Local *wh*-subjects under *Quem nunca?* ellipsis

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Abstract

In this paper I show that there is an elliptical construction in Brazilian Portuguese involving *nunca* (‘never’) restricted to locally moved *wh*-subjects and provide an account of this peculiar restriction. The construction in question corresponds to the sequence *Quem nunca?* (‘Who never?’), which is used as a follow-up comment to a declarative sentence such as *Pedro beijou João* (‘Pedro kissed João’), meaning ‘Who did never kiss João?’. Curiously, the *wh*-element in such cases must correspond to the locally moved subject. I argue that the construction in question provides evidence for Bošković’s (2023) proposal regarding two different positions for *wh*-movement, in which local *wh*-subjects move to a position below CP and above TP, whereas other *wh*-elements all move to Spec,CP. I also show this approach provides evidence for the view in which a Spec-head relation is needed for ellipsis licensing.

Keywords: ellipsis, *wh*-constructions, Brazilian Portuguese, left periphery.


1. Introduction

The linguistic expression *Quem nunca?* (literally 'Who never?') is used in Brazilian Portuguese (BP) as a follow-up comment to a declarative sentence that serves as its antecedent (cf. 1), being felicitous in a context where speaker B is not at all surprised by the statement uttered by speaker A. Unless otherwise indicated, the data presented in this paper is of Brazilian Portuguese. Ellipsis will be represented as a crossed-out text.

(1)

A: Pedro beijou João
P. kissed J.

B: Quem nunca [*beijou João]? 
who never kissed J.
'Who has never kissed João?'

*Quem nunca?* is a type of rhetorical question, typically used in an ironic way. A natural continuation of B's comment would be, for instance, something like 'He [João] kisses everybody!'. In this paper I will provide a syntactic account of the phenomenon; more specifically, will provide an account for the structure and ellipsis licensing involved. In the following section I show that *Quem nunca?* is better understood as a case of TP ellipsis. In section 3 I show that the *wh*-element must be a locally moved *wh*-subject. In section 4 I present Bošković's (2023a) proposal that there are different *wh*-movement positions in the left periphery, with one dedicated to local subjects. In section 5 I propose a structure for *Quem nunca?* and argue for a Spec-head ellipsis licensing approach, as in Lobeck (1995). In section 6 I conclude.

2. *Quem nunca?* as (TP) ellipsis

Here I will provide evidence that *Quem nunca?* is an elliptical construction. First, notice that the *wh*-phrase in (2) must be interpreted as the subject, and it cannot be interpreted as the object.

(2)

A: Pedro beijou João
P. kissed J.

B: Quem nunca [*beijou João]? 
who never kissed J.
'Who has never kissed João?'

B': *Quem nunca [*Pedro beijou*] 
who never P. kissed
(Intended) 'Who has Pedro never kissed?'

1 See Dias (2022) for additional evidence on the elliptical status of *Quem nunca?*.
The facts in (2) are straightforwardly accounted for under an ellipsis approach, since the non-elided version of B' is ungrammatical (i.e., *Quem nunca Pedro beijou?; cf. the well formed Quem Pedro nunca beijou?), which means it cannot be the ellipsis source for Quem nunca? prior to deletion.\footnote{An anonymous reviewer pointed out that ellipsis has long been known for its effect of rescuing ungrammatical structures, as in the case of island repair, thus suggesting that the argument regarding (2) above should be taken with a grain of salt. But even though sluicing (TP ellipsis) is able to ameliorate island effects (Ross 1967, Merchant 2001), that shouldn't lead us to expect it to unrestrictedly rescue ungrammatical structures. I am unaware of cases in which sluicing rescues structures in which their ungrammaticality is based on anything other than locality violations, which are not involved in (2B'). However, there is an interesting point to be made here regarding this issue. Manner adverbs in English, which must occur below Infl, e.g., John (*completely) will (completely) lose his mind, show up above it under ellipsis, e.g., John partially lost his mind, and Bill completely did (Lasnik 2003:16; see also Ochi 1999). If one were to expect nunca to be stranded higher than usual under ellipsis just like English completely, the fact (2B') is ill formed would indeed count as evidence against an ellipsis account. However, BP doesn't allow such misplaced adverbs, as we can see in (i): the adverb must follow the auxiliar even under ellipsis.}

