D E L T A

Foreword

Contemporary Issues in Syntax and Semantics
Questões Contemporâneas em Sintaxe e Semântica

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Most of the papers in this volume were presented during the 3rd EISSI, in 2018 at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil. EISSI - *Encontro Internacional de Sintaxe e Semântica & Interfaces*/*International Syntax and Semantics & Interfaces* - was founded by a group of researchers from the Graduation Program in Letras and the Graduation Program in Linguistics from Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS), Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. Ana Ibanos organized the first two editions of the conference. The first I EISSI, in 2011, was on *Time across languages.* Emmon Bach, Östen Dahl, Brenda Laca, and Marcelo Ferreira were the invited speakers. A selection of the papers

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is in Molsing & Ibanos (2013). In 2015, the second conference was on *Possible Worlds and Contexts*. Richard Waltereit, Claire Beyssade and Roberta Pires de Oliveira were the invited speakers. The third edition, organized by Roberta Pires de Oliveira, Ina Emmel, Sandra Quarezemin and Monica Monawar, invited Luigi Rizzi and Angelika Kratzer to teach, lecture and discuss contemporary issues in syntax-semantics (Pires de Oliveira *et al*, 2020). *Contemporary Issues in Syntax and Semantics,* the theme of the 3 EISSI, was the open call for paper answered by all the papers in this volume.

For this volume, Luigi Rizzi (Collège de France) and Gennaro Chierchia (Harvard University) were invited to present their view on the state of the art in syntax and semantics. Although some scholars defend a distinction between the minimalist program and the cartographic approach, Rizzi has always argued that the fundamental computational devices assumed in cartographic analysis are fully consistent with basic tenets and tools in Minimalism (Cinque & Rizzi 2010; Rizzi & Cinque 2016). Syntax is a matter of binary merge, both internal and external, giving rise to labeled hierarchical representations. Semantics is functional application and lambda abstraction. Minimalism, Cartography are absolutely compatible with logical discourse semantics, as Gennaro Chierchia's (Harvard University) research project shows since his 1984 PhD on the syntax and semantics of infinitives and gerunds. Both researches are rooted in Chomsky seminal work, the heuristics of the project appear clearly in the empirical coverture across languages, the predictions concerning natural languages, language acquisition, and language processing, all of which help to formulate further empirical and theoretical questions. Any theory of natural language must explain the ordering of the functional heads that reappears across languages, the mid-level generalizations in semantics, movement to A and to A' positions, the corresponding semantics, focus, focal items. Those are some of the topics discussed in the interviews. Both mention the increasing role of experiments in contemporary linguistics.

Rizzi's investigation reveals that syntactic structures consist of complex functional sequences of simple, but numerous, structural atoms. He highlights that natural languages favor local simplicity, adopting organizational principles which enforce a distributed representation of complex properties. He showed that the set of

functional elements is much richer than previous assumed (Rizzi 1997, 2001, 2004). His studies have highlighted important properties of the sequences, properties of ordering, of mutual incompatibility, and other distributional properties. Another important issue, investigated by Rizzi, is what he calls the "further explanation" of cartographic properties: can the properties uncovered in cartographic research be deducible from fundamental ingredients of linguistic computations? (Rizzi 2013). Freezing effects properties are related to labeling algorithms proposed in Chomsky (2013). According to Rizzi (2006), the connection between the subject criterion and criterial freezing offers an alternative to the classical Empty Category Principle (ECP) analysis of subject object asymmetries[6]. Locality, the great theoretical question very well explored by Rizzi's work over the nineties, has defined in terms of the Relativized Minimality (RM) principle (Rizzi 1990). The variation between languages (the crosslinguistic scope of this line of cartographic enterprise) is also highlighted in research conducted by Luigi Rizzi (Belletti & Rizzi 1996; Rizzi 2000). These and other topics are explored in the interview.

