

THE STRUCTURE OF AN EXCLAMATIVE CONSTRUCTION IN BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE¹

Marcelo Amorim Sibaldo
Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco

Abstract: *The main goal of this paper is to propose a structure for Free Small Clauses of Brazilian Portuguese, through the analysis of an exclamative structure consisting in a juxtaposition of a Predicate and its Subject in that order with no verb or tense morphology in its surface. In order to do so, I show some syntactic-semantic restrictions that govern these structures followed by some syntactic diagnostics. I conclude that Free Small Clauses are root-TPs.*

Keywords: *Free Small Clauses, exclamative sentences, Brazilian Portuguese*

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to describe the internal structure of an exclamative construction of Brazilian Portuguese (BP), which has scarcely been investigated despite its frequent use by Brazilian speakers. I will call this construction the Free Small Clause (FSC)² and define it as the juxtaposition of a predicate and its subject, in that fixed order, without any verb or morphological specification for tense on the surface:

- (1) a. Muito linda a Maria!
 very beautiful the Maria
 ‘Maria is very beautiful!’
 b. Uma maravilha essa aula!
 a marvel this class
 ‘This class is marvelous!’

Our interest in the syntactic structure of FSCs is mainly motivated by the fact that, superficially, such structures seem to be smaller than “ordinary” sentences. Thus, the key question that will guide our discussion is as follows: what is the structure of FSCs in BP? For the analysis, I will use the generative theory in its minimalist version (see Chomsky

¹ This paper is a shorter revision of Sibaldo (2013). I thank Marcel den Dikken, Ana Maria Martins, Nicola Munaro, Elisa Di Domenico, GETEGRA team and two anonymous reviewers for discussion, comments, and suggestions. Due to space issues, some of these comments and suggestions could not be explored in this paper and will be fundamental for future work. The errors, of course, are mine. I also acknowledge the support of CAPES through the grant BEX 1905/14-7.

² This term was first used in Kato (1988).

2001 and subsequent works) as well as the theory of the syntax of predication outlined in den Dikken (2006).

In this paper, I propose that FSCs are root sentences; more specifically, I argue in favor of the idea that they are TP-phases. Thus, unlike Chomsky (2001), I suggest that not only ν Ps and CPs are phases, but also TPs.

2. Syntactic-semantic restrictions

2.1. Restriction on the order

(1) seems to be the “canonical” order for an FSC in BP, given that DP + predicate order (without the copula) is ungrammatical, as already noted by Kato (1988):³

- (2) a. *A Maria muito linda!
 the Maria very beautiful
 b. *Essa aula uma maravilha!
 this class a marvel

2.2. Restrictions on the subject

The subjects of FSCs are always *specific*. Thus, there are no non-specific DPs, bare plurals, negative polarity items, or degree quantifiers (see (3)). Only *specific* and *strongly referential* DPs are the subjects of FSCs (see (4)):

- (3) a. *Muito linda uma saia qualquer!
 very beautiful a skirt any
 b. *Muito lindas saias!
 very beautiful skirts
 c. *Muito linda(s) nenhuma saia/ poucas saias!
 very beautiful no skirt/ few skirts
- (4) a. Muito bonita uma saia que eu vi no shopping!
 very beautiful an skirt which I saw at.the mall
 ‘The skirt I saw at the mall is very beautiful!’
 b. Um amor o seu filho!
 a love the your son
 ‘Your son is lovely!’

³ An anonymous reviewer points out that with “an intonational break, or with a slight interrogative curve at the end of the first DP” the structures in (2) could be improved. I agree with him/her, but, for me, it seems to be the case of two different structures, since, to take one example, in (2) – (ia) below – we cannot have a resumptive pronoun doubling the subject and in the case pointed out by the reviewer – (ib) below –, we can:

- (i) a. *Muito linda [a Maria]_i [ela]_i!
 very beautiful the Maria she
 b. [A Maria]_i?! Muito linda [ela]_i!
 the Maria?! very beautiful she
 ‘Maria?! She is very beautiful!’

