DISCONTINUOUS NOUN PHRASES

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▪ ABSTRACT: This paper aims to examine the noun phrase with non-canonical order of constituents, called 'discontinuous Np' by Keizer (2007). The analysis and description of discontinuity aims to search, based on Functional Discourse Grammar theoretical framework (HENGEVELD; MACKENZIE, 2008), for pragmatic, semantic and formal factors which motivate the speaker's choice of specific encodings to these Nps in the Morphosyntactic Level. The sample is constituted from spoken language records from the Iboruna database, which represents the spoken variety in the northwest of São Paulo State, collected by the ALIP project, within the Functional Grammar Research Group, at UNESP, in São José do Rio Preto. For the purposes of this work, the following criteria are explored: (i) motivation for discontinuity; (ii) type of intervening material in the Np; (iii) morphosyntactic configuration of the discontinuous Np; and (iv) structural weight of the element displaced from the Np. The analysis shows that discontinuity is predominantly motivated by pragmatic aspects, in particular, by the focal status of information provided by part of the Np. Furthermore, the prototypical discontinuous Np is characterized by the interference of morphosyntactic material between the head noun and its postnuclear constituents. Although there is this linear distancing, the comprehension of discontinuous statements is not impaired due to a semantic link preserved at the Representational Level, a possible interpretation in a theoretical model such as FDG.

▪ KEYWORDS: noun phrase; discontinuity; focus.

Opening words

The discontinuity of the noun phrase (henceforth Np) is a morphosyntactic phenomenon that disrupt the constituents' adjacency by presenting a non-canonical ordering, either by the interference of elements in the morphosyntax, as in (1a), or by the repositioning of modifiers, as in (1b).

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(1) a. *aí na parte de trás… dessa made(i)ra… da ou/ d**a o(u)tra made(i)ra** [que eu tava falan(d)o] **plana** né?...* (AC049; RP: L195)

(And then on the back of that wood… **the other wood** [*I was talking about*] **plane**, right?)

b. *no fundo tem mais dois cômodo que é:: … um é **o depósito** [do meu pai] **de doce**…* (AC027; DE: L.112)

(in the back, there are two more rooms which is... one is **the warehouse** [*of my father*] **of candy**)

In the linguistic literature, discussions about the phenomenon of discontinuity, that is, the displacement of a constituent from the Np domain, can fall into two types: those that focus on the morphosyntactic restrictions that apply to displacement and those that are more concerned with the analysis of the circumstances that favor displacement in situations in which the speaker makes a choice between two acceptable word orders. This work is linked to the second type, since it looks at the formal coding of discontinuous Nps in order to verify what activates one or another form of expression.

Therefore, considering the functional vocation of this work, our main objective, in addition to describing the formal nature of this type of Np, is to investigate pragmatic, semantic and morphosyntactic motivations that activate the discontinuity of its constituent parts.

For Keizer (2007), who conducted a study of discontinuous Nps in English, it is necessary to take into account the different ordering principles that would determine the final order of the elements and that would be in interaction and, in some contexts, in competition. In the case of this work, two principles are crucial: the principle of communicative weight,[1] according to which structures with pragmatic prominence, in particular, structures with a status of new information in the discourse would be placed in the final position of the linguistic expression; and the structural weight,[2] according to which the structures would be organized in linear morphosyntax relative to their increasing complexity, that is, from the least complex to the most complex structure.

This work analyzes the performance of these two principles in order to verify which one is predominantly responsible for the discontinuity in Nps and to provide explanations about the variation in the order of the elements, a type of analysis already carried out by Camacho (2017) and Souza-Martins (2020a, 2020b), which is the main source of the data under analysis. At first, the main hypothesis of this work, in line with Keizer (2007), is that the communicative weight principle has a more significant role in discontinuity and defines more often the order of the elements, when in competition with the structural weight principle.

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[1]   The author also refers to the principle as the "end-focus principle". In this work, the terms will be used as synonyms.

[2]   Also referred to as "the principle of increasing complexity" both in the author's text and in this work.

For that purpose, this study is based on the theoretical framework of the Functional Discourse Grammar (henceforth FDG) (HENGEVELD; MACKENZIE, 2008), whose main objective is to "account for the morphosyntactic and phonologically coded phenomena in languages, either as correlates of pragmatic and semantic aspects of the formulation, either as having inherent properties of coding" (HENGEVELD; MACKENZIE, 2012, p. 47).

