



A NOTE ON BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE NON-SENTENTIAL WH-EXCLAMATIVES

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ABSTRACT

In this squib, we analyze short exclamatives in Brazilian Portuguese, what we call here non-sentential wh-exclamatives. Contrarily to what Sibaldo (2015) attests (that such constructions constitute a CP, hence bearing a sentential nature), we propose these structures to be understood as APs dominated by a Degree projection. We propose, following Zanutinni and Portner (2003), that adjectives are the head of an exclamative, and that the augmentative morphology is also able to activate exclamative illocutionary force inside DegP and license short exclamatives.

Keywords: short exclamatives, DegP, augmentative

RESUMO

Neste *squib*, analisamos exclamativas curtas no português brasileiro, construções que aqui denominamos exclamativas-wh não-sentenciais. Contrariamente ao que atesta Sibaldo (2015) (que essas construções constituem um CP e carregam, portanto, natureza sentencial), nós propomos que essas sentenças são na verdade APs dominados por uma projeção de grau. Propomos, seguindo Zanutinni e Portner (2003), que adjetivos nucleiam construções exclamativas, e que a morfologia de aumentativo dentro do DegP é capaz de ativar a força ilocucionária exclamativa e licenciar exclamativas curtas.

Palavras-chave: exclamativas curtas, DegP, aumentativo

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1 INTRODUCTION

Medeiros Junior & Sieiro (2020) have described some properties of sentential wh-exclamatives in Brazilian Portuguese focusing on data such as those in (1) and (2):

- (1) a. Que linda casa você tem!
 What beautiful house you have
 'What a beautiful house you have!'
- b. Que lindos que são os seus filhos!
 What beautiful that are the your sons
 'How beautiful your kids are!'
- c. Que tristes fatos ocorreram aqui!
 What sad facts happened here
 'What sad facts have happened here!'
- (2) a. Que lindo o que vocês fizeram!
 What beautiful the what you did
 'How beautiful what you did!'
- b. Que linda a casa que você comprou!
 What beautiful the house that you bought
 'How beautiful the house you bought!'
- c. Que interessantes os dados que você estuda!
 What interesting the data that you study
 'How interesting the data you study!'

According to the authors, data in (2) provide evidence to propose there might be more than one functional projection within ForceP, namely a RelP — which would host relative Wh-phrases, — and an ExclmP bearing an exclamative feature. Exclamation, according to Medeiros Junior & Sieiro's arguments, must be higher than relativization in Brazilian Portuguese; see (3) below:

- (3) a. [_{ExclmP}[Que linda] a casa [_{RelP}[que] [_{TP} vocês compraram]]].
 b. *[A casa [_{RelP}[que] [_{TP} vocês compraram] [_{ExclmP}[Que linda]]]]¹.

1 As pointed out to us by one of the anonymous reviewers, we need to agree that this sentence is grammatical with a pause after the verb form "compraram". This phenomenon is addressed in Medeiros Jr & Sieiro (2020) p.24. The authors argue that in this case the preposed relative would be a 'hanging topic' hosted by a DiscP above force.

Data such as (4), though, have received little attention in the literature and the present squib intends to discuss them:

- (4) a. Que linda casa / Que casa linda!
 what pretty house what house pretty!
 'What a pretty house!'
- b. Que linda!
 'how pretty!'
- c. Que casa!
 what house
 'What a house!'
- d. Linda casa!
 pretty house
 'pretty house!'
- e. Linda!
 'Pretty!'
- f. *Casa!
 'House!'

As one can see from the data in (4), short (non-sentential) exclamatives can be built in five different ways:

- (i) Que + adjective + noun / Que + noun + adjective: (a)
 (ii) Que + adjective: (b)
 (iii) Que + noun: (c)
 (iv) Adjective + noun: (d)
 (v) Adjective: (e)

However, it is not possible to build a short exclamative from a bare noun just as (4)f².

Leopoldino (2018) has observed though that it is possible to reach exclamation with a bare noun bearing augmentative morphology, just as seen in (5) below:

- (5) a. Carrão!
 Car.AUG!
 What a car!'

