

**REASSESSING THE EXISTENCE OF VERB-STRANDING vP-ELLIPSIS IN BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE***REAVALIANDO A EXISTÊNCIA DE VERB-STRANDING vP-ELLIPSIS NO PORTUGUÊS BRASILEIRO*Ezekiel Panitz<sup>1</sup>**ABSTRACT**

Previous studies of vP-ellipsis in Brazilian Portuguese (BP) have claimed that BP permits verb-stranding vP-ellipsis (VVPE), a variant of vP-ellipsis in which the lexical verb raises out of the elliptical vP, thereby stranding the ellipsis site. The present study revisits this claim and argues that BP does not, in fact, permit VVPE. The argument against the existence of VVPE presented in this article proceeds in two steps. First, existing arguments in support of the claim that BP has VVPE are reassessed and shown to be unconvincing. Second, it is argued that VVPE overgenerates, thus calling into question the claim that BP has VVPE.

**KEYWORDS:** Verb-stranding vP-ellipsis. Brazilian Portuguese. Ellipsis.

**RESUMO**

Diversos trabalhos sobre a elipse de vP no português brasileiro (PB) afirmam que esta língua permite *verb-stranding vP-ellipsis* (elipse de vP com encalhe do verbo; doravante VVPE), uma forma de elipse de vP em que o verbo lexical é alçado para fora do vP elidido, e assim sobrevive à elipse. O presente trabalho revisita essa afirmação e argumenta que o PB, na verdade, não permite VVPE. O argumento contra a existência de VVPE no PB apresentado neste artigo é construído em dois passos. Primeiro, os argumentos existentes a favor da afirmação de que o PB tem VVPE são reavaliados e se argumenta que não são convincentes. Em seguida, argumenta-se que VVPE sobregera, o que coloca em dúvida a afirmação de que o PB tem VVPE.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Verb-stranding vP-ellipsis. Português brasileiro. Elipse.

**Introduction**

Within the literature on Brazilian Portuguese (BP), a fair amount of attention has been devoted to sentences such as (1), in which the entire content of the vP goes missing, minus the lexical verb (CYRINO; MATOS, 2002, 2005; TESCARI NETO, 2012).

- (1) Quando a Ana pôs os óculos na mesa, a Maria também pôs.  
 when the A. put the glasses on.the table the M. also put  
 ‘When Ana put her glasses on the table, Maria also put her glasses on the table.’  
 (CYRINO; MATOS, 2002, p. 182)

Such sentences are standardly assumed to involve verb-stranding vP-ellipsis (hereafter, VVPE), a variant of vP-ellipsis in which the lexical verb escapes the ellipsis site by raising to some vP-external

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functional head (e.g., Asp or T).<sup>2</sup>

- (2) Quando a Ana pôs os óculos na mesa, a Maria<sub>i</sub> também [<sub>vP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>vP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> os óculos na mesa]]

Relevantly, BP also has vP-ellipsis of the more familiar sort, in which the lexical verb remains internal to the ellipsis site (CYRINO; MATOS, 2002, 2005).

- (3) A Ana já tinha lido o livro à irmã, mas a Paula não tinha.  
the A. already had read the book to.the sister but the P. NEG had  
'Ana had already read the book to her sister, but Paula hadn't.'

(CYRINO; MATOS, 2002, p. 187)

Moreover, BP has verb movement to a vP-external position in non-elliptical sentences (GALVES, 1994; SILVA 2001; TESCARI NETO 2012, *inter alia*).

- (4) O João acabou+X [<sub>vP</sub> completamente [<sub>vP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>vP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> o seu trabalho]]  
the J. finished completely the his work  
'João completely finished his work.'

(GALVES, 2001, p. 109)

Thus, there is initial plausibility to the assumption that BP allows VVPE. After all, VVPE is simply the combination of vP-ellipsis and verb movement to a vP-external position, both of which are independently possible in BP.

Of course, plausible conclusions are sometimes incorrect. In this article, I revisit the claim that BP has VVPE and conclude that BP does not have VVPE, contrary to previous thinking. I demonstrate that positing VVPE for BP is neither necessary nor desirable. It is not necessary, as apparent cases of VVPE can in fact be accounted for without VVPE; and it is not desirable, as VVPE overgenerates.

The present article builds upon a series of recent articles by Landau (2018, 2020a, 2020b). In 2018 and 2020b, Landau examines four languages which were previously thought to allow VVPE (Hebrew, in 2018; Hindi, European Portuguese, and Russian, in 2020b) and argues that these languages do not permit VVPE. Landau's conclusion is based upon the same two observations utilized here: (i) VVPE is unnecessary, as the data it purports to account for are independently accounted for; (ii) VVPE is undesirable, as it overgenerates. Having concluded that these languages disallow VVPE, Landau asks why they do so, noting that this question is particularly pressing in languages that independently allow both vP-ellipsis and verb movement to a vP-external position. Landau addresses this question in his 2020a paper, where he proposes that VVPE is impossible — not just in some languages, but universally — as it runs afoul of a UG constraint regulating ellipsis of head-less XPs.

