

### ***Que* clauses in Portuguese**

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The main goal of this paper is to examine the properties of Portuguese clauses introduced by *que* ‘that’ such as (1):

- (1) a. Assine os documentos, {*que/porque*} eu preciso levar para o advogado.  
sign-IMP the documents, that /because I need take-INF to the lawyer  
‘Sign the papers because I need to take them to the lawyer.’  
b. Assine os documentos, {*que/\*porque*} eu levo para o advogado.  
sign-IMP the documents, that /\*because I take-PRES to the lawyer  
‘Sign the papers, then I will take them to the lawyer.’

The examples above display that the relation between the *que* clause and the matrix clause in (1a) does not have the same reading as in (1b), despite the superficial similarity between them. In (1a), *que* ‘that’ can be replaced by *porque* ‘because’, without loss of meaning. Consequently, the sentence in (1a) is usually analyzed as a specific kind of causal clause. Causal clauses have been classified in (i) proper causal clauses, which are said to express a *de re* cause, the direct reason for the situation described in the main clause (2), or (ii) explicative causal clauses, which express a *de dicto* cause, the reason why the speaker believes the main clause to be true (3a) or a justification for the utterance of the main clause (3b). According to Sweetser (1990), the causal relations correspond to different domains: the content domain (2), the epistemic domain (3a) and the speech act domain (3b). In (3), but not in (2), *porque* can be replaced by *que*. The *que* clause in (1a) is then classified as a causal clause in the speech act domain.

- (2) A Maria foi embora {*porque/\*que*} ela estava cansada.  
the Maria went away because/\*that she was tired  
‘Maria left because she was tired.’  
(3) a. A Maria saiu, {*porque/que*} a luz tá apagada.  
the Maria left, because/that the light is off  
‘Maria left because the lights are off.’  
b. Vamos comer, {*porque/que*} eu tô com fome!  
let’s eat, because/that I am with hunger  
‘Let’s eat, because I’m hungry!’

The *que* clause in (1b), however, does not express a justification for the utterance of the main clause, as the *que* clause in (1a). Thus, the replacement of *que* ‘that’ by *porque* ‘because’ is not possible in (1b). A good paraphrase for (1b) would be the sentence in (4), with the two clauses coordinated by *e* ‘and’. The *que* clause in (1b) could then be said to have a consecutive reading, in the sense that it expresses an action that will necessarily follow the action commanded in the main clause if this action is executed. In this way, the complex sentence in (1b) could also be paraphrased as in (5), which presents a subordinate conditional clause. In fact, the first clause in (1b) presents a conditional meaning, and the *que*-clause is interpreted as the fulfilment of this condition:

- (4) Assine os documentos e eu levo para o advogado.  
sign-IMP the documents and I take to the lawyer  
‘Sign the documents and I will take them to the lawyer.’  
(5) Se você assinar os documentos, eu levo para o advogado.  
if you sign the documents, I take to the lawyer  
‘If you sign the documents, I will take them to the lawyer.’

We argue that these different readings would be a consequence of the highly bleached semantic content of *que* and the loose syntactic link they established with the related clauses. For instance, the same interpretation can be reached if we have two separated sentences, such as in (6), in which the second sentence expresses a causal or a consecutive meaning, shown in (6a) and (6b), respectively.

- (6) a. Assine os documentos. Eu preciso levar para o advogado.  
 Sign-IMP the documents. I need take-INF to the lawyer  
 ‘Sign the papers. I need to take them to the lawyer.’  
 b. Assine os documentos. Eu levo para o advogado.  
 Sign-IMP the documents. I take to the lawyer  
 ‘Sign the papers. I will take them to the lawyer.’

We assume, then, following Corr (2016), that, in the case of (1a), “QUE is not specifically to instantiate an explicit causal link between the sentence it introduces and its preceding associated clause. Instead, its use is primarily motivated by the speaker’s desire to maintain and improve conversational flow” (p. 207).

Due to its weak semantic and syntactic import *que* cannot replace *porque* in a proper causal clause corresponding to a central/integrated adverbial clause, as in (2). However, in contrast to what it should be expected, in the speech act domain, in which *que* and *porque* seem to be interchangeable, as shown in (3), *que*- and *porque*-sentences also present a different behavior: They can be distinguished on the basis of (i) anteposition, as in (7), which is possible with *porque* clauses, but excluded by these *que*-clauses and (ii) coordination, as in (8), which is marginal with *que* clauses:

- (7) {*Porque* / \**que*} eu estou com fome, vamos comer!  
 because / \*that I am with hunger, let’s eat  
 ‘Since I’m hungry, let’s eat!’  
 (8) Vamos comer, {*porque* / *que*} eu estou com fome e *porque* / ?*que*} já está tarde.  
 let’s eat, because / that I am with hunger and because / ?that already is late  
 Intended: ‘Let’s eat, because I’m hungry and because it is late.’

The same behavior occurs with the *que*-clauses with a consecutive reading:

- (9) \**Que* eu levo para o advogado, assine os papeis.  
 that I take to the lawyer, sign the papers  
 (10) ?*Assine* os papeis, *que* eu levo para o advogado e *que* o assunto fica encerrado.  
 Sign-IMP the papers, that I take to the lawyer and that the subject is closed  
 ‘Sign the papers, and I’ll take them to the lawyer and the matter is done!’

These facts suggest that *porque* clauses are peripheral subordinate clauses in the sense of Haegeman (2012), a.o.; however, this cannot be the case of *que* clauses. Considering the discussion so far, we propose that *que* clauses in (1) have the same analysis: they are parenthetical clauses that modify the host clause (1), or an element within this clause (11).

- (11) a. O João, *que* ninguém é de ferro, tirou dois meses de férias.  
 the João, that nobody is of iron, took two month of vacation  
 ‘João took two months off because everyone needs a break.’  
 b. Assine logo, *que* eu levo para o advogado, os papeis do divórcio.  
 Sign-IMP soon, that I take to the lawyer, the papers of+the divorce  
 ‘Sign the divorce papers as soon as possible, and I’ll take them to the lawyer.’

Considering the reliance of the parenthetical on its host sentence, shown by its unacceptability when it occurs in isolation (#*Que ninguém é de ferro.*, #*Que eu levo para o advogado.*), we adopt de Vries’ (2012) proposal that parentheticals are syntactically linked to their host by Parenthetical Merge. Based on this evidence, we extend Colaço & Matos (2016)’s analysis to both types of these *que* clauses, assuming that they are parentheticals, associated with the main clause via a paratactic link.

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