

Title The Syntax of Gerunds and Infinitives: Subjects, Case and Control
 Author Pires, Acrisio Magno Gomes
 Affiliation U Maryland, College Park
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Abstract This dissertation unifies the treatment of certain non-finite agreement, tense & control. First, it presents a minimalist analysis of clausal gerunds in English V-ing constructions with a PRO or a lexical NP subject marked with accusative or nominative Case. It is argued that sentential gerunds project at least a Verb Phrase, but vary in terms of phi-features & other functional projections, up to a Tense Phrase. They contrast with respect to overt & null subject licensing, tense & aspectual properties. Second, it analyzes gerunds without overt subjects & gerunds as complements of perception verbs. It shows that tense & event binding do not entirely correlate with the contrast between control & raising/exceptional case marking (ECM), against null Case approaches to control. Third, it accounts for the distinctions between inflected & non-inflected infinitives in Portuguese by analyzing obligatory control as the result of NP-movement. Fourth, it accounts for changes in the history of Portuguese infinitives by adopting a theory of acquisition & change. It is shown that the loss of agreement morphology in inflected infinitives in Brazilian Portuguese has only partial syntactic effects, which follow from an NP-movement approach to control & from a theory that relies on the need for children to find local triggers to acquire their grammars. It also evaluates the two major competing approaches for the rise of inflected infinitives in Old Portuguese, providing arguments from a cue-based theory of acquisition that this innovation is not the result of an analogy with finite forms. Finally, it connects the loss of Brazilian Portuguese inflected infinitives to the widespread loss of agreement morphology & to a larger set of changes, including loss of verb-subject inversion & shifts in clitic placement. It is argued that these changes are connected with the weakening or loss of a single functional projection in the left periphery of the clause. These changes accelerate in the mid-19th century & are completed by the early 20th century, supporting an approach that links a series of catastrophic changes through a single structural change.

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