<sup>2</sup> In what follows, it will not be necessary to establish which vP-external functional head the lexical verb raises to in BP. I will therefore abstract away from the precise identity of this functional head and represent it as "X". For verb-movement in BP, see Galves (2001), Silva (2001), Tescari Neto (2012), among others.

Presently, a number of languages are still believed to allow VVPE. Landau's proposal that VVPE is universally barred invites a reassessment of these languages. The current article does just this for one language, Brazilian Portuguese.

The paper is structured as follows. In section 1, I review the arguments that have been put forward within the BP literature in support of VVPE. I argue that the arguments are unconvincing, as the data VVPE purports to account for are independently accounted for. Section 2 goes one step further and argues that VVPE overgenerates. Section 3 concludes.

## 1. Positing VVPE is unnecessary: Reassessing existing arguments in support of VVPE

### 1.1. Missing PP arguments

In order to establish that a given language has VVPE, it is necessary to examine sentences that are unambiguously analyzable as involving VVPE. In other words, one must use sentences which not only *can* be analyzed as involving VVPE, but moreover *must* be so analyzed.

For instance, suppose one considers sentences such as (5), in which the verb's object DP has gone missing (English words are used for convenience.)

- (5) Susan saw the movie, and Fred also saw.  
(Interpretation: Susan saw the movie, and Fred also saw the movie.)

In principle, such sentences can be generated via two distinct strategies: (i) VVPE, (ii) argument drop<sup>3</sup>.

- (6) Susan saw the movie, and Fred also saw+X [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> the movie]]  
(7) Susan saw the movie, and Fred also saw+X [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> ec<sub>DP</sub>]]

In languages that do not allow object DPs to undergo argument drop, the only option for generating sentences like (5) is VVPE. In such languages, then, the acceptability of sentences like (5) motivates the conclusion that these languages have VVPE. By comparison, in languages that *do* permit argument drop of object DPs, sentences like (5) can be independently generated via argument drop and therefore do not furnish an argument in support of the existence of VVPE.

As is widely acknowledged within the BP literature, BP is a language that productively licenses argument drop of object DPs (CYRINO, 1997; CYRINO; LOPES, 2016, FARRELL, 1990; FERREIRA, 2000; *inter alia*). The following sentences provide a few examples.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The term 'argument drop' is used here as a cover term for the following three processes: (i) argument ellipsis, (ii) topic drop, and (iii) *pro* drop. Argument-dropped arguments are represented as *ec*.

<sup>4</sup> A number of proposals have been made regarding the nature of null object DPs in BP. Ferreira (2000), Grolla (2005), and Nunes and Santos (2009) argue that the null object is *pro*. Cyrino (1997) and Cyrino and Lopes (2016) argue that the null object is generated through argument ellipsis. Panitz (2021) argues that both of the above strategies are in fact available. Meanwhile, Kato, Martins, and Nunes (2023) show that the null object can additionally be generated under topic drop. Thus, the null object in BP appears to be three-ways ambiguous: it can be generated via *pro*, argument ellipsis, or topic drop.  
(footnote continued on following page)

- (8) [Esse tipo de garrafa]<sub>i</sub> impede as crianças de abrirem ec<sub>i</sub> sozinhas.  
 this type of bottle impedes the kids of open alone  
 ‘This type of bottle prevents kids from opening (this type of bottle) alone.’  
 (BIANCHI; FIGUEIREDO SILVA, 1994, p. 187)
- (9) Ele trouxe [o livro]<sub>i</sub> para a escola e ela trouxe ec<sub>i</sub> para o escritório  
 he brought the book to the school and she brought to the office  
 ‘He brought the book to the school, and she brought (it) to the office.’  
 (CYRINO; LOPES, 2016, p. 488)
- (10) Ontem o João pôs [o dinheiro]<sub>i</sub> na gaveta, mas Pedro guardou ec<sub>i</sub>  
 yesterday the J. put the money in.the drawer, but P. kept  
 no cofre.  
 in.the safe  
 ‘Yesterday, João<sub>i</sub> put his<sub>i</sub> money in the drawer, but Pedro<sub>j</sub> kept his<sub>i/j</sub> money in the safe.’  
 (CYRINO; LOPES, 2016, p. 486)

Since BP allows argument drop of object DPs, sentences like (5) are therefore of no use in deciding whether BP has VVPE, a fact that is universally recognized within the literature on VVPE in BP. Cyrino and Matos (2002, 2005) therefore use the sentences in (11) to argue for the existence of VVPE in BP. The crucial property of these sentences is that they contain a null PP object (in addition to a null DP object).