It is known since Ross (1967) that both strict (3a) and sloppy (3b) readings are available under ellipsis, which has traditionally been used as an ellipsis diagnosis. \footnote{An anonymous reviewer observed that the sloppy identity is highly inaccessible under sluicing (Merchant 2001), pointing out that the availability of such reading in Quem nunca? could actually be an argument against the TP analysis. The sentence in (ii), however, shows that a sloppy reading is available under clausal e in BP.}

(3) John\textsubscript{1} likes his\textsubscript{1} car and Peter\textsubscript{2} does, too.

a. John\textsubscript{1} likes his\textsubscript{1} car and Peter\textsubscript{2} likes his\textsubscript{1} car, too. \textit{(strict)}

b. John\textsubscript{1} likes his\textsubscript{1} car and Peter\textsubscript{2} likes his\textsubscript{2} car, too. \textit{(sloppy)}
Quem nunca? behaves alike in this respect. Notice that both a strict and a sloppy reading are available for the elided pronoun in (4).

(4)  A: João₁ beijou sua₁ patroa.
J. kissed his boss

B: Quem₂ nunca [beijou sua₁/₂ patroa]?  
who never kissed his boss
'Who has never kissed his own boss?' / 'Who has never kissed João's boss?'

Considering that we are dealing with an instance of ellipsis, now I will show Quem nunca? is a type of clausal ellipsis, and not a case of lower licensed ellipsis such as VP ellipsis (VPE). As observed by Merchant (2013), voice mismatches are not allowed under clausal (e.g., TP) ellipsis.

(5)  *Joe was murdered, but we don't know who [t murdered Joe].
Merchant (2013: 81)

Notice that lower cases of ellipsis, e.g., VPE, do not allow such mismatches, since the target of deletion is arguably below the Voice head, as shown in (6).

(6)  The system can be used by anyone who wants to [use it].
Merchant (2013: 79)

In (7) we see that a voice mismatch is not allowed in Quem nunca?.

(7)  a. A: João beijou Maria.
J. kissed M.

B: Quem nunca [beijou Maria]? / *[foi beijado por Maria/João]?
who never beijou M. was kissed by M. J.
'Who has never kissed Maria?'

b. A: João foi beijado pela Maria.
J. was kissed by M.

B: Quem nunca [foi—beijado pela Maria]? / *[beijou João/Maria]  
who never was kissed by M. kissed J. M.
'Who was never kissed by Maria?'

Additional evidence that Quem nunca? is better understood as clausal ellipsis is given below.

In cases where the target of deletion is a TP, tense mismatches between the ellipsis site and the antecedent are not allowed. This can be seen in (8) from an example of clausal ellipsis in Hungarian, where the future tense ellipsis site cannot recover the past tense antecedent.
(8) *Mari tegnap várásolt a piacon, és nem holnap.
  M. yesterday shopped the market. on and not tomorrow
  'Mari was shopping at the market yesterday, and not tomorrow.'
  Griffiths & Lipták (2014: 214, fn2)

Notice in (9) that tense mismatches are also not permitted under *Quem nunca*?

(9) A: Maria beijou João na festa ontem.
    M. kissed J. at the party yesterday

B: Quem nunca [beijou João]? Ele já beijou todo mundo!
    who never kissed J. he already kissed everybody
    'Who did never kiss João? He has already kissed everybody!'

B': #Quem nunca [beija João]/[vai beijar João]? Ele beija/ vai beijar
    who never kisses J. will kiss J. he kisses will kiss
todo mundo!
    everybody
    (Intended) 'Who never kisses/will kiss João? He kisses/will kiss everybody!'

Lastly, *Quem nunca?* seems to obey the ban against a non-null C under sluicing, i.e., TP ellipsis, thus patterning with (10), as we see in (11). 4

(10) A: Alguém beijou João
    someone kissed J.

B: Quem? (*que)
    who that
    'Who kissed João?'

    P. kissed J.

B: Quem nunca?
    who never

B': ??Quem que nunca?5
    who that never

B'': *Quem nunca que?
    who never that

4 For more on the ban, see Ross 1967 and Merchant 2001.
5 The acceptability of B' (*Quem que nunca?*) varies among BP speakers, with a group of speakers who considers it degraded (but still better than B'' (*Quem nunca que?*)), and a group that considers it acceptable. I will address this variation in section 5, but the point here is that B' and B'', at least for a group of speakers, contrast with B.
Notice that the only fully acceptable version of *Quem nunca?* is the one with a null C, with the presence of *que* (‘that’) making the expression degraded. The contrast between B’ and B” will be addressed in section 5. Therefore, I take *Quem nunca?* constructions to involve TP ellipsis.