2.3. Restrictions on the predicate

FSCs predicates can consist of just the adjectival category (see (5a)) and some constituents that appear similar to DPs at first glance, which I call here “evaluative DPs.” These evaluative DPs differ from “ordinary” DPs when they are in FSCs in that the latter are discarded and the former are allowed (see (5b) *vs.* (5c)) because of their evaluative content. Moreover, others phrases such as PPs⁴ (see (5d)), AdvPs (see (5e)), and VPs⁵ (see (5f)), are also ungrammatical as FSC predicates:

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----------------------|
| (5) | a. Linda a Maria!
beautiful the Mary
'Mary is beautiful!' | <i>APs</i> |
| | b. Um luxo essa sua bolsa!
a luxury this your bag
'Your bag is luxurious!' | <i>Evaluative DPs</i> |
| | c. *Médico esse cara!
doctor this guy | <i>DPs</i> |
| | d. *Na Ponta Verde o João!
in.the Ponta Verde the João | <i>PPs</i> |
| | e. *Bem a Maria!
well the Maria | <i>AdvPs</i> |
| | f. *Dormindo os meus alunos!
sleeping the my students | <i>VPs</i> |

Thus, *evaluative* predicates in FSCs are predicates that, rather than pointing to a fact, describe an impression or personal opinion of the speaker, who mentions something surprising or unusual, which is inherent for exclamative sentences (Zanutini & Portner

⁴ As pointed out by Marcelo Ferreira (p. c.), we can have FSCs with some locative PPs predicates, when they have some kind of modification, as we can see in (i):

- (i) Bem no alvo esse tiro!
well in.the target this shot
'This shot was in the center of the target!'

A reviewer also points out that some PPs can be in FSCs contexts like (iia). For me and for the Brazilian Portuguese speakers I have asked, it would improve a lot if we put the copula in front of it, which could also occur in the other cases I show in (5), but not necessarily. More on PP predicates in FSCs will be focused only on future work.

- (ii) a. De férias o João! Que maravilha!
of vacations the João what marvel
b. 'Tá de férias o João! Que maravilha!
is of vacations the João
'João is on vacations! Wonderful!'

⁵ A reviewer notices that, when modified by an adverb like *sempre* “always”, the structure is fine:

- (i) Sempre dormindo os meus alunos!
always sleeping the.pl my students
'My students are always sleeping!'

2003). “Gradable” predicates must then express a consideration and cannot be referring expressions.

2.4. Restrictions on “tense”

As pointed out earlier, FSCs do not show tense morphology on the surface. However, they can be paraphrased as if the copula were in the present tense (uttered in out-of-the-blue contexts), which is the only possible reading, as shown in the data in (6):⁶

- (6) a. Lindo o dia!
‘The day *is*/**was*/**will be* beautiful!’
b. Bonita a sua roupa!
‘Your outfit *is*/**was*/**will be* pretty!’

3. Diagnosing a structure for FSC

3.1. FSC: Subject adjunction to the right or predicate A’-movement?

To answer the question of whether FSCs display subject adjunction to the right or predicate A’-movement, firstly, I will use the test with adverbs and locative PPs, because it is known that adverbs and locative PPs mark the limit of a nuclear sentence; then, what comes after these elements is considered to occupy the A’-position. The contrast between (7) and (8) below seems to corroborate the idea that the subject of FSCs does not suffer right adjunction:

- (7) a. *Muito lindas na igreja/ontem as flores
very beautiful in.the church/yesterday the flowers
b. *Bonito na festa/ontem o seu vestido
beautiful at.the party/yesterday the your dress
- (8) a. Muito lindas as flores na igreja/ontem!
very beautiful the flowers in.the church/yesterday
‘These flowers were very beautiful in the church/yesterday!’
b. Bonito o seu vestido na festa/ontem!
beautiful the your dress at.the party/yesterday
‘Your dress was beautiful at the party/yesterday!’

Further, quantifiers can be in the subject position of FSCs, but, as it is known, quantifiers cannot occupy an A’-position, as illustrated in (9):

- (9) a. Um amor cada um de vocês!
a love each one of you
‘Each one of you is lovely!’

⁶ Even though FSCs do not show tense morphologically, as described in section 3.3, they use adverbs or adverb phrases as a means of expressing it.

- b. Muito lindos todos esses seus sapatos!
 very beautiful all these your shoes
 ‘All your shoes are very beautiful!’