- (11) a. Ele está mandando as cartas aos clientes  
 he is sending the letters to.the clients  
 e ela está também mandando.  
 and she is also sending  
 ‘He is sending the letters to the clients and she is too.’  
 (CYRINO; MATOS, 2002, p. 192)
- b. A Ana não leva o computador para as aulas,  
 the A. NEG brings the computer to the classes  
 porque os amigos também não levam.  
 because the friends also NEG bring  
 ‘Ana does not bring her computer to the classes because her friends do not either.’  
 (CYRINO; MATOS, 2002, p. 180)
- c. Quando a Ana pôs os óculos na mesa, a Maria também pôs.  
 when the A. put the glasses on.the table, the M. also put  
 ‘When Ana put her glasses on the table, Maria did too.’  
 (CYRINO; MATOS, 2002, p. 182)

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At the present point in the discussion, it suffices to simply point out that BP allows null object DPs. Whether the null object is generated via *pro*, argument ellipsis, or topic drop—or some combination thereof—is not relevant, presently.

The implicit assumption underlying Cyrino and Matos's (2002) use of such sentences is that BP does not have argument drop of PP arguments, and hence that the sentences above cannot be generated as in (12a-c), which involve argument drop of the object PP (in addition to argument drop of the object DP). These sentences, so the reasoning goes, thus provide evidence for concluding that BP has VVPE (see (13a-c)), as it is necessary to draw this conclusion if one is to account for the acceptability and interpretation of sentences such as (11a-c).

- (12) a. ... e ela está também mandando+X [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> ec<sub>DP</sub> ec<sub>PP</sub>]  
 b. ... porque os amigos também não levam+X [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> ec<sub>DP</sub> ec<sub>PP</sub>]  
 c. ... a Maria também pôs+X [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> ec<sub>DP</sub> ec<sub>PP</sub>]
- (13) a. ... e ela está também mandando+X [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> ~~as cartas aos clientes~~]]  
 b. ... porque os amigos também não levam+X [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> ~~o computador para as aulas~~]]  
 c. ... a Maria também pôs+X [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> ~~os óculos na mesa~~]]

However, BP *does* allow PP arguments to independently drop. The examples in (14) demonstrate this. Each of the right-hand sentences in (14) is interpreted as containing a null PP (e.g., *naquele cofre* ‘in that safe’, in (14a)), thus confirming that BP does indeed allow PP arguments to independently drop.

- (14) a. A Maria guardou um anel naquele cofre.  
 the M. kept a ring in.that safe  
 Já a Ana guardou um colar.  
 but the A. kept a necklace  
 ‘Maria kept a ring in that safe. But Ana kept a necklace in that safe.’
- b. A Maria pôs uma televisão no meu escritório.  
 the M. put a television in.the my office  
 Já a Ana pôs um rádio.  
 but the A. put a radio  
 ‘Maria put a television in my office. But Ana put a radio in my office.’
- c. A Maria comprou uma camisa pro João.  
 the M. bought a shirt for.the J.  
 Já a Clara comprou um chapéu.  
 but the C. bought a hat  
 ‘Maria bought a shirt for João. But Clara bought a hat for João.’
- d. A Bruna mandou as cartas aos clients  
 the B. sent the letters to.the clients  
 e o João mandou os comprovantes  
 and the J. sent the receipts  
 ‘Bruna sent the letters to the clients, and João sent the receipts to the clients.’

- e. A Clara levou o notebook para a aula  
 the C. brought the laptop to the class  
 e a Bianca levou o celular.  
 and the B. brought the cellphone  
 ‘Clara brought her laptop to class, and Bianca brought her cellphone to class.’

Sentences like (11a-c) can therefore be generated as depicted in (12a-c), contrary to what Cyrino and Matos implicitly assume. Such sentences do not, therefore, provide any evidence in support of postulating VVPE in BP.

Before concluding this section, a remark is in order. An anonymous reviewer questions whether the sentences in (14a-e) succeed in showing that BP has argument drop of PPs. Specifically, the reviewer observes that there are languages which plausibly do not have argument drop of PPs but which nonetheless allow PPs to go missing in sentences like (14). English is one such language, as the following examples attest.

- (15) a. Bianca sent the letters to the clients, and Paul sent the receipts.  
 (Interpretation: ... and Paul sent the receipts to the clients.)  
 b. Clara brought her laptop to class, but Susan brought her cellphone.  
 (Interpretation: ... but Susan brought her cellphone to class.)

Assuming that English indeed does not have argument drop of PPs, it follows that there is more than one way to omit argumental PPs: argument drop and some other mechanism,  $M_{pp}$ . Hence, one cannot conclude on the basis of the sentences in (14) that BP has argument drop of PP; after all, the omission of the PPs in these sentences might be due to  $M_{pp}$ .