3. The data

In this section I discuss the relevant properties of *Quem nunca?* constructions for which this paper will propose an analysis. Interestingly, *Quem nunca?* ellipsis is only available with a locally moved *wh*-subject, that is, moved within the clause they are generated (cf. 12b, 13b). With (local) *wh*-objects (cf. 12c), long distance (LD) *wh*-arguments (cf. 13c for the object, 13d for the subject), and *wh*-adjuncts (cf. 14), this ellipsis is disallowed. In (12a), (13a) and (14a), we have the discourse antecedent of the elliptical constructions in (b-d). Notice that the non-elided versions of the ellipses being examined are all acceptable, which shows that the issue with the ungrammaticality in such cases is with respect to ellipsis licensing. In other words, it is only when ellipsis following *nunca* is applied that the pattern can be observed.6

         P. kissed J.

         b. B: *Quem nunca [t beijou João]? (Quem nunca beijou João?✓)*
               who never kissed J.
               'Who did never kiss João?'

         c. B': *Quem Pedro nunca [t beijou]? (Quem Pedro nunca beijou?✓)*
               who P. never kissed
               'Who did Pedro never kiss?'

(13)   a. A: Maria disse que Pedro beijou João.
         M. said that P. kissed J.

         b. B: *Quem nunca [t disse que Pedro beijou João]? (Quem nunca disse que Pedro beijou João?✓)*
               who never said that P. kissed J.
               'Who did never say Pedro kissed João?'

6 By long distance *wh*-arguments I refer to both subjects and objects generated outside of the matrix clause they end up in, such as in the embedded clause.

7 It might be worth exploring other cases of BP rhetorical questions in which a *wh*-element is involved, such as *Quem diria...?* (lit. ‘who would say’; cf. English ‘Who would’ve thought?’), or *Quem (me) dera...* (lit. ‘who would give (me)’; cf. English ‘I wish’). As with *Quem nunca?*, it seems that the *wh*-element in these constructions must also be a subject. But caution is needed, since in here an inflected verb is involved and we might be dealing with a case of a lower ellipsis (or we might not even be dealing with ellipsis at all). Separate tests must be run to verify the status of these constructions in order to entertain a uniform account. I thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing up this point.
c. B': *Quem Maria nunca [disse que Pedro beijou João]? (Quem Maria nunca disse que Pedro beijou João? ✓)
who M. never said that P. kissed 'Who did Maria never say Pedro kissed?'

d. B'': *Quem Maria nunca [disse que beijou João]? (Quem Maria nunca disse que beijou João? ✓)
who M. never said that kissed J. 'Who did Maria never say kissed João?'

P. kissed J. at the party

b. B': *Onde Pedro nunca [beijou João]? (Onde Pedro nunca beijou João? ✓)
where P. never kissed J. 'Where did Pedro never kiss João?'

As we can see, only local wh-subjects are allowed in Quem nunca? ellipsis constructions, whereas non-local wh-subjects (i.e., both local and LD wh-objects, LD wh-subjects, wh-adjuncts) are not. This is summarized in the table below.

Table 1. Brazilian Portuguese Quem nunca? ellipsis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quem nunca [XP]?</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>local wh-subject</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>12b,13b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>local wh-object</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>12c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD wh-subject</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>13d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LD wh-object</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>13c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wh-adjunct</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>14b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The problem to be addressed in the remainder of this paper is: why only locally moved wh-subjects are allowed in BP Quem nunca? constructions? What is special about them?

4. Different wh-movement positions

In this section I present the theoretical framework I will adopt in the analysis of Quem nunca? constructions.

Bošković (2021, 2023a,b) argues that there are two distinct wh-positions, one being confined to locally moved wh-subjects (cf. 15). In particular, he argues that who in (16b) is lower than who in (16a), but higher than Amy in (16c). For expository reasons, I have labeled the higher wh-position as H_CP (i.e., higher CP), and the lower one L_CP (i.e., lower CP). In his work, L_CP is actually named A/A', as the author claims it consists of a mixed A and A' position, given that it is able to (i) satisfy EPP, (ii) check nominative Case, and also (iii) check A' features, e.g., [+WH]. Here, I will
be concerned with the distribution of *wh*-words in the left periphery, rather than with the mixed A/A’ properties.