Given the arguments above, it is tempting to assert that BP FSCs are the result of predicate A'-movement to the left over its subject. However, as (10) shows, Negative Polarity Items (NPIs) are accepted in FSC predicates, and, like quantifiers, NPIs are not usually accepted in A'-position:

- (10) a. Nem um pouco bonita a Maria!
 even a little beautiful the Mary
 ‘Mary is not even a little beautiful!’
 b. Nada bonita a sua irmã!
 nothing pretty the your sister
 ‘Your sister is not even a little bit pretty!’

The data presented in this section suggest that both the subject and predicate of BP FSCs appear to occupy an A-position and not an A'-position.

3.2. VP adverbs: Where are the FSCs?

Let's assume that VP adverbs (e.g., *always*) occupy an adjunction position to VP. By observing the contrast between (11) and (12) below, one can infer that the predicate of FSCs does not seem to have been moved to a position above the SC, since a structure in which the adverb is between the subject and the predicate is ungrammatical (see (12)). On the other hand, (11) shows that the structures in which the adverb is in the initial position are grammatical, suggesting that BP FSCs are actually *in situ*:

- (11) a. [_{SC} Sempre [_{SC} bonita a sua roupa]]
 always beautiful the your outfit
 ‘Your outfit is always beautiful!’
 b. [_{SC} Sempre [_{SC} muito chata essa aula]]
 always very boring this class
 ‘This class is always very boring!’
- (12) a. *Bonita sempre a sua roupa
 beautiful always the your outfit
 b. *Muito chata sempre essa aula
 very boring always this class

3.3. Functional projections: Does the FSC have TP and CP?

To support the idea that ordinary SCs do not have a tense phrase (TP) projection, Cardinaletti & Guasti (1995) use the tests of TP adverbs and of negation:

- (13) a. Hoje eu acho [_{CP} que [_{TP} a Maria estava bonita ontem]]. *Adverbs*
 today I think that the Mary was beautiful yesterday

- ‘Today I think that Mary was beautiful yesterday.’
 b. *Hoje eu acho [_{SC} a Maria bonita ontem].
 today I think the Mary beautiful yesterday
 a’. Eu acho [_{CP} que [_{TP} a Maria **não** está triste]]. *Negation*
 I think that the Mary not is sad
 ‘I think that Mary is not sad.’
 b’. *Eu acho [_{SC} a Maria **não** triste].
 I think the Mary not sad

FSCs in BP, unlike ordinary SCs, seem to have a TP projection because TP adverbs can be adjoined to them (see (14)):

- (14) a. Bonita a sua roupa **ontem!**
 beautiful the your outfit yesterday
 ‘Your outfit was beautiful yesterday!’
 b. Muito lindo o dia **hoje!**
 very beautiful the day today
 ‘The day is very beautiful today!’

The negation test shows that FSCs do not have a negative counterpart, as illustrated in (15):

- (15) (*Nã) linda (*nã) a Maria (*nã)!
 (*not) beautiful (*not) the Mary (*not)

However, this characteristic is not surprising, as it holds for any exclamative sentence⁷ (Zanuttini & Portner 2003; Villalba 2004). Nonetheless, a piece of evidence that can be given, in the sense that negation can occur in FSCs, is example (10) above, for, as already pointed out by Zanuttini (1991), an inherent relation between negation (including NPIs) and T(ense) can be established. It is assumed in cases like (10) that a category NegP is added to TP. Therefore, I think it is reasonable to assume that there is a TP projection in sentences with NPIs, such as (10).

All tests carried out in this section support the idea that BP FSCs, differently from ordinary SCs, have a TP projection. However, the data in (16) below seem to show evidence that they do not have a CP node.

- (16) a. A Maria achou a sua roupa muito bonita!
 the Mary found the your outfit very beautiful
 ‘Mary found your outfit very beautiful!’
 b. A Maria achou muito bonita a sua roupa!
 the Mary found very beautiful the your outfit
 ‘Mary found very beautiful your outfit!’
 c. Hoje a Maria achou que a sua roupa estava muito bonita ontem!
 today the Mary found that the your outfit was very beautiful yesterday
 ‘Today Mary found that your outfit was very beautiful yesterday!’

⁷ Except in cases of expletive negation and others of standard negation, which require appropriate context, what does not seem to be the case in (15). See Villalba (2004).

