribution of isto / isso / aquilo

Isto [now/today, here, I/we]

(33) Mas isto hoje em dia já não há nada. (ALV)
  but EXPL today – already NEG has nothing
  “But today there’s nothing anymore.”

(34) Isto por aqui já não há ninguém a aprender. (MST)
  EXPL by here already NEG nobody A learn.INF
  “Here, nobody is learning [that] anymore.”

(35) [De Inverno a gente passa mais um pouco, com os barquitos, às vezes, molhados.]
  Isto a vida do mar é arrastada! (ALV)
  EXPL the life of the sea is ± very difficult
  “The life of fishermen is very difficult!”
On the distribution of isto / isso / aquilo

**Isso** [hearer, ... ?]

(36) *Aquilo* não há nada que chamem borrage, ou borragem, ou assim?

*INF Borracheira. isso borracheiras são plantas. *(NPC)*

(37) Se vir cedo, isso há o que a gente come, [...] *ALV*

If you come early, EXPL has that the people eat.

Towards a discourse-specific analysis of non-argumental neuter demonstratives

- **at the syntax-discourse interface**
- as deictic elements they make the speaker’s coordinates explicit
- > complementary distribution of *isto / isso / aquilo*
- important difference w.r.t. emphatic *ele*

**Aquilo** [not here, not now, not me/us]

(38) *Aquilo* os carros para aí comparam-se mais com o Alentejo. *(ALC)*

EXPL, the cars over there compare more to the Alentejo.

(39) Era o mestre com um martelinho a comprar e eram dois martelos:

was the master with a little hammer A arrange and were two hammers tâe-tâe-tâe. *Aquilo faziam ali uma música!* *(IIO)*

ONOMAT. EXPL made3PL there a music.

- The master had a little hammer, and there were two other hammers: tap-tap-tap. They made such a music!

**REFERENCES**


G R A C I A S!