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RESEARCH PAPER

# Deletion of Reflexive Clitics with the Verb *Custar* in European Portuguese: An MTC Account

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The impersonal verb *custar* (lit. ‘cost’) in European Portuguese selects for a dative experiencer argument and an infinitival clause, which may be preceded by the preposition *a*. Interestingly, a reflexive clitic co-referential with the experiencer argument can be deleted (under conditions to be specified) if it is within the prepositional infinitival complement, but not within its prepositionless counterpart. We argue that the presence of the preposition *a* preceding the infinitival complement of *custar* correlates with obligatory control and show how deletion of reflexive clitics within the prepositional infinitivals can be captured under the movement theory of control (MTC; see e.g. Hornstein 1991, 2001; Boeckx, Hornstein and Nunes 2010). More specifically, we show that if the infinitival subject is a deleted copy left by the “controller”, this copy can trigger deletion of the reflexive clitic as a way to satisfy a superficial ban on morphologically identical clitics in a local domain.

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**Keywords:** reflexive clitics; European Portuguese; obligatory control; movement theory of control

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## 1 Introduction

The impersonal verb *custar* ‘cost’ in European Portuguese presents us with an interesting puzzle.<sup>1</sup> At first sight, all that needs to be said about it is that its infinitival complement may be optionally preceded by the preposition *a* ‘to’, with a corresponding subtle difference in meaning, as illustrated in (1) below. That is, *custar* may select for either a prepositionless or a prepositional infinitival as a matter of lexical subcategorization.

- (1) a. Custou-me escrever o relatório.  
cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> write-INF the report  
‘Writing the report was hard on me.’
- b. Custou-me a escrever o relatório.  
cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to write-INF the report  
‘It was hard for me to succeed in writing the report.’

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the paper, judgments are due to the first author, except when indicated otherwise. The patterns to be discussed here do not exist in Brazilian Portuguese, which only has the raising version of *custar* (see the example in (40) below and Martins and Nunes 2005 for relevant discussion).

Curiously, however, a reflexive clitic in the infinitival clause co-referring with the matrix experiencer must sometimes be deleted in the prepositional version but not in its prepositionless counterpart, as exemplified by the contrast in (2).

- (2) a. Custou-me sentar-\*(**me**) no chão.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> sit-INF-CL<sub>1SG</sub> on-the ground  
 ‘To sit on the ground pained me.’
- b. Custou-me a sentar-\*(**me**) no chão.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to sit-INF-CL<sub>1SG</sub> on-the ground  
 ‘It was hard for me to succeed in sitting on the ground.’

The sentences in (3) below present additional attested examples of this unexpected availability of deletion of the reflexive clitic in the prepositional complement of *custar*. In each of the examples, the infinitival verb should in principle be associated with a reflexive clitic (*levantar-me*, *adaptar-me*, *integrar-me* and *convencer-me*, respectively).

- (3) a. Custou-me a **levantar**, pois estava cansado do dia de  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to raise because was tired of-the day of  
 ontem.  
 yesterday  
 ‘It was hard for me to get up because I was tired from yesterday.’
- b. Custou-me a **adaptar** ao modo de jogar do Barcelona.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to adapt to-the way of play of-the Barcelona  
 ‘It was hard for me to succeed in playing in the manner of the Barcelona team.’
- c. não sei bem porquê, custou-me a **integrar** na universidade.  
 not know well why cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to integrate in-the university  
 ‘I don’t know why, it was hard for me to adapt to the university.’
- d. Custou-me a **convencer** de que nada faria como  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to persuade of that nothing would-do as  
 viageiro (. . .) mas tive de me render à evidência.  
 homing-pigeon but had of myself render to-the evidence  
 ‘I very much resisted to recognize that it would not be successful as homing  
 pigeon but I eventually had to accept it.’

(Google search, 03-07-2016)

This process of reflexive deletion in European Portuguese involves a plethora of complexities. First of all, the availability of deletion is sensitive to the type of verb involved in the embedded clause. Putting aside lexical idiosyncrasies which may affect speakers’ judgements, three general patterns can be identified, as outlined in (4).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In the following discussion we will abstract away from these independent lexical restrictions, for they do not interfere with the distinction between the two types of infinitival complements associated with *custar*. That is, lexical conditioning may derive the pattern in (4) for the prepositional complement, but deletion is uniformly ruled out in the case of the prepositionless complement, regardless of the lexical items involved. For concreteness, we will henceforth focus on examples of the type described in (4c). For relevant discussion and further refinements on types of reflexive verbs, see e.g. Burzio (1986); Cinque (1988); Vilela (1992); Brito, Duarte and Matos (2003); Duarte (2013); Gonçalves and Raposo (2013); Mendikoetxea (1999); Peregrín Otero (1999); Sánchez López (2002).

- (4) ● *Deletion is impossible if the reflexive clitic can alternate with a non-reflexive argument with no significant changes in the meaning of the verb:*

a. Custou-**nos** a ver-\*(**nos**) na fotografia.  
 cost-us<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to see-REFL<sub>1PL</sub> in-the picture  
 ‘It was hard for us to succeed in spotting ourselves in the picture.’

a’. Custou-**nos** a vê-**los** na fotografia.  
 cost-us<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to see-them<sub>CL.ACC</sub> in-the picture  
 ‘It was hard for us to succeed in spotting them in the picture.’

- *Deletion is optional with verbs that always require a reflexive clitic, regardless of whether or not they are semantically reflexive (that is, verbs that are traditionally classified as intrinsically “pronominal”):*

b. Custou-**te** a arrepender-(**te**) de tudo o que fizeste.  
 cost-you<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to repent-REFL<sub>2SG</sub> of everything the what did-2SG  
 ‘It was hard for you to succeed in repenting everything you did.’

b’. \*Custou-**te** a arrepê-**la** de tudo o que fez.  
 cost-you<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to repent-her<sub>CL.ACC</sub> of everything the what did-3SG  
 \*‘It was hard for you to make her repent everything she did.’

- *Deletion is obligatory for some speakers (and possible for others) if alternation between reflexive and non-reflexive arguments leads to (slight) changes with respect to thematic properties of the arguments involved.<sup>3</sup>*

c. Custou-**me** a levantar-(\***me**) da cadeira.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to raise-REFL<sub>1SG</sub> from-the chair  
 ‘It was hard for me to succeed in rising from the chair.’

c’. Custou-**me** a levantá-**la** da cadeira.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to raise-her<sub>CL.ACC</sub> from-the chair  
 ‘It was hard for me to succeed in raising her from the chair.’

Second, *custar* is, to the best of our knowledge, the only verb in European Portuguese that allows both types of impersonal constructions illustrated in (1) and correlates deletion of the reflexive clitic in (2)/(3) with the presence or absence of the preposition. However, this deletion process is not necessarily dependent on the presence of the preposition *a* in the embedded clause, as the contrast between (2a) and (2b) could lead one to think. This phenomenon is also found with the (prepositionless) infinitival complement of perception and causative verbs, as shown in (5).

