On the relation between intonational phrasing and pitch accent distribution Evidence from European Portuguese varieties

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Main goals: (i) to explore the relation between intonational phrasing and PA distribution in 2 other EP var.; (ii) to investigate whether the suggested correlation between intonational phrasing and PA distribution for SEP and NEP extends to other var.; (iii) to contribute to the characterization of the relevant dimensions of variation in the European system, both within and across languages.

Methodology
Sample
- Two centre-southern varieties (A Venture – Alg & Alagarve – Ale), included in the Interactive Atlas of the Prosody of Portugal (Cruz & Vigário, 2013)
- Two female speakers per variety, 20-45 years-old, high-school or university level of education
Procedure
- Recording task (76 sentences), produced twice by each speaker (76x24), in loco (total of 650 sentences).

Results
Dominant phrasing pattern
- Both in Ale and Alg, NP-PA phrasing is dominant (86%) even in non-branching cases (61%).
- A lira morenos. (The old lady's dark haired women.)

(Vigário & Frota 2003, Frota et al 2007, Vigário et al 2007 for Northern European Portuguese (NEP) and SEP; Hellmuth et al 2004, 20007 for Egyptian Arabic). Two different views were proposed:
- correlation between prosodic factors – fewer phrases, fewer accents (Vigário & Frota 2003, 2007; Vigário et al 2007);
- no correlation between prosodic factors – phrasing and domain for pitch accent distribution are orthogonal dimensions of a prosodic system (Hellmuth 2001, 2007).

Main conclusions:
- Two regions of the same variety (Interior Center and South) may display 3 prosodic properties: preference for the (S)(VO) pattern in Ale (as in SEP) vs. preference for the (VO) pattern in Alg (as in NEP) – correlated with branching within-language prosodic variation.
- Syntactic branching and length trigger the (S)(VO) phrasing pattern in Ale, in Alg, syntactic branching is the relevant factor.
- The interdependence between phrasing and PA distribution that holds in SEP, NEP and Alg was not found in Alg (as in Cairene Arabic).
- The sum, both dimensions are relevant for the characterization of the international system and (ii) may vary independently across languages and across language varieties.

In previous work (Holmberg et al. 2006), intonational phrasing was compared across Romance languages (EP, Spanish, Catalan, Italian) on the basis of a common corpus adapted for each language – the Romance Language Database (RLD), which comprises Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) sentences with varying length in no. of syllables and syntactic complexity (presence/absence of branching in S and O).

• In RLD, (S)(VO) prevails (98%; SVO) triggered by prosodic length in no. of syllables; becomes relevant (40%) in branching short S (72% vs. non-branching short S).

(See Table 2 of the study for more info)