It is almost pointless to say that this study has a functionalist orientation precisely because it presupposes that certain morphosyntactic codifications are motivated by pragmatic and semantic aspects, which implies an investigation that links the analysis of the morphosyntactic characteristics to the functional motivations that underlie the linguistic structure. In this aspect, the FDG theory is able to provide linguistic explanations about the analyzed phenomenon, which justifies the choice of such an approach.

It is precisely within this theoretical orientation that García Velasco (2010) and Van de Velde (2012) investigate some aspects of discontinuity in English and Dutch data, respectively, proposing that the phenomenon corresponds to a specific circumstance in which pragmatic and semantically related entities are coded separately in the Morphosyntactic Level, due to motivations coming from the levels of formulation. It is also based on this postulate that our analysis will be developed, aiming to verify whether, in fact, this also applies to Portuguese data, more specifically to the variety spoken in the region of São José do Rio Preto.

As for the organization, this text is structured as follows: section 1 and its subsections deal with the theoretical support in which a discourse-functional perspective of the Np and its discontinuity is presented; section 2 identifies the proposal and the methodological procedures for this work; section 3 shows the motivations that activate the Np discontinuity phenomenon; and the Final Words discuss the main generalizations and theoretical implications.

A functional perspective of discontinuity

Functional Discourse Grammar

The Functional Discourse Grammar takes, as its basic unit of analysis, Discourse Acts instead of sentences. It is conceived as "the Grammatical Component of a global model of verbal interaction in which this component is linked to the Conceptual Component, the Output Component and the Contextual Component" (HENGEVELD; MACKENZIE, 2012, p. 44), as presented in the general architecture in Figure 1.

These three components are not grammatical, but interact with the Grammatical Component through formulation and coding operations; the first operation concerns rules that govern pragmatic and semantic representations, and the second concerns rules that convert such representations into morphosyntactic and phonological representations.

The Conceptual Component is considered the driving force of the Grammatical Component, as it develops both the speaker's communicative intention and conceptualizations regarding extralinguistic factors. The Output Component, based on the information that the Grammatical Component provides, produces the expressions, whether written, acoustic or sign. Finally, the Contextual Component "contains the description of the content and the form of the preceding speech, the real perceptible context in which the speech event occurs and the social relations between the participants" (HENGEVELD; MACKENZIE, 2012, p. 45).
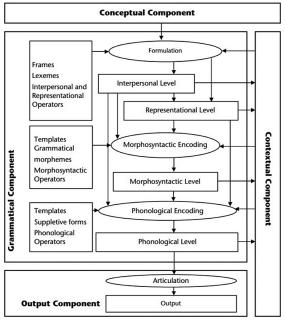
Figure 1 – General layout of FDG

Source: Adapted from Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008, p.13).

As shown in Figure 1, FDG initiates with the speaker's intention and develops until the articulation, due to the assumption that the more the organization of a grammar framework approaches the linguistic processing in the individual, the more effective it will be. In this regard, it is understood that FDG "takes the functional approach of language to its logical extreme" (HENGEVELD; MACKENZIE, 2012, p. 47) because, within its top-down organization of grammar, Pragmatics governs Semantics; Pragmatics and Semantics govern Morphosyntax; and, finally, Pragmatics, Semantics and Morphosyntax govern Phonology.[3]

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[3] This way of organization does not mean that the two levels of codification are always determined by the two levels of formulation. A typical formal structure of English language, such as the presentative form [there + be + Np], has no strictly pragmatic and semantic motivation.

Within the Grammatical Component, there are four levels of linguistic organization, which, in turn, have a hierarchically ordered organization in layers. The first one is the Interpersonal Level, responsible for the linguistic actions in the interaction process between the participants. It contains pragmatic representations of formulation. Its highest layer is the Move (M), which, on the one hand, constitutes the largest unit of interaction relevant to the linguistic analysis and, on the other hand, may contain one or more Discourse Acts (A), the basic unit of discourse. In turn, each Act contains two participants in the interaction, Speaker (S) and Addressee (A), and the Communicated Content (C), which is the totality of what the speaker wants to evoke in the interaction with the addressee. Each Communicated Content, in turn, contains one or more Subacts hierarchically subordinated to the Communicated Content. Subacts can be Ascriptive (T), evoking a property, or Referential (R), evoking a referent.

