DPs/WHs followed by highlighter in Atlantic restructured languages: a non cleft construction

Márcia Santos Duarte de Oliveira

*Universidade de São Paulo, FAPESP, Brasil*

marcia.oliveira@usp.br

**Abstract:** The current study considers the fronted phrases followed by *que* ‘that’, without copula, in Atlantic restructured languages, by analysing the phenomenon from a diachronic perspective. Different from several other diachronic analyses, in this paper it is considered that fronted phrases followed by *que* ‘that’, without copula, are better described as non-cleft, and are therefore monoclusal constructions. Our proposal supports the concept of a highlighter in restructured languages. This highlighter manifests a feature of a universal nature and it was reinforced due to contact with African languages. Apart from this, the current study goes further, presenting a different analysis from a diachronic perspective and which takes into consideration universal features.

**Keywords:** Fronted DPs/WHs, highlighter, non-cleft construction.

---

1 I am greatly grateful to the reviser/editors of this paper for the painstaking and careful review of the text and also for their important suggestions. It is needless to say that the remaining imperfections are of my own responsibility.
Resumo: O presente estudo considera os sintagmas fronteados seguidos por ‘que’, sem cópula, em línguas reestruturadas do Atlântico e busca uma análise do fenômeno a partir de uma perspectiva diacrônica. No entanto, diferente de outras análises diacrônicas, neste trabalho, assumimos que os sintagmas fronteados seguidos por ‘que’, sem cópula, são melhor descritos como sentenças não-clivadas; logo, são tomados como construções monoclausais. Nossa proposta corrobora o conceito de ‘highlighter’ em línguas reestruturadas, mas ratificamos a ideia de que esse ‘highlighter’ manifeste traço de natureza universal e que tenha sido reforçado nas línguas devido ao contato com línguas africanas. À parte essa questão, nosso estudo vai além e apresenta uma diferente análise para o fenômeno sob enfoque, que, mesmo tendo como ponto de vista a perspectiva diacrônica, leva em consideração traços de natureza universais.


1 Introduction

The morphosyntactic construction discussed in this study is that of fronted phrases followed by que ‘that’, without a copula, in partially restructured Atlantic languages, as in (1)-(2)²:

(1) Brazilian Vernacular Portuguese — BVP³

O BoLo⁴ que o João comeu

the cake highlighter the João ate

‘The cake that John ate’

²The abbreviations and symbols are at the end of the paper.
³Costa & Duarte (2001: 629). Example (12a), renumbered and translated. The heading and glossing lines are ours.
⁴In this paper, the focalized element is marked by capital letters in the more prominent syllable (intonation peak).
(2) **BVP**\(^5\)

O que você fez?
what highlighter 2S to do.3S.PST
‘What did you do?’

In this paper, the morphosyntactic element *que* ‘that’, exemplified in (1) and (2) above, is referred to as a highlighter\(^6\), following the perspective suggested by Oliveira (2011) and Jorge & Oliveira (2012) in their analysis of this phenomenon. As such, this approach represents a departure from the majority of proposals in the literature concerning constructions with DPS/WHPs followed by *que* ‘that’ without a copula.

Previous analyses — Costa & Duarte (2001); Braga, Kato & Mioto (2009), among others — propose that there is elision of the copula, hence categorizing sentences (1) and (2) as a subtype of (pseudo-)cleft constructions. Before raising this particular issue, the terms to be used shall be defined first in the pages to follow.

### 1.1 Highlighter and Atlantic Restructured Languages

The term ‘Atlantic restructured languages’ is understood as a technical term related to Linguistic Contact. Oliveira & Holm (2011) point out that\(^7\):

The term ‘Atlantic Creoles’ [...] refers to Creoles that have been linked to African languages (ALS). Thus the term is related to the languages that have ALS as their substrates.[...]

Therefore, by using the term ‘Atlantic restructured languages’ in this paper, an approach is adopted which sees language contact as part of the process of formation of the constructions exemplified in (1) and (2).

In 1980, Holm published an article that is of direct relevance to the morphosyntactic question analyzed in this work. According to Holm (1980: 372-3):

---

\(^5\)Oliveira (2011: 79); example (1). The glossing line of Oliveira (2011) was changed. The heading is ours.

\(^6\)The term highlighter was introduced by Holm (1980) and it refers to a syntactic discursive category attested in West African languages and, later on, widespread to other contact languages.

