Usage-Based Linguistics and its interfaces

Roberto de Freitas Junior[1]

Maria Maura Cezario[2]

Guest editors

The Usage-Based Linguistics and its interfaces, dossier of the *Linguística* (UFRJ) journal, was inspired by the discussions developed during the 24th National Seminar and the 11th International Seminar of the Discourse and Grammar Research Group, which took place in November 2019 at UFRJ. In these conferences, several aspects related to the cognitive-functional linguistic research were presented and discussed. These researches are developed around the world and in Brazil and represent the foundations of Usage-Based Linguistics.

The UBFL (Usage-based Functional Linguistics), a Brazilian branch of the broader term Usage-Based Linguistics, highlights the term Functional in its self-description, which shows the Discourse & Grammar group's own perception of the instrumental, pragmatic and concrete role of linguistic knowledge and use. The emphasis on the functional perspective has also historical evidence: the creation of this important research group has its roots in the discussions of American Functionalism, represented by scholars like Sandra Thompson, Paul Hopper, Talmy Givón, Elizabeth Traugott and many others that launched a new perspective about the phenomenon of language, determinant in America and in the rest of the world ever since.

The label UBFL (LFCU) also stands for perspectives and approaches which – under the scope of the term Usage-based Linguistics and its several models – contribute to a new viewpoint of the

1   Roberto de Freitas Junior is an Adjunct Professor at the Brazilian Sign Language Departament (UFRJ), at the Linguistics Graduate Program (UFRJ) and at the Arts and Linguistics Graduate Program (UERJ- FFP). E-mail: robertofrei@letras.ufrj.br.

2   Maria Maura Cezario is a Full Professor at the Linguistics and Philology Departament (UFRJ) and at the Linguistics Graduate Program (UFRJ). She is currently at a post-doctorate intership at UFRN and is supported by a CAPES scholarship. E-mail: mmcezario@gmail.com.

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nature of language, which encompasses the functionalist perspective, but also brings contributions from Cognitive Linguistics and Construction Grammar. These approaches bring up for non-formal linguistic discussions a epistemology consistent and somewhat updated concerning what is currently known about psychology, memory, learning, in sum, about human cognition.

In this perspective, grammar is understood as a conceptual network of linguistic constructions, symbolic form-meaning pairings, which constitute the constructicon of a language. Such constructions are formed and modified in linguistic usage by the operation of several general domain cognitive processes, such as categorization, analogy and intention-reading abilities. Therefore Usage-Based Functional Linguistics is interested in investigating how constructions emerge and are related within the constructicon, aiming to explain the production, processing and the understanding of language

In this sense, themes such as the cognitive representation of language, whether from the perspective of acquisition (L1/L2), linguistic variation or change, have become objects of investigation under points of view that, their own way, bring significant contributions for the observation of language phenomena. These viewpoints, with the functionalist expertise on the cognition/language interface, remodel the whole functional approach and contribute with new methodological proposals complementary to the treatment of the analysis of the expressiveness, meaning and functionality of language through empirical manipulation of observable data.

Thus the development of new technologies, the enrichment of traditional analytical practices and the (re)construction of a theoretical thinking make UBFL an area of linguistic investigation that presents not only a consistent epistemology, but also a set of methodological procedures that combine traditional and contemporary views, which together constitute a qualitatively fundamental instrument for a good description of the representation of language and of different languages, in whatever contexts of use.

This dossier is developed in such scenario, by bringing a range of works that fall under the multiple possible approaches under the scope of UBFL. We, therefore, present in the current issue papers directly aligned with the UBFL perspective and that mostly focus the description of Brazilian Portuguese under the constructionist perspective, although we still present two functional texts, which complement the thought diversity proposed in this edition of our journal.

We also highlight an important interview kindly given by Professor Florent Perek from the University of Birmingham, England. The researcher participated in the 24th National Seminar and the 11th International Seminar of the Discourse and Grammar Research Group, delivering courses,

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debating topics in the area and contributing with information on experimental methodologies and corpus analysis. These methodologies have shown extreme advantage for studies on the cognitive representation of language for the usage-based constructional perspective worldwide. In the interview, given to professors Marcia dos Santos Machado Vieira, Roberto de Freitas Junior and Karen Sampaio Braga Alonso, all from UFRJ, the interviewee deals with various theoretical and practical subjects, an important contribution from his area of expertise for the interested reader.

In the paper *Internal competition in construction hierarchy: a study of the non-synonymy principle,* Flávia Saboya da Luz Rosa and Mariangela Rios de Oliveira present a study about the restraining-argumentative subfunction construction, coded as $[\text{Indut}_R \text{Afix}_{Loc}]_{RA}$, based on instantiations of the following constructions: *alto lá, calma aí, calma lá, espera aí, espera lá, segura aí, segura lá, aguenta aí, aguenta lá* e *para aí*. The authors offer an important discussion about the relation between linguistic variability and Goldberg's principle of non-synonymy (1995, 2006)[3].