(15) \[ \text{[HCP [LCP *wh-SubjLOC [TP ...} \]

(16) a. I wonder \text{[HCP *who Amy met]}.  
b. I wonder \text{[LCP *who left]}.  
c. I think \text{[TP Amy left]}.  

Bošković argues that local *wh*-subjects move straight to LCP without passing through Spec,TP, by showing *who* in e.g., *who left?* is neither in Spec,TP nor in Spec,CP, but it must be in between. Quantifier float (Q-float) data from West Ulster English (WUE) show that *wh*-subject movement cannot proceed via Spec,TP. WUE allows Q-float under *wh*-movement (17b,c), but a regular subject in Spec,TP is unable to float a quantifier following a passive verb (17a). Considering Q-float is allowed under a *wh*-subject (17b), if *wh*-subjects were to pass through Spec,TP, we would expect (17b) to pattern with (17a) and not with (17c). Therefore, the *wh*-subject in (17b) must be above TP.

(17) a. *[TP They were arrested all *t last night].  
b. Who [TP (*t) was arrested all *t in Duke Street]?  
c. What did [TP he say all *t that he wanted]?  

Bošković (2023a: 03)

However, *who* and *what* in (17) cannot occupy the same position in the left periphery. If that were the case, the contrast in (18) would be unexpected. Notice that the *wh*-object moves above the topic, a position unavailable for *wh*-subjects, suggesting that the former is higher than the latter. Also notice that a long-distance *wh*-subject above the topic is not ungrammatical (18b), being acceptable in contrast to (18c).

(18) a. ?Mary wonders which book, for Kim, Peter should buy.  
b. ??I wonder which student, for Kim, Mary said should buy that book.  
c. *Mary wonders which student, for Kim, should buy that book.  

Bošković (2023a)
Also, in a number of languages, fronted \(wh\)-subjects and non-subjects are marked differently, as in Igbo\(^8\).\(^9\)

\[
\begin{align*}
(19) \quad & \text{a. } Ōnyē *(ka) Óbì hùrù n'áhiá?} \\
& \quad \text{who FOC O. saw at-market} \\
& \quad 'Who did Obi see at the market?' \\
& \text{b. } Ōnyē (*ka) hùrù Ádá n'áhiá?} \\
& \quad \text{who FOC saw A. at-market} \\
& \quad 'Who saw Ada at the market?'
\end{align*}
\]

Amaechi & Georgi (2019)

Extraction from subject \(wh\)-islands is less degraded than from non-subject \(wh\)-islands (see 20).\(^{10}\) Bošković (2023a) captures this fact by saying that in the former case we have \(wh\)-movement crossing a position that is not a pure A'-position, since it's a mixed A/A' position, contrary to what happens in the latter cases, where we have \(wh\)-movement to an A'-position across an A'-Spec.\(^{11}\) Crucially, \(who\) in (20a) and \(how\) in (20b) must be in different positions, as if they occupied the same position the attested contrast would be unexpected.

\[
\begin{align*}
(20) \quad & \text{a. } ?\text{What do you wonder who bought?} \\
& \text{b. } ??\text{What do you wonder how she bought?}
\end{align*}
\]

Another case where we have a local subject vs non-local subject asymmetry is given below. Kaisse (1983) observed there is a one-word host restriction on contracted auxiliaries hosted by moved \(wh\)-phrases, which crucially doesn't apply to local \(wh\)-subjects.

\[
\begin{align*}
(21) \quad & \text{a. } [\text{Who}]'s \text{ coming?} / [\text{What}]'s \text{ Mary buying?} / [\text{When}]'s \text{ dinner?} / [\text{How}]'s \text{ your old man?} \\
& \text{b. } *[\text{Whose food}]'s \text{ the dog eating } t? \\
& \text{c. } [\text{Whose food}]'s \text{ } t \text{ burning?} \\
& \text{d. } *[\text{Which man}]'s \text{ she the fondest of } t? \\
& \text{e. } [\text{Which man}]'s \text{ } t \text{ leaving first?}
\end{align*}
\]

Kaisse (1983)

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\(^8\) Amaechi & Georgi (2019) show that LD \(wh\)-moved subjects pattern with objects in preceding the complementizer FOC.