² In very specific situations (with specific nouns) an exclamation from a bare nominal is possible (only in blaming contexts):

- (i) a. Merda!
 'shit!'
 b. Caralho!
 'dick!'

- b. Mulherão!
 Woman.AUG
 'What a woman!'
- c. Homão (da porra)!
 Man.AUG of.the fuck
 'What a f*ing man!'

The aim of this squib is trying to evaluate the contrast between (4)f and (5) and trying to analyze the structure of a non-sentential exclamation in Brazilian Portuguese.

The squib is organized as follows: in section 2 we discuss the structure of this kind of exclamatives contrasting the CP hypothesis to the DegP hypothesis, as well as propose a structure in cartographic terms for DegP; in section 3 we present our conclusions.

2 WHAT MIGHT BE THE STRUCTURE OF A SHORT (NON-SENTENTIAL) (WH)-EXCLAMATIVE?

When one utters an exclamation one indicates sort of a surprise feeling, amazement for what's being observed. Let us just try to figure out a specific context: let's just imagine that Laura has come to visit her friend Paul. Paul is taking part in a running competition, and Laura is going to watch him run. Laura and Paul himself think he is not enough prepared for a good result on the running, but suddenly (and surprisingly) Paul wins the race, going against all the odds. Laura, then, utters:

- (6) John has won the race!

That utterance clearly expresses Laura's surprise and amusement on her friend's results.

In a second situation, let us just think that John has invited Carlos for dinner with a promise that John himself is going to cook. Carlos is aware of John's disastrous cooking abilities, but he doesn't want to disappoint his longtime friend; he accepts, then, John's invitation. But, during the dinner, Carlos realizes the food his friend prepared is just... DELICIOUS! Carlos, then, utters:

- (7) What a delicious food you've prepared, pall!

In (6), just as in (7), the expectations of the speakers were surpassed, and both express certain degree of emotion throughout their utterances. This is what constitutes the phenomenon of exclamation.

Hence, one might call an exclamation an utterance that is supposed to express some sort of extreme emotion, usually a surprise, concerning something.

As pointed out in the introduction, Brazilian Portuguese presents a large variety of exclamative constructions: (i) intonational exclamatives, just like (8); sentential wh-exclamatives, as in (9); (iii) short sentential Wh-exclamatives, as in (10), and short exclamatives not containing a wh-phrase, as in (11)³:

- (8) O João venceu a corrida!
The John won the race
'John won that race!'
- (9) a. Que linda casa você tem!
What beautiful house you have
'What a beautiful house you have!'
- b. Que lindos que são os seus filhos.
how beautiful that are the your sons
'How beautiful you sons are!'
- (10) a. Que linda casa!/ Que casa linda!
What pretty house What house pretty
'What a pretty house!'
- b. Que linda!
How beautiful
- c. Que casa!
What house
'What a house!'
- (11) a. Linda casa!/ Casa linda!
Beautiful house House beautiful
'Beautiful house!'
- b. Linda!
Beautiful'

In (8), the exclamation is reached via intonational structuring, considering the fact that the structure of such a sentence is just similar to that of an affirmative⁴. In (9), one might

³ Leopoldino (2022) (in preparation) proposes the exclamatives in (11) are supposed to be derived via (10), originating sort of a reduced non-sentential wh-exclamative.

⁴

(i) O João venceu a corrida. (affirmative)
The John won the race
'John won that race!'

find what we call here a sentential wh-exclamative: an exclamative sentence containing a tensed verb (and hence, constituting a TP).

(10) and (11) contain short exclamatives, what we call here non-sentential Wh-exclamatives; and these are the exclamatives we wish to highlight here.

An initial question on the subject would be inquiring about the structural nature of the exclamatives in (10) and (11), as we will assume here with Medeiros Junior and Sieiro (2020) and Sieiro (2020) that exclamatives in (8) and (9) constitute CPs. Would (10) and (11) also be CPs?

2.1 THE STRUCTURE OF BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE SHORT EXCLAMATIVES

2.1.1 THE CP HYPOTHESIS

Sibaldo (2015) analyzes the following data:

(12) a. Muito linda essa bolsa!
Very pretty this purse
'Such a pretty purse!'

b. Uma droga aquela aula!
A shit that class
'What a shit of a class!'