- d. *Hoje a Maria achou muito bonita a sua roupa ontem!
 today the Mary found very beautiful the your outfit yesterday

Example (2) shows that the order *Subject + Predicate* (S-P) is always ruled out. Nevertheless, the contrast between (16a) and (16b) seems to suggest that, embedded under the exceptional case-marking (ECM) verb *achar* ‘think,’ both order (S-P and P-S) can be found. Verbs such as *achar* ‘think’ in BP select a common SC (see (16a)) or a CP (see (16c)). Therefore, [*Muito bonita a sua roupa ontem*] ‘Very beautiful your clothes yesterday’ in (16d) is excluded as an FSC (= TP). Then, (16d) seems to be the key evidence to assume that FSCs in BP are root TPs; that is, FSCs are, as they are named, “free” and cannot be embedded.

Moreover, if the analysis undertaken here is to be taken into account, one can easily explain why there may be switching in the order S-P / P-S after ECM verbs in (16a) and (16b): These examples have a Small Clause complement, and its order can be switched, in opposition to FSCs, which have a fixed order.

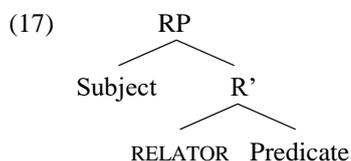
4. FSC as a TP

According to den Dikken (2007: 1), predication

in semantics is property ascription, and in syntax involves an asymmetrical structure including the predicate, its subject, and a functional element (the RELATOR) mediating the uniformly asymmetrical (but non-directional) relationship between the predicate and its subject

So, for this author, in a predication there will always be a RELATOR (R), head of the predication projection, RP, that’s why it is *configurational*. Differently from Bowers’ (1993), who assumes a functional head Pr (“a mnemonic for predication”, p. 595) and explicitly recognizes it as “a new functional category” (p. 593), den Dikken’s approach states RELATOR to be functional and abstract, acting as a placeholder for any functional head in a relation of predication between two terms. According to this perspective, RELATOR can be a copula, a preposition or the tense, for instance.

Therefore, all relations of predication are syntactically represented by the structure in which constituents denoting the predicate and the subject are dependent on a connective (the RELATOR) establishing the (syntactic and semantic) connection between the two constituents. The hierarchical structure would be asymmetrical as in (17) below:



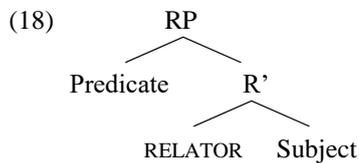
Since RELATOR establishes the connection between the predicate and its subject, the approach sketched in (17)

gives syntactic, configurational expression to perspectives on syntactic predication that appeal to ‘predicate linking’ [...] the idea that ‘predicates appear in positions where they can be linked to their subjects’ (Heycock 1991: 21).

(den Dikken 2006: 12)

that is, predicate must to be one of the two dependents of RELATOR, exactly as in (17). Within this framework, the *locality* of a predication relation is captured since RELATOR accommodates both the predicate and the subject in its minimal domain (roughly, the specifier and complement position in a given head).⁸

It is interesting to note that the notion of locality set out above does not impose any directionality on the relations of predication, that is to say, these relations can also be non-directional. For non-directional or reverse predication I mean a predication whose predicate is in the specifier, with the following configuration:⁹



Quoting den Dikken’s (2006: 251), the RELATOR

is a cover for anything that may be used to connect a predicate to its subject [...]. It is explicitly not proposed to represent a syntactic category [...].

Adopting a nondirectional RP configuration for SCs (see den Dikken 2006) and bearing in mind the results of the tests applied earlier, I proposed the structure in (19) for FSCs of BP. It is important to notice that this outcome was possible based on the assumptions that FSCs of BP: (i) are not the result of left movement of the predicate, nor of adjunction to the right of the subject (see section 3.1.); (ii) are *in situ* (see section 3.2.); and (iii) have only a TP projection in their internal structure (and, of course, RP) (see section 3.3).



As previously discussed, the tests in section 3.3 suggest that FSCs are root TPs; that is, they are autonomous sentences that neither embed nor can be embedded. They also do not have a CP projection. In sum, they are actually “free.” However, this idea does not seem to be compatible with what is suggested in Chomsky (2001 *et passim*), whose proposal is that

⁸ It is worth noting that the RELATOR head is *never* lexical, for being a functional head, RELATOR is not a θ -role assigner. From the perspective outlined here, a head H is either θ -assigner or the mediator of a predication, but never both at the same time, that is, there is a division of labor in θ -assignment and mediation of relationship of predication. Another assumption of this approach is that lexical projections do not have a specifier, while all RELATOR projections must have a specifier.

