LINGUISTIC VARIATION AND CHANGE

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Organised by three researchers whose work focuses on the phenomena of linguistic variation and change and the relationship between them, this issue brings together analysis and discussion of (inter)national scientists who have turned their concern to constructional variation and/or its relation to linguistic change (especially, constructional and constructionalization change, in terms of TRAUGOTT; TROUSDALE, 2013). We understand that:

> All human languages are characterised by inherent synchronic variability (Hudson 1997, 2007a) and are subject to change over time. Consequently, due to this central role of variation and change, any explanatorily adequate cognitive theory of language should aim to account for both of these phenomena. (HOFFMAN; TROUSDALE, 2011: 1)

There is much research dealing with variation due to polysemy or polyfunctionality, but less so with variation due to the mechanism of analogy or due to the ability to construct variants,

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which is associated with the delimiting of constructions (in the sense of Construction Grammar, cf. GOLDBERG, 1995; 2006). This issue, therefore, seeks to promote: (i) the visibility of work by researchers in and outside Brazil who are dealing with such potentiality of variation studies in usage-based Construction Grammar, especially in cases where this work has directly addressed problems around the theme of the issue, as well as (ii) the dissemination of results from empirical analysis made by Brazilian researchers relating to the treatment of alternations in usage-based Construction Grammar.

It is worth noting that, at a specific event in the field of Construction Grammar (ICCG11, *11th International Conference on Construction Grammar*), the issue of alternation is to be highlighted as a theme for one of its workshops! We also hope to highlight this prominent area of research by providing this publishing opportunity. With the current issue, we intend to contribute so that the discussion about variation/alternation can thrive within the Construction Grammar Model. Such approach has only recently received focus in Brazil. Among publications in this profile[4], there is that of MACHADO VIEIRA (2016), who proposed, within our Discourse & Grammar Research Group seminars, the need to account for generalizations about linguistic variation (by association, or similarity) in Construction Grammar, which states that language is projected from the experience of use, and, therefore, to consider a kind of heuristic in this sense.

There are many issues and paths that arise when scientists interested in CG perceive and begin to operate with constructs and constructions in association and/or similarity. Among other questions, these are some points that exemplify our interest:

(i) What counts as alternation or interchangeability, given the complexity of attributes involved in the formal and functional poles of a construction?

(ii) What criteria make it possible to establish empirically the delimitation of linguistic variants?

(iii) How are variants to be modelled theoretically? What is the relationship between these variants and the schemas that sanction them? How is their relationship with conditioning variables/attributes and restrictions configured?

(iv) How are the constructions which have similar formal and functional values cognitively triggered? What determines their frequency of use?

(v) What is the relation between language variants that compete or coexist and the language communities or discursive practice communities in which the variants are used?

(vi) How is the relationship between variants configured in terms of representation in the *constructicon*?

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4   It is important to point out that, as far as we know, usage-based (cognitive)-functional study of variation initiatives take place and focus on Rio de Janeiro. Hence, it explains the fact that, in this issue, there is a significant contribution of researchers based in scientific institutions of Rio de Janeiro.

(vii) Which (theoretical, methodological and analytical) topics need problematization in usage-based Construction Grammar in light of this research?

There are different perspectives already in process that deal with these phenomena. Bybee (*apud* TORRENT, 2012) and Goldberg (forthcoming) refer to the potential relationship of the variationist perspective *know-how* to that of functional-usage-based cognitive models.

EntreviSta:

Usage-based models tend to bring together contributions from both Cognitive and Functional Linguistics, Historical Linguistics included. Do you see border conflicts (or alignment issues) in such convergence?