<sup>3</sup> For instance, reflexive structures with verbs of this class differ from reflexive structures with standard transitive verbs like *see* in being incompatible with passives and disallowing reflexive clitic doubling, as respectively shown in (i) and (ii). Note that, in (i), *a* implies *a'* but *b* does not imply *b'*.

- (i) a. Ele viu-se no espelho.  
 he saw-REFL<sub>3SG</sub> in-the mirror  
 ‘He saw himself at the mirror.’  
 a’ Ele foi visto no espelho.  
 he was seen in-the mirror  
 ‘He was seen at the mirror.’

- (5) a. A Maria viu-**te** desequilibrar-(\***te**) e não te  
 the Maria saw-you<sub>CL.ACC</sub> lose-balance-REFL<sub>2SG</sub> and not you<sub>CL.ACC</sub>  
 agarrou.  
 grabbed  
 ‘Maria saw you lose your balance and did not grab you.’
- b. A Maria sentiu-**se** desequilibrar-(\***se**) e caiu.  
 the Maria felt-REFL<sub>3SG</sub> lose-balance-REFL<sub>3SG</sub> and fell  
 ‘Maria felt herself lose her balance and fell.’
- c. O professor mandou-**me** sentar-(\***me**) na fila da  
 the professor ordered-me<sub>CL.ACC</sub> sit-REFL<sub>1SG</sub> in-the row of-the  
 frente.  
 front  
 ‘The professor ordered me to sit in the front row.’
- d. O João fez-**nos** queixar-(\***nos**) à polícia.  
 the João made-us<sub>CL.ACC</sub> complain-REFL<sub>1PL</sub> to-the police  
 ‘João made us complain to the police.’

It is worth observing that the data in (5) do instantiate biclausal bare infinitival ECM structures and should not be confused with restructuring *faire*-infinitive constructions, which independently exclude reflexive clitics associated with the infinitival verb (see Kayne 1975; Gonçalves 1999; among others). The preverbal *vs.* postverbal position of the embedded subject in (6) below, for instance, respectively signals an ECM and a *faire*-infinitive construction. Notice that the reflexive clitic associated with the infinitival verb is licensed in the ECM configuration in (6a), but not in the *faire*-infinitive counterpart in (6b).

- (6) a. {Mandei/Vi} o menino deitar-se.  
 ordered-1SG/saw-1SG the boy lie-down-INF-REFL<sub>3SG</sub>
- b. \*{Mandei/Vi} deitar-se o menino.  
 ordered-1SG/saw-1SG lie-down-INF-REFL<sub>3SG</sub> the boy  
 ‘I sent the boy to bed/I saw the boy go to bed.’

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- b. Ele levantou-se do chão.  
 he raised-REFL<sub>3SG</sub> from-the floor  
 ‘He rose from the floor.’
- b’ #Ele foi levantado do chão.  
 he was raised from-the floor  
 ‘He was raised from the floor.’

- (ii) a. Ele viu-se a si próprio no espelho.  
 he saw-REFL<sub>3SG</sub> to REFL<sub>3SG</sub> own in-the mirror  
 ‘He saw himself at the mirror.’
- b. \*?Ele sentou-se a si próprio na cadeira.  
 he sat-REFL<sub>3SG</sub> to REFL<sub>3SG</sub> own in-the chair  
 ‘He sat at the chair.’

A confounding factor is that for some speakers (including the first author, but not e.g. Gonçalves 1999), suppressing the reflexive can save *faire*-infinitive sentences with causative verbs but, crucially, not with perception verbs. Thus, these speakers allow a reflexive reading for (7a) below, for instance, but not for (7b), which can only have a nonreflexive interpretation in which the infinitival subject is a null pronoun with arbitrary interpretation. This shows that the deletion of reflexives seen in (5), for example, is not the rescue strategy available for some speakers in *faire*-infinitive constructions such as (7a), for it involves not only causative (see (5c-d)), but also perception verbs (see (5a-b)).

- (7) a. Mandei           deitar           o       menino.  
           ordered-1SG   lie-down-INF   the    boy  
           ‘I sent the boy to bed.’ or ‘I made someone put the boy to bed.’
- b. Vi                deitar           o       menino.  
           saw-1SG       lie-down-INF   the    boy  
           ‘I saw someone put the boy to bed.’ *but not* ‘I saw the boy go to bed.’

Finally, deletion of reflexives also seems sensitive to the finiteness specifications of the clause separating the two clitics. In a sentence such as (8) below, for instance, where the clitics are separated by a finite clause, deletion is not allowed.

- (8) Eu   pergunto-**me**   se   devo           queixar-\*(**me**)   à       polícia.  
       I   ask-REFL<sub>1SG</sub>   if   should-1SG   complain-REFL<sub>1SG</sub>   to-the   police  
       ‘I wonder if I should complain to the police.’

This brief survey of the complexities involving reflexive deletion in European Portuguese raises the question of what property the prepositional infinitival of *custar* in (1b) has that makes it bluntly contrast with (1a) regarding the phenomenon of reflexive deletion illustrated in (2b) and (3). As we have just seen, it cannot be just a matter of lexical subcategorization. Crucially, we cannot say that reflexive deletion is somehow licensed by the preposition subcategorized by *custar*, for it can also be licensed in the prepositionless complement of perceptual and causative verbs (see (5)). Thus, we seem to be forced to either take the preposition *a* and perceptual and causative verbs to form a natural class or assume a construction specific condition tied to *custar a* banning the co-occurrence of the relevant clitics. Needless to say, neither of these options is conceptually appealing.

Our approach to this puzzle has two parts. Building on work by Martins and Nunes (2005), we first argue that the relevant difference between (1a) and (1b) involves obligatory control. Once this is established, we then proceed to show how the contrast between (2a) and (2b) may receive a natural account under the movement theory of control (MTC; see e.g. Hornstein 1999, 2001; Boeckx, Hornstein, and Nunes 2010). We should point out at the outset that it is not our goal to undertake a comparative evaluation of different theories of control with respect to the data presented here. Our main reason for framing the discussion in terms of the MTC is that one of its key ingredients – namely, the assumption that obligatorily controlled PRO is a deleted copy of the “controller” – provides a straightforward way to handle reflexive deletion within the prepositional

complement of *custar*. We leave for another opportunity an adequate investigation of whether and how non-movement approaches to control can replicate the results obtained under the MTC (see Martins and Nunes forthcoming).

Before we move to the discussion proper, some clarification remarks are in order. What matters for the argument to be developed below is the existence of contrasts like (2), relative to the availability of deletion of the embedded reflexive clitic. Whether deletion may be forbidden, optional, or mandatory for different speakers is irrelevant for the ensuing discussion. What is important is that whenever deletion is possible (for a given speaker), it takes place in the prepositional, but not in the prepositionless, infinitival complement of *custar*. It is also worth noting that the relevant contrast only arises if the infinitival verb does not allow an intransitive use. Speakers that independently allow the verbs *sentar* ‘sit’ or *levantar* ‘to raise’, for example, to be intransitive do not identify the contrast in (2) or see anything especial about (4c), but do so in analogous sentences with verbs that disallow an intransitive option in their grammars.

