


# PRESENTATION

## Language, Grammar and Discourse at the pragmatics-syntax interface

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The huge number of studies that have productively investigated the interaction between grammar and pragmatics in the last decades provide us with clear evidence that many linguistic phenomena deserve complex approaches in which different levels of analysis are involved. This favors multifactorial accounts and shows that contemporary linguistic theory is equipped with adequate tools to explore the functioning of natural languages. Among these conceptual tools, the basic notions of Information Structure, in either its relational side -topic, focus, contrast, emphasis, given / new- or its referential side – accessibility, salience, givenness, associative anaphora – play a major role.

This issue of *Gragoatá* is devoted to the study of how syntax and pragmatics interact in the expression of informational notions. It offers the reader a variety of contributions to the topic that, on the one hand, reflect a remarkable diversity in theoretical approaches, and, on the other, highlight a number of issues that seem to be raising a special interest among researchers, in particular in studies on Brazilian Portuguese. Among the theoretical frameworks represented, functional approaches are predominant – Functional Discourse Grammar, Usage-Based Construction Grammar, textual linguistics –, but formal approaches

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### How to cite:

PINHEIRO-CORREA, P.; LEONETTI, M. Language, Grammar and Discourse at the pragmatics-syntax interface. *Gragoatá*, Niterói, v.27, n.58, p. 5-19, mai.-ago 2022. <<https://doi.org/10.22409/gragoata.v27i58.54291>>

are also represented. As for the main topics addressed, the expression of topic and focus through word order patterns, together with the discourse functions of word order, is the central one, but some attention is also paid to referential expressions and discourse anaphora.

The first three texts are developed within theoretical approaches related to the models of Usage-based linguistics. In the first article of this collection, *Discutindo níveis de generalização na Gramática de Construções Baseada no Uso: a rede construcional [(X) CHEGAR SN]<sub>FOC</sub> no PB* (“Discussing levels of generalization on Usage-Based Construction Grammar: the constructional network [(X) ARRIVE NP]<sub>FOC</sub> in Brazilian Portuguese”), the authors R. de Freitas Junior, J. Nascimento, P. Mouta Marques and I. Albernaz develop a study on a specific focus construction in Brazilian Portuguese (hereinafter, BP). Within the Usage-Based Construction Grammar theoretical framework (GOLDBERG, 2006; HILPERT, 2014, among others) and Cognitive-Functional Linguistics, the authors use written BP corpus data to propose the existence of a focus construction activated by a specific verb. Considering, from this theoretical point of view, constructions as conventional pairings of form and function (GOLDBERG, 1995) shared to a greater or lesser extent by speakers of a language, the authors describe instantiations of the construction [(X) CHEGAR NP]<sub>FOC</sub> and analyze it as part of the constructional network associated with the expression of focus, having the function of specifying the more abstract schema [(X) V NP]<sub>FOC</sub>. This, in turn, would be an abstract scheme related to the expression either of informative focus in the NP in post-verbal position or sentence focus – in which all elements present in the construct are considered relevant information.

The idea of psychological realism of grammatical representations (LANGACKER 1987), and the hypothesis of usage-based verbal valency (PEREK, 2015) are key notions in this article. Accordingly, the psychological reality of more frequent and more specific constructions would be more plausible than that of more abstract patterns. This supports the proposal for the existence of a more specific construction [(X) CHEGAR SN]<sub>FOC</sub> in the BP *constructicon*. Likewise, the authors propose a further semantic-based split of the construction into three microconstructions – using Traugott and Trousdale

(2013) terms – being located at a lower level in the proposed constructional network.

Trying to motivate their proposal of splitting the construction into three different presentative *time*, *event* and *unspecific referents* predications, the authors debate the possibilities and limits in the formation of argument structure constructions.

In the second paper in the volume, *Gramática de Construções, Estrutura da Informação e construções interrogativas: evidências do russo sobre um campo de pesquisa em aberto* (“Construction Grammar, Information Structure and Interrogative Constructions: Evidence of Russian on an Open Field of Research”), D. Oliveira investigates informative properties of a specific interrogative construction in Russian.

The author seeks to escape from most typical approaches to information structure in what concerns his object of study, interrogatives, instead of declaratives. Thus, selecting a specific type of Russian interrogative – the one presenting the morphological marker *li* – Oliveira discusses his data within Usage-based Construction Grammar and Lambrecht’s Cognitive Pragmatics (1994) theoretic concepts in a qualitative study of data from a written corpus.