The second level is the Representational one, which deals with the semantic aspects of a linguistic unit, therefore being responsible for the designation. Its layers are defined based on the semantic categories they include. The highest layer is the Propositional Content (p), characterized as a mental construct, which contains one or more Episodes (ep), which, in turn, contains one or more States-of-Affairs (e), second-order entities that can be located in time and evaluated in terms of their reality. The State-of-Affairs layer can be organized into Configurational Property (f) (predicate and its arguments), Individual (x) (first-order entities located in space), Location (l), Time (t), Manner (m), Quantity (q) and Reason (r).

The third level, the Morphosyntactic one, deals with the structural aspects of a linguistic unit. In addition to being often functionally motivated, this level has its own organizational principles, which is of interest to this work. In addition, it receives input from the formulation levels and is responsible for the morphosyntactic coding of interpersonal and representational representations. Its highest layer is Linguistic Expression (Le), any set of at least one morphosyntactic unit, which, in turn, can be formed by Clauses (Cl), Phrases (P) and Words (W).

The fourth and final level is the Phonological one, which deals with all aspects of coding not covered by the morphosyntactic level. It receives input from the three other levels and provides the input for the Output Component. Its layers are: the Utterance, the largest speech segment covered by the phonological level, the Intonational Phrase, the Phonological Phrase, the Phonological Word, the Syllable and the Foot.

We are mainly interested here in the relationship between the highest levels of formulation - the Interpersonal and the Representational - and the Morphosyntactic level, since dealing with the phenomenon of discontinuity requires to deal with the word order at the Morphosyntactic Level and the motivations coming from the highest levels. The next section discusses how FDG conceives the Np.

A functional discourse approach of the Np

From a purely formal point of view, the Np is a set of elements within the clause that has a noun as its head. According to Perini (1995), it can be defined in a very simple way, conceiving it as "the phrase that can be the subject of some clause" (PERINI, 1995, p. 92, our translation),[4] as in (2-3).

(2) ***Esse professor*** *é um neurótico*. (PERINI, 1995, p. 92)

(**This teacher** is a neurotic.)

(3) ***Um neurótico*** *rabiscou meus livros*. (PERINI, 1995, p. 92)

(**A neurotic** scribbled my books.)

Based on these examples, the author considers that *esse professor* (2) is an Np because it is the subject of the first clause, and so is *um neurótico* in (3), although the same Np appears in (2) in the predicate position, performing a non-referential, but ascriptive function. In addition to the formal definition of Perini (1995), it can be postulated that, from a semantic perspective, the noun, besides naming, refers to things in the world, that is, to entities in the extralinguistic world, real or imaginary. This is the role played by *esse professor* in (2) and *um neurótico* in (3); that definition, however, would exclude this same Np in (2), in the semantic function of predicate.
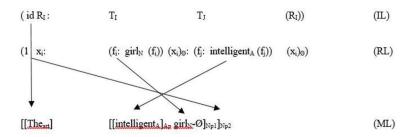
Based on this difference, we will now look at the Np from a pragmatic and semantic perspective, which implies the need of a more complex treatment for the definition of the category, and assume that, from a pragmatic point of view, a Np can perform the function of a Referential Subact, like *esse professor* in (2) and *um neurótico* in (3), and also of an Ascriptive Subact, which is the case of *um neurótico* in (2).

The ascriptive and referential functions that the Nps perform at the Interpersonal Level are treated as Subacts, the Ascriptive and the Referential ones,[5] which, at the Representational Level, correspond, respectively, to the evocation of the semantic functions of predication and designation. The organization in levels and layers of the FDG model, seen in the previous section, seems to provide a satisfactory theoretical solution for the pragmatic, semantic and morphosyntactic characteristics of the Np. To show the interaction between the levels, we provide, in Figure 2, the proposal for formalization by Hengeveld (2008) to analyze the standard case of the Np *the intelligent girl*.

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4   Original: "*o sintagma que pode ser sujeito de alguma oração*".

5   A Referential Subact is an attempt to evoke a referent and an Ascriptive Subact is an attempt to evoke a property, cf. Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008).

Figure 2 – Standard Np representation

(id R_I : T_I T_J (R_I))   (IL)

(1 | x_i :   (f_i: girl$_N$ (f_i)) (x_i)$_\emptyset$: (f_j: intelligent$_A$ (f_j))   (x_i)$_\emptyset$ (RL)

[[The$_{art}$]   [[intelligent$_A$]$_{Ap}$ girl$_N$-Ø]$_{Np1}$]$_{Np2}$ (ML)

The triple representation in Figure 2 shows, in fact, that it is precisely the referential status of the Np at the Interpersonal Level (IL) which identifies its prototypical use, although, as shown in example (3), a Np can, secondarily, evoke an Ascriptive Subact.