\(^7\)Oliveira & Holm (2011: 32, note 6, our translation).
there seems to be a syntactic category ‘highlighter’ in the mother tongues of many of the first West Africans who reanalyzed Portuguese, English and French into the pidgins that became the Atlantic creoles.

this highlighter is an amazing chameleon that has blended almost imperceptibly into the surrounding lexicon of Creole languages stretching halfway round the world, from the Indian Ocean to the Caribbean (and possibly the Pacific).

Recently, researchers have also presented evidence of a morphosyntactic highlighter in partially restructured languages: Oliveira (2011) and Jorge & Oliveira (2012) on Brazilian Vernacular Portuguese\(^8\) (henceforth BVP); Santos & Silva (2012) on Angolan and Guinea Bissau Portuguese; and Figueiredo & Santos (a sair) on the Portuguese spoken in Almoxarife (São Tomé and Príncipe) and Libolo (Kwanza Sul, Angola).

For Oliveira & Holm (2011: 36, translation ours):\(^9\)

The ‘highlighters’ presented here […] seem to point to a typical construction from Africa that ‘invaded the world’ following the phenomenon of the Portuguese Age of Discovery, as explained by Holm (1980).

In the following pages, Holm’s approach to considering language contact as part of the process of formation of restructured languages (including ‘partially restructured languages’ such as BVP) will be stressed. But, different from Holm’s proposal, it is understood that the substratist hypothesis with regards to the highlighter construction, cannot alone explain all the features of restructured languages. It has been pointed out that the phenomenon discussed in this study is also attested in non-restructured languages (Oliveira 2011: 109-114), as in example (3) of Malagasy, showing the highlighter without a copula\(^{10}\):

\(^8\)Among others.

\(^9\)‘Os ‘highlighters’ aqui apresentados podem ser atestados das Américas ao Oceano Índico e parecem apontar para uma construção típica de África que ‘invadiu o mundo’ a partir do fenômeno das Grandes Navegações, como explicitado por Holm (1980).’

(3) WHP followed by highlighter, without a copula, in Malagasy\textsuperscript{11}
\begin{verbatim}
amin=\textit{inona} no \textit{manasa} \textit{lamba} Rasoa
with=what \text{highlighter} wash.active \text{clothes} Rasoa
\end{verbatim}

‘With what did Rasoa wash clothes?’

Oliveira (2011: 110) provides a good summary of the data in (3):

What we want to emphasize is the analysis in which this data does not belong to a cleft structure, but to a monoclausal structure [...] . Although Malagasy is not a restructured type language, it does have the same type of focus in question-word elements as in restructured languages [...].

This study, thereby confirms the findings of Oliveira (2011), underlining the fact that Malagasy is not an African language, neither a restructured language, rather an Austronesian language. So, the highlighter cannot be said to be ‘a typical construction from Africa that has blended almost imperceptibly into the surrounding lexicon of the restructured languages stretching halfway round the world’ in the sense of Holm (1980: 372, 373) and Oliveira & Holm (2011: 36). Rather, following Oliveira (2011: 112-115), it is a typical construction widely attested in Africa that has promoted its morphosyntactic features in the ‘New World’ by linguistic contact. It is also important to say that the highlighter has ‘universal features’.

1.2 Partially/Fully Restructured Languages

In this study, the concepts of partially/fully restructured languages followed, are those introduced in Holm (2004) and confirmed in Oliveira & Holm (2011) — among others:

According to Holm (2004), five languages are the result of ‘partial restructuring’:

Brazilian Vernacular Portuguese — BVP; Nonstandard Caribbean Spanish — NSCS; African American English — AAE; Afrikaans — A; and Vernacular Lsects of Réunionnais French — VLRF. Holm proposes that BVP, NSCS, AAE, A, and VLRF are languages restructured from Portuguese, Spanish, English, Dutch, and French,

\textsuperscript{11}Oliveira (2011: 110). Example renumbered.
respectively. For the author, the ‘partially restructured languages’ are not part, typologically, of the creole languages group. Creole languages, according to Holm (2004), are ‘fully restructured languages’.

Holm & Inverno (2005), among other authors, and Figueiredo (2010) add the Angolan Portuguese and the Portuguese of the community of Almoxarife (São Tomé and Príncipe), respectively, to the group considered partially restructured languages.