⁹ As den Dikken (2006: 13) proposes, the structure in (18) has an essential role in the syntax of nominal, adjectival and adverbial predication. See den Dikken (2006), for many cases explained by reverse predication.

structures are *equative* structures and FSCs are *predicational* ones (using Higgins 1979 traditional typology).

After the description and diagnostics I did here, I can conclude that FSCs in BP are root TPs, that is, TP-phases. If the analysis proposed here is on the right track, these constructions could reinforce the evidence that TP can also be considered a phase (and not only CP and *v*P, against Chomsky 2001), as already proposed—however, in a different and independent way, as suggested by Gallego (2007), among many others.

References

- Cardinaletti, Anna, and Maria Teresa Guasti. 1995. "Small clauses: Some controversies and issues of acquisition". In *Syntax and semantics: Small clauses* ed. by Anna Cardinaletti and Maria Teresa Guasti, 1-23. California: Academic Press.
- Castroviejo, Elena. 2007. "A Degree-Based Account of Wh-Exclamatives in Catalan". In *Proceedings of Sinn und Bedeutung*, ed. by E. Puig-Waldemüller, 134-149. Barcelona: Universitat Pompeu Fabra.
- Chomsky, Noam. 1993. "A minimalist program for linguistic theory". In *The View from Building 20*, ed. by Kenneth Hale and Samuel J. Keyser. 1-52. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.
- Chomsky, Noam. 2001. "Derivation by phase". In *Ken Hale: A Life in Language*, ed. by Michael Kenstowicz, 1-52. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
- Chomsky, Noam. 2004. "Beyond explanatory adequacy". In *Structures and beyond: The cartography of syntactic structure*, ed. by Adriana Belletti, 104-131. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dikken, Marcel den. 2006. *Relators and linkers: The syntax of predication, predicate inversion, and copulas*. Cambridge, MA.: The MIT Press.
- Dikken, Marcel den. 2007. "Phase Extension: Contours of a Theory of the Role of Head Movement in Phrasal Extraction". *Theoretical Linguistics* 33 (1): 1-41.
- Gallego, Ángel. 2007. "Phase theory and parametric variation". PhD Dissertation. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Barcelona.
- Gutiérrez-Rexach, Javier. 2008. "Spanish Root Exclamatives at the Syntax/Semantics Interface". *Catalan Journal of Linguistics* 7: 117-133.
- Heycock, Caroline. 1995. "The internal structure of Small Clauses". In *Proceedings of the 39th meeting of the North East Linguistics Society (NELS 39)* 25, 5: 223-238.
- Higgins, F. R. 1979. *The Pseudo-Cleft Construction in English*. New York: Garland.
- Kato, Mary. 1988. "Free and dependent small clauses in Brazilian Portuguese". *Handout presented in GT de Teoria da Gramática*.
- Kato, Mary. 2007. "Free and dependent small clauses in Brazilian Portuguese". *DELTA* 23, n. especial. 85-111.
- Moro, Andrea. 1997. *The Raising of Predicates: Predicative Noun Phrases and the Theory of Clause Structure*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Moro, Andrea. 2000. *Dynamic Antisymmetry*. Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Nunes, Jairo. 2007. "Relativized minimality and the Extended Peeking Principle". *Cuadernos de Lingüística del I. U. I. Ortega y Gasset* 14: 73-86.
- Sibaldo, Marcelo Amorim. 2013. "Free Small Clauses of Brazilian Portuguese as a TP-Phase". In *Selected Proceedings of the 16th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium*, ed. by Jennifer Cabrelli Amaro et al., 324-337. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.

- Villalba, Xavier. 2004. "Exclamatives and negation". Ms. Bellaterra: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.
- Viotti, Evani de Carvalho. 1999. "A sintaxe das sentenças existenciais no português do Brasil [The syntax of Brazilian Portuguese existential sentences]". PhD. dissertation. Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo.
- Zanuttini, Raffaella. 1991. "Syntactic properties of sentential negation". PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.
- Zanuttini, Raffaella, and Paul Portner. 2003. "Exclamative clauses: At the syntax-semantics interface". *Language* 79(1): 39-81.