Fortunately, it is not necessary to determine whether the omission of PPs in BP is due to argument drop or to  $M_{pp}$ . The sentences in (14) clearly show that BP has some mechanism for omitting argumental PPs. If the omission is due to argument drop, the grammaticality and the interpretation of the sentences in (11) are accounted for via argument drop of the DP and PP objects, as described above (see (12)). If, on the other hand, the omission of PPs in BP is due to  $M_{pp}$ , the grammaticality and the interpretation of (11a-c) are accounted for via the joint application of  $M_{pp}$  and argument drop, where  $M_{pp}$  silences the PP argument and argument drop silences the DP object. Thus, the grammaticality and the interpretation of the sentences in (11) are accounted for without appeal to VVPE, irrespective of whether the omission of PP arguments in BP is ultimately due to argument drop or to  $M_{pp}$ . This being so, the conclusion reached above stands: namely, that the sentences in (11) do not provide evidence for concluding that BP has VVPE.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Since it is not necessary to decide whether the omission of PPs is due to argument drop or to  $M_{pp}$ , I have omitted a discussion of what sort of process  $M_{pp}$  might be. I nonetheless briefly offer two possibilities here.

$M_{pp}$  may be some hitherto, undiscovered syntactic process which silences PP arguments. If PPs in BP are silenced by this process, the sentences in (14) are generated as follows, where the PP is silenced by  $M_{pp}$ .

(i) ... [<sub>X</sub> [<sub>v</sub> V+v]+X] [<sub>vp</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>vp</sub> t<sub>v</sub> DP ec<sub>pp</sub>]] (footnote continued on following page)



## 1.2. The verb-identity requirement

Consider (1), repeated here.

- (16) Quando a Ana pôs os óculos na mesa, a Maria também pôs.  
 when the A. put the glasses on.the table the M. also put  
 ‘When Ana put her glasses on the table, Maria also put her glasses on the table.’  
 (CYRINO; MATOS, 2002, p. 182)

The verb heading the antecedent  $\nu$ P and the verb heading the elliptical  $\nu$ P are identical (*pôr*; *pôr*). Cyrino and Matos (2002) claim that (16) becomes ungrammatical when the two verbs are distinct (*colocou*; *pôr*).

- (17) \*Quando a Ana colocou os óculos na mesa, a Maria também pôs.  
 when the A. put the glasses on.the table the M. also put  
 ‘When Ana put her glasses on the table, Maria also put her glasses on the table.’  
 (CYRINO; MATOS, 2002, p. 182)

Cyrino and Matos account for the contrast between (16) and (17) as follows. Recall, first, that Cyrino and Matos implicitly assume (incorrectly, as observed above) that BP does not allow argument omission of PPs<sup>6</sup> and that examples like (16) and (17) must therefore be generated under VVPE. They therefore take the contrast between (16) and (17) to indicate that VVPE is subject to a verb-identity requirement. This requirement, they argue, follows from the more general requirement that ellipsis sites be identical to their antecedents. In (17), the elliptical  $\nu$ P and the antecedent  $\nu$ P are not identical, as the copies (i.e., the traces) of the two verbs are distinct from one another. (On the distinctness of the copies of the two subjects, see fn. 7, directly below).

- (18) Quando a Ana colocou+X [ <sub>$\nu$ P</sub> <a Ana> [ <sub>$\nu$ P</sub> <colocou> os óculos na mesa]], a Maria também pôs+X [ <sub>$\nu$ P</sub> <a Maria> [ <sub>$\nu$ P</sub> <pôs> os óculos na mesa]]

Since the two  $\nu$ Ps are not identical in (17), VVPE is not possible; moreover, since VVPE is assumed to be the only mechanism for generating (17), the ungrammaticality of this sentence is

Alternatively, the PPs in (14) are simply not projected, syntactically—that is, the PPs are absent from the syntax, altogether. The right-hand sentences in (14) would then have the following structure, in which the missing PP is absent from the syntax.

- (ii) ... [<sub>X</sub> [<sub>v</sub> V+v]+X] [ <sub>$\nu$ P</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [ <sub>$\nu$ P</sub> t<sub>v</sub> DP]]]

Under this approach,  $M_{pp}$  is the mechanism that incorporates the unprojected PP into the sentence’s interpretation. (On the incorporation of unprojected arguments into the interpretation of sentences containing unprojected arguments, see Williams (1985) and Jackendoff (1990), among others.)

<sup>6</sup> As noted above, the examples in (14) demonstrate that BP has some sort of mechanism for silencing PP arguments. This mechanism may be argument drop, or it may be some distinct mechanism, referred to above as  $M_{pp}$ . Going forward, I will use the term *argument omission of PPs* to refer to the mechanism that silences argumental PPs in BP, whatever this mechanism ultimately turns out to be.

purportedly explained. By comparison, the elliptical *vP* and the antecedent *vP* in (16) are indeed identical.<sup>7</sup>

- (19) Quando a Ana pôs+X [<sub>vp</sub> <a Ana> [<sub>vp</sub> <pôs> os óculos na mesa]], a Maria também pôs+X [<sub>vp</sub> <a Maria> [<sub>vp</sub> <pôs> os óculos na mesa]]

VVPE is thus possible in (16), thus accounting for the grammaticality of (16).