Oliveira’s study aims to be an introductory description of the functions of this specific construction. He analyzes the data in light of the different focal structures proposed by Lambrecht (1994) – *argument focus*, *predicate focus* and *sentence focus*. This informational analysis allows the author to observe restrictions regarding constituent ordering according to the focal structure presented by the construct. In this way, he seeks to provide evidence for the existence of at least two different interrogative-*li* constructions in the constructional network, precisely reflecting differences in the information structure of this type of interrogative in Russian.

Amidst the myriad of definitions present in the literature for the most central informative functions such as topic and focus, L. Lima e Silva and H. Melo, in the third work in this volume, “A probabilistic approach to the distribution of subject and anacoluthon NPs in topics in spontaneous speech”, employ a definition of topic from Prosodic Phonology. Based on Language in Act Theory (CRESTI, 2000) and following t’Hart’s (1990) definition of Topic as the textual portion presenting a

specific prosodic pattern, the authors analyze oral data and develop a probabilistic analysis of the informational nature of the NP occurring in the utterance's initial position in Topic-Comment sequences as defined in the theory used.

Lima e Silva and Melo observe that in oral syntax the NP in Topical position can, in some cases, be recalled as the subject of the subsequent Comment in the utterance, so this element would be identifiable by an explicit correlation with the antecedent NP in Topical position. In other cases, however, the NP in Topic position corresponds to an element identified by the authors as an *anacoluthon*, an element with little or no grammatical relation to the comment that follows it the utterance. In other approaches, as in the cognitive study of referencing by Apothéloz (2003, p. 75), the subject of the Comment in this second condition described by Lima e Silva and Melo would be called *associative anaphora*, occurring when there is a certain interpretative dependence, but absence of explicit coreference with the preceding NP.

This observation leads to a probabilistic study on the nature of the NP in Topic position in oral data from European Spanish, American English and Brazilian Portuguese found in annotated corpora. Using *R* program (R CORE TEAM, 2018), the author conducts a statistical study to calculate the probability of subject and *anacoluthon* NPs in Topic, using also a mixed model of logistic regression with random cross effects.

The model showed that there is about five times more chances that the NP in Topic is the subject of the verb in the Comment when it bears the semantic features *animated* and *definite* and when it is concurrently pragmatically classified as given information.

The following two texts in the collection are also developed within the framework of cognitive-functional linguistics. The first is based on the cognitive-iconic principle developed by Givón (1990) among others and the second uses the Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG), heir to the tradition of Dutch Functional Grammar by Dik (1989) and developed by Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008).

In *As funções textuais da ordenação verbo-sujeito* ("Textual functions of verb-subject ordering"), C. Ataíde explores pragmatic-discursive-textual reasons for word orderings in BP different from subject-verb (SV), seeking to complement the

already classic works in functionalist literature that explain word order as motivated by the following factors: (i) greater or lesser verbal transitivity (the greater the transitivity, the greater the tendency for preverbal subjects); (ii) degree of novelty of the subject (the lower the degree, the greater the tendency to be preverbal) and (iii) information flow of the sentence. Conducting a qualitative analysis based on a corpus of written data from journalistic discourse, the author identifies two functions for verb-subject (VS) order in text organization. The first is related to strategies for establishing the centrality of a given theme in the text and, therefore, ensure textual continuity. The second function identified by the author tends to be a strategy of discontinuity to insert other thematic topics in the text or, alternatively, signal a different flow of attention in the message.

Next article, *Multifuncionalidade de mesmo: relação entre função e ordenação morfosintática* ("Portuguese *mesmo* 'same' multifunctionality: relationship between function and morphosyntactic ordering"), by E. Pezatti and A. Peres is based on Functional-Discourse Grammar (HENGEVELD; MACKENZIE, 2008), a model that offers an extensive description of informative functions, updating the rich focus typology developed by Dik (1989). This theory allows both to describe informative functions rarely found in other approaches<sup>1</sup> and to differentiate more concretely functions that in most cases are poorly understood or overlapped. Such is the case of the distinction between Focus and Emphasis, which are often confused and that within FDG find a theoretical apparatus capable of differentiating them with great accuracy.