(13) a. Que linda essa bolsa!
How beautiful this purse
'Such a beautiful purse!'

b. Que droga aquela aula!
What shit that class
'What a shit of a class!'

The author will nominate the sentences in (12) Free Small Clauses and the ones in (13) Wh-free Small Clauses; both are supposed to be characterized by the juxtaposition of a predicate and a subject, with no verb mediation or any tense morphology, with the difference that the ones in the second group are headed by a wh-element.

Sibaldo considers data in (13) to constitute sentential exclamatives, CPs headed by a Degree projection. One of the arguments the author uses to state these structures contain a

(ii) O João venceu a corrida! (exclamative)
The John won the race'
'John won the race.'

sentential status, is elaborated throughout a test based on the ideas found in Cardinaletti & Guasti (1995), which consists in inserting a time adverb in the structure; consider (14) below:

- (14) a. Que lindo o dia hoje!
How beautiful the day today
'What a beautiful day today!'
- b. Que droga de aula aquela ontem!
What shit of class that yesterday
'What a shit of a class that one yesterday!'

Sibaldo argues that if it is possible to insert those time adverbs (*hoje; ontem*) it means the structure they integrate must contain a TP, hence, a CP. It sounds convincing at first glance, but Leopoldino (2022) argues there are reasons to believe this might not be totally correct.

The point is one can find some independent evidence in Brazilian Portuguese to attest time adverbs can be adjoined to compounds where a TP is not supposed to be structured, as in infinitival sentences that complement perception verbs (FELSER, 1999), just as those we see in (15)⁵:

- (15) a. Eu ouvi o bebê chorar ontem.
I heard the baby to cry yesterday
'I heard the baby crying yesterday.'
- b. Elas viram o João beber hoje e ontem.
They saw the John drink today and yesterday
'They saw John drinking today and yesterday.'

It is possible to argue that the adverbs in (15) are modifying the verb in the matrix, but the examples in (16), provided to us by an anonymous reviewer, are unambiguous in this matter:

- (16) a. Descansar amanhã é uma boa ideia
To rest tomorrow is a good idea
'Having some rest tomorrow is a good idea'
- b. Descansar hoje foi uma boa ideia
rest today was a good idea
'Having some rest today was a good idea'⁶

The mismatch between the time of the verb and the time information expressed by the adverb in (16) guarantees that the infinitive is the one being modified by the adverb. What then is the appropriate analysis?

⁵ For a more detailed discussion on infinitive sentences that complement perception verbs as being VPs, see Felser (1999).

⁶ We would like to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for the hint.

2.1.2 THE DegP HYPOTHESIS

As we mentioned in the previous section, Leopoldino (2022) argues that Felser (1999) provides convincing arguments in favor of a VP structure for the subordinate sentence in (15) a and b. If Felser is correct, that is, if the complements of perception verbs are indeed VPs, as one can perfectly see, time adverbs can be adjoined to a VP structure also. This being so, Sibaldo's generalization starts to get a little weakened, since it is possible to adjoin a time adverb in a structure that is not a TP.

What Leopoldino proposes (and we are assuming his ideas on this squib) is that short exclamatives are APs dominated by a DegP and there are certain positions within DegP related to the activation of exclamative illocutionary force.

The main point in Leopoldino's argumentation against a CP structure in data such as (12) and (13) is that, in general, one can find the realization of the C head along with a wh-phrase in a CP-like structure (no matter if it is an interrogative, a relative clause, or an exclamative sentence); let's just see data below:

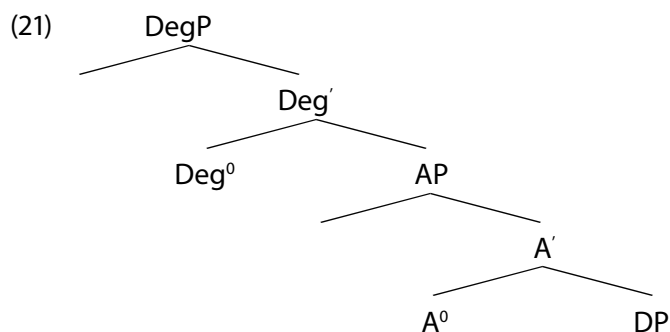
- (17) [CP Quem_i [C que [TP t_i chegou]]]? (Interrogative)
 Who that arrived
 'Who has arrived?'
- (18) A menina [CP de quem [C que [TP eu gosto]]]. (Relative clause)
 The girl of whom that I like'
 'The girl I like'
- (19) [CP Que lindo [C que [TP seu carro é]]]! (Exclamative sentence)
 How beautiful that your car is
 'How beautiful is your car!'

One might not observe the same kind of occurrence in the data put to analysis here:

- (20) a. *Que linda que essa bolsa!
 How beautiful that this purse
- b. *Que bosta que essa aula!
 What shit that this class
- c. *Que lindo que o seu carro!
 How beautiful that the your car

Hence, one seems to have strong reasons to suppose data like (20) do not contain sentential nature, but constitutes something shorter.

Considering Zanuttinni & Portner's (2003) idea that the head of an exclamative sentence might be an adjective⁷, and also considering the semantics of an exclamative, as necessarily an evaluative construction, (see Zamparelli (1993), Castroviejo (2007) and Rett (2011)), we will propose here that short exclamatives such as the ones we put into analysis are, in fact, APs headed by a DegP, presenting the preliminary structure shown below:



We understand there are reasons to think the adjective is the heart of this kind of construction considering two main facts:

Exclamatives must have evaluative content;

Short exclamatives can occur with a bare adjective, but not with a bare noun (see (21) below):

- (22) a. Que linda casa!
 What pretty house
 'What a pretty house!'
- b. Linda casa!
 Pretty house
 'Pretty house!'
- c. Linda!
 Pretty
 'Pretty!'
- d. *Casa!
 House
 'House!'

⁷ Zanuttinni & Portner (2003, p 55)

We also consider “que”⁸ to share with the adjective some evaluative content (see Leopoldino (2018)), considering occurrences as (23)⁹:

- (23) a. Que casa!
 What house
 ‘What a house!’
- b. Que carro!
 What car’
 ‘What a car!’
- c. Que homem!
 What man’
 ‘What a man!’

One might, though, consider the following set of data:

- (24) a. Casarão!
 House.AUG
 ‘Big house!’
- b. Carrão!
 Car.AUG
 ‘Great car!’
- c. Homão (da porra)!
 Man.AUG of fuck
 ‘What a f*ing man!’

As it can be seen from (24), degree morphology seems to be able to activate exclamative illocution, highlighting the contrast between (22d) and (24). This might constitute a strong argument in favor of the DegP hypothesis, though (25) might bring us a little problem:

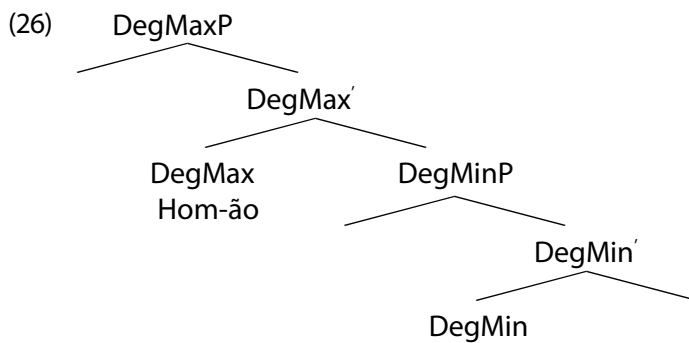
⁸ We are considering that *que* is a determiner of a noun, in a proposal à la Kayne (1994).

⁹ An alternative to this analysis would be supposing there is a null adjective in data such as (22), as shown below:

- (i) Que casa (linda)!
 what house (pretty)!
 ‘What a pretty house!’
- (ii) Que carro (maravilhoso)!
 What car (wonderful)
 ‘What a wonderful car!’
- (iii) Que homem (incrível)!
 What man (incredible)!
 ‘What an incredible man!’