JB:

The relationships with these three areas are different. Usage-based theory is an extension of the approaches developed in Cognitive and Functional Linguistics, as practiced for the last forty or more years, but Historical Linguistics is a much older and very traditional field that has been approached in many different ways in the last century and a half. The theoretical notions relied on in Historical Linguistics often make structuralist assumptions and for researchers trained on these notions, the acceptance of usage-based ideas may be difficult, even if they are revealing. The more recent field of language variation and change is more likely to incorporate usage-based methods and ideas because it is more attuned to the study of language in context and the inherent variability of language. (TORRENT, 2012: p.2)

Constructions add an important dimension to the view of language as a complex adaptive, dynamic system as they provide a) a reason for languages to arise ontogenetically and diachronically, and b) explanations for certain ways in which languages are constrained. The constructionist approach offers researchers interested in syntactic variation a grammatical paradigm that *expects* dynamic, statistical patterns of varying degrees of specificity and abstraction. The framework allows us to capture variation of formal *and* functional properties including those related to how constructions are used in context. Finally, constructionist approaches encourage us to look for regularities across and within languages. At the same time, the variationist perspective offers traditional constructionist researchers tools and encouragement to look beyond an "ideal speaker-hearer" in order to consider actual speakers and hearers in their own communities, which adds immense richness to the data. (GOLDBERG, forthcoming)

Others have been looking at Exemplar Theory (BYBEE, 2010) for a solution to accommodate linguistic alternation in Construction Grammar. And there are also those who deal with the issue using the concept of degeneration (VAN DE VELDE, 2014), the idea of "degenerative" horizontal relations in the *constructicon*. In the current issue of this journal, a sample of these views is presented.

This second issue of the 21st volume of the journal *Diadorim: revista de estudos linguísticos e literários* deals with the topic "*Variation and Change in Construction Grammar*" based on a

dossier consisting of an interview with Professor Martin Hilpert (University of Neuchâtel) and 11 papers that deal directly with this theme. In addition to the section devoted to these articles in the thematic dossier, there are three other contributions, consisting of: an essay that combines views of language and social history, semantics and syntax; a book review; and a scientific article written in English, which, in addition to being a contribution to the scientific literature, is also a tribute to the researcher Susan Rothstein (1958-2019; Bar-Llan University, Israel).

> She believed that better theories of language would come from the interaction between theoretical scholars with a crosslinguistic perspective and a large supply of formal techniques (like herself) and scholars who may be less formal but have deep access to wider ranges of subtle linguistic data. Susan put this conviction at work in many ways, advising and collaborating on work in Chinese, Hungarian, Brazilian languages, as well as Hebrew and English. (https://linguistlist.org/issues/30/30-3134.html)5

In general terms, we gather here the perspective of researchers who, in their texts, provide discussions that take place in national and foreign research centers/projects, regarding the phenomena of variation and change and their relationship.

We open this issue of the journal with the interview given by Martin Hilpert (University of Neuchâtel) to Marcos Luiz Wiedemer (State University of Rio de Janeiro), Marcia Machado Vieira (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) and Maria Maura Cezario (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) about several issues of great interest to research conducted in the field of Functional-Cognitive Linguistics, Construction Grammar and Sociolinguistics. Martin Hilpert reflects on themes such as constructional representation, variation (by polysemy and similarity) and linguistic change. He deals with questions concerning the contributions of different areas of linguistics to the constructionist study of the variation and linguistic change phenomena and he points out that the study of how variation in constructionist approaches has advanced a great deal.

In the article *Identifying word categories in Mandarin Chinese with constructional approach*, Ziming Lu (Zhejiang University) deals with constructions with *Ge*, a Mandarin classifier that is typically followed by nouns. In the post-verbal position, the author notes that *ge* co-occurs with prototypically non-nominal elements and its function is unclear. Based on a constructional approach, she seeks to identify the word categories of the elements that follow *ge* and the post-verbal position. Within specific constructions, the elements that follow *ge* show variation in their grammatical behavior.

On treating variation in usage-based construction grammar: the case of cleft constructions in Brazilian Portuguese, by Diego Leite de Oliveira (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), is an article that discusses to what extent a proposal for the treatment of allostructions (CAPPELLE, 2006, 2009), associated with the model of exemplar-based categorization

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5   Obtuary excerpt from LINGUIST List 30.3134, edited by Everett Green, on August 15, 2019.

(cf. PIERREHUMBERT 2001, BYBEE 2010, 2013), can contribute to the identification of the place of variation in the representation of linguistic knowledge in the form of a network of constructions. Thus the author discusses the theme considering the alternation in the use of cleft patterns of type SER X QUE Y, X SER QUE Y and X QUE Y, from attested instances of language and in dialogue with research made by Braga (2009), Braga et al. (2013) e Vieira et al. (2015).