The authors explore the functions of *mesmo* ("same") in Brazilian Portuguese in a quantitative and qualitative analysis based on a written corpus consisting of private and official letters. In the analysis they describe different functions for items with the form *mesmo* (which they analyze as one and the same, multifunctional word). These functions are interpersonal and semantic in nature, as determined in FDG's theoretical framework. The authors identified that, according to the corpus, *mesmo* in most cases has a semantic motivation, basically related to identity and anaphora. However, in the rest of the data, the motivation for using *mesmo* is interpersonal

<sup>1</sup>As, for instance, the notion of contrastive topics, which is not addressed in the authors' text.

(pragmatic): in this case, the item expresses Emphasis or Contrast, pragmatic functions according to the FDG approach.

In the next set of texts, issues of pragmatic-syntax interface in the context of textual linguistics are discussed. In *Había una vez una construcción presentativa, Interpretaciones discursivas de las oraciones con haber impersonal* (“Once upon a time there was a presentative construction. Discourse interpretations of impersonal *haber* sentences”), the authors V. Belloro and G. Galindo Morales play in the title with the presentative semantics commonly assigned in the relevant literature to Spanish verb *haber*. The authors start from an observation by McNally (2016) that criticizes the association that is commonly made in the literature between the presence of forms of the verb *haber* (“to have/to be”) in an utterance and their immediate ascription to an existential predication. Thus, the authors’ aim is detailing the informative functions that come to be performed by utterances with *haber* in Mexican Spanish. They describe a wide range of types of predication and argue for the various discursive functions performed by *haber* in their data. They show that, taking into account the utterance conditions, *haber*, even being actually a typically existential verb, often bears a presentative function.

In the same way, they seek to understand the semantico-pragmatic characteristics of *haber* when it is associated with a locative expression. If, on the one hand, utterances with *haber* providing existential readings involve entities that the utterer considers to be unknown to the addressee, on the other hand, those in which *haber* is associated with locative expressions establish a spatial frame and are interpreted as sentence focus or, alternatively, as predicate-focus, according to Lambrecht’s (1994) focus typology.

Two other kinds of predication described by the authors are the possessive, in which utterances with impersonal *haber* can be easily paraphrased by possessive sequences with *tener* (“have”), and the attributive one, directly related with the previous one. Thinking of BP, possessive predication is precisely where the impersonal *ter* (Portuguese “to have”) – also called “existential *ter*” – occupies the place of *haver* (Portuguese “to be/to have”) a feature considered in the literature as typical of Brazil and Madeira Island, in contrast to the apparent preference for the use of *haver* in these cases in

mainland Portugal (MATEUS et alli, 1989). Consequently, the use of *haber* with possessive value in Spanish is a difficult topic for Brazilians learning the language. The BP case demonstrates the overlap between possessive predication and the use of *haber* discussed by the authors for Spanish.

They also discuss utterances with *haber* related to eventive predication, in addition to the others already mentioned. In the same way, considering the informational status (PRINCE, 1981) of the referents in utterances with impersonal *haber*, they disassociate any direct relationship between this verb and necessarily new or informatively relevant referents, by presenting examples in which it appears associated to informatively given referents and bearing textual functions different from introductory ones.

In *Information structure of Ancient Greek*, the authors F. Henrique and R. Albuquerque discuss informative properties of three different types of participles located at the beginning of complex sentences in Ancient Greek. By analyzing *circumstantial*, *genitive absolute* and *updated* participles, the authors discuss in Ancient Greek, based on data from a text in classical Greek and from another one in Biblical Greek. To do so, they rely on the theoretical assumptions of Systemic-Functional Linguistics (HALLIDAY, 2004, 2014) and the concepts of information structure as proposed by Lambrecht (1994).

Lambrecht (1994)'s seminal work and recurrently cited in several studies in this volume establishes cognitive and formal bases to clearly differentiate pragmatic *presupposition* (common ground) from pragmatic *assertion*, notions also extensively discussed in Oliveira's aforementioned text on Russian interrogatives (in this volume). Following Lambrecht (1994), Henrique and Albuquerque examine the difference between participles and adverbial clauses in this position and propose a pragmatic difference between them. They identify a relationship between adverbial phrases at the beginning of complex clauses and Lambrecht's (1994) pragmatic *presupposition*, content that the interlocutors believe is shared between them or that the author of a written text assumes is shared with her reader up to that point in the text, a knowledge that will have been co-constructed by the reader until then. By the other hand, participles in these clauses would function as

common ground management, conveying information about which operations are to be performed on common ground.