This pragmatic status of the standard Np is represented by R_I at the Interpersonal Level, which translates the Referential Subact; it contains, in turn, two instantiations of an Ascriptive Subact (T_I e T_J), implying that the denotation of the Np at the Representational Level (RL) involves two corresponding lexical properties (f_i e f_j). Still at this level, (x_i) indicates that the Np denotes a first-order entity, in this case *girl*, modified by *intelligent*, which has the properties f_i e f_j, respectively, to represent the fact that the referential denotation of the Np has a lexical expression at the Representational Level.

It is also at this level that the nominal nature of the Np is indicated, marked, in Figure 2, as the category N of noun, subscribed in the lexical item acting as a head, and as the category A of adjective, subscribed in the lexical item acting as a modifier. Based on the information provided by the highest levels, the encoder formally produces a Np at the Morphosyntactic Level (ML) with the typical English ordering, where the adjective in the modifier function precedes the name in the head function; in the case of the Portuguese variety examined, the opposite situation would occur. It is, therefore, at the Morphosyntactic Level that the ordering of the constituents takes place.

As it can be seen, the Noun Phrase (Np) is a morphosyntactic category that evokes, as a prototypical member,[6] a Referential Subact at the Interpersonal Level and denotes, at the Representational Level, an Individual (x), who is, in this case, a first-order entity, which can be located in space and evaluated in terms of its existence. It is formally constituted by the definite article (Art), which represents, at the Morphosyntactic Level, the identifiable feature of the referent at the Interpersonal Level, and by the Np$_2$, which, in turn, is formed by Np$_1$, consisting of a noun (N), performing the head function, and

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[6] Hengeveld (2008) identifies other types of Nps that are less prototypical members of the category. These are the cases of non-nominal Nps (**I saw what you did**); Nps that denote second- and third-order entities, such as states-of-affairs (**milk production**) and propositions (**belief in change**); Nps with proper names and pronouns (**Peter left / he left**), which are not denoted at the Representational Level; Nps that represent vocatives (**Hey, girl!***);* Nps with x-incorporated in languages that contain them and, finally, ascriptive Nps, as *um neurótico* in (3).

of an Adjectival Phrase (Adjp), which is, in Hengeveld's example, represented by the adjective (A) *intelligent*.

It can be seen that the functional complexity of the Np is supported by a grammar model, such as FDG, precisely because it represents, in hierarchically organized levels and layers, this mode of operation that projects a pragmatic, semantic and morphosyntactic perspective for a unit that, otherwise, it is treated only as a purely syntactic category. The next section presents how this model is also able to identify some ordering principles that allow us to explain, from the functionalist perspective, discontinuity and, more specifically, discontinuous Nps.

Constituent ordering and discontinuity

Discontinuous Nps can be understood as an unconscious choice of the speaker between two formally acceptable word orders of morphosyntactic organization. As we will see later, however, there are cases in which order appears to be a deliberate strategy by the speaker to produce certain effects on the discourse situation. In any case, the relationship between the Morphosyntactic Level and the two highest levels that serve as input is ruled by three principles, iconicity, domain integrity and functional stability. Each of these principles contributes, in its own way, to maximize the parallelism between the structures, reinforcing transparency and ease of interpretation.

Let us start with the principle of iconicity. Although language is a symbolic construct that, as such, is able to tolerate a maximally arbitrary relationship between form and content, natural languages have a diversity of phenomena that provide a certain degree of homology between these two dimensions. These are the phenomena covered by the principle of iconicity, whose performance can be illustrated by the correspondence between the order in which the categories of the Interpersonal Level and the Representational Level are introduced and the order in which these categories are expressed in formal codification, as seen in (4a-b).

(4) a. *O jogo começou às 16:00 e terminou empatado.*

(The game started at 4pm and ended in a tie)

b. *O jogo, que começou às 16:00, terminou empatado.*

(The game, which started at 4pm, ended in a tie)

(adapted from Hengeveld and Mackenzie, 2008, p. 284)

The example in (4a) illustrates the case of a move with two discourse acts, whose morphosyntactic order preserves the chronological sequence of the events evoked and designated, at the Representational Level, as two States-of-Affairs. According to

this order, the Morphosyntactic Level encodes this relation in the form of a linguistic expression consisting of two coordinated sentences.