\(^9\) The reader is referred to Bošković 2023b for additional evidence for the split presented here.


Notice that the two-word *wh*-phrases above cannot be the host of a contracted auxiliary (cf. 21b, 21d), except when it corresponds to a local *wh*-subject (cf. 21c, 21e). Bošković (2021) takes this to indicate that *wh*-XPs in non-subject (cf. 21b, 21d) and subject (21c, 21e) questions are not in the same position. Also notice that LD moved subjects (cf. 22) pattern with objects in this respect.

(22) *[Which man]'s Peter claiming *t we will leave first?*

As mentioned in Bošković (2023b), there are other languages with processes restricted to local *wh*-subjects. Gan (2022) shows that in Hong Kong Sign Language only local *wh*-subjects need to undergo rightward *wh*-movement. In Lewis (2022) it is shown that object *wh*-objects and LD *wh*-subjects pattern alike with respect to British *do*-ellipsis, since both disallow *wh*-extraction out of *do*-ellipses (cf. 23). However, *wh*-extraction of local subjects is allowed (cf. 24).

(23) a. Although I don't know what Tom will read, I do know what Fred will (*do).

b. I don't know who Martha thinks will leave, but I do know who Emily thinks will (*do).

Baltin (2006)

(24) A: Sue wouldn't kiss Peter last night.

B: Well, who WOULD (do)?

Lewis (2022)

The idea to be pursued here is that the restrictions we see in BP *Quem nunca?* relate to the aforementioned ones, which all suggest a dedicated position to local *wh*-subjects.

In this respect, Brazilian Portuguese displays the same topicalization pattern observed in (18) for English, indicating that *wh*-objects are higher than *wh*-subjects, which is expected under the $HCP/LCP$ approach. Notice that the contrast in BP is even sharper (cf. 25).

(25) a. Maria quer saber que livro, pro Pedro, o João comprou.

   M. wants to.know which book to.the P. the J. bought

   b. Maria quer saber que aluno, pro Pedro, o João disse que

   M. wants to.know which student to.the P. the J. said that

   comprou o livro.

   bought the book

   c. *Maria quer saber que aluno, pro Pedro, comprou o livro.

   M. wants to.know which student to.the P. bought the book

Also consider BP (26). In (26a) we have a simple *wh*-subject construction, and in (26b) a simple *wh*-object one.
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(26) a. *Quem* (que) *ti viu a garota?*  
    *Who saw the girl?*

   b. *Quem* (que) *a garota viu *ti?*  
    *Who did the girl see?*

Now consider BP (27). Even though it is possible to topicalize the object above the local *wh*-subject position (27a), it is impossible to topicalize the subject above the *wh*-object (27b). This contrast provides additional support for the claim that *wh*-subjects and *wh*-objects have different landing sites in the left periphery domain.

(27) a. *E [a garota]*, quem (que) *ti viu *ti?  
    *As for the girl, who saw her?*

   b. *E [a garota]*, quem (que) *ti viu *ti?  
    *As for the girl, who did she see?*

I take the data above to indicate that locally moved *wh*-subjects in BP also occupy the intermediate projection between *H*CP and TP, that is, _l_ CP. I will capitalize on the availability of this projection in BP to propose an account for the ellipsis pattern presented in the previous section.\(^{12}\)

5. The account

Assuming with Bošković (2021, 2023a,b) that locally moved *wh*-subjects move to Spec, _l_ CP, we are able to capture the topicalization pattern seen in (25) and also the ellipsis facts I have presented in section 3, namely, that *Quem nunca?* ellipsis is only available when the *wh*-element corresponds to the local *wh*-subject, being excluded in cases of object, LD subject, and adjunct *wh*-movement. This is exactly the cut that is predicted under Bošković’s subjects-in-Spec, _l_ CP analysis.

By also assuming with Lobeck (1995) that [+WH] Spec-head agreement is a necessary condition for ellipsis licensing in cases of TP ellipsis (e.g., sluicing), I propose that *nunca* heading the _l_ C projection licenses ellipsis when it stands in a Spec-

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\(^{12}\) An anonymous reviewer pointed out that this approach to split CP, in which the local *wh*-subject is in the lower Spec,CP, predicts elements in the higher Spec,CP co-occurring with the *wh*-subject. This is exactly the case seen in (18) and in (25)-(27) with respect to the interaction between *wh*-movement and topicalization, where the topic must be above the low CP. They have also mentioned that the split CP analysis predicts that local *wh*-subjects should not create a *wh*-island. I do not agree that this a straightforward prediction of this approach; it would really depend on the phasal status of the projections within CP, which is to a large extent an empirical matter. Potentially relevant here is the work by Vera (2019), who discusses Spanish double-complementizer constructions and argues that the lower CP (TopicP) in his split CP domain is a phase.
head relation with \textit{Quem}_{[+WH]}: this is only possible when \textit{quem} corresponds to the local subject, since this is the element located in Spec,\textsubscript{LCP}. This is represented in (28).