As we mentioned above, the general term *Information Structure* covers both the study of relational phenomena like focus, topic and contrast, and the study of referential connections based on accessibility and givenness. The first kind of work constitutes the central part of what is usually referred to as *Information Structure*, and it is well represented in this issue. The second kind of research focuses on reference and anaphoric dependencies, and it is also nicely represented here.

Among the papers dealing with discourse anaphora, the first one is *(Re)discutindo o estatuto informacional das anáforas encapsuladoras: para além da classificação dado e novo* (“(Re)discussing the informational status of encapsulating anaphoras: beyond the Given / New classification”), by D. Castanheira and M. Cesario. Here the term *encapsulating anaphora* indicates the use of NPs that retrieve previously mentioned antecedents while at the same time introducing new descriptive information about them. The goal of this research is to review the informational status of expressions conveying anaphoric encapsulation in published interviews in Brazilian magazines; the authors aim at discussing three initial hypotheses:

1. Encapsulating anaphoric expressions can be analysed in terms of a continuum between the two poles *given* and *new*.
2. Anaphoric encapsulation tends to introduce new referents through complex NPs, obeying iconicity.
3. Encapsulating expressions tend to occur in sentence initial position when referring to non-novel entities.

The research takes inspiration from the traditions of Text Linguistics and American functionalism, and, in particular, from the work of E. Prince (1992) and T. Givón (1995, 2001). There are three main factors to be analysed: the novelty degree of the encapsulating NP, its internal complexity, and its position in the sentence. The first factor requires distinguishing three novelty degrees: 1. Low (bare demonstratives); 2. Intermediate (with recategorization or re-elaboration); 3. High (with



encapsulation of a complex fragment of the text). Thus, the *given / new* distinction has to be seen as a gradual distinction. Hypotheses 1 and 2 are confirmed by the data in the corpus. As for hypothesis 3 on sentence initial position, a correlation is found between the initial position and a low degree of novelty in anaphoric expressions, as expected.

Another contribution dealing with the interpretation of referential expressions is *Intercalação hipotática temporal entre sujeito e verbo em língua portuguesa e a (re)construção referencial* (“Temporal hypotactic intercalation between subject and verb in Portuguese and referential (re)construction”), by S. A. Cavalcante. The author aims at examining how temporal subordinate clauses that are interspersed between the subject and the verb contribute to determine the referential properties of the subject -the “referenciation”, in the author’s terms, following proposals by Mondada and Dubois (1995). In this sense, temporal clauses share some features with relative clauses and behave like nominal modifiers. The analysis is based on a small amount of examples from a corpus of formal texts and built on four parameters (definiteness, informational status, accessibility and topical persistence).

The author tries to show that interspersed temporal clauses may have effects on the establishment of the subject’s reference: the main one is a restrictive effect, but it may also have a recategorization function, an evaluative function, or even the function of introducing a change in topical perspective.

Clearly representative of the relational view of Information Structure is the paper by E. Martínez Caro, “*And that is what she did: demonstrative clefts in English writing*”. The paper is a study of a specific type of cleft construction, so-called *demonstrative clefts* (introduced by a demonstrative), based on a dataset from a written American English corpus complemented with a smaller dataset from a spoken American English corpus.

After a review of the characteristic properties of demonstrative clefts, the author presents the goals of her research:

1. study the frequency and distribution of the different types of demonstrative clefts in English writing, comparing the results with those for speech;

2. explore the factors determining the choice between *that*-clefts and *this*-clefts, trying to relate this choice to the anaphoric or cataphoric function of the construction;
3. examine their position in the text, especially at turning points, trying to discover systematic patterns within the rhetorical organisation of the text, and observing whether these positions offer interesting insights for the development of topic in the text.

Among the findings of the study, we can highlight the clear preference of *that* clefts for being anaphoric, in contrast with *this is* clefts, which tend to be cataphoric, and the frequent occurrence of demonstrative clefts at turning points in the text, with a linking and orientation function when appearing at the beginning of the paragraph, a summative function at the end of paragraphs, and a topic introductory function near the beginning of the text. The paper closes with the analysis of certain structural features co-occurring with demonstrative clefts, such as their appearing inside the domain of reported direct speech, usually with a summative function, and their combination with connective and stance adjuncts, and also focusing adverbs. All these points show that demonstrative clefts deserve special attention inside the family of cleft constructions, due to the particular connection between grammar and discourse functions that they display.