It would be possible to avoid the iconic relation if the speaker's functional interest was to give more prominence to the information that the game ended in a tie than to the moment of beginning, as shown in (4b). In this case, the move would consist of two discourse acts, one of which, the subsidiary one, appears as a relative clause at the Morphosyntactic Level, and the nuclear one, as the main clause, opening three intonational phrases at the Phonological Level. The formulation of one of the two statements consists of a conscious choice of the speaker, who uses the strategy of relativization to make a discourse act more prominent than the other. Everything is, as it turns out, a matter of communicative intention that gives total priority to the speaker in the interaction situation, always taking into account his/her interlocutor.[7]

Another principle that restricts the Morphosyntactic Level for reflecting the organization of the levels that serve as input is that of domain integrity. This principle refers to a universal preference for units, which belong together to the Interpersonal and Representational levels, to be juxtaposed to each other at the Morphosyntactic Level (HENGEVELD; MACKENZIE, 2008). In other words, modifiers should ideally be placed, in the morphosyntactic expression, in a position adjacent to the heads over their scope; similarly, functions and operators should be performed by elements close to the units to which they apply.

The violation of the principle of domain integrity, which causes the appearance of discontinuities, constitutes a type of violation of the transparency relation, which consists of a two-way relationship between the units of meaning and the formal units, as understood by Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008) and, in particular Hengeveld (2011) and Leufkens (2015).

By transparency, we consider this ideal two-way alignment between the hierarchical structure of the highest levels among themselves and between their hierarchical structure and that of the Morphosyntactic Level; in this case, the evocation of a Referential Subact, for example, should not be interrupted by the evocation of another Referential Subact, as in (4b), or by some Ascriptive Subact. This principle applies by default, that is, if everything else is equal, the correspondence between the levels would guarantee respect for the principle of domain integrity.

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7 According to Neves (2012), it is defended here the existence of a unique grammatical system for the spoken and written modalities of language, but which also contemplates the use's specificities of each one. The author recalls the difficult limit of distinction, from the point of view of the basic structures, between the spoken language and the written language, a question that she leads to the different compartments (or levels) of the "grammar", noting, for example, that, in some fields, not in general, "differences are discussed more strongly in the field of interaction (mode of production, conditions of use, interests and specific purposes), while in other fields differences are already discussed more specifically in the system level"(NEVES, 2012, p. 78). It should be noted, however, that in none of the cases any of the components (syntactic, semantic or pragmatic) that are integrated to compose the grammar of the language disappears.

The third principle, which is worth discussing here, that of functional stability, requires that constituents with the same specification, whether interpersonal or representational, be placed in the same fixed position in relation to other categories.[8]

Other circumstances, besides the performance of these three principles, which activate discontinuity are evoked by Keizer (2007), as the end-weight principle (or structural complexity) and the end-focus principle (or communicative weight) to contemplate the pragmatic circumstances.

The first principle concerns the fact that the free word order is activated by a syntactic processing, determined by the tendency to optimize the structures of the language, that is, the least complex structure available (HAWKINS, 1983). Dik (1997) refers to this restriction as the Principle of Increasing Complexity, conceiving it as a preference to order the constituents of a linguistic expression in terms of the progressively higher degree of complexity of its constituents.

It is natural, according to Dik (1997), that this principle is opposed to that of functional stability: although the constituents with the same functional profile are placed in the same position, this preference can be overcome by the difference in internal complexity between them. The complexity is, in this same sense, referred to as "weight" by Mallinson and Blake (1981) and Hawkins (1983). Thus, these are motivations in competition in the terms of Du Bois (1985).

Regarding the second principle, that of end-focus (or communicative weight), according to Keizer (2007) and Dik (1997), different functional, discursive or cognitive notions have been used to explain the way in which the elements of the clause are ordered. According to the Principle of Pragmatic Highlighting, constituents with a special pragmatic function are preferably placed in "special positions", including at least the clause-initial position.

In accordance with this principle, Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008) postulate three positions available at the Morphosyntactic Level for the insertion of elements in the sentence: the initial position (P^I), the medial position (P^M) and the final position (P^F), according to the postulates of Dik (1997). Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008), however, add relative positions for each of these absolute positions, such as P^{I+n}, $P^{M+/-n}$ and P^{F-n}, which become available only when the absolute positions (P^I, P^M and P^F) are filled, as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 – Absolute and relative clause positions.

P^I	P^{I+1}	P^{I+n}	P^2	P^{2+n}	P^{M-n}	P^{M-1}	P^M	P^{M+1}	P^{M+n}	P^{F-n}	P^{F-1}	P^F

Source: Pezatti (2014, p. 82).