The ungrammaticality of (17) comes as a surprise, given the results of the preceding section. There, it was argued that BP allows argument omission of PPs. It should therefore be possible to generate (17) via argument drop of the object DP and argument omission of the PP.

Indeed, upon closer inspection, it turns out that sentences like (17) are in fact grammatical. The majority of the speakers I have consulted (indeed, all but one) accept (17). Moreover, *all* of the speakers I have consulted accept the examples in (20) thru (23).

- (20) A Ana colocou os óculos na mesa ontem. Já a Maria pôs hoje.  
the A. put the glasses on.the table yesterday. but the M. put today  
'Ana put her glasses on the table yesterday. But Maria put (her glasses on the table) today.'
- (21) [Context: João and Maria participated in a cooking game show. The announcer is recounting the sequence of events.]  
O João pôs um quilo de açúcar no bolo às 9h02. Já a Maria colocou às 9h04  
the J. put a kilo of sugar in.the cake at 9:02. but the M. put at 9:04  
'João put a kilo of sugar in the cake at 9:02. But Maria put (a kilo of sugar in the cake) at 9:04.'
- (22) [Context: Paulo and Ana participated in a cooking game show. Paulo and Ana should have both put a kilo of sugar in the cake, but only Paulo did.]  
O Paulo pôs um quilo de açúcar no bolo, mas a Ana não colocou.  
the P. put a kilo of sugar in.the cake, but the A. NEG put  
'Paulo put a kilo of sugar in the cake, but Ana didn't put (a kilo of sugar in the cake).'
- (23) [Context: The detective has examined the scene of the crime and is now making a deduction.]  
Se a Ana colocou a arma dela no armário, a Maria (certamente) não pôs  
if the A. put the gun of.her in.the closet, the M. certainly NEG put  
'If Ana put her gun in the closet, Maria (certainly) didn't (put her gun in the closet).'

<sup>7</sup> Actually, the two *vPs* in (16) are not fully identical, as the copies (i.e., traces) of the two subjects are distinct (see (19)). However, it is well-known that the identity requirement tolerates non-identical copies (traces), provided the traces are bound by expressions that stand in a contrastive relation with one another. For instance, (i) is good, as *Jill* and *Frank* contrast with one another; and (ii) is likewise good, as *the book* and *the article* contrast.

- (i) Jill [<sub>vp</sub> <Jill> seems [<Jill> happy]] and Frank also does [<sub>vp</sub> <Frank> seem [<Frank> happy]]  
(ii) The book, I [<sub>vp</sub> liked <the book>]. The article, I didn't [<sub>vp</sub> like <the article>]

Crucially, the traces of the two verbs in (17) are bound by distinct elements which do *not* stand in a contrastive relation to one another; i.e., *colocou* 'put' and *pôs* 'put' mean the same thing, hence are evidently not contrastive. The non-identity of the two verbal traces in (17) therefore cannot be ignored by the identity requirement on ellipsis, thereby ruling out ellipsis.



Sentences like (17) and ((20)-(23)) are thus accounted for without appealing to VVPE.

### 1.3. Missing adverbs

Consider the examples in (24), which Tescari Neto (2012) presents as evidence in support of the conclusion that BP has VVPE.

- (24) a. O Mané limpou o banheiro cuidadosamente e a Mara também limpou.  
 the M. cleaned the bathroom carefully and the M. also cleaned  
 ‘Mané cleaned the bathroom carefully, and Mara also cleaned the bathroom carefully.’  
 (TESCARI NETO, 2012, p. 154)
- b. O Mané limpou a casa de novo e a Mara também limpou.  
 the M. cleaned the house of new and the M. also cleaned  
 ‘Mané cleaned the house again, and Maray also cleaned the house again.’  
 (TESCARI NETO, 2012, p. 153)

Both examples contain an adverb in the left-hand conjunct which is merged  $vP$ -internally (either adjoined to  $vP$  or merged lower down). If BP has VVPE, it is predicted that the adverb should be recoverable in the right-hand conjunct, as shown below.

- (25) a. O Mané limpou o banheiro cuidadosamente e a Mara também  
 limpou+X [ <sub>$vP$</sub>   $t_v$  o banheiro cuidadosamente]
- b. O Mané limpou a casa de novo e a Mara também limpou+X [ <sub>$vP$</sub>   $t_v$  a casa de novo]

As the glosses to (24) attest, this prediction is borne out.

The examples in (24) involve  $vPs$  that are situated in a matrix clause. Consider, now, the following examples, in which the  $vP$  is embedded within an island. If BP indeed has VVPE, it is expected that the adverb in (26), (28), and (30) should be recovered in the interpretation of the right-hand conjuncts/sentences, as is illustrated in (27), (29), and (31). However, the adverb is not recovered, contrary to what analyses that posit VVPE for BP would lead us to expect.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> There is some variation from speaker to speaker—and for each speaker, from sentence to sentence—with regard to the interpretation of the right-hand conjuncts/sentences in (26), (28), and (30). At one end of the extreme, the reading under which the adverb is recovered is totally out. At the other end of the extreme, this reading is quite marginal, though not totally excluded. The relevant contrast is with the sentences in (32)–(34), which show that traditional (i.e., non-V-stranding)  $vP$ -ellipsis is fully allowed island-internally in BP. Thus, if BP has VVPE, the null hypothesis is that VVPE should likewise be fully allowed island-internally, which in turn predicts that the adverbs in (26), (28) and (30) should be fully recoverable. This prediction is not borne out, as the judgements in the body of the text attest.