(28)

\[\begin{tikzpicture}
  \node (LCP) {LCP};
  \node (LC) [below left of=LCP] {L\textsubscript{C}};
  \node (TP) [below right of=LCP] {TP};
  \node (QuemWH) [left of=LC] {Quem\textsubscript{[+WH]} [nunca]};
  \draw (LCP) -- (LC);
  \draw (LCP) -- (TP);
  \draw (LC) -- (QuemWH);
\end{tikzpicture}\]

Under Bošković’s proposal regarding a special position for locally moved \textit{wh}-subjects, we would expect to find cases where a syntactic process is essentially confined to this position, which is in fact confirmed by the BP ellipsis process under consideration, hence this ellipsis process can be taken to provide evidence for the proposal in question.

5.1. \textit{Quem nunca? structure}

\textit{Nunca} (‘never’) has a very similar distribution with the negation \textit{não} (‘not’, ‘no’) in Brazilian Portuguese. They both have a fixed position and must occur between the subject and the inflected verb.\textsuperscript{13}

(29)

\begin{enumerate}
\item a. Eu não assisti (*não) ao filme.
   I \text{not watched not to.the movie}
   'I didn't watch the movie'
\item b. Eu nunca assisti (*nunca) ao filme.
   I \text{never watched never to.the movie}
   'I never watched the movie'
\end{enumerate}

Additionally, they share the same properties with respect to the licensing of emphatic negation either pre- or post-sententially.

(30)

\begin{enumerate}
\item a. (Não,) eu não assisti ao filme(, não).
   no  I \text{not watched to.the movie no}
   'No, I didn't watch the movie'
\item b. (Não,) eu nunca assisti ao filme(, não).
   no  I \text{never watched to.the movie no}
\end{enumerate}

I take this to indicate that \textit{não} and \textit{nunca} occupy the same position in the clause structure. Following work by Gribanova (2017), I will assume there are two positions associated with polarity (i.e., negation, affirmation) in the clausal structure: one above

\textsuperscript{13} See discussion about the syntactic structure of \textit{Quem nunca? constructions also} in Dias (2022).
TP (i.e., PolP) and one below TP (i.e., NegP). The higher one is able to host focus features in addition to polarity features. Neg, on the other hand, hosts the morphosyntactic features responsible for sentential negation.\textsuperscript{14} She claims these projections are connected (i.e., they license each other) via an Agree relation.

In languages with verb-stranding ellipsis in polarity focus contexts (e.g., Russian (cf. 31), Hungarian (cf. 32), BP (cf. 33), it is proposed that the verb head moves to the higher polarity head, from where it licenses TP ellipsis. Also relevant is Martins (2016), who argues for a polarity phrase $\Sigma P$ above TP able to license ellipsis after verb movement to the $\Sigma$ head.

\textbf{14} Cf. also Zanuttini (1997) for relevant discussion.

\textbf{15} See Bošković (2021) for evidence that local subject focus movement also lands in this projection. Notice that a focalized DP can also appear under nunca ellipsis, which is expected under this approach:

(i) Pedro beijou Maria, mas João\textsubscript{[+FOC]} nunca [beijou Maria].

P. kissed M. but J. never kissed M.

Crucially, the DP preceding nunca must be a local subject.
I will take *nunca* to head the lower polarity projection, which here I will label \(\text{NeverP}\) for ease of exposition. *Nunca* is licensed via Agree with the higher head \(\text{LCP}\), which can be either null or host an emphatic negation (cf. 34). Remember that both \(\text{LCP}\) and *Never* are able to host polarity features.

(34) (Não,) Maria nunca beijou João.
  no M. never kissed J.
  '(No,) Maria never kissed João.'