The following attested examples involving the verb *habituar* ‘get used to’ (Google search, 03/07/2016) illustrate the relevant aspects of this variation:

- (9) no início custou-me a **habituar-me** a esta realidade  
 in-the beginning cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to get-used-INF-REFL<sub>1SG</sub> to this reality  
 ‘(Coming from a small village to the city), it was hard for me to succeed in adapting to this new reality.’
- (10) No princípio custou-me a **habituar**, (. . .) mas agora já  
 in-the beginning cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to get-used-INF but now already  
**me habituei**  
 REFL<sub>1SG</sub> got-used  
 ‘It was hard for me to succeed in accepting it (i.e. having diabetes) but now I can deal with it.’
- (11) Custou-me **habituar** a esta coisa de ser só eu. Mas  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> get-used-INF to this thing of be-INF only I but  
**habituei.** E gosto.  
 got-used and like  
 ‘It was hard to get used to being alone. But I got used to it. And I enjoy it.’
- (12) Custou-me **habituar-me** ao Tom mas lá **me**  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> get-used-INF-REFL<sub>1SG</sub> to-the Tom but eventually REFL<sub>1SG</sub>  
**habituei.**  
 got-used  
 ‘It was hard on me to get used to Tom but eventually I did.’

Speakers that allow sentences like (9) may simply not have the relevant ban on identical clitics in their grammars and deletion is not an option. Thus, (9) contrasts with (10), where the reflexive of the first conjunct has been deleted. That this indeed involves a case of reflexive deletion and not an intransitive use of *habituar* is shown by the fact that



the reflexive clitic is present in the second conjunct of (10). Furthermore, notice that the infinitival complement in (10) is prepositional, which conforms with the generalization that deletion is only licensed when the preposition is present (see (2)). In turn, (11) apparently contradicts what we have just said, for there is no reflexive in the infinitival complement and the preposition is not present either. However, when we examine the second conjunct of (11), we see that this speaker independently treats *habituár* as intransitive. Hence, (11) is not at odds with (2), for the first conjunct does not involve deletion, but an intransitive use of *habituár*. Finally, the second conjunct of (12) shows that this other speaker takes *habituár* to be reflexive, but the reflexive in the first conjunct cannot be deleted because the infinitival is not prepositional. The grammar that we will be discussing throughout the paper is the one illustrated in (2), (3), and (10), that is, the grammar where deletion of reflexive clitics is enforced in the prepositional complement of *custar*.

The paper is organized as follows. In section 2 we make some brief remarks regarding the deletion process illustrated in (2b)/(3)/(4b')/(4c')/(5)/(10). It should be pointed out that our goal is not to account for the deletion process itself, but to use it as an independent criterion of empirical adequacy to test structures assigned to (1a) and (1b). In section 3 we show that the two infinitival complements in (1) sharply contrast with respect to obligatory control diagnostics and that the type of deletion seen in (2b) is limited to the obligatory control structure. Given this result, in section 4 we show that this correlation between obligatory control and deletion can receive a straightforward account if the obligatorily controlled infinitival subject is analyzed as copy of the “controller”, as postulated by the MTC. Section 5 presents some concluding remarks.

## 2 Some remarks on the deletion of reflexive clitics with *custar a*

Bearing in mind that only the prepositional complement of *custar* may allow for deletion (see (2a) vs. (2b)), let us consider the data in (13) and (14).

- (13) a. Custou-**me** a sentar-(\***me**) no chão.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to sit-REFL<sub>1SG</sub> on-the ground  
 ‘It was hard for me to succeed in sitting on the ground.’
- b. Custou-**te** a sentar-(\***te**) no chão.  
 cost-you<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to sit-REFL<sub>2SG</sub> on-the ground  
 ‘It was hard for you to succeed in sitting on the ground.’
- (14) a. Custou-**me** a sentá-**lo** naquele banco.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to seat-him<sub>CL.ACC</sub> on-that bench  
 ‘It was hard for me to succeed in seating him on that bench.’
- b. Custou-**lhe** a pagar-**lhe** toda a dívida.  
 cost-him<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to pay-him<sub>CL.DAT</sub> all the debt  
 ‘It was hard for [him/her]<sub>i</sub> to succeed in paying [him/her]<sub>k</sub> all the debt.’

At first sight, the contrast between the sentences in (13), on the one hand, and (14a), on the other, simply indicates that deletion is triggered when the clitic in the embedded clause is identical to the clitic attached to *custar*; hence, deletion takes place in (13a) and (13b), but not in (14a). However, the contrast between the two sentences of (13) and

(14b) shows that phonological identity is not sufficient, for the two clitics in (14b) are identical, but deletion is not triggered. Upon close inspection, we can see that deletion targets reflexive clitics; hence, it is possible in (13), but not in (14).<sup>4</sup>

For the sake of completeness, it should be noted that some speakers may allow deletion of reflexive *se* in the presence of a third person dative clitic, as illustrated in (15) and the attested example in (16).<sup>5</sup>

- (15) Custou-**lhe** a sentar-%(**se**) naquele banco.<sup>6</sup>  
 cost-him<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to sit-REFL<sub>3SG</sub> on-that bench  
 ‘It was hard for him/her to succeed in sitting on that bench.’

- (16) Diogo também acordou cedo e custou-**lhe** a levantar!<sup>7</sup>  
 Diogo also woke-up early and cost-him<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to raise  
 ‘Diogo also woke up early and it was hard for him to get up.’

This seems to suggest that for some speakers, *se* and *lhe* are to be computed as morphologically similar enough to trigger deletion of the reflexive. As pointed out to us by Renato Lacerda (personal communication), this may be less unexpected

<sup>4</sup> As observed by a reviewer, the two clitics in sentences like (13a), for example, are not clearly identical from a morphological point of view, for the higher clitic is a pronoun with dative Case, whereas the lower clitic is a reflexive with accusative Case. The point is well taken, but it is worth observing that in Portuguese, first and second person clitics have syncretic forms for datives and accusatives, as well as for pronouns and reflexives, as respectively illustrated below. For concreteness, we will assume that such syncretism obliterates the relevant differences between these clitics, rendering them identical. Whatever the ultimate specification of identity turns out to be, the relevant point for our concerns is that it affects only the prepositional infinitival complement of *custar*.

- (i) a. Ele deu-me um presente.  
 he gave-me<sub>DAT</sub> a gift  
 ‘He gave me a gift.’  
 b. Ele viu-me.  
 he saw-me<sub>ACC</sub>  
 ‘He saw me.’
- (ii) a. Ele barbeou-me ontem.  
 he shaved-me<sub>PRON</sub> yesterday  
 ‘He shaved me yesterday.’  
 b. Eu barbeei-me ontem.  
 I shaved-me<sub>REFL</sub> yesterday  
 ‘He shaved me yesterday.’

<sup>5</sup> That deletion of the reflexive is not an option for all speakers is shown by the attested example in (i) below, to be contrasted with (16).

- (i) Acordou encharcado em suor e custou-**lhe** a levantar-**se**.  
 woke-up drenched in sweat and cost-him<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to raise-REFL<sub>3SG</sub>  
 ‘He woke up drenched in sweat and it was hard to get up.’  
 (Google search, 02-08-2016; <http://dissejuno.blogspot.pt/>)

<sup>6</sup> In (15) we are reporting judgements by speakers who accept deletion of reflexive *se* and do not have an intransitive use of *sentar*. The first author does not accept deletion of *se* in the presence of a third person dative clitic.