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[8] In certain languages, the disposition of constituents performing a focal function is determined by their position in relation to the verb. The Turkish language, for example, inserts the constituent with the function of Focus in the immediately pre-verbal position and fixes the tense position in the verb in the final position of the clause.

Dik (1997) understands that the two peripheral positions (P^I and P^F) are psychologically prominent and extremely relevant to the communication process, while the medial position (P^M) is not only the least prominent position, but also, structurally, should not be considered a unique position considering the variable number of constituents that a sentence can contain.

Based on the Principle of Pragmatic Highlighting, constituents with special pragmatic function are positioned preferably in "special positions", including at least clause-initial position, or P^I. This principle would explain the displacement of elements both at the beginning of the clause (5a) and at the end (5b), demonstrating the speaker's intention to highlight information from his/her speech by accommodating it in a specific position.

(5) a. *Doutores sempre houve muito poucos.* (PEZATTI, 2014, p. 98)

   (*Doctors* there have always been very few)

   b. The announcement was being made *that he was going to the Department of Education and Science.* (KEIZER, 2007, p. 288)

Sentences like (5a) show how elements that contain given information are displaced out of their domain and reallocated at the clause-initial position, a typical Topic position in Portuguese language; in contrast, sentences like (5b) illustrate what Keizer (2007) calls communicative weight: the focal information contained in part of the Np is displaced to the clause-final position, appropriate for the insertion of new information. The phenomenon is also mentioned as "extraposition" by the author, although this is a term already used by researchers from other theoretical approaches, especially the generative one.

However, as predicted by Dik (1997a), Keizer (2007) and also Du Bois (1985), in certain contexts, the principles may engage in a competition: each one favors a specific order, which may require from the speaker an execution of a compensatory balancing act by selecting the form of expression that best meets his/her communicative purposes.[9]

In the two Dutch functionalist models, the Theory of Functional Grammar (DIK, 1997) and Functional Discourse Grammar (HENGEVELD; MACKENZIE, 2008), it is, as it was shown, the Interpersonal Level that provides the templates for the speaker to formulate his/her messages based on in his/her estimates of the addressee's mental state, which are motivated by pragmatic functions. Pezatti (2014) highlights three of

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[9] There is a clear risk here of admitting a functionalist position that Du Bois (1985) calls "transparent functionalism". According to this theoretical perspective, apparently autonomous syntactic factors actually constitute the transparent result of the speaker's functional objectives, so that it becomes unnecessary to postulate some arbitrary syntactic mechanism for the description of the language. In other words: the only forces that govern "syntax" are the positive forces of external linguistics, such as bio-based processing mechanisms, communicative intentions, etc. (DU BOIS, 1985). This is not the position that is assumed here: we recognize the principle that some rules of morphosyntactic organization are formally motivated without any influence from the speaker's communicative intentions, which would be subject to pragmatic principles governing formal organization.

them, recognized by FDG, that have an impact on formal expression: topic, focus and contrast,[10] but adds a fourth, emphasis. We will focus here only on the Focus function due to its relevance to the purposes of this paper.

The Focus function consists of the speaker's strategic selection of new information with the purpose of filling a gap in the potential information of the addressee or of correcting information that he/she already has. Focal information can be assigned to the Referential Subact, the Ascriptive Subact, or to the clause as a whole, in the case of statements in which all the constituents are new (*The mail has arrived*).

The Principle of Pragmatic Highlighting causes a discontinuous organization of the Np at the Morphosyntactic Level and breaks with the linear ordering of its constituents. García Velasco (2010) understands that the term **discontinuity**, in general, refers to a linguistic unit whose members are interrupted by interfering linguistic material in linear morphosyntax. This concept, according to him, differs from the notion of **displacement**,[11] which, in turn, concerns the linguistic unity that, in a certain syntactic context, appears in a different position than it would appear if it were in accordance with the canonical word order required by the grammar of the language.

The difference between the two notions, still according to the author, is that **displacement** is defined based on the syntactic categories of the language, thus being a theoretically independent notion; **discontinuity**, on the other hand, is a term that depends on the way in which each theoretical model conceives the notion of **constituent**. In view of this, it is evident the need to make clear what is considered discontinuity in the light of the FDG.

Tracing a path between different perspectives of discontinuity in order to define to which one the FDG fits in with, García Velasco (2010) quotes Huck and Ojeda (1987 *apud* GARCÍA VELASCO, 2010), who explain three approaches to the phenomenon in linguistic theory: constant semantic interpretation, syntactic dependency and semantic unity.