Holm (2004: 135-6) pointed out that the most relevant social factor in determining the structure of a partially restructured language is the demographic ratio between native and non-native speakers of that language. This explains why the partial restructuring of languages occurred in the new societies where neither the European nor the non-European group was numerous enough to overwhelm one another culturally. This is the main differentiating social factor between the partially restructured languages and the completely restructured languages, such as Creole languages, which developed in a social context where the African group was considerably more numerous than the European group — Cf. Holm (2004: 24).

Holm (2004) stresses that one of the advantageous ways of establishing a general typology of partially restructured languages is by making morphosyntactic comparisons across lexical boundaries. Holm (2012) follows in this direction, comparing the most salient features of Afrikaans with the corresponding features of BVP, and drawing attention to morphosyntactic constructions that match those of Creoles and their substrate languages rather than those of their European lexical source language. One of the morphosyntactic constructions presented in Holm (2012: 414) for BVP, is that with a ‘focus marker’, the morpheme que — ‘that’. In this study, the morpheme que — ‘that’ is referred to as the ‘highlighter’.

In his study, Holm (2012: 416) came to the conclusion that morphosyntactic constructions such as the one stated above are evidence that there are structures that distinguish ‘fully restructured languages from those that are partially restructured — and those have not been restructured at all’. However, as noted above — see (1.1), it is crucial to point out that the morphosyntactic

\[\text{Holm (2012: 414, (51)) exemplifies the ‘focus marker’ que — ‘that’ with a data from BVP: Onde que você mora?}\]
The phenomenon investigated in this paper is also attested in non-restructured languages. In this regard, Oliveira (2011: 111-113) argues that if language contact is to be considered as a part of the process of formation of restructured languages, there is a need for a universal theory. So, in this study an approach is taken that will comprise both Linguistic Contact and Formal Linguistics theories.

The paper is divided into four main sections in addition to this introduction. In section 2, a short review of the cleft operation is presented, showing that the morphosyntactic phenomenon of fronted phrases followed by que ‘that’ without copula has been previously analysed by scholars as being the result of a grammaticalization process that erases the invariable copula. In section 3 a different analysis is undertaken which proposes that the phenomenon is better described as non-cleft, and is, therefore, a monoclausal construction. Section 4 presents the conclusions.

2 A short review of the clefting operation

This second section consists of a review on some relevant literature on clefting that is important to the analysis of DPS/WHs followed by a ‘highlighter’ and without a copula, as seen in (1) (O Bolo que João comeu ‘The cake that John ate’) and (2) (O que que você fez? ‘What did you do?’).

Clefting is a grammatical operation for marking focus through the copula in two specialized constructions: (i) cleft sentences; (ii) pseudo-cleft sentences (Ribeiro & Côrtes Júnior 2009: 210, note 3). The difference between the two constructions is in the type of WH-word that introduces the ‘subordinate clause’. In cleft constructions, this item is an invariable subordinator of the complementizer type, whilst with pseudo-cleft constructions it is a morpheme similar to that which introduces free relatives (Braga, Kato & Mioto 2009: 253). Consider the examples below in BVP, from Oliveira (2011)\textsuperscript{13}:

\begin{equation}
\begin{array}{l}
(4) \text{Context-Sentence to Achieve Focus (Cleft)} \\
\text{a. O linguista escreveu um trabalho} \\
\text{The linguist wrote a paper} \\
\text{‘The linguist wrote a paper.’}
\end{array}
\end{equation}

\textsuperscript{13}Oliveira (2011: 80); examples (2a-b), (3a-b), renumbered. The headings are ours.
b. \([\text{TP} \ O \ linguista \ escreveu \ um \ trabalho]^{14}\)

c. **Cleft**

\[\text{Foi [um traBAlho] que o linguista escreveu}\]

‘It was [a paper] that the linguist wrote.’ (He did not write a book.)

d. \([\text{ip} \ ... \ foi [scl \ [\text{NP} \ um \ traBAlho][scl][CP \ OP_j \ que \ o \ linguista \ escreveu[v_j][v_i]]](i=j)^{15}\]

(5) **Context-Sentence to Achieve Focus (Pseudo-Cleft)**

a. **A Hellena projetou a casa do fotógrafo**

‘Hellena designed the photographer’s house.’

b. \([\text{TP} \ A \ Hellena \ projetou \ a \ casa \ do \ fotógrafo]^{16}\)

c. **Pseudo-Cleft**

\[\text{Quem projetou a casa do fotógrafo foi [a HeLLEna]}\]

‘Who designed the photographer’s house was [HeLLEna].’ (and not João)

---

^{14}The structure is greatly simplified. It aims to demonstrate that the sentence is a
monoclausal construction.