- (26) a. O fato que o João nada bem me alegra.  
 the fact that the J. swims well me gladdens  
 Já [<sub>island</sub> o fato que o Pedro também nada] me surpreende.  
 but the fact that the P. also swims me surprises  
 ‘The fact that João swims well gladdens me. But the fact that Pedro  
 {?\*swims well/✓swims} surprises me.’
- b. O fato que a Maria dirige rápido me assusta.  
 the fact that the M. drives fast me frightens  
 Já [<sub>island</sub> o fato que a Júlia também dirige] me surpreende.  
 but the fact that the J. also drives me surprises  
 ‘The fact that Maria drives fast frightens me. But the fact that Julia also  
 {?\*drives fast/✓drives} surprises me.’
- (27) a. Já [<sub>island</sub> o fato que o Pedro também nada+X [<sub>vp</sub> t<sub>v</sub> bem]] me surpreende  
 b. Já [<sub>island</sub> o fato que a Júlia também dirige+X [<sub>vp</sub> t<sub>v</sub> rápido]] me surpreende
- (28) a. A Maria ficou com orgulho quando ela soube que a filha  
 the M. stayed with pride when she learned that the daughter  
 dela nadou bem. Já a Clara ficou com orgulho [<sub>island</sub> quando ela  
 of.her swam well but the C. stayed with pride when she  
 soube que a sobrinha dela também nadou]  
 learned that the niece of.her also swam  
 ‘Maria became proud when she learned that her daughter swam well.  
 But Clara became proud when she learned that her niece also {?\*swam well/✓swam}.’
- b. A Ana ficou com raiva quando ela soube que a filha dela  
 the A. stayed with anger when she learned that the daughter of.her  
 dirige rápido. Já a Clara ficou com raiva [<sub>island</sub> quando ela soube  
 drives fast but the C. stayed with anger when she learned  
 que o marido dela também dirige]  
 that the husband of.her also drives  
 ‘Ana became angry when she learned that her daughter drives fast. But  
 Clara became angry when she learned that her husband also  
 {?\*drives fast/✓drives}.’
- (29) a. ... [<sub>island</sub> quando ela soube que a sobrinha dela também nadou+X  
 [<sub>vp</sub> t<sub>v</sub> bem]]  
 b. ... [<sub>island</sub> quando ela soube que o marido dela também dirige+X  
 [<sub>vp</sub> t<sub>v</sub> rápido]]

- (30) a. Esse é o cara que disse que o João nada bem e aquele é  
 this is the guy that said that the J. swims well and that is  
 [<sub>island</sub> o cara que disse que o Pedro também nada]  
 the guy that said that the P. also swims  
 ‘This is the guy who said that João swims well, and that is the guy who said that Pedro also {?\*swims well/✓swims}.’
- b. Esse é o cara que disse que a Maria dirige rápido e aquele é  
 this is the guy that said that the M. drives fast and that is  
 [<sub>island</sub> o cara que disse que a Júlia também dirige]  
 the guy that said that the J. also swims  
 ‘This is the guy who said that Maria drives fast, and that is the guy who said that Julia also {?\*drives fast/✓drives}.’
- (31) a. ... [<sub>island</sub> o cara que disse que o Pedro também nada+X [<sub>vP</sub> t<sub>v+V</sub> bem]]  
 b. ... [<sub>island</sub> o cara que disse que a Júlia também dirige+X [<sub>vP</sub> t<sub>v+V</sub> rápido]]

If BP has VVPE, it is necessary to explain why VVPE apparently cannot apply island-internally. Moreover, it is necessary to explain why VVPE differs from traditional (i.e., non-V-stranding) vP-ellipsis, which *can* occur island-internally in BP, as the following examples attest (see also CYRINO; MATOS, 2002, p. 178)

- (32) O fato que a Maria tá nadando bem me alegra.  
 the fact that the M. is swimming well me gladdens  
 Já [<sub>island</sub> o fato que a Clara também tá [<sub>vP</sub> nadando bem]] me surpreende.  
 But the fact that the C. also is me surprises  
 ‘The fact that Maria is swimming well gladdens me. But the fact that Clara is also swimming well surprises me.’
- (33) Essa é a pessoa que disse que a Júlia tá nadando bem  
 this is the person that said that the J. is swimming well  
 e [<sub>island</sub> aquela é a pessoa que disse que a Clara também tá [<sub>vP</sub> nadando bem]]  
 and this is the person that said that the C. also is  
 ‘This is the person who said that Julia is swimming well, and that is the person who said that Clara is swimming well, too.’
- (34) A Ana ficou com raiva quando ela soube que a filha dela tava  
 the A. stayed with anger when she learned that the daughter of her was  
 dirigindo rápido. Já a Clara ficou com raiva [<sub>island</sub> quando ela soube que  
 driving fast But the C. stayed with anger when she learned that  
 o marido dela também tava [<sub>vP</sub> dirigindo rápido]]  
 the husband of her was also  
 ‘Ana became mad when she learned that her daughter was driving fast. But Clara became mad when she learned that her husband was driving fast, too.’

