The beginning of transformation: a nanosyntactic account for parasynthetic verbs in Brazilian Portuguese

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Parasynthesis in Brazilian Portuguese is mostly restricted to verbs denoting a change of state (i.e., inchoative verbs), such as *endoidecer* 'to become crazy', *encarecer* 'to become expensive' and *apodrecer* 'to rot'. A prefix, *en-*, *es-* or *a-*, combines with the suffix *-c* and generates the inchoative reading in a verbal stem. Our first research question is *how these parasynthetic verbs are formed*? To answer this, we adopt the assumptions of Nanosyntax (Starke 2010, 2011; Caha 2009), a cutting-edge approach to morphology analysis. We argue that the prefix and the suffix are added separately during the derivation, and each one corresponds to an individual categorial head. We propose that the prefix is a voice feature that when activated licenses a new argument, and the suffix is the [INCHOATIVE] feature, indicating the change of state the verb represents. To sustain our hypothesis, we present a diachronic pathway of the parasynthetic constructions, remounting to inchoative Latin verbs in *-sc-*. Allen (1982) argues that this suffix at first formed verbs with no aspectual or semantic common ground, such as *poscere* 'to ask,' *suescere* 'to accustom' or *crescere* 'to grow'. Later in the evolution of the language, the suffix specialized as an inceptive or monoargumental inchoative verb, such as *calescere* 'to become hot,' *nigrescere* 'to become black' or *ignescere* 'to become inflamed.' Meul (2010) indicates that the addition of the prefix licensed a new argument and a causative sense: *incalescere* 'to heat,' *innigrescere* 'to darken.' From this, we demonstrate that the different functions of the prefix and the suffix were present since the origins of the structure and under the Nanosyntax frame, we propose that each element of the so-called parasynthetic formation has a particular syntactic feature. Finally, we present the later development inchoative forms found in Brazilian Portuguese, where only a prefix (*en-* , *a-*) or a suffix (*-e*) is present: **endoidar** 'to become crazy,' *carear* 'to become expensive.' We argue that these forms are connected to the named parasynthetic inchoative constructions, exhibiting a change in the feature configuration, where only the prefix or the suffix concentrate more than one feature. With this research, we contribute to the discussion on the status of discontinuous constituents (Crysmann 2010, Kosch 2012, Mbah 2012, Hendrikse and Mfusi 2011, Efthymiou 2014, Kari 2015). By assuming "one feature, one head" (Kayne 2005) and taking it to a radical point, Nanosyntax might be the better tool to explain that, in fact, circumflexion is not a word-formation process existent in Brazilian Portuguese.

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