The first one considers that a **constituent** is a phonetic sequence with the same semantic contribution no matter whether its members are contiguous or not. The second one defines **constituent** based on dominance relations typical of an arboreal configuration to which transformations by movement can subsequently be applied, in order to produce several levels of syntactic analysis. The third one postulates that non-adjacent syntactic elements cannot form a constituent, although they can be projected in a semantic representation in which their value can form a unit (HUCK; OJEDA, 1987 *apud* GARCÍA VELASCO, 2010). For García Velasco (2010), it is with this third

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[10]   These categories differ from those that Dik (1997) initially postulated, since, for example, contrastive focus is now a pragmatic function of its own, called "contrast".

[11]   The term **displacement** should not be associated with transformations or movements of the linguistic structure, as conceived by the generative theory. In this text, the term is used to indicate that a linguistic structure assumes a non-prototypical position, due to the speaker's specific motivations. This does not mean that the constituent has moved from its original position, but that it has been placed in a position that it would not be in if it was not for the communicative intention of the speaker.

approach that FDG fits in, since this theoretical model allows morphosyntactically separated units to have a semantic connection at the Representational Level.

Another author, Van de Velde (2012), argues in the same direction as García Velasco (2010), in his analysis of Prepositional Phrases (hereinafter Pps) that are displaced to the clause-initial position, a phenomenon known as "extraction". In line with García Velasco (2010), Van de Velde (2012) argues that, in a sentence like **About Amsterdam I read two books**, the Np [**two books**] and the PP [**about Amsterdam**] do not form a single constituent at the Morphosyntactic Level, however, they have a connection at the Representational Level, in which the semantic relations between head and modifier are established, as shown in the following representation.

(6) About Amsterdam I read two books.

RL: $(p_i: (Past\ e_i: [(f_i: ler\ (f_i))\ (x_i)_A\ (2\ x_j: [(f_j: book\ (f_j))\ (x_j)]: [(f_k: [(f_l: about\ (f_l))\ (l_i)]\ (f_k))\ (x_j)])_U\ (e_i))(p_i))$[12]

ML: $(Le_i: (Cl_i: [(Pp_i: - about\ Amsterdam - (Pp_i))\ (Np_i: -eu- (Np_i))\ (Vp_i: -li- (Vp_i))]\ (Np_j: - two\ books - (Np_j))\ (Cl_i))\ (Le_i))$

(Adapted from Van de Velde, 2012, p. 9)

In addition, this morphosyntactic organization, for him, is the result of a motivation derived from the Interpersonal Level, since the Pp performs a topical function, a pragmatic strategy that would motivate the choice to place it in the clause-initial position. The representation of the Dutch sentence *Van de eerste klasse wordt alleen de beste ploeg geselecteerd* (in English, Of the premier league, only the best team is selected) contained in (7) demonstrates how FDG accommodates the phenomenon at the Interpersonal Level.

(7) *Van de eerste klasse wordt alleen de beste ploeg geselecteerd*

IL: $(M_I: (A_I: C_I: [+ id\ (R_I)_{Topic}\ (T_I)\ +id\ (R_J): alleen(R_J)]\ (C_I))\ (A_I))\ (M_I))$

RL: $(p_i: (e_i: [(f_i: selecteer\ (f_i))\ (1\ x_i: [(f_j: ploeg\ (f_j))\ (x_i)]: [(f_k: best\ (f_k))\ (x_i)]: [(f_l: [(f_m: van\ (f_m))\ (x_j: -eerste\ klasse- (x_j))]\ (f_l))])_U\ (e_i))\ (p_i))$

ML: $(Le_i: (Cl_i: [(Pp_i: -van\ de\ eerste\ klasse- (Pp_i))\ (Vw_i: wordt\ (Vw_i))\ (Np_i: -alleen\ de\ beste\ ploeg- (Np_i))\ (Vp_i: -geselecteerd- (Vp_i))]\ (Cl_i))\ Le_i))$

(VAN DE VELDE, 2012, p. 10)

It is the position of García Velasco (2010), combined with that of Van de Velde (2012), which is defended in this work.

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[12] X_i refers to "I" and l_i refers to "Amsterdam", according to Van de Velde (2012).