<sup>7</sup> Example taken from: Fernando Oliveira, *A Menina do Rio*, Published June 20th 2016 by Books on Demand, p. 8. In this novel one finds the standard, non-intransitive use of the verb *levantar*.



than it looks if one takes into consideration that in Spanish, the reflexive *se* may be a suppletive form of the dative *le* in “spurious”-*se* constructions, as shown in (17) (see e.g. Perlmutter 1971; Bonet 1995).

- (17) **Se/\*Le** lo diste. (Spanish)  
 SE/him<sub>CL.DAT.3SG</sub> it<sub>CL.ACC</sub> gave.2SG  
 ‘You gave it to him/her.’

What matters for the purposes of our discussion is that for speakers who allow deletion of *se* in sentences such as (15), they only permit it in the prepositional version. In the following discussion we will abstract away from the variation regarding sentences like (15), for it does not interfere with the distinction between the two types of infinitival complements associated with *custar*.

### 3 Differences between the two infinitival complements of *custar*

Let us now return to the intriguing puzzle in (2), repeated below in (18), and discuss differences between the two types of complement of *custar* that may provide a basis for us to account for why deletion is triggered in (18b) and blocked in (18a).

- (18) a. Custou-me sentar-\*(**me**) no chão.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> sit-REFL<sub>1SG</sub> on-the ground  
 ‘To sit on the ground pained me.’
- b. Custou-me a sentar-(\***me**) no chão.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to sit-REFL<sub>1SG</sub> on-the ground  
 ‘It was hard for me to succeed in sitting on the ground.’

#### 3.1 Some interpretive differences

Despite their similarities, the two infinitival complements of *custar* contrast in many aspects (see Martins and Nunes 2005). Although the experiencer argument of *custar* is interpreted as affected by the state of affairs described in the infinitival clause of both types of complements, in the prepositional version it is also interpreted as being more actively engaged in carrying out the events described in the infinitival. This is very clear in the pair of sentences in (19) below, where the speaker’s attitude towards the secretary goes in opposite directions depending on whether or not the infinitival is prepositional. Hence, the two structures may be pragmatically adequate with antonym verbs in the infinitival domain, as illustrated in (20). (20b), in particular, would be pragmatically odd with *perder* (‘lose’) instead of *ganhar* (‘win’).

- (19) a. Custou-me despedir a secretária.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> fire-INF the secretary  
 ‘I felt pity that the secretary was fired’
- b. Custou-me a despedir a secretária.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to fire the secretary  
 ‘It took a lot of effort on my side for me to succeed in firing the secretary.’

- (20) a. Custou-lhes muito perder o jogo.  
 cost-them<sub>CL.DAT</sub> much lose-INF the game  
 ‘It was very painful for them to lose the game.’
- b. Custou-lhes muito a ganhar o jogo.  
 cost-them<sub>CL.DAT</sub> much to win the game  
 ‘It took them a lot of continued effort to succeed in winning the game.’

Also telling is the pragmatic oddness of *b*-sentences in (21) and (22) below, as people are not normally engaged in bringing about the kind of events described in their embedded clauses.

- (21) a. Custou-me ver morrer o cachorro.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> see-INF die-INF the dog  
 ‘Seeing the dog die was painful for me.’
- b. #Custou-me a ver morrer o cachorro.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to see-INF die-INF the dog  
 ‘It was hard for me to succeed in the goal of seeing the dog die.’
- (22) a. Custou-me muito perder o meu amigo.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> much lose-INF the my friend  
 ‘Losing my friend was very painful for me.’
- b. #Custou-me muito a perder o meu amigo.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> much to lose-INF the my friend  
 ‘It took some effort on my side in order for me to lose my friend.’

This engagement by the experiencer in the prepositional version may also correlate with duration, as illustrated by the different interpretations of (23a) and (23b) below. It is also behind the oddness of (24a) against the felicity of (24b).<sup>8</sup>

- (23) a. Todas as manhãs me custa acordar.  
 all the mornings me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> costs wake-up-INF  
 ‘Every morning waking up upsets me.’
- b. Todas as manhãs me custa a acordar.  
 all the mornings me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> costs to wake-up-INF  
 ‘Every morning it takes some time for me to get awake.’
- (24) a. #Por causa da greve dos transportes, custou-me  
 for cause of-the strike of-the transportation cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub>  
 chegar a horas ao trabalho.  
 arrive-INF on time to-the work  
 ‘Due to the strike in public transportation, I felt bad about getting to work on time.’

<sup>8</sup> For the ambiguity of the preposition *a* between a true preposition and an aspectual marker, see Gonçalves (1992, 1996); Duarte (1993); Gonçalves and Freitas (1996); Barbosa and Cochofel (2005); among others.

- b. Por causa da greve dos transportes, custou-me a  
 for cause of-the strike of-the transportation cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to  
 chegar a horas ao trabalho.  
 arrive-INF on time to-the work  
 ‘Due to the strike in public transportation, it took me a lot of effort and time to get to work on time.’

### 3.2 Some differences in structural complexity

The two infinitival complements also contrast in terms of structural complexity, as the prepositional version does not license auxiliaries (see (25)), modals (see (26)), or independent time adverbials (see (27)):

- (25) a. Custou-me ter estado em pé tanto tempo.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> have-INF been on foot much time  
 ‘Having been standing up for so long was painful for me.’  
 b. \*Custou-me a ter estado em pé tanto tempo.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to have been on foot much time  
 ‘It was hard for me to succeed in having stood up for so long.’
- (26) a. Custa-me só poder beber água.  
 costs-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> only can-INF drink water  
 ‘Being allowed to drink only water is hard for me’  
 b. \*Custa-me a só poder beber água.  
 costs-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to only can drink water  
 ‘It is hard for me to succeed in being allowed to drink only water.’
- (27) a. Custa-me só ter folga amanhã.  
 costs-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> only have-INF day-off tomorrow  
 ‘Being off duty only tomorrow upsets me.’  
 b. \*Custa-me a só ter folga amanhã.  
 costs-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to only have day-off tomorrow  
 ‘It has been hard for me to succeed in being off duty only tomorrow.’

### 3.3 Standard Control diagnostics

The interpretive and structural differences reported above suggest that the prepositional infinitival but not its prepositionless counterpart may instantiate obligatory control. This is further confirmed when unequivocal diagnostics of obligatory control are examined, as we will show below.

#### 3.3.1 Licensing of independent subjects

The two infinitivals differ in their ability to license an overt subject. The attested prepositionless example in (28a), for instance, sharply contrast with its prepositional counterpart

in (28b) in allowing an overt subject (which indicates that the prepositionless sentence displays an inflected infinitive, a matter we will return to in section 3.3.5).