Gribanova 2017 claims that the lower polarity complex head moves to the higher one, which is followed by TP ellipsis in cases like (33). Where *nunca* serves as the fragment answer to an antecedent, I propose *nunca* head-moves to \(\text{LCP}\) to check its focus feature prior to TP deletion. Alternatively, we could envision *nunca* as being base generated in \(\text{LCP}\) and thus licensing a lower null *Never* through a distance in ellipsis cases. I will leave this open and adopt the head movement approach for concreteness.

For *Quem nunca*? I propose it licenses TP ellipsis in the configuration (35), that is, with *nunca* heading \(\text{LCP}\) after movement motivated by focus feature checking. The *wh*-subject, as we saw, is in Spec,\(\text{LCP}\).

(35)

The polarity head *nunca* is generated in the lower *Never* position. In order to check its focus feature, it moves to \(\text{LCP}\), where ellipsis of its complement TP is then applied. The \(\text{wh}\)-subject is base generated in Spec,\(\text{vP}\) and then moves (straight) to Spec,\(\text{LCP}\), where it satisfies EPP and checks [+WH]. The ungrammatical cases of
ellipses seen in (12c), (13c), (13d), and (14b) in section 3 are thus explained because Quem and nunca do not stand in a Spec-head (Agree) relation.\footnote{See Koopman (2006) for additional evidence and argumentation that agreement must be understood in terms of a Spec-head configuration, contra Chomsky (2001).}

In the following I will discuss the contrast attested in (11), repeated below as (36).

(36) A: Pedro beijou João.
    P. kissed J.

    B: Quem nunca?
        who never

    B’: ??Quem que nunca?
        who that never

    B”: *Quem nunca que?
        who never that

5.2. BP interrogative que as base generated in the higher CP

The complementizer que ('that') cannot occur following Quem nunca (*Quem nunca que?; see 36B’), which naturally follows from the structure provided in (35), but its occurrence between Quem and nunca is considerably better (??Quem que nunca?; see 36B’), even fully acceptable by some speakers (see note 5). However, given (35), no intervening element is expected between quem and nunca, since they stand in a Spec-head relation. In order to better understand this, let’s take a look at (37), where a phonetic transcription for Quem que nunca? is provided; quem = [kĕi], que = [-ki], and nunca = [’nũkɐ].

(37) Quem que nunca?
    who that never

    a. [’kĕi.ki ’nũ._ke]
    b. *[kĕi ki ’nũ.ke]
    c. *[kĕi ki.nũ.ke]

The complementizer que in (37) behaves like a suffix\footnote{Or like an enclitic. I will leave the precise status of the interrogative que aside. Relevant here is its status as a non-free element.} (cf. 37a), and it cannot be pronounced as an independent word (i.e., a free morpheme) (cf. 37b).\footnote{It also doesn't receive stress: [’kĕki], *[kĕïki].} Also notice that it is not prefixal/proclitic, as it doesn't attach to the following word (cf. 37c). I then propose that interrogative que is (always) base generated in H.C, that is, above Quem in (35). However, this element cannot be spelled-out in this position when there
is no host to its left due to its suffixal nature. I propose that an operation amounting to "Affix Hopping" (Chomsky 1957) takes place hopping que onto Quem in Spec\(_1\),CP, thus enabling it to be pronounced.\(^{19}\)

Interestingly, the complementizer que in embedded clauses (38a) and the homonymous relative pronoun (38b) behave differently from interrogative que, being pronounced as a free morpheme in (38), which shows that the affix-like nature of que is restricted to Wh-constructions. This is not to say that que in (38) is a strong form, since it can never bear stress.\(^{20}\) Additionally, interrogative que and que in (38) fail to pattern alike in another respect: in both the embedded (cf. 38a) and in the relative clause (cf. 38b) que is obligatory, whereas it is optional in Wh-sentences\(^{21}\) (cf. 35). I will leave this puzzle aside, noticing that this suggests we have different ques in BP, and that the claim I made here about que is restricted to the complementizer in Wh-constructions.

\[(38) \quad \text{a. Pedro disse *(que) o homem chegou.} \quad \text{P. said that the man arrived} \quad \text{Pedro said the man arrived}\]

\[\quad \text{b. O homem *(que) chegou é feliz.} \quad \text{the man that arrived is happy} \quad \text{The man that arrived is happy}\]

\[(39) \quad \text{a. Quem (que) beijou João?} \quad \text{who that kissed J.} \quad \text{Who kissed Joaõ?}\]

\[\quad \text{b. Quem (que ) Maria beijou?} \quad \text{who that M. kissed} \quad \text{Who did Mary kiss?}\]

I will leave this puzzle aside, noticing that this suggests we have different ques in BP, and that the claim I made here about que is restricted to the complementizer in Wh-constructions. The proposal is summarized in (40).\(^ {22}\)

\(^{19}\) Alternatively, the inversion could also be implemented in terms of “Prosodic Inversion”, a PF process which moves a prosodically weak element the minimal distance necessary for it to get prosodic support (cf. Halpern 1995).