^{15}The syntagmatic structure in (4b) is based in Brito & Duarte (2003: 689; example
(17b)). The phrases in the structure were translated. The typology of cleft
constructions used by Brito & Duarte (2003) is based on Casteleiro (1979), Kato
‘[. . .]The empty category attested in the clausal constituent that occupies the
subject position of the small clause is bound by an operator. The operator may
be a relative pronoun or null operator whose value is set by the focusing element
scholars, in general (including Brito & Duarte (2003)), it is assumed that every
cleft structure contains a relative (see, Braga, Kato & Mioto 2009: 283). However,
other authors follow a different direction, taking the approach of Modesto (1995,
2001) and confirmed in Mioto & Negrão (2007), that ‘not all cleft structures do
contain a relative’.

^{16}See note 14.
It can be demonstrated that sentences (4a) and (5a) have been split into two and that the result of this split is embedding, as seen in (4c-d) and (5c-d). Oliveira (2011: 80-81) explains that what identifies the structure in (4c) as a cleft construction is the presence of the copulative verb *ser* ‘to be’ and the complementizer *que* ‘that’. A similar case is verified in (5c) where is attested a pseudo-cleft construction. In structures like (5d), the pseudo-cleft construction is made with a pronoun-wh, such as *que* ‘who’. It should be noted also that the phrases *um traBAlho* ‘a paper’ and *a HelLEna* ‘Hellena’ are focalized.18

In the following subsection, attention will focus on the pseudo-cleft structures as exemplified in (5c) above.

### 2.1 Particular Pseudo-Clefts

Sentences such as (5c) above are termed ‘basic pseudo-cleft’ (Costa & Duarte 2001: 627). However, the literature states that there are two types of pseudo-cleft clauses highly restricted among the Romance languages: (a) *that-less clefts*19 and (b) *inverse that-cleft*20; (c) *inverse that-cleft question*21 (Costa & Duarte 2001: 629-30).

#### a. That-less Clefts

Ambar (2005) observed that in Portuguese there is a special construction which bears the presence of the copulative verb *ser* ‘to be’ just as in the clefts, but without the complementizer. This type of structure is called ‘that-less clefts’ by Ambar (2005: 110).

---

17 The syntagmatic structure in (5d) is based on Brito & Duarte (2003: 689; example (13a)). The phrases in the structure were translated. (See note 15 for a review of the typology of the structure of ‘cleft operation’ used by Brito & Duarte (2003). Concerning the ‘basic pseudo-cleft’, these authors state: ‘If the relative clause rises to the specifier position of the Inflection Phase we have a ‘Basic Pseudo-Cleft’ [...]’ (Brito & Duarte 2003: 689; our translation).
18 We have changed the numbering of the examples in the quote.
19 This terminology is from Ambar (2005: 97).
20 This terminology is from Kato & Ribeiro (2009: 144-145).
21 Cf. note 20.
(6) **That-less Clefts — Brazilian Vernacular Portuguese**

**A Hellena projetou foi [a CAsa do fotógrafo]**

the Hellena projetou was [house of the photographer]

‘Hellena did design the house.’ (and not the library)

Ambar (2005: 110) comments that there are different analyses for ‘that-less clefts’ such as that exemplified in (6): (a) In the views of Casteleiro (1977) and Kato & Raposo (1996), these structures derive from pseudo-clefts, through deletion of WH-pronoun; (b) Ambar (1999) treats them as remnant IP movement; and (c) Costa and Duarte (2001) consider them to involve non-maximal VP s. However, further analysis of the structure of ‘that-less cleft’ is beyond the scope of this paper.

b. **Inverse That-Cleft and Inverse That-Cleft Question**

The singularity of the inverse that-cleft and inverse that-cleft question construction resides in the sequence of é que ‘is that’, located to the right of the element that is focalized. Observe the phrase [a Hellena] followed by é que ‘is that’, below:

c. **Inverse That-Cleft — BVP**

(7) **A HeLLEna é que projetou a casa do fotógrafo**

the Hellena is that design the house of the photographer

‘It was Hellena that designed the photographer’s house.’ (and not João)