Absent an explanation for why VVPE should be impossible island-internally and for why it should differ in this respect from traditional vP-ellipsis, the examples in (24) provide only a weak argument in support of positing VVPE in BP. Clearly, it would be preferable to posit an alternative analysis of the examples in (24) that avoids overgenerating the impossible readings in examples like (26), (28), and (30). In the remainder of this section, I sketch the main features of such an analysis.

BP is a language that allows topic drop (FERREIRA, 2000; KATO; MARTINS; NUNES, 2023; MODESTO, 2000; RODRIGUES, 2004). Topic drop, as is well known, is unable to apply to material that is internal to islands. For instance, topic drop (of the subject) is possible in (35), but not in (36), where the topic-dropped subject is internal to a wh-island.

- (35) a. Onde está a Maria<sub>i</sub>?  
 where is the M.  
 ‘Where is Maria?’  
 b. ec<sub>i</sub> acabou de sair.  
 just of left  
 ‘(She) just left.’ (KATO; MARTINS; NUNES, 2023)
- (36) a. Onde está a Maria<sub>i</sub>?  
 where is the M.  
 ‘Where is Maria?’  
 b. \*O que ec<sub>i</sub> fez desta vez?  
 the what did of.this time  
 ‘What did (she) do this time?’ (KATO; MARTINS; NUNES, 2023)

As was observed above, adverbs are also unable to drop island-internally. In this connection, it is notable that (at least some) languages with topic drop allow adverbs to undergo topic drop. For instance, German allows topic drop of adverbs.

- (37) a. Was machst du heute?  
 what make you today  
 ‘What do you make today?’  
 b. ec<sub>i</sub> mach ich mal gar nichts  
 make I PRT at.all nothing  
 ‘Today I make nothing at all.’ (TRUTKOWSKI, 2016, p. 3)

I therefore suggest that adverb drop in BP is generated under topic drop, a phenomenon which is independently available in BP. Analyzing adverb drop in BP in this fashion is preferable to analyzing it in terms of VVPE for the following reasons: (i) if VVPE is to account for the existence of adverb drop in BP (i.e., if it to account for the ability to recover the adverb when the adverb is in the matrix clause, as in (24a-b)), one must explain why VVPE is unable to apply island-internally; (ii) moreover, one must explain why VVPE differs from traditional vP-ellipsis in being unable to apply island-internally;

(iii) furthermore, there is no independent evidence for the existence of VVPE in BP (see the preceding two subsections), whereas there *is* independent evidence for the existence of topic drop in BP; as such, it is preferable to extend the analysis of topic drop to adverbs than it is to posit VVPE, whose existence in BP is otherwise unmotivated; (iv) finally, VVPE overgenerates elsewhere in the grammar, as will be shown below (section 2); thus, positing VVPE to account for island-external instances of adverb drop comes at a cost.

## 2. Positing VVPE is undesirable: The case from overgeneration

The preceding section argued that the evidence for positing VVPE for BP is unconvincing. In each case, the relevant data can be accounted for without positing VVPE. In the present section, I go one step further and argue that VVPE overgenerates. Therefore, positing VVPE for BP is not only undermotivated, but also undesirable.

### 2.1. Raising verbs

Consider the sentences in (38) and (39), each of which involves a raising verb. The sentences in (38) involve the familiar sort of raising, in which the raising verb takes an infinitival complement. The sentence in (39) involves hyper-raising, which is a variant of raising in which the raising verb takes a finite CP complement.<sup>9</sup>

- (38) a. Os meninos não perigam repetir de ano, mas [as meninas]<sub>i</sub>  
 the boys NEG on.verge.of repeat of year but the girls  
 perigam [<sub>TP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> repetir de ano]  
 on.verge.of repeat of year  
 ‘The boys aren’t on the verge of being held back, but the girls are on the verge of being held back.’
- b. A Maria acabou perdendo o ônibus e [o João]<sub>i</sub> também  
 the M. ended.up missing the bus and the J. also  
 acabou [<sub>TP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> perdendo o ônibus]  
 ended.up missing the bus  
 ‘Maria ended up missing the bus, and João also ended up missing the bus.’
- c. O clima político na França (ainda) não parou de piorar, mas  
 the climate political in.the France still NEG stopped of get.worse but  
 [o clima político no Brasil]<sub>i</sub> (já) parou de [<sub>TP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> piorar]  
 the climate political in.the Brazil already stopped of get.worse  
 ‘The political climate in France (still) hasn’t stopped getting worse, but the political climate in Brazil has (already) stopped getting worse.’