Gennaro Chierchia has developed a robust semantic interpretation of generative syntax into Montague's calculus, contributing to several domains in the syntax-semantics-pragmatics interface. The semantics of the DP across languages is at the origin of his series of papers on noun denotations and the Semantic Parameters (Chierchia, 1998), which opens a research agenda to investigate natural languages. Clusters of differences in the noun phrases across languages are explained by a choice very early in the derivation, when little n is projected from the root noun. The interpretation of Infinitive and Gerundive clauses, De se reading and the interpretation of PRO (Chierchia 1984, 1989) are other examples of his contribution to our understanding of syntax and semantics interface of the CP domain and anaphora. Polarity items, focus, pragmatic reasoning, implicatures and language architecture (Chierchia 2013) moves the discussion to context, and presuppositions in dynamic approaches (Chierchia 1995). In those areas, he claims in the interview, experimental research is a necessary tool since we

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6. For Rizzi (2006), the effects resulting from the link between the subject criterion and criterial freezing support the basic properties of the classical approach and avoiding the theoretical difficulties of an ECP account in a framework based on minimalist guidelines.

are dealing with subtle phenomena. Logical semantics-pragmatics and Cartography hand-in-hand is a promising avenue in the study of natural languages.

The interviews close this special volume on contemporary syntax and semantics, composed of papers ordered from the lexicon to illocutionary force. The first two papers report formal accounts on lexical properties of items that are related to the notion of "number" in the verbal domain. In "Semelfactives as atomic predicates", Romina Trebisacce (Universidad de Buenos Aires/CONICET/UADER) argues that semelfactives are telic predicates (against Smith, 1991) without internal temporal structure (against Rothstein 2008), i.e. atomic. The iterative reading is generated by the operator or temporal phrase, by quantifying into atoms. Pluractionality is allowed because semelfactives denote atomic events. In "Decomposing distribution across dimensions: evidence from Libras", Marta Donazzan (Université de Nantes) and Luciana Sanchez-Mendes (Universidade Federal Fluminense) study pluractionality (Lasersohn 1995) analyzing data collected with a Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) a signer. They argue that dubbed one-handed repetition \rep conveys distribution in time; the addition of the spatial dimension, signaled by two-handed alternating repetition \alt, indicates that the distribution in time is related to the participants.

The next two papers move the investigation to the level of the nominal phrase; the first on definite phrases and the second, on indefinites. In "A alternância parte-todo com verbos transitivos no PB: um caso de fatoração de argumento", Letícia Lucinda Meirelles (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais) and Márcia Cançado (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais) analyze an alternation in the object position of transitive verbs in Brazilian Portuguese, as in: *o cachorro mordeu a perna da menina* (the dog bit the leg of the girl) and *o cachorro mordeu a menina na perna* (the dog bit the girl in the leg). They are "*property factoring alternation*" (Levin 1993). Semantically, they are determiner phrases that are connected by part and whole relations, and participated on events of physical contact, where they are affected. The alternation is pragmatically blocked when the event is prototypically about a specific part of the participant, i.e. *penteou* (to comb) **a mãe penteou a filha no cabelo*. They claim the

alternation changes the perspective on the event, by changing the focus of information.

Fernando Carranza (Universidad de Buenos Aires/CONICET) and Carlos Muñoz Pérez (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile), in "The syntax and semantics of approximate indefinites in Spanish", develop the syntax and semantics of indefinite nominal phrases that lead to approximative interpretation such as *unas veintidós* (some twenty). They propose that an approximative morpheme Approx is combined with the cardinal number; the morphological realization of this morpheme is as the plural affix on the indefinite article. Following Rothstein (2017), they assume the exponent of this morpheme to be syncretic with plural morphology. Since cardinals cannot host this type of affix, it attaches to the indefinite article heading the nominal in order to avoid a stranded affix violation. Regarding the semantics of the Approx morpheme, it draws a "margin of error" around the cardinal number by calculating a proportional value σ. As discussed, this type of variable seems to be necessary even for other approaches to the semantics of approximators.