Brito & Duarte (2003: 691) analyze the sequence é que ‘is that’, exemplified in (7), as a construction that results from a process of syntactic reanalysis. Accordingly, é que ‘is that’ is a single fixed form, which occupies a single syntactic position. This is not a new proposal, because Campos & Xavier (1991: 261-264) had previously argued that the sequence é que ‘is that’ is an emphatic sequence which is in the nucleus of the complementizer phrase (CP). Subsequently, Costa & Duarte (2001: 628) proposed that the sequence é que ‘is that’ is the process of incorporation of the complementizer que ‘that’ in the copula form é (is), the nucleus of the inflection phrase (IP). The analysis proposed by Costa & Duarte (2001: 628) is slightly revised by Brito & Duarte.

---

22 We are not also pursuing in this section the behavior of tense in this clefts in Portuguese (the main concern of Ambar’s analysis).
(2003). The latter researchers propose that the ‘single fixed form’ é que ‘is that’ occurs in the subject position of the small clause and, via verb movement to Inflexion; the copula and the complementizer come to occupy the position of the functional core Inflection of the copulative sentence. In the view of Brito & Duarte (2003: 691-692), a process of syntactic reanalysis of the expression é que ‘is that’ occurred in Modern Portuguese, and such cleft constructions are characterized by the presence of a null complementizer in the clausal constituent.

Brito & Duarte (2003: 691-692), also claim that the expression é que ‘is that’ occurs in the ‘inverse that-cleft question’ in European Portuguese, as in the following example:

(8) **Inverse That-Cleft Question — European Portuguese**

O que é que o corvo fez?

What is that the crow did?

‘What did the crow do?’

In this paper, the focalized element in cleft sentences is marked by capital letters in the more prominent syllable (intonation peak) — as in example (7) [He.LLE.na]. On the contrary, there is no special intonation peak on o que ‘what’. This syntactic-phonological fact of WH focus is considered in Oliveira (2011: 94) and upheld by the analysis in Jorge and Oliveira (2012: 258).

Brito & Duarte (2003: 692) claim that the strategy of é que ‘is that’ in ‘pseudo-cleft WH-questions’, as in (8), is a phenomenon that began to develop in Modern Portuguese. So, in their view, the syntactic reanalysis process that originated é que ‘is that’ as a single fixed form in pseudo cleft constructions did not occur in Old and Classic Portuguese. However, studies such as Kato & Ribeiro (2009: 144) suggest that ‘inverse that-cleft’ began to occur in Portuguese in the fifteenth century. Kato & Ribeiro (2009: 144) present evidence that ‘inverse that-cleft question’ started to appear in the language in the seventeenth century, thus much earlier than what was claimed in previous studies. So, one of the problems with the analysis of é que ‘is

---

23 Brito & Duarte (2003: 692); datum (25a); the re-numbering, translation, heading and glossing line are ours.

24 Inverse ‘That-Cleft Question’, as in (8), is also attested in BVP: (i) O que é que Marta fez? ‘What did Marta do?’. See note 4.

that’ as a single fixed form in pseudo-cleft constructions is the conclusion that these structure only began to develop in Modern Portuguese. However, the analysis of the structure of ‘inverse that-cleft’ and ‘inverse that-cleft question’, mainly in European Portuguese, is beyond the scope of the current paper. Nevertheless, there is a need for highlighting a particular type of pseudo-cleft construction, taking into consideration the fact that previous analyses have defended the hypothesis that they have two subtypes. This is the topic of the next subsection.

2.2 Reduced Inverse Pseudo-Clefs

The research literature shows that, among the Romance languages, the structures ‘inverse that-cleft’ and ‘inverse that-cleft question’ permit two subtypes of structures that are attested only in BVP (Costa & Duarte 2001: 628). They may be termed ‘reduced inverse that-cleft’ and ‘reduced inverse that-cleft question’ constructions.

As seen in section 1, fronted phrases followed by que ‘that’, without a copula, have been considered by many researchers to be cleft structures allowed by copula erasure. Below, sentences (9) and (10) are repeated, and renumbered. The new headings indicate the analysis of these constructions as subtypes of inverse pseudo-clefts sentences, as conceived by many scholars:

(9) Reduced Inverse That-Cleft - BVP

O Bolo que o João comeu
the cake COMP the João ate
‘The cake that John ate.’ (and not the bread)

(10) Reduced Inverse That-Cleft Question - BVP

O que que você fez?
What COMP 2s to do.3s.pst
‘What did you do?’