*In Estatuto informacional e focalização: sua influência na posição do sujeito no PB* (Information status and focus: its influence over subject position in BP), S. R. Cavalcante, A. Cruz, and A. Machado discuss some interesting aspects of the relation between word order and information structure in BP. It is well known that BP underwent important changes in its grammatical system that led to a rigid SV order and to a significant decrease in the use of subject inversion (VS).

To investigate how this process has affected the expression of information structure, and in particular the introduction of new information and focus marking, the authors analyse a series of personal letters written between 1800 and 1975, from the *Corpus Histórico da Língua Portuguesa*. The data allow them to test two hypotheses: 1. The informational status of the subject

– that is, whether it conveys new information – is no longer the crucial factor licensing subject inversion in contemporary BP; 2. If inversion ceases to express focus on the subject, some other formal strategy must take its place. Both hypotheses are, in fact, confirmed, and this is the major contribution of the paper. With respect to hypothesis 1, the main finding is that the informational status of the subject is still relevant with unaccusative predicates, but the lexical condition based on the verb type has become the central factor for subject inversion, as VS is nowadays restricted to unaccusative predicates in BP. As for hypothesis 2, the authors find that clefting is now the basic strategy for focus marking in BP, in particular for contrastive focus, together with emphasis on the preverbal subject in SV. The analysis is supported by illustrative diagrams that gather rich quantitative data, and the results throw light on the consequences that historical changes affecting word order patterns have for focus marking systems.

The paper by W. Monteiro, “An analysis of asymmetries in subject personal pronoun usage in Brazilian Portuguese and Spanish”, deals with subtle differences in usage of first-person pronouns in BP and Spanish. Both BP and Spanish are null-subject languages, and despite this they show intriguing differences in the distribution of overt and null subject pronouns, basically because null subjects occur more frequently in Spanish than in BP.

The author reviews some aspects of the syntactic literature on pronouns in null-subject languages, and also some contributions from pragmatics and discourse studies. Once this background has been set, he examines the use of first-person subject pronouns in excerpts from interviews published in newspapers. The analysis focusses predominantly on discourse factors. It confirms that BP shows a preference for overt subject pronouns, whereas Spanish shows the opposite tendency.

Finally, we have a paper that investigates the prosodic side of focalization in BP: *Os domínios da focalização: um estudo experimental* (“The domains of focalization: an experimental study”), by M. Carnaval, J. A. de Moraes and A. Rilliard. As prosody plays a major role in the expression of information structure, this paper makes an adequate complement to the other articles devoted to notions like topic and focus.

The authors present an experimental study that analyses the interaction of the notions of Broad Focus and Narrow Focus with the hierarchy of prosodic domains established in Prosodic Phonology (from the syllable to the phonological utterance, with special attention to phonological word and phonological phrase) and five different values / readings of the focal constituent. The experiment tries to assess the conditions that affect the perception of the limits of focal domains in BP. Three basic hypotheses are tested:

1. A narrow focal domain (phonological word) is more easily perceived than a complex focal domain (phonological phrase).
2. The integration of auditory and visual channels optimizes the perception of focal domains.
3. Acoustic cues are more relevant than visual ones in the identification of the limits of focalization.

The statistical results of this multimodal perception experiment are presented in different tables and diagrams; they show that narrow focal domains, especially in combination with contrastive focus, are usually better delimited in perception, which confirms hypothesis 1. Hypothesis 2, by contrast, is not confirmed, as modality does not have significant effects on the identification of the focal domain. As for hypothesis 3, it was found that, according to the prediction, acoustic cues are essential to recognize focal domains.

The second part of the paper is devoted to a qualitative analysis of different aspects of the data in the experiment, such as the use of lengthening of tonic syllables as a reinforcing strategy in focus marking.

With this collection of papers, this issue of *Gragoatá* aims at providing readers with a view of current research on the most representative problems of interaction between syntax and pragmatics, mostly focused on information structure (topic, focus, the given / new distinction, discourse anaphora).

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