- (25) a. *Carrinho!
Car.MIN
- b. *Casinha!
House.MIN
- c. *Homenzinho!
Man.MIN

If degree morphology is responsible for activating illocutionary exclamative force in (24), what might be the problem with (25)? Well, if we consider exclamation to involve a maximum degree semantics, diminutives might fail to activate exclamation. We then propose there might be more structure within DegP, one (the augmentative, DegMaxP) which is responsible for exclamation:



A bare name must reach DegMaxP and get augmentative morphology in order to activate exclamative force inside DegP. This would ensure the maximum degree semantics required for exclamation.

We propose DegMax must be higher in structure, despite the discussion found in Armelin (2011), which states diminutives are higher. Armelin's analysis is based on data such as (27):

- (27) a. cachorro – *cachorrinhozão/ cachorrãozinho
b. menino – *menininhozão/ meninãozinho
c. chato – *chatinhozão/ chatãozinho

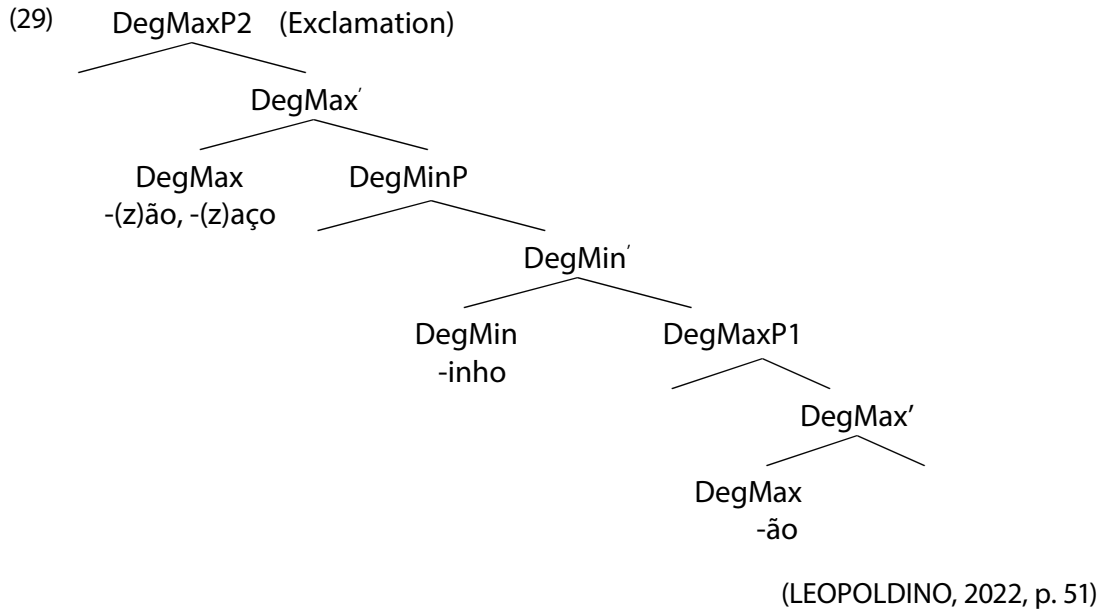
(ARMELIN, 2011, p. 18)

However, one must consider the possibility of data such as (28), also found in Brazilian Portuguese:

- (28) a. Lembrancinhazona!
c. Carrãozaço!
b. Menininhozão!

(LEOPOLDINO, 2022)