Nahendi Almeida Mota and Marcia dos Santos Machado Vieira are the authors of the text *The Intensifying construction with color lexemes in Brazilian Portuguese,* in which there are some results of the research about the subschema [X cor de SN] of the intensifying construction [X cor de Y]. They argue that emotion, often revealed by facial coloring, can be a factor that contributes to the symbolic preparation present in the given (sub)schemes, described as alloconstructions of the constructional network of Brazilian Portuguese intensifiers.

The text *The phoric predicate construction in contemporary Brazilian Portuguese,* by Vinicius Maciel de Oliveira, addresses the phoric predicate construction with the verb *fazer,* showing how such construction maintains a phoric relationship with some predicate that has been mentioned, is to be mentioned or that is part of the situational context. The research also shows that the reference process can occur through repetition, which allows an observation of the phenomenon through the linguistic variation perspective.

In *A constructional analysis of the lexical formations based on coronavirus in contemporary Brazilian Portuguese,* Carlos Alexandre Gonçalves analyzes the coronavirus construction, from its creation in the field of infectology to the current days. He observes some morphological and semantic aspects present in the word formation processes used, in order to map the strategies followed by

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3   GOLDBERG, A.E. (1995). *A construction grammar approach to argument structure.* Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press.
GOLDBERG, A.E. (2006). *Constructions at work: the nature of generalization in language.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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speakers for the expression of points of view with the constructions chosen. The main sources of data are the social networks Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, spaces where users of the language often express their opinions about the current political scenario of the country and about the pandemic with the use of new constructions created from the name of the virus.

In *Diachronic study of the ordering of causal constructions with porque and por+infinitive based on the perspective of functional principles,* Mayra França Floret and Maria da Conceição Auxiliadora de Paiva, through a quantitative analysis of data collected from 17th, 20th and 21st century texts, verify the unmarked order of these constructions and verify whether there is some relationship between the order of the clause with these connectors and the informational status; or if there is relationship between the order of clauses and the iconic cause-effect relation. The authors also discuss some possibilities of syntagmatic organization change of these constructions in the history of Portuguese.

Lia Abrantes Antunes Soares and João Paulo da Silva Nascimento, in the paper *Evidence on the cognitive representation of BP functional constructions in children and deaf adults*, based on usage-based analysis, discuss the cognitive representation of nominal Portuguese constructions that instantiate the [(S) V (functional) X] pattern in which the verbs *ser*, *estar* and *ficar* are inserted. They have studied instances of these patterns in 58 L2BP written productions by undergraduate deaf students and deaf students in the first grade of elementary school. Data were collected from the *Corpus* NEIS-UFRJ. Their results points to the need for a stronger relationship between these theoretical approach and L2 teaching methodologies.

As mentioned, this number presents two articles that, although do not deal with the constructionist approach, are related to the Journal's call as they follow the functional approach: the texts "*From pages to screen: a multi-dimensional approach to the adaptation of young adult novels to the movies* and *Corpus linguistics and dialogues of Spanish language learning materials: an analysis of the directive speech acts in the context of service encounters.*

The first of the texts, whose authors are Márcia Veirano Pinto and Tiago Marcondes Valende, has as main objective the understanding of how the verbal language presented in young adult books is adapted to the audiovisual language of cinema, as occurred with cinematographic productions like *The outsiders* (1983), *The basketball diaries* (1995) and *Harry Potter and the sorcerer´s stone* (2001). The work - made from the analysis of thirty literary novels and thirty subtitles of their respective movies - brings a study of variation between the different types of language, based on the dimensions of variation in English (Biber, 1988). The results show that the stories become more interactive, less

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narrative and more dependent on context in the cinematographic adaptations.

The second text, authored by Flávia Colen Meniconi, compares the directive speech acts present in the dialogues of Spanish language textbooks adopted at the Federal University of Alagoas to the spontaneous oral corpus of the Autonomous University of Madrid. The article shows an analysis of the linguistic and discursive differences used in the formulations of the directives of these materials and reveals the distance between spontaneous oral speech and the dialogues created in Spanish language teaching materials. The author concludes that for the development of the pragmatic competence of students of Spanish as a foreign language, the teaching materials should be based on spontaneous samples of the language.

Finally, Karen Sampaio Alonso and Diego Oliveira offer the community of students and researchers of Linguistics with a review that presents the main ideas of the book "*The Grammar Network*: *how linguistic structure is shaped by language use*", written by Holger Diessel, and it also discusses its main postulates and concepts. According to the authors, this book fills a gap in the area, because "there was not a work that sought to bring together the diverse multidisciplinary contributions to a network model in a systematic, coherent, didactic material, and at the same time permeated with important theoretical reflections for the conception of usage-based language "(the authors in this volume).

Among the several fields in Linguistics, this dossiê, related to themes discussed in the 24th National Seminar and the 11th International Seminar of the Discourse and Grammar Research Group, presents a set of researches centered on linguistic usage, mostly connected to a constructional view of grammar. We hope that the community of scholars in the area enjoy the issue to the fullest, an issue organized in a quarantine that has already lasted six months and that makes us reflect on the importance of scientific studies in all areas and on the value of the study of human language, which serves, among other reasons, as an instrument for the protection of the human species.

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