- (28) a. Custou-me            **ele** levar    o    exercício em        branco.  
          cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub>        he take-INF the    exercise in        white  
          ‘It upset me that he went to school without his homework assignment done.’  
          (<http://paranoias-de-mae.blogs.sapo.pt/2012/10/>, 04/07/2016)
- b. \*Custou-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> a    **ele**        levar o            exercício em        branco.  
          cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub>    to he        take the        exercise in        white

The contrast in (28) can be accounted for if the prepositional but not the prepositionless infinitival involves obligatory control. Accordingly, only prepositionless infinitivals can license a (null) expletive, as illustrated in (29).

- (29) a. Custa-nos    [*expl* haver    pessoas com        fome]  
          costs-us<sub>CL.DAT</sub>        exist-INF people with        hunger  
          ‘That there are hungry people pains us.’
- b. \*Custou-nos a    [*expl*    haver    estudantes preparados para o exame]  
          cost-us<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to            exist    students prepared for the exam

If the prepositionless infinitival can license an independent subject within its clause, as the combination of the data in (28) and (29) clearly shows, we are led to expect that in sentences such as (30), the null subject of the prepositionless infinitival need not correfer with the matrix experiencer, whereas the null subject of the prepositional version (as an instance of obligatory control) must.

- (30) a. Custou-me<sub>i</sub>    [**ec**<sub>i/k</sub> reprovar esse        aluno]  
          cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub>        fail-INF    that        student  
          ‘That I/other people failed that student pained me.’
- b. Custou-me<sub>i</sub>    a    [**ec**<sub>i/\*k</sub>    reprovar esse        aluno]  
          cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to            fail        that        student  
          ‘It was hard for me to succeed in failing that student.’/\*‘It was hard for me to succeed in having other people fail that student.’

We take this prediction to be essentially correct, but it should be observed that there is a very strong bias for the embedded null subject to take the experiencer of *custar* as its antecedent, which leads some speakers (including one of the anonymous reviewers) to reject (30a) with index *k* and other analogous structures. We do not have an account of why this bias is stronger for some speakers and not others, but we would like to mention two points that support our description of the data. First, the non-correferential interpretation in out-of-the-blue sentences such as (30a) may become more salient if an appropriate pragmatic context is provided. This is illustrated in (31) below, for instance, where the context set by the question in (31A) pragmatically precludes the correferential

reading for the null subject of the infinitival in (31B). Crucially, no pragmatic context is able to license the non-correferential reading with prepositioned infinitivals.<sup>9</sup>

- (31) A: O que achas do Mário?  
the what think of-the Mario  
‘What do you think of Mario?’
- B: Custa-me ter tanto talento e não o aproveitar.  
cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> have-INF such talent and not it profit-INF  
‘It pains me that he is so talented and does not take advantage of it.’

More importantly, the bias towards the correferential interpretation can be turned around via contrastively focused pronouns. In a subject control construction such as (32) below, for instance, the postverbal pronoun in the infinitival is interpreted as imposing a contrastive focus on the embedded subject (for relevant discussion, see e.g. Costa 2004; Barbosa 2009; Szabolcsi 2009). When a contrastively focused pronoun is added to (30), as shown in (33), the contrast now becomes crystal clear: the pronoun can impose a contrastive focus interpretation on an embedded subject linked to a discourse antecedent in the propositionless complement of *custar*, but not in its prepositional counterpart.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Further relevant examples are given in (i) and (ii) below, whose prepositional counterparts would be fully ungrammatical.

- (i) Quanto a esse miúdo, custa-me ter tanto talento e não o  
as to that kid cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> have-INF such talent and not it  
aproveitar.  
profit-INF  
‘As for that kid, it pains me that he is so talented and does not take advantage of it.’
- (ii) A: — Porque é que está tão aborrecido comigo? Ainda é por causa  
why is that is so upset with-me still is for cause  
daquele aluno?  
of-that student  
‘Why are you so upset with me? Is it still about that student?’
- B: — É. Custou-me ter reprovado um aluno que sabe  
is cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> have-INF failed a student that know  
bem que não merecia.  
well that not deserved  
‘Yes, it is. It pained me that you failed a student that you know well didn’t deserve it.’

<sup>10</sup> Note that (32) displays obligatory control. Thus, in contrast to (33), there is no disjoint reference interpretation available for the subjects even if the embedded subject is focused, as shown in (i) below. Importantly, (32) also demonstrates that when the infinitival subject is focused, an overt subject is compatible with the simple infinitive in control structures.

- (i) \*[o João]<sub>i</sub> quer [ec<sub>k</sub> resolver eu<sub>k</sub> o problema.  
the João wants solve-INF I the problem  
‘João wants me to solve the problem.’

- (32) [o João]<sub>i</sub> quer [ec<sub>i</sub> resolver **ele**<sub>i/\*k</sub> o problema.  
 the João wants solve-INF he the problem  
 ‘João wants to solve the problem himself.’

- (33) a. Custou-me<sub>i</sub> [ec<sub>k</sub> resolver **ele**<sub>k</sub> o problema]  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> solve-INF he the problem  
 ‘That he himself solved the problem pained me.’  
 b. \*Custou-me<sub>i</sub> a [ec<sub>k</sub> resolver **ele**<sub>k</sub> o problema]  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to solve he the problem

### 3.3.2 The requirement of a local antecedent

(34a) below shows that to the extent that the null subject of the prepositionless infinitival may take an antecedent, it need not be local, whereas (34b) shows that the antecedent of the subject of the prepositional infinitival must be local. Like what we saw in section 3.3.1, the contrast becomes more salient if contrastive focus is added to the picture, as shown in (35).

- (34) a. [O Rui]<sub>k</sub> acha que me<sub>i</sub> custou [ec<sub>i/k</sub> escrever o relatório]  
 the Rui thinks that me cost write-INF the report  
 ‘Rui thinks that my/his writing the report pained me.’  
 b. [O Rui]<sub>k</sub> acha que me<sub>i</sub> custou a [ec<sub>i/\*k</sub> escrever o relatório]  
 the Rui thinks that me cost to write the report  
 ‘João thinks that it was hard for me to succeed in writing the report.’

- (35) a. [O Rui]<sub>k</sub> acha que me<sub>i</sub> custou [ec<sub>k</sub> escrever **ele**<sub>k</sub> o relatório]  
 the Rui thinks that me cost write-INF he the report  
 ‘Rui thinks that his writing the report (himself) pained me.’  
 b. \*[O Rui]<sub>k</sub> acha que me<sub>i</sub> custou a [ec<sub>k</sub> escrever **ele**<sub>k</sub> o relatório]  
 the Rui thinks that me cost to write-INF he the report

### 3.3.3 On the c-command condition and the nature of the antecedent

The argument that the null subject in (34b)/(35b) requires a local antecedent presupposes that the dative argument of *custar* sits in a c-commanding position. That this holds true is shown by the Principle C effect illustrated in (36).

- (36) \*Custou-lhe<sub>i</sub> a criticar [o João]<sub>i</sub>  
 cost-him<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to criticize the João  
 ‘It was hard for him<sub>i</sub> to succeed in criticizing João<sub>i</sub>.’

That being so, one predicts that a DP within the experiencer should not count as a proper antecedent for the null subject of a prepositional infinitival, due to lack of c-command. Unfortunately, this prediction cannot be tested because the experiencer argument of *custar* can be realized by a dative clitic, but not by a full DP, as illustrated in (37). We speculate that this idiosyncrasy is related to the inherent nature of the Case assigned by *custar* to its experiencer.