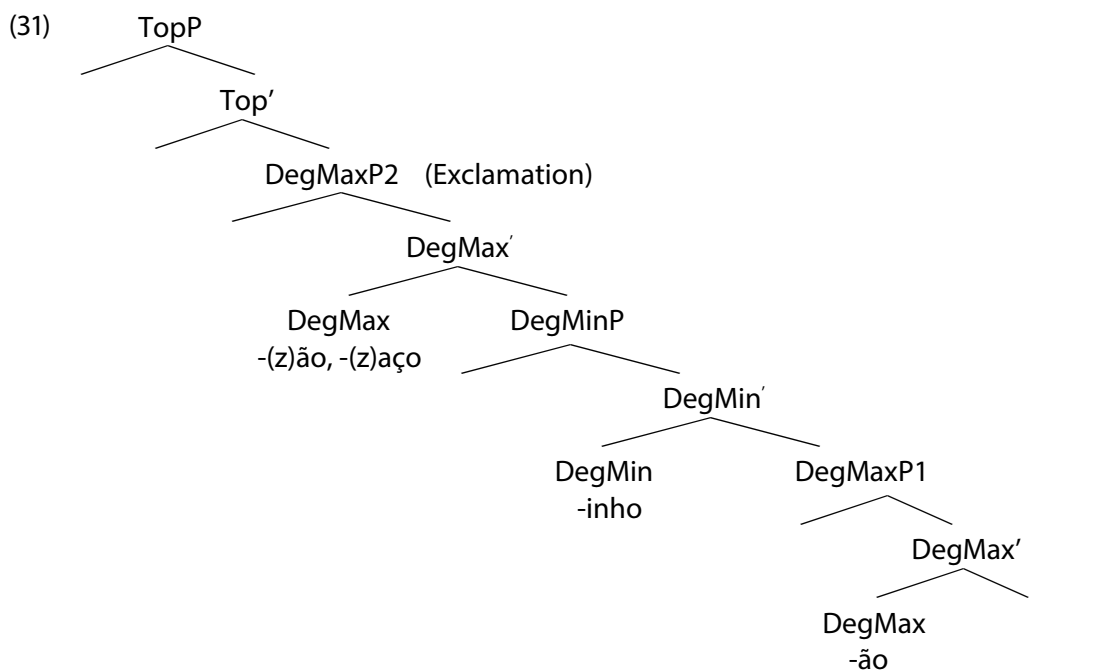
Data, then, suggests there are more available positions inside DegP, namely more than one augmentative projection, being the higher the responsible for exclamation. Leopoldino (2022) proposes the following structure for DegP:



Besides this, Leopoldino (2022) also registered data such as (30):

(30) Esse carro seu, que lindo!

Would there be any other positions within DegP, just as a Topic projection, for instance, that would license (29)? There are reasons to believe so, what would give us the following scenario for the DegP:



3 FINAL REMARKS

In this squib, we've analyzed the non-sentential exclamative constructions in Brazilian Portuguese. First, we argued against the notion that this type of construction holds a CP structure. We did it so by showing that the supposed C head of the CP could not be filled by the term 'que'. Every other sentence with a CP structure allows the C head to accommodate such term. This suggests that the wh-exclamatives analyzed in this squib do not present such structure.

We further argued, following Zanuttini & Portner (2003), Rett (2011) and Castroviejo (2007), that the real structure of the non-sentential wh-exclamatives consists of an AP headed by a DegP. Then, observing the fact that the augmentative morphology, but not the diminutive, is able to license the exclamative force, we proposed that there should be more than one projection inside DegP, one for the augmentative (DegMaxP) and another one for the diminutive (DegMinP)¹⁰.

Furthermore, we've argued that, despite the analyses set by Armelin (2011) (which states diminutives are higher), the order of augmentative and diminutive within DegP is flexible. This fact made us posit there must be more than one DegMaxP projection (DegMaxP1 and DegMaxP2) separated by one DegMinP, each of them bearing different functions. Only the projection of DegMaxP2, the higher node, can activate the illocutionary force¹¹ of an exclamative in non-sentential constructions as the ones we put into analysis here.

Finally, we suggested that constructions like *esse carro seu, que lindo!* constitute some evidence of an even richer structure inside DegP. Specifically, it seems to point to the existence of a syntactic position for Top in this projection, since there is a clear dislocation of a DP to the left of the phrase.

10 It is possible to argue that the augmentatives and the diminutives are in the same projection. In this line of reasoning, the co-occurrence of more than one morpheme would be due to category recursion. However, this analysis fails to explain why there is a fixed order in cases like *carrinhoço*, where the augmentative must be higher than the diminutive, or even the possibility of the occurrence of augmentatives and diminutives in a reverse order.

11 It is important to note that we are not claiming that there is an ForceP in the structure, but that the exclamative force of the sentences is somehow activated by the augmentative morpheme. We leave this aside for further consideration.

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