Eneile Santos Saraiva (Master´s degree from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), with her article entitled *Variation in uses of constructions of the direct transitive verb + clitic se: impersonalization and indeterminacy in scientific and journalistic texts of Brazilian Portuguese*, analyzes the phenomenon of variation of constructions with Verbal Predicate$_{DT/TER}$ + clitic SE in Brazilian Portuguese scientific and journalistic written texts. According to the author, certain properties enable the impersonal conceptualization of verbal predication in Portuguese. Specifically in this paper, the author describes data from [Predicate$_{DT}$ + SE + non-verbal element + (participant 1)] and [Predicate$_{TER}$ + SE + non-verbal element + (participant 1)], and she provides an analysis of constructional variation centered on a statistical treatment of the relationship between conditioning discursive-pragmatic variables and data emerging from these patterns, in order to derive generalizations about variation in Construction Grammar. To this end, she conceives variation based on the compatibility between assumptions of Construction Grammar and Sociolinguistics, that is, on a socio-constructionist perspective (MACHADO VIEIRA, 2017; WIEDEMER; MACHADO VIEIRA, 2018).

In the paper *The prototypical transitive construction and the causative transitive construction in Portuguese: a case of constructional variation?*, Monclar Guimarães Lopes (Fluminense Federal University) discusses the existence of constructional variation relationship between the prototypical transitive structure [X$_{agent}$ VERB Y$_{affected}$] and the causative transitive structure [X$_{agent}$ VERB.COM Y$_{affected}$], two argument structure constructions that share properties at the semantic level, although they are different in the formal one. The author works mainly with the allostruction model (CAPPELLE, 2006; PEREK, 2015), which describes and represents the variation relations in the constructional network. He adopts a qualitative and quantitative methodology in order to obtain possible generalizations regarding the description of the properties of the form and meaning of these constructions. The results of the research show that, although the two structures are not fully equivalent and not always interchangeable, there is a constructional variation relationship between them, since there are contexts of use in which both are likely to be recruited to express the same truth value.

Sueli Maria Coelho (Federal University of Minas Gerais) and Silmara Eliza de Paula Silva (Master´s degree from the Federal University of Minas Gerais), in the article *A study of the linguistic variation in prepositional link in constructions [V$_{DAR + PREPOSITION}$ + V$_{INFINITIVE}$] in Brazilian Portuguese*, analyze data with the verb DAR in a collection of texts produced from the 18th to the 19th centuries, with the aim of identifying their main linguistic functions, as

well as exploring possible contexts of variation between them. To achieve these objectives, they adopt the Construction Grammar model and a methodological interface between gramatica-lization of constructions and constructionalization (TRAUGOTT; TROUSDALE (2013)), and a Labovian Sociolinguistic model (NEVALAINEN; PALANDER, 2012; POPLACK 2012). Their results show four types of constructions with the verb DAR.

Manuela Correa Oliveira (PhD from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) is the author of the article *Mental and material processes: constructional change in phrasal verbs with particle out*, which investigates the development of transitive phrasal verbs regarding the position of the particle *out,* i.e. whether it is continuous to the verb – *throw out the trash* – or discontinuous to it – *throw the trash out.* She shows, from the written data, that the two constructions, besides being distinct, are licensed by a more abstract schema, namely: the transitive phrasal verb one. She argues that such a distinction can be seen through the diachronic analysis of the lexical item occupying the verbal position and the cognitive processes resulting from the utterances. The study is situated in the tradition of Usage-Based Models and, more specifically, under the assumptions of Construction Grammar. The results, based on data from the 17th to the 20th century, show the high token frequency of the continuous pattern and its expressive productivity. They also demonstrate that there has been a process of constructional change from material processes to mental processes, a noticeable tendency for both [V out SN] and [V SN out]. The results show different trajectories for [V out SN] and [V SN out], revealing the need to consider them two pairings of form and meaning.

