Clitic position in Spanish and Portuguese has been of considerable interest to syntacticians for decades (Quicoli 1976, Madeira 1993, Martins 1993, Luis & Otoguro 2004, *inter alia*), but it has been largely ignored by variationists. Schwenter & Torres Cacoullos (2010), however, show that clitic placement in complex constructions in Mexican Spanish is conditioned by constructional and pragmatic factors. Meanwhile, this phenomenon has not been previously studied in Portuguese. Focusing on the variability in object placement in European Portuguese (EP), this study explores the question from a variationist perspective and provides results that are at odds with trends found in other Romance varieties.

Although Brazilian Portuguese (BP) follows the Romance trend toward generalized proclisis for clitic objects, EP strongly favors enclisis as a general rule (Cunha & Cintra 2002). However, following certain classes of words--namely conjunctions, negators, and certain adverbs--EP normatively shows proclitic placement, as in (1). This normative syntax applies variably, though, as seen in (2).

(1) *Talvez me pareça um pouco excessivo.*
“Perhaps it *seems* a little excessive to *me.*” [CRPC 236]

(2) *Quer dizer que esforcei-me durante cinquenta minutos.*
“What I mean is that I *exerted myself* during 50 minutes.” [PTePN-R.Ferro]

This study investigates the factors that determine the selection of enclitic placement in two normatively proclitic contexts: in the context of the adverb *talvez* and the complementizer *que.* Using the Corpus do Português (Davies & Ferreira 2006-), 933 tokens of clitic pronouns following *talvez* and *que* were extracted and coded for fixed effects: adverb/conjunction (*talvez*vs. *que*), number of words between the adverb/conjunction and the pronoun, number of verbs in sequence, subject expression, verb form, tense, mood, person/number of the verb, pronoun, pronoun type, mode (oral vs. written), construction type, and year. The tokens were also coded for the random effects of speaker/author and verb, and the data was analyzed using a mixed-effects logistic regression model in R. Overall, 25% of the tokens reflect enclitic usage, and subject explicitness, construction type, tense, and mode are all significant predictors of enclitic object placement. Much like what Schwenter & Torres Cacoullos (2010) show for Mexican Spanish, certain complex verbal constructions favor enclitic selection. Furthermore, post-verbal clitic placement in EP is affected by mode, such that oral data shows significantly higher rate of enclitic usage than fiction, which has a rate than news and academic writing. Although the data show a relatively stable rate of enclitic usage over the past century, these mode differences suggest that EP is in the process of becoming a categorically enclitic language. While EP and BP have been shown to function according to similar constraints with respect to null vs. overt object expression despite differences in overall rates (Schwenter & Silva 2003, 2010), this study shows that the placement of overt clitic pronouns in EP differs significantly not only from that of BP but also from patterns found in other Romance varieties. Thus, the proclitic trends in Romance are not necessarily the inevitable result of linguistic change within the family.

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