Still in the lexical domain (VP), Renato Basso (Universidade Federal de São Carlos) and Thayse Letícia Ferreira (Universidade Federal de São Carlos), in "Sobre a estrutura dos PPs locativos no Português Brasileiro: nome ou parte axial?", study axial locatives in BP and compare Svenonius' proposal (2010) according to which AxPart is a functional projection in the syntax to Matushanskty & Zwarts (in press) proposal which denies the existence of such a projection in favor of an approach according to which the head of the phrase is a weak noun. The authors claim the latter view is a better explanation for the data in BP. The next paper moves up the VP into the TP domain.

Modal verbs are certainly one of the hottest themes in Syntax-Semantics. Chierchia, in the interview, points out that one of the issues in contemporary semantics is whether degrees are needed to account for adjectives and other lexical items. In "Modalidade com graus? Necessidade fraca e o verbo *dever* do português", Marcelo Ferreira (Universidade de São Paulo), relying on Kratzer (2012)'seminal work on modality, investigates the hypothesis that weak necessity modals, such as *dever* in BP, may have a degree argument. The author explores

the analogies between modal verbs and proportional determiners, gradable adjectives, universal QPs, and plural definite descriptions, with the aim of evaluating what are the best analytical tools to understand weak necessity.

Moving up into the TP domain, and closely related to the main topics in the review in this volume, Eduardo Correa Soares (Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina/CNPq), Philip Miller (Université de Paris), and Barbara Hemforth (Université de Paris/CNRS), in "The Effect of Semantic and Discourse Features on the Use of Null and Overt Subjects – A Quantitative Study of Third Person Subjects in Brazilian Portuguese", present an empirical investigation, corpora search and two acceptability experiments, into the distribution of null and overt subjects in BP. They show that animacy and specificity affect the relative frequency of null and overt subjects and their acceptability in sentences. They develop an approach in the light of a theory of anaphora resolution (Ariel 1990).

The last two papers in this special edition are about the grammatical illocutionary force of a sentence, assuming Rizzi's proposal (Rizzi, 1997). In "Que lindo o que vocês fizeram! Brazilian Portuguese wh-exclamatives and the evidence for a split force", Paulo Medeiros Junior (Universidade de Brasília) and Pedro Luiz Moraes Sieiro (Universidade de Brasília/CAPES) investigate wh-exclamative sentences in BP. The authors claim that they provide evidence to split Force in the periphery of the sentence (Rizzi 1997), given cooccurrence of a relative and an exclamative in the same utterance. The authors assume two functional heads in Force: a RelP (hosting relative WHs) and an ExclP, which hosts exclamative WHs. Moreover, they argue that the data shows that exclamation must be higher than relativization in a Split Force projection, and below other discourse projections.

In "Imperativos pretéritos no português brasileiro", Rerisson Cavalcante (Universidade Federal da Bahia), and Higor Monteiro Paiva (Universidade Federal da Bahia/PIBIC) study BP sentences with past subjunctive verbs in matrix without any licensing element. The authors argue that this syntactic structure corresponds to a past imperative. Those sentences are past imperative which they characterize by the feature [counterfactual]. They discuss the interactions between

imperative sentences and grammatical tense and also compare this structure with other sentential types from French, English, Dutch, and Spanish, which have also been described as imperatives directed to the past. They suggest that those are historically the structure is linked to conditional sentences, and pragmatically felicitous in *to do* list.

The review of Galvez, Kato & Roberts (2019) *Português brasileiro. Uma segunda viagem diacrônica* by Carlos Felipe Pinto (Universidade Federal da Bahia) follows the papers, most of which are about Brazilian Portuguese, introduces Brazilian Portuguese, a language that has puzzled both syntacticians and semanticists.

Each one of the contributions in this volume, from the lexicon to the illocutionary force, and the review of the history of Brazilian Portuguese reflect contemporary issues in syntax and semantics. Luigi Rizzi and Gennaro Chierchia are key names in this enterprise of understanding natural languages from a scientific point of view. Their interviews close the volume. There are many points of contact between them, as we have already mentioned. Both authors carefully investigate the interface between syntax and semantics/pragmatics. The relation between the computational system and other cognitive systems, in order to explain what is that we know without knowing that allows us to talk the way we do, what explains natural languages and the human mind are some of the topics discussed by them. The volume is a contribution to enlarge our understanding of this ability that we all share: our language.

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