Maria da Conceição Paiva (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) and Allan Costa Stein (Master´s degree from the Federal University of Espírito Santo), in their article *Trajectory of construction [SN LEVAR JEITO SPrep]*, focus, from the perspective of Usage-Based Construction Grammar, on the formation and expansion of the scheme [SN LEVAR JEITO SPrep], in which the prepositional phrase can be headed by the prepositions *of, to* and *with*, in contemporary Portuguese. They start from the hypothesis that the most abstract scheme [SN LEVAR JEITO SPrep] relates, by an instance link, the light/support verb construction to the caused-motion construction. The analysis leads them to evidence for the postulation of five related microconstructions in the model they propose. Such constructions are distinguished both as the target of modalization (either the SN-Subject or in the preposition's complement) and in the type of modality they perform (possibility or capacity). In this text, the authors also turn to the dissimilarity mapping.

In the article *The support verb microconstructions with "deixar" ´in Brazilian Portuguese*, José Roberto Prezotto Júnior (Graduate in Letters from Paulista State University Júlio de M Research Filho) and Edson Rosa Francisco de Souza (Paulista State University Júlio de M Research Filho) investigate three Brazilian Portuguese support-verb microcons-tructions, instantiated by the verb "*deixar*" (´leave´), such as [deixar claro], (literally, ´to make clear´), [´deixar marcas´] (something near to ´to leave mark/sequels´) and [literally, ´deixar

sombra de dúvida´] (´to leave shadow of doubt´), in light of the theoretical assumptions of Usage-Based Functional Linguistics (BYBEE, 2016; TRAUGOTT; TROUSDALE, 2013). They defend the hypothesis that such microconstructions emerge in the language through the process of analogization from the already consolidated and productive constructional scheme [SUJ + VTR + OBJ] in Portuguese. These support-verb microconstructions inherit properties of this scheme, preserving in their base the transitivity relation, that is, a verbal structure that establishes relation between argumentative terms (subject argument and object argument).

In the paper *Semantic differences of quantifying microconstructions: the case of NP1 of NP2*, Karen Sampaio Braga Alonso (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) and Nuciene Caroline Amphilóphio Fumaux (Master´s degree from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) present a study about the binominal quantifier constructions *um(a) N de SN* in Brazilian Portuguese from the perspective of Usage-Based Linguistics, in order to describe how the distribution of these constructs occurs in the use of language. They compare four quantitative microconstructions – *DET monte de NP*; *DET montanha de NP*; DET *enxurrada de NP*; *DET chuva de NP* – resorting to a collexeme analysis (GRIES; STEFANOWITSCH, 2004). The results show that these functionally similar microconstructions have their own situational preferences, which were associated with either more or less semantic coherence with their quantifier function.

Mariangela Rios de Oliveira (Fluminense Federal University) and Vanessa Barbosa de Paula (Master´s degree from Fluminense Federal University), in the article entitled *The intensifying construction of degree [P(A)RA LÁ X_{ADJ}]* _ *trajectory, paradigmatization and degeneration*, describe, in terms of gradience and gradualness, the intensifying construction of degree **[p(a)ra lá de X_{adj}]$_{ig}$**. In the historical development of Portuguese, they observe a neoanalysis that, in the form of microsteps of linguistic change, made this new construction emerge and become routinized in contemporary Brazilian Portuguese. To do so, they map contexts of use, in terms of Diewald (2002, 2006), which motivated the linking of meaning and form of the subparts involved, resulting in the symbolic conventionalization of a new member of Portuguese grammar, i.e. of a grammatical construction in that variety. Once conventionalized in the language, **[p(a)ra lá de X_{adj}]$_{ig}$** becomes part of the *constructicon*, as a new constituent of the intensifying degree expression paradigm, in the last stage of the contextual cline proposed by Diewald; Smirnova (2012). In this development, **[p(a)ra lá de X_{adj}]$_{ig}$** is marginally placed in the class of degree intensifiers, competing for instantiation in linguistic use with other corresponding function constructions such as **muito X_{adj}] e [X_{adj} demais]**, among others.