- (37) \*Custou **ao João** a escrever o relatório.  
 cost to-the João to write the report  
 ‘It was hard for João to succeed in writing the report.’

The fact that *custar* assigns (inherent) dative Case to its specifier yields an additional contrast between the two infinitival complements of *custar*. As shown in (38) below, the indefinite clitic *se* is not licensed in the prepositionless infinitival. However, some speakers (including the first author) allow it with the prepositional infinitival, as illustrated by (39a) and the attested example in (39b). Interestingly, these speakers also allow constructions such as (40), where *custar* functions as a raising verb.

- (38) \*Custa-se acreditar numa coisa dessas.  
 costs-SE<sub>IND</sub> believe-INF in-a thing of-these  
 ‘It is hard for one to believe in such a thing.’

- (39) a. Custa-se a acreditar numa coisa dessas.  
 costs- SE<sub>IND</sub> to believe in-a thing of-these  
 ‘It is hard for one to believe in such a thing.’  
 b. Já se custa a encontrar mas aparece. (CORDIAL-SIN, MIG26)  
 already SE<sub>IND</sub> cost to find but appears  
 ‘It is difficult to find it nowadays but you can still catch it (that fish).’

- (40) Custei a acreditar numa coisa daquelas.  
 cost-PAST-1SG to believe in-a thing of-those  
 ‘It was hard for me to believe in such a thing.’

Under the standard assumption that indefinite *se* is intrinsically nominative, the ungrammaticality of (38) (for all speakers) and (39) for speakers who do not allow (40) is due to a feature clash, as the verb *custar* assigns inherent dative Case to its specifier (see section 3.3.2). For speakers who also admit a raising construction for *custar*, (39) is to be derived on a par with (40), with *se* being raised from the embedded clause directly to the subject position of the matrix clause, where nominative Case is available.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> (i) below provides attested examples of raising constructions with *custar* in European Portuguese.

- (i) a. custei a libertar-me, tinha uma dependência daquele homem.  
 cost-1SG to free-REFL<sub>1SG</sub> had-1SG a dependency of-that man  
 ‘It was hard to free myself, as I was totally dependent on that man.’  
 (<http://anossavida.pt/forum/viol-ncia-dom-stica>, 04/07/2016)  
 b. Espero sinceramente que as duas últimas épocas sejam apenas  
 hope-1SG sincerely that the two last seasons are-SUBJ just  
 um pesadelo do qual custámos a acordar.  
 a nightmare of-the which cost-PAST-1PL to wake-up  
 ‘I sincerely hope that the last two (football) seasons were just a nightmare from which it was hard for us to wake up.’  
 (<http://www.forumscp.com/index.php?topic=31904.375;wap2>; 04/07/2016)



- (44) a. Custou-nos [*ec* **reprovar(mos)** aquele aluno]  
 cost-us<sub>CL.DAT</sub> fail-INF-1PL that student  
 ‘That we failed that student pained us.’
- b. Custou-nos a [*ec* **reprovar(\*mos)** aquele aluno]  
 cost-us<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to fail-INF-1PL that student  
 ‘It was hard for us to succeed in failing that student.’

The availability of agreement morphology in (44a) is actually not surprising, for the prepositionless infinitival can license an independent subject, as discussed in section 3.3.1. As for (44b), there was not an *a priori* expectation, for in European Portuguese subject control verbs generally do not license overt agreement morphology, whereas object control optionally do so, as illustrated in (45). In this regard, what (44b) shows is that it patterns like subject rather than object control.

- (45) a. Nós tentamos contratar(**\*mos**) o Pedro.  
 we tried-1PL hire-INF-1PL the Pedro  
 ‘We tried to hire Pedro.’
- b. O João convenceu-nos a contratar(**mos**) o Pedro.  
 the João convinced-us to hire-INF-1PL the Pedro  
 ‘João convinced us to hire Pedro.’

There is actually interesting indirect evidence that shows that it is not the case that the prepositional infinitival in (44b) has  $\phi$ -features that do not get morphologically realized, but rather that it simply has no  $\phi$ -features. The evidence is based on Raposo’s (1987) observation that only uninflected infinitives license *tough*-movement, as shown in (46).

- (46) Esses livros são difíceis de ler(**\*mos**)  
 these books are hard of read-INF-1PL  
 ‘These books are hard to read.’

Interestingly, only the prepositional complement of *custar* allows a *tough*-like construction, as illustrated in (47) and (48).<sup>12</sup> If the two infinitivals were featurally identical, one

<sup>12</sup> Attested examples are provided in (i) below.

- (i) a. A grande altitude tudo é mais penoso (. . .) as botas custam  
 at high altitude everything is more painful the boots cost-3PL  
 a levantar do chão.  
 to raise-INF of-the floor  
 ‘At high altitude everything is more painful. It is difficult to get your boots off the ground.’  
 (CETEM-Público, 03/07/2016)
- b. Um momento mágico que levou à loucura os gregos, orgulhosos  
 a moment magical that took to craziness the Greeks proud  
 de, finalmente, verem começar os Jogos Olímpicos que  
 of finally see-3PL start-INF the Games Olympic that  
 tanto custaram a organizar. (Jornal de Notícias, 13/08/2004)  
 so-much cost-PAST-3PL to organize

should in principle expect both of them to allow *tough*-movement in (47) and (48). The fact that this is not what happens may be taken to show that the prepositionless infinitival has  $\phi$ -features, which may be morphologically realized or not, whereas the prepositional infinitival has no  $\phi$ -features whatsoever.

- (47) a. \*Aqueles alunos custaram reprovar.  
           those students cost-PAST-3PL fail-INF
- b. Aqueles alunos custaram a reprovar.  
           those students cost-PAST-3PL to fail  
           ‘Those students were hard to fail.’
- (48) a. \*Estas caixas custam imenso carregar.  
           these boxes cost-PAST-3PL immense carry-INF
- b. Estas caixas custam imenso a carregar.  
           these boxes cost-PAST-3PL immense to carry  
           ‘These boxes are very hard to carry.’

### 3.4 Summary

In sum, the prepositional infinitival complement of *custar* involves obligatory control, whereas its prepositionless infinitival complement does not, as sketched in (49).

- (49) a. [... [CL.DAT [*custar* [pro V-INF... ]]]]
- b. [... [CL.DAT<sub>i</sub> [*custar* [PRO<sub>i</sub> a V-INF ...]]]]

(49a) involves a personal infinitive which may license a *pro* in the subject position; *pro* may – but need not – be bound by the experiencer argument in the specifier of the VP headed by *custar* (see section 3.3.1). By contrast, the embedded subject of (49b), as an instance of obligatorily controlled PRO, must be bound by the experiencer argument of *custar*, as it is the most local c-commanding antecedent.

Having characterized the infinitival complements of *custar*, we may now go back to the puzzle of why prepositional infinitivals may trigger the deletion of a reflexive clitic.