<sup>9</sup> On hyper-raising in BP, see Martins and Nunes (2005) and Nunes (2008, 2019).

- (39) O João não parece que vai ganhar a corrida, mas [o Pedro]<sub>i</sub> parece  
 the J. NEG seems that will win the race but the P. seems  
 [<sub>CP</sub> que t<sub>i</sub> vai ganhar a corrida] Mas vamos aguardar pra ver quem acaba ganhando!  
 that will win the race but let's wait for see who ends up winning  
 'It seems that João won't win the race and that Pedro will win the race. But let's wait and see who ends up winning!'

If BP has VVPE, it should be possible to generate (40a-c) from (38a-c) via VVPE, as (41) demonstrates. Similarly, it should be possible to generate (42) from (39) via VVPE (see (43)). However, the sentences in (40) and (42) are unacceptable. Sentences with raising verbs thus show that VVPE overgenerates in BP.

- (40) a. \*Os meninos não perigam repetir de ano, mas as meninas perigam  
 the boys NEG on.verge.of repeat of year but the girls on.verge.of  
 (intended) 'The boys aren't on the verge of being held back, but the girls are on the verge of being held back.'
- b. \*A Maria acabou perdendo o ônibus e o João também acabou  
 the M. ended.up missing the bus and the J. also ended.up  
 (intended) 'Maria ended up missing the bus, and João also ended up missing the bus.'
- c. \*O clima político na França (ainda) não parou de piorar, mas  
 the climate political in.the France still NEG stopped of get.worse but  
 o clima político no Brasil (já) parou  
 the climate political in.the Brazil already stopped  
 (intended) 'The political climate in France (still) hasn't stopped getting worse, but the political climate in Brazil has (already) stopped getting worse.'
- (41) a. ... mas [as meninas]<sub>i</sub> perigam+X [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> repetir de ano]]]  
 b. ... e [o João]<sub>i</sub> também acabou+X [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> perdendo o ônibus]]]  
 c. ... mas [o clima político no Brasil]<sub>i</sub> não parou+X [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>TP</sub> t<sub>i</sub> de piorar]]]
- (42) \*O João não parece que vai ganhar a corrida, mas o Pedro parece.  
 the J. NEG seems that will win the race but the P. seems  
 Mas vamos aguardar pra ver quem acaba ganhando!  
 but let's wait for see who end up winning  
 (intended) 'It seems that João won't win the race and that Pedro will win the race. But let's wait and see who ends up winning!'
- (43) ... mas [o Pedro]<sub>i</sub> parece+X [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>CP</sub> que t<sub>i</sub> vai ganhar a corrida]]]

## 2.2. VP-idioms

The following sentences contain VP-idioms: specifically, *abotoar o paletó* 'to die' and *picar a mula* 'go away quickly'. As can be observed, the idiomatic reading is preserved under traditional vP-ellipsis.



- (44) a. A Maria vai abotoar o paletó. A Carla também vai.  
the M. will button the jacket. the C. also will  
'Maria will die. Carla will, too.'
- b. A Maria vai picar a mula. A Ana também vai.  
the M. will prick the mule. the A. also will  
'Maria will go away quickly. Ana will, too.'

Having observed that the idiomatic reading is, in principle, preserved under ellipsis, consider the following sentences.

- (45) a. A Maria abotoou o paletó. #A Carla também abotoou.  
the M. buttoned the jacket. the C. also buttoned  
'Maria died. #Carla also buttoned.'
- b. A Maria picou a mula. #A Carla também picou.  
the M. pricked the mule. the C. also pricked  
'Maria left quickly. #Carla also pricked.'

If BP indeed has VVPE, it should be possible to generate the right-hand sentences in (45) under VVPE (see (46)), which predicts that the right-hand sentences in (45) should allow the idiomatic reading.

- (46) a. A Carla também abotoou+X [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> o paletó]]
- b. A Carla também picou+X [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> [<sub>VP</sub> t<sub>v</sub> a mula]]

The right-hand sentences in (45) do not, however, allow the idiomatic reading. VVPE thus overgenerates non-existent readings in sentences containing VP-idioms.

### 3. Closing remarks

The claim that BP has VVPE is widely accepted within the BP literature. This article has revisited this claim and argued that it is incorrect. The argument consisted of two parts. First, existing arguments in support of the existence of VVPE in BP were revisited and argued to be unconvincing. Second, it was argued that VVPE produces overgeneration in BP, overgenerating non-existent interpretations and ungrammatical sentences.

Given VVPE's overgeneration problem, the claim that BP has VVPE comes with a cost and should be maintained only if there is good reason to. The absence of convincing arguments in support of BP having VVPE indicates that such good reason is lacking, meaning that VVPE both can and should be jettisoned.

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