The last article in this thematic dossier on variation and change in Construction Grammar is *The [[X]$_N$ de Taubaté] pattern in Brazilian Portuguese: a study on syntagmatic compounds in a construction perspective,* by Natival Almeida Simões Neto (Master´s degree from the Federal University of Bahia). The author analyzes the constructional and cognitive aspects involved in the schematic pattern [[X]$_N$ de Taubaté]$_N$, based on the Constructional Morphology, according to Booij (2010, 2017), Gonçalves (2016) and Soledade (2018), and on the constructional

approach to change in terms of Traugott; Trousdale (2013). Examples in texts from social media on the Internet reveal that the standard [[X]$_N$ de Taubaté]$_N$ instantiates realizations such as *hetero de Taubaté*, *crente de Taubaté*, *LGBT de Taubaté* e *facada de Taubaté*. which usually designate something false/fake, that are associated with the episode of a *falsa grávida de Taubaté* (*"the fake pregnant of Taubaté"*). The author argues that this pattern can be compared to other similar patterns in the Brazilian Portuguese history, such as [[X]$_N$ do Paraguai]$_N$ and [[X]$_N$ de Itu]$_N$. The hypothesis is that all of these schemes come from a more general pattern [[X]$_N$ de [Y]$_N$]$_{SN}$, which initially corresponds to ´origin´ or ´location´ relationships, and gets specialized after remarkable cultural events take take place.

In addition to the papers aligned with our thematic issue, the reader will find three other contributions to the linguistic literature.

The first is the essay written by Edilberto Vinícius Brito Nascimento (Master´s degree from the State University of Campinas), entitled *'Esquina' on the Portuguese-Brazilian press in diachronic analysis*, in which the author deals with how the Portuguese-Brazilian press used the word 'esquina' (´corner´) in the 19th century, based on the role of views on the social history of language, semantics and syntax, through a 'historical-diachronic' lens. It describes constructions such as a ´esquina que volta' (literally, 'turning back corner') in the 18th century newspapers; it maps possible paraphrases to the expression at that time in order to produce a (counter) directional analysis for the expression; and it analyzes diachronically this and other related constructions in the 19th, 20th and 21st century newspapers. He points out that expressions with ´esquina que volta' have nuclear motion verbs, which imply target arguments, coincident with PPs (prepositional phrases). The paraphrases for the locative, however, refute contradictory meanings for the expression. Diachronic research, on the other hand, shows that the use of 'esquina que volta/vai/sai/vira para/na' ('corner that turns back / goes forth / goes out / turns to/on') is less common in recent decades, although newspapers continue to use ´esquina´ ('corner') in other language constructions, which it reveals that the term ´esquina´ has undergone a grammaticalization process as an adverb, usually followed by the preposition com ('with') or 'de' (´of´).

The second contribution is found in the paper signed by Roberlei Bertucci (Federal University of Technology of Paraná) and Susan Rothstein (Bar-Ilan University), whose title is *Stative predicates in the progressive in Brazilian Portuguese*. In such article, they map contexts in which the progressive aspect is possible with stative predicates in Brazilian Portuguese. In the literature, particularly about English language, this is an unexpected fact, as the progressive aspect is associated only with events composed of stages (eventive predicates). States, however, are segmentally homogeneous: they have no stages; they are true in minimal moments (subinterval property). The authors argue that progressive in this context can be accepted if a stage structure is grammatically licensed for events denoted by stative predicates. They also find similarities between the progressive restrictions in Brazilian Portuguese and the usual

ones in the progressive in English. Therefore, they propose that the difference in acceptability between stative predicates in progressive in Brazilian Portuguese (*estar amando*) and in English (*is loving*) relates to grammatical constraints in the composition of a stage structure between these languages. Thus, the authors deal, to some extent, with similarity and dissimilarity.

Finally, in the review of *Hermann Paul's 'Principles of Language History' Revisited: Translations and Reflections* (AUER; MURRAY, 2015), William Alfred Pickering (Doctor from Campinas State University) sets out his critical account of the book based on the topics focused on it, such as: Hermann Paul's general theoretical principles, mental representations, analogy, phonetic change, as well as the concept of emergent grammar. Pickering points out that the authors of the book have, by convincing argumentation, been able to show that Hermann Paul's work is relevant to 21st century linguistics, to contemporary discussions in the context of usage-based linguistics.

In concluding the exposition of our goals with the proposition of the theme, as well as the presentation of the current issue, we can only invite the reader to embark on the territoriality of linguistic variation and change as illustrated here.

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