## 4 Back to the deletion puzzle

Once the fundamental control difference between the two types of infinitival complements selected by *custar* has been identified in section 3, the data in (2), repeated below in (50), can be taken to show that deletion of reflexives locally bound by an (identical) clitic (see section 2) is only operative within the obligatory control structure (i.e. the prepositional infinitival complement).

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‘A magical moment that led the Greeks to ecstasy, as they were proud to see the Olympic Games, which were so hard to organize, finally begin.’

(*Jornal de Notícias*, 13-08-2004. <http://www.jn.pt/arquivo/2004/interior/contar-alegorias-no-espírito-olimpico-455554.html?id=4555;04/07/2016>)

- (50) a. Custou-me sentar-\*(**me**) no chão.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> sit-INF-REFL<sub>1SG</sub> on-the ground  
 ‘To sit on the ground pained me.’
- b. Custou-me a sentar-\*(**me**) no chão.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to sit-INF-REFL<sub>1SG</sub> on-the ground  
 ‘It was hard for me to succeed in sitting on the ground.’

This conclusion is confirmed by standard object control constructions (with a transitive control verb and an accusative Case marked controller) such as (51) and the attested examples in (52) (CETEM-Público, 04/07/2016), which show that deletion of the reflexive is also possible if the controller is an (identical) clitic (see section 2).

- (51) a. Eles obrigaram-**nos** a afastar-\*(**nos**) daquele caminho.  
 they forced-us to get-away-REFL<sub>1PL</sub> from-that path  
 ‘They forced us to get away from that path.’
- b. O médico vai forçar-**te** a sentar-\*(**te**) de outra maneira.  
 the doctor goes force-you to sit-REFL<sub>2SG</sub> of other manner  
 ‘The doctor will force you to sit in another way.’
- (52) a. Uma bala passou rasante sobre a minha cabeça (. . .)  
 a bullet passed low over the my head  
 obrigando-me a **deitar** no chão.  
 forcing-me to lie on-the floor  
 ‘A bullet passed low over my head, forcing-me to lie on the floor.’
- b. Com um sorriso, convidaram-nos a **sentar**.  
 with a smile invited-3PL-US to sit  
 ‘With a smile, they invited us to take a seat.’
- c. Após ter caído de costas num pântano, apressou-se  
 after have-INF fallen on back in-a swamp hastened-REFL<sub>3SG</sub>  
 a **levantar** e a pedir desculpas ao instrutor pelo erro.  
 to raise and to ask apologies to-the instructor for-the mistake  
 ‘After falling on his back in a swamp, he hastened to get back to his feet and apologize to the instructor for the mistake.’

It is worth noting another parallel. Recall that standard object control in European Portuguese allows the infinitival to optionally carry overt agreement morphology, whereas the prepositional complement of *custar* bans such inflection (see section 3.3.5). Interestingly, only the non-agreeing version licenses deletion of reflexive clitics, as illustrated by the contrast between the uninflected infinitives of (51) and their inflected counterparts in (53).

- (53) a. Eles obrigaram-**nos** a afastarmo-\*(**nos**) daquele caminho.  
 they forced-us to get-away-1PL-REFL<sub>1PL</sub> from-that path  
 ‘They forced us to get away from that path.’
- b. O médico vai forçar-**te** a sentares-\*(**te**) de outra maneira.  
 the doctor goes force-you to sit-2SG-REFL<sub>2SG</sub> of other manner  
 ‘The doctor will force you to sit in another way.’

However, deletion of reflexives when bound by an (identical) local clitic is not restricted to object control configurations. Recall that this phenomenon is also found with the infinitival complement of perception and causative verbs (see section 1), as illustrated in (54) (= (5)).

- (54) a. A Maria viu-**te** desequilibrar-\*(**te**) e não te agarrou.  
 the Maria saw-you lose-balance-REFL<sub>2SG</sub> and not you grabbed  
 ‘Maria saw you lose your balance and did not grab you.’
- b. A Maria sentiu-**se** desequilibrar-\*(**se**) e caiu.  
 the Maria felt-REFL<sub>3SG</sub> lose-balance-REFL<sub>3SG</sub> and fell  
 ‘Maria felt herself lose her balance and fell.’
- c. O professor mandou-**me** sentar-\*(**me**) na fila da frente  
 the professor ordered-me sit-REFL<sub>1SG</sub> in-the row of-the front  
 ‘The professor ordered me to sit in the front row.’
- d. O João fez-**nos** queixar-\*(**nos**) à polícia.  
 the João made-us complain-REFL<sub>1PL</sub> to-the police  
 ‘João made us complain to the police.’

The contrast between sentences such as the ones in (54), where deletion is available, and (55) below (= (8)), where deletion is blocked, suggests that the co-occurrence restriction that triggers reflexive deletion is clause bound. Hence, the two clitics in (55) do not interact with each other because they belong to different clauses.

- (55) Eu pergunto-**me** se devo queixar-\*(**me**) à polícia.  
 I ask-REFL<sub>1SG</sub> if should-1SG complain-REFL<sub>1SG</sub> to-the police  
 ‘I wonder if I should complain to-the police.’

Importantly, what matters is not exactly where the higher clitic ends up, but where it is generated. In (54) the upper clitic is generated in the embedded clause and later cliticizes to the matrix verb (see e.g. Gonçalves 1999; Martins 2000), as becomes clearer with sentences such as (56) below, which involves proclisis to the matrix verb. To put it in different terms, the higher clitic of (54) and (56) has a chance to interact with the reflexive, triggering the deletion of the latter, before it moves to the matrix clause. In (55), on the other hand, there is no derivational step where the two clitics appear in the same clausal domain.

- (56) A Maria não **me** viu desequilibrar-\*(**me**).  
 the Maria not me saw lose-balance-REFL<sub>1SG</sub>  
 ‘Maria didn’t see me lose my balance.’



Bearing these observations in mind, let us examine the (simplified) structures associated with (50), as respectively sketched in (57).

- (57) a. [*pro*<sub>expl</sub> *custou-me* [*pro* *sentar-me* no chão]]  
 b. [*pro*<sub>expl</sub> *custou-me*<sub>i</sub> [*PRO*<sub>i</sub> *a sentar-me* no chão]]

As discussed in section 3, the empty category in the embedded subject position is *pro* in the case of the prepositionless infinitival complement of *custar* (see (57a)), but an obligatorily controlled PRO in the prepositional version (see (57b)). However, this difference does not seem to be of much help. Given that deletion of the reflexive is triggered in (57b), but blocked in (57a), one would like to treat (57a) on a par with (55), which also blocks deletion, and (57b) with (54) and (56), which trigger deletion. In this sense, (57a) and (55) may be taken to form a natural class in the sense that its clitics are generated and surface in different clauses. Hence, it may be expected that they do not interact – a correct result. However, (57b) and (54)/(56) do not seem to form a natural class, for the higher clitic is generated in the embedded clause in the latter, but in the higher clause in the representation in (57b). In other words, if the co-occurrence restriction under discussion is indeed clause bound, the representation in (57b) leads to the incorrect prediction that the two clitics do not interact and the reflexive cannot be deleted.