Work proposal and methodological procedures

Although the considerations of Pezatti (2014) apply to the clause level, the pragmatic functions, motivating alternative orders, are also relevant for examining the motivations for discontinuity of the Np, as part of a multifunctional theory. Indeed, Keizer (2007) considers that the only fruitful way to explain the complexity of potential variation is to assume that the order of the Np constituents is determined by principles and preferences in interaction and possibly in competition.

From a functional perspective, according to Dik (1997) and Keizer (2007), it is necessary to postulate a multifunctional theory of constituents' ordering, based on the following assumptions: (i) the ordering patterns found in a language result from principles in interaction; (ii) each of these principles is itself functionally motivated; (iii) two principles in interaction do not always define the same ordering preference; (iv) as the solution for the ordering in a given language contains an element of compromise, it ends up being characterized by a certain degree of tension.

Keizer (2007) postulates the hypothesis that the speaker's decision to displace material that belongs to the Np's structure is determined by independent principles. When two or more principles define conflicting orders, it is possible that the speaker performs a kind of compensatory balancing act, the result of which depends on a given discourse context (the speaker's intentions, the addressee's identity, etc.).

The compensatory balancing act starts from two premises: the use of the least complex form and the efficiency achieved by indicating the pragmatic status in terms of the functions that the elements involved perform – main constituent, intervening material and displaced constituent – to achieve the communicative effect foreseen. The balancing act, therefore, has two functions:

(i)   to make the statement less complex, which implies reducing the difficulty in cognitive processing by arranging the most complex material in the final position of a construction;

(ii)   to highlight the material in focus, usually presented as new in the speech. However, other pragmatic functions, in addition to Focus, can act as motivations for discontinuity.

The result of this balancing act can lead to a statement that, from the speaker's point of view, is the best he/she can produce to create the desired effect. From the addressee's point of view, a multifunctional approach seems perfectly plausible, as he/she opts for an interpretation that, in the given context, is in accordance with the choice of construction of the speaker (KEIZER, 2007).

Based on this multifunctional theory, Keizer (2007) postulates the following hypotheses for Np discontinuity:

(i) a speaker's choice to place material structurally belonging to an Np outside that Np is determined first and foremost by two independent principles: structural weight and communicative weight; (ii) in the majority of cases these two factors favour the same word order; (iii) where the two factors favour competing word orders, the speaker will try to decide which of the two factors, in the given circumstances and given his/her communicative intentions, outweighs the other in terms of efficiency and effectiveness; (iv) in such situations other (independent) factors may also play a role; these other factors, though usually not strong enough to determine word order by themselves, may therefore tip the balance in the case of a 'draw'; (v) the ultimate order of the elements is the one which the speaker, in the given circumstances, believes to be the most efficient one available or attainable, despite the fact that at least one major word ordering principle has been violated. (KEIZER, 2007, p. 273-274).

Based on these premises, the central hypothesis of this work foresees the performance of the principles of structural weight and communicative weight and the prevalence of the latter one in a possible competition between them in discourse circumstances that favor the appearance of discontinuities. This implies assuming the primacy of pragmatic motivations over morphosyntactic ones, a hypothesis that is in line with the hierarchical organization of the FDG theoretical model.

The analysis material consists of a representative sample of the spoken modality, extracted from the Iboruna Database. This *corpus*, collected by the ALIP Project (*Amostra Linguística do Interior Paulista*/Linguistic Sample of the Interior Paulista), represents the linguistic variety spoken in the region of São José do Rio Preto. Collected between March 2004 and September 2007, it constitutes the first database of the variety spoken in the interior of the State of São Paulo, with strict control of collection procedures and social factors, covering seven municipalities in the northwest region: Bady Bassitt, Cedral, Guapiaçu, Ipiguá, Mirassol, Onda Verde and São José do Rio Preto (GONÇALVES, 2019).

The informants, with social profiles pre-defined by the intersection of the social characteristics sex/gender, age group, education level and family income, contributed with five different types of oral texts: narrative of personal experience (NE), retelling narrative (NR), description report (DE), procedure report (RP) and opinion report (RO). In this study, the different types of text do not constitute the criteria for analysis, but assure greater diversity in the use of the spoken language in the social context.

By the crossing of the social factors groups, the profiles of the Census Sample or Community Sample (AC, from *Amostra Censo*) were constituted, with a total of 152 informants. The constitution of the sample of discontinuous Nps required the examination of the 152 reports, a total of approximately 1.5 million words (GONÇALVES, 2019), which provided, in the end, a total of 334 occurrences of discontinuous noun phrases,

77 of which constituting interruption cases and 257 cases of Nps displaced in the clause. This work is limited