27This terminology is based in Kato & Ribeiro (2009: 148), who refer only to our ‘reduced inverse that-cleft question’ type, and calling it a ‘reduced cleft’.
Costa & Duarte (2001: 628) believe that a significant structural difference between the constructions in (9), a ‘reduced inverse that-cleft’, and ‘inverse that-cleft’, as in (7) cannot be attested. The authors also call attention to the ‘inverse that-cleft question’ (as in (8)), in BVP. Likewise, according to Costa & Duarte (2001: 628), it is most likely that a significant structural difference between the constructions, as in (8), an ‘inverse that-cleft’ question, and ‘reduced inverse that-cleft question’, as in (10), also cannot be attested.

Costa & Duarte (2001: 628) and Kato & Ribeiro (2009: 152), among others, analyze the reduced inverse pseudo-cleft sentences, as exemplified in (9)-(10) above, as a result of a grammaticalization process that erases the invariable copula, which leads to what is called (in this paper) ‘the reduced inverse pseudo-cleft’\(^{28}\). They claim that the phenomenon did not affect Modern European Portuguese, but only BVP.

Nevertheless, the current study rejects the reduced inverse pseudo-cleft approach. The following section will propose a different hypothesis.

### 3 Reaffirming another analysis

In the present study it is assumed the proposal that departs from the analysis that claimed that sentences as (9)-(10) are the result of a process of grammaticalization of the copula, which gives rise to ‘reduced (pseudo)cleft’ constructions in BVP. The analysis undertaken here corroborates other approaches that suggest that such constructions are better described as non-cleft, and are therefore monoclausal constructions (Oliveira 2011: 111).

It is also important to recall that the phenomenon under analysis did not affect only BVP, but has been attested in other partially restructured languages. As seen in subsection 1.2, researchers have presented evidence of a morphosyntactic highlighter in the Portuguese of Angola, Guinea Bissau and Almoxarife (São Tomé and Príncipe). This phenomenon has also been attested in Creole languages, such as Capeverdean, Principense, and Jamaican Creole (Oliveira and Holm 2011: 32-33).

Oliveira & Holm (2011: 32-35) describe fronted WHs followed by a highlighter in Atlantic Creole languages (see example (2)); the authors conclude that in such sentences ‘[…] there is neither a clefting structure, nor a copula, nor a complementizer. There is a fronted WH-phrase followed by a focus marker.’\(^{29}\).

In the next subsections, it will be shown that the analysis of fronted phrases followed by que ‘that’, without copula in Atlantic restructured languages — examples (1)-(2) — has been divided between two groups of researchers.

\(^{28}\) Costa & Duarte (2001: 628) propose the same structure for ‘inverse pseudo-clefts’ and ‘reduced inverse pseudo-clefts’.

\(^{29}\) Oliveira & Holm (2011: 34, translated).
3.1 Two Different Approaches

Vieira (2012: 15) discusses copula absence and ‘highlighters’ in WH-questions in BVP, noting that the phenomenon has been analyzed in two different ways by linguists: (i) Those who take into consideration the formation of contemporary BVP from a diachronic perspective, favoring the language contact aspect and the weight of its socio-historical background, and comparing BVP with languages such as Creoles; (ii) Mostly Brazilian scholars, who conduct synchronic studies considering only the morphosyntactic aspects. For the purpose of this paper, a diachronic perspective is adopted, yet synchronic aspects are not excluded when considering the morphosyntactic constructions under analysis. This is the subject of next section.

3.1.1 The Diachronic and Universalist Hypotheses are not Mutually Exclusive

In the present study, the diachronic position is adopted in order to analyse fronted phrases followed by *que* ‘that’, without copula in Atlantic restructured languages. However, it should be noted that, in explaining features of this phenomenon analysed in restructured languages, the diachronic (substrate) hypothesis does not exclude the role of the universalist hypothesis in the genesis of this grammatical feature. So, following Oliveira (2011: 112-4) and Jorge & Oliveira (2012: 264-74), it can be said that a feature of a universal nature was reinforced in restructured languages due to contact with West African languages and also Creole languages.

The present study corroborates the studies of Oliveira (2011) and Jorge & Oliveira (2012) in proposing that sentences as (1) and (2), repeated as (9) and (10), are not cleft constructions. Unlike the cleft analyses, here it is assumed that these sentences belong to a monoclausal structure.