The intriguing contrast between (57a) and (57b) ceases to be puzzling, though, if the obligatorily controlled PRO in (57b) is actually a deleted copy of the “controller”, as postulated by the MTC (see e.g. Hornstein 1999, 2001; Boeckx, Hornstein and Nunes 2010). We have seen that *custar* assigns inherent dative Case to its specifier (see section 3.3.3) and selects for either a personal or an impersonal infinitival complement (see section 3.3.5). If the embedded infinitival is personal, it assigns nominative to its Spec, regardless of whether or not its  $\phi$ -features are morphologically realized, i.e., whether or not it is inflected (see section 3.3.5). The embedded subject then gets frozen in the embedded clause and *custar* must assign its other  $\theta$ -role to a new element selected from the numeration. By contrast, if the infinitival is impersonal, it does not assign Case to its subject. Under the MTC, the subject may then move to [Spec, *custar*], where it gets an additional  $\theta$ -role and is assigned inherent dative Case. Thus, the MTC analyzes the sentences in (50) along the lines of (58), where the embedded subject position of (50b) involves a copy of the “controller” in the embedded subject position.

- (58) *Representations of (50) under the MTC:*  
 a. [*pro*<sub>expl</sub> *custou-me* [*pro* *sentar-me* no chão]]  
 b. [*pro*<sub>expl</sub> *custou-me*<sup>i</sup> [*me*<sup>i</sup> *a sentar-me* no chão]]

In (58b) – but not in (58a) – there are two instances of the same clitic within the embedded clause. However, this is usually not tolerated in European Portuguese, as seen with ECM constructions in (54)/(56). Given that the ungrammaticality of the two clitics in (50b) parallels that of the sentences in (54)/(56), the exceptional deletion of the reflexive clitic in (50b) can be viewed as a way to comply with the superficial filter ruling out morphologically identical clitics within the same clause (see (58b)). As for (50a), no problem arises as the subject of the infinitival (*pro*) is not a clitic (see (58a)); hence, it is morphologically distinct from the reflexive clitic and no deletion is triggered. To sum up, the major assumption of the MTC – namely, that obligatorily controlled PRO is a (deleted) copy of its antecedent – provides a straightforward account of why reflexive

deletion within the infinitival complement of *custar* can only take place if *custar* is used as an obligatory control verb.<sup>13</sup>

## 5 Concluding remarks

The MTC has all the ingredients to provide an account for the curious problem brought up by (59) (= (2)), which shows that reflexive clitics may be deleted in the infinitival complement of *custar* when it is used as an obligatory control verb.

- (59) a. Custou-me sentar-\*(**me**) no chão.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> sit-INF-REFL<sub>1SG</sub> on-the ground  
 ‘To sit on the ground pained me.’
- b. Custou-me a sentar-\*(**me**) no chão.  
 cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to sit-INF-REFL<sub>1SG</sub> on-the ground  
 ‘It was hard for me to succeed in sitting on the ground.’

Under the MTC, we expect obligatorily controlled PRO to behave like a regular copy of its antecedent. More precisely, we expect obligatorily controlled PRO to be subject to whatever computations and restrictions apply to its antecedent in the post-syntactic components of grammar. We have seen that the co-occurrence restriction under discussion computes obligatorily controlled PRO but not a co-referential *pro*. From the perspective of the MTC, this is not at all surprising. If PRO is a copy of its antecedent (in this particular case, a copy of the experiencer clitic associated with *custar*), it may be computed with respect to the ban on morphologically identical clitics in a local domain and trigger reflexive deletion.

The discussion above has focused on the apparently erratic behavior of a single lexical item in European Portuguese (*custar*), but should also be considered under a broader (even if speculative) perspective. It is very likely that the lexical idiosyncrasy of *custar* regarding the optionality of the preposition in its infinitival complement illustrated in (1), repeated here in (60), is something that can be acquired based on primary linguistic data. That is, a child exposed to data parallel to (60a) and (60b) may reach the reasonable conclusion that the optionality in (60) is a matter of lexical subcategorization: *custar* may select for either a prepositionless or a prepositional infinitival.

<sup>13</sup> A reviewer asks whether one could not get the same results under a PRO-based account by assuming that ECM and controlled infinitivals are not phases. From this perspective, a phase intervenes between the matrix experiencer and the reflexive in (ia), but not in (ib). Thus, deletion could be triggered in (ib) but blocked in (ia).

- (i) a. [*pro*<sub>expl</sub> custou-**me** [*pro*<sub>phase</sub> sentar-**me** no chão]]  
 b. [*pro*<sub>expl</sub> custou-**me** [PRO a sentar-**me** no chão]]

The reviewer’s point is well taken. In fact, in Martins and Nunes (forthcoming) we assume the phase-based framework and make a detailed comparison between non-movement approaches to control and the MTC with respect to two types of co-occurrence restrictions in European Portuguese: the one discussed here, which leads to deletion of reflexives, and ungrammatical cases of indefinite *se* co-occurring with reflexive *se*. Our conclusion is that when reflexive deletion is considered in isolation, there is no clear basis for distinguishing between movement and non-movement approaches to control under a phase-based analysis. However, when reflexive deletion is computed together with the co-occurrence restriction involving indefinite and reflexive *se*, only the movement approach is able to provide a unified account of the two phenomena. For our current purposes, it is worth noting that our main point here – namely, to show that the different behavior displayed by each of the infinitival complements of *custar* with respect to reflexive deletion is linked to obligatory control and cannot be a simple matter of lexical subcategorization – still remains valid if we frame our MTC account in terms of the phase approach suggested by the reviewer.

- (60) a. Custou-me escrever o relatório.  
cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> write-INF the report  
'Writing the report was hard on me.'
- b. Custou-me a escrever o relatório.  
cost-me<sub>CL.DAT</sub> to write the report  
'It was hard for me to succeed in writing the report.'

However, all the complexities associated with reflexive deletion discussed in the preceding sections make it clear that it is very implausible to assume that a child could attain all the intricacies involving the contrast between (59a) and (59b) by relying solely on primary linguistic data. In other words, the differences between the two types of infinitival complements of *custar* discussed in this paper present an interesting poverty-of-stimulus puzzle and we have the ingredients to outline an innatist answer if control involves movement to thematic positions, as advocated by the MTC.

The steps towards such an answer go like this. In the process of language acquisition, a child must identify the inventory of lexical items of the target language that allow for obligatory control. In the case under discussion, a child acquiring European Portuguese must identify that (60b) involves obligatory control. Once this is attained, a child equipped with the MTC will assign the structure in (61) below to the sentence in (59b). In other words, the child will know – even in absence of positive evidence – that the experiencer of the matrix clause may be computed with respect to the co-occurrence restriction involving the embedded reflexive in (59b), thanks to its copy in the subject of the embedded clause. This predicts, for instance, that children should not master the contrast between (59a) and (59b) before establishing that structures such as (60b) involve obligatory control.

- (61) [*pro*<sub>expl</sub> custou-**me**<sup>i</sup> [**me**<sup>i</sup> a sentar-**me** no chão]]

Whether these speculative remarks can be adequately fleshed out or the predictions they make are on the right track is a matter that requires an independent detailed investigation, going beyond the scope of this paper.

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### Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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