\(^{20}\) I thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing that out.

\(^{21}\) Except under sluicing, where it is always prohibited; see Merchant (2001).

\(^{22}\) An anonymous reviewer pointed out that the syntactic status of que in (38) and (39) is very different, which should make us take the comparison established in the text with a grain of salt. In (38b), for instance, que corresponds to a relative pronoun in Spec,CP (with a null C). Also, que in interrogative contexts such as (39) occurs in a projection with a filled Spec,CP, whereas in declarative contexts such as (38a) Spec,CP is not filled. I would like to stress out that the relevant comparison is strictly phonological, and it is only relevant to emphasize that interrogative que and the other ques do not behave (phonologically) alike. Since they all have the same phonological form and the operation regulating the distribution of interrogative que is phonological, I believe it remains relevant to point out these asymmetries.
For the speakers who do not accept an intervening *que* between *Quem* and *nunca*, I propose "Affix Hopping" does not operate when ellipsis is involved. Notice that for sluicing this must be true for all speakers, as *que* is never allowed in such cases (cf. 10). Also notice that if no PF switch was proposed and if the complementizer *que* was able to be base generated either below *HC* or below *LC* we wouldn't expect variation among speakers with respect to (32B'), i.e., ??*Quem que nunca?* (see note 5).

5.3. A note on identity of ellipsis

Here I claim that an approach solely based on lack of identity under recoverability of deletion wouldn't be enough to account for the pattern discussed.\(^{23}\)

One could wonder whether the problem with (41c) is due to the fact the ellipsis site [*beijou t*] takes [*beijou João*] as an antecedent, in violation of identity.

\[(41)\]

a. Pedro beijou João
   P. kissed J.

b. Quem nunca [*beijou João]*?
   who never kissed J.
   "Who did never kiss João?"

c. *Quem Pedro nunca [*beijou*]?
   who P. never kissed
   "Who did Pedro never kiss?"

Consider, however, (42) and (39).

\[(42)\]

A: Pedro beijou alguém.
   P. kissed someone

B: Quem [*Pedro beijou*]?
   who P. kissed

\(^{23}\) I refer the reader to Dias (2022), which has proposed an account (based on scopal parallelism) for the lack of identity under ellipsis as attested in *Quem nunca?* constructions, with focus on a different set of data. More specifically, it addresses the fact ellipsis licensing in these constructions are island sensitive.
'Who did Pedro kiss?'

(43) A: Alguém beijou João.
    someone kissed J.

B: Quem [t beijou João]?
    who      kissed J.

'Who kissed João?'

We attest the same lack of identity between the antecedent and the ellipsis site in (41a/c) and (42,43A/B), but the contrast emerges only in the former. This shows that lack of identity is not sufficient to rule out (41c).

Finally, identity fails to account for the basic *Quem nunca?* case, as the *wh-*trace (i.e., a deleted copy) in the ellipsis site cannot be taken to be identical with the correlate DP (i.e., *Pedro*) in the antecedent.

(44) A: [Pedro beijou João]
    P.  kissed J.

B: Quem nunca [Quem beijou João]?
    who never      kissed J.

6. Conclusion

In this paper I have shown that the reason why only the element moving to Spec,L,CP, i.e., locally moved *wh*-subject, survives *nunca* ellipsis is because this ellipsis targets the complement of 1C, which I have proposed it is realized by *nunca* in the constructions in question. Besides providing additional evidence for the existence of two positions for *wh*-movement, this work indicates that ellipsis licensing is structurally determined, and not lexically determined, that is, X is a licensor in a language L only if it occupies a licensing position. In the case discussed here, *nunca* is able to license ellipsis when it heads 1C, but unable to do so otherwise, since it must stand in a Spec-head relation with *Quem* to become an ellipsis trigger.

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