Sentences (9)-(10), now with a different analysis, and followed by their syntagmatic structure, represent the hypothesis proposed here. Observe that the morpheme *que* ‘that’ is no longer treated as a complementizer, rather as a highlighter — see examples in (11)-(12).

---

30 Section (1) of this paper includes a review of work by scholars who fit into the first group mentioned by Vieira (2012: 215). Likewise section (2) of this study presents of work review representative of the second group pointed out by the same author.

31 See examples in (1) and (2).
a. *The Realization of Morphosyntactic Focus — Highlighter — in Fronted DP for Focus Marking*

(11) BVP

a. O BOlo que o João comeu
   the cake highlighter the João ate
   ‘The cake that John ate.’ (and not the bread)

b. $[\text{CP o bolo}_3 c \text{ que } [\text{HIGH}_{\text{WH}}] [\text{TP }< o \text{ bolo}_2>] \ T \ [\text{VP }< o \text{ bolo}_1 > \text{ João comeu}[\text{VP ...}]]^{32}$

b. *The Highlighter as the Instantiation of an Element belonging to the WH Class in Fronted WH Phrases*

(12) BVP

a. O que que você fez?
   What Highlighter 2s to do.3s.PST
   ‘What did you do?’

b. $[\text{CP o que}_3[\text{WH}] c \text{ que } [\text{WH}] [\text{TP }< o \text{ que}_2[\text{Person}>] \ T \ [\text{VP }< o \text{ que}_1[\text{WH}][\text{Person}> \text{ você fez } [\text{VP ...}]]^{33}$

Observe that there are differences between constructions with *fronted* DP — as exemplified in (11a-b) — and constructions with WH *fronted* — as seen in (12a-b). Both structures are followed by a highlighter, but:

- in (11a-b), the highlighter is the realization of morphosyntactic focus;
- in (12a-b), the highlighter is the instantiation of an element belonging to the WH class, ‘close’ to CP.

Oliveira (2005, 2007) and Oliveira & Holm (2001), respectively, present information concerning pragmatic versus grammatical control of focus, related to the differences presented in (i) and (ii) above. Below, a more detailed analysis of the data in (11b) and (12b) is presented.

---

32. The structure is based in Jorge & Oliveira (2012: 271; example (17)) and also on the analysis presented by Figueiredo & Santos (a sair). According to Jorge & Oliveira (2012: 271), the numbering 1/2/3 on DPs is only to show that the DP phrase is searching for checking phi-features and edges-features simultaneously. Regarding checking features, see ‘probe-goal relations’ in Chomsky (2001: 5).

33. The structure is based on Jorge & Oliveira (2012: 271; example (17)).
3.1.1.1 The Realization of a Morphosyntactic Focus (Highlighter) in DPs Fronted for Marking Focus  Following Hyman & Watters (1984: 242), the marking of focus in many African languages is linked to a closed typology in the pragmatic (intentional) control type of focus (such as, for example, assertive/contrastive), in which the speaker intends to produce focus. Hyman & Watters propose that, in those languages, focalized elements receive a pragmatic focus mark, as in Oliveira (2011: 96)\(^{34}\). It is assumed that DPs fronted for marking focus, as in (11a-b), can be inserted in this type of control of focus. Observe that there is an intonation peak on the focalized element that is marked by capital letters in the syllable which is more prominent — as in (11) [BO.lo] ‘CAke’. This intonation peak is linked to a type of focus: contrastive focus — ‘The cake ([BO.lo]) that John ate.’ (and not the bread)

Nevertheless, the main point regarding DP fronted phrases followed by highlighter, is to support previous studies that assert that such sentences are linked to African languages of the Niger-Congo family group (see for example, the study of Green (2007: 60-69) about Focus in Hausa). These studies claim that there is an absence of cleft structures in fronted elements as attested by Oliveira (2011: 99-102). Arends (1989: 104) also shows that clefts do not occur in Kimbundu and Kikongo, two Bantu languages.

3.1.1.2 The Highlighter as the Instantiation of an Element belonging to the WH Class in WP Fronted  Following Hyman & Watters (1984: 244), the marking of focus in many languages of the Niger-Congo/Benue-Congo family is intrinsic to the grammatical derivation system called grammatical control of focus\(^{35}\). In her analysis of fronted questions, Oliveira (2011: 96) states that the fronted element does not fit into a classic typology of focus — such as contrastive or assertive focus, for example. Furthermore, the author observes that in many languages the fronted question word is followed by the same morphosyntactic element attested in intentional (pragmatic) focus.

So, in the present study, it is accepted that fronted WHs followed by the highlighter — as exemplified in (12a-b) — can be accommodated in the typology of grammatical control of focus. Note that there is no intonation peak on the focalized WH o que ‘that’. Probably, this lack of an intonation peak may be connected to a lack of any realization of focus, such as contrastive focus, for instance (as attested in (11)).

\(^{34}\) See also Oliveira (2005: 160), (2007: 7-8).
\(^{35}\) See also Oliveira (2005: 147, 2007: 5-6).
Regarding WP fronted phrases followed by highlighter, this study also supports previous studies that assert that such sentences are linked to African languages (and also to Creole languages) — see Oliveira (2011: 99-108).

Hence, the present study agrees with the analysis proposed by Jorge & Oliveira (2012) that, in WH fronted the highlighter is the instantiation of an element belonging to the WH class, close to CP. In other words, for Jorge & Oliveira (2012: 271-272), the highlighter can be credited with being the nominal counterpart of WH-phrases — which concerns, in essence, the way in which the lexicon is organized, and is directly linked to functional categories such as Case and Agreement (the set of phi-features category).

4 Final remarks

In this paper, presented within the frameworks of Contact Linguistics and Formal Linguistics36, it is pointed out that:

- fronted phrases followed by que ‘that’, without copula in Atlantic restructured languages have been analysed in two ways: from both diachronic and synchronic perspectives;
- the synchronic perspective of the phenomenon analyses it as a reduced inverse pseudo-cleft structure;
- the diachronic perspective of the phenomenon analyses it as a non (pseudo) cleft sentence. Nevertheless, the interpretation is different from that of other diachronic approaches.

Fronted phrases followed by que ‘that’ are analysed as cleft structures or as structures derived from clefting by linguists taking a diachronic perspective (Mello 1997: 172; Holm & Machado 2010: 54; Holm 2012: 414). For Holm & Machado (2010), for instance, the focus marker que ‘that’ in BVP results from an incorporation process. For Holm & Machado (2010: 61), the incorporation of que ‘that’ was facilitated by the existence of the Portuguese emphatic structure é que ‘is that’, but its original motivation was the need to highlight a fronted element. This motivation need was from the native speakers of Portuguese Creoles and West African languages (whose substrate

---

36 Our analysis of the phenomenon studied follows the theory of syntactic derivation by phases, in particular that seen in Chomsky (2001).
languages already featured such elements), rather than from Portuguese native speakers. Hence, Holm & Machado (2010) present a diachronic analysis. But, different from the analysis presented here, the authors trace the origin of the phenomenon to a cleft structure: the focus marker que ‘that’ derives from a (pseudo)-cleft structure — é que ‘is that’ — see subsection (2.1) of the current paper.

To complete the consideration on fronted phrases followed by que ‘that’, this paper reaffirms, in the sense of Oliveira (2011: 115), that a specific feature of a universal nature has been reinforced in restructured languages due to contact with West African languages. In order to achieve a better understanding of the problem under discussion, the diachronic analysis needs to be complemented with a synchronic perspective, as was indicated in the presented study.

Abbreviations


References


Brito, Ana Maria & Inês Duarte. 2003. Orações relativas e construções aparentadas. In Mateus, Maria Helena Mira, Ana Maria Brito, Inês Duarte,


Figueiredo, Carlos Filipe Guimarães. 2010. A concordância plural variável no sintagma nominal do português reestruturado da comunidade de Almoxarife, São Tomé. (Desenvolvimento das regras de concordância variáveis no processo de transmissão-aquisição geracional), vols. 1 e 2. Dissertação de Doutoramento, Universidade de Macau.


Modesto, Marcelo. 1995. As construções clivadas no PB: relações entre interpretação focal, movimento sintático e prosódia. Dissertação de Mestrado, Universidade de São Paulo.


Mioto, Carlos & Esmeralda Vailatti Negrão. 2007. As sentenças clivadas não contêm uma relativa. In Castilho, Ataliba T. de, Maria Aparecida Torres
Morais et alii. (orgs.) *Descrição, história e aquisição do português brasileiro*, 159-84. Campinas: Pontes/ FAPESP.


Received: 06/30/2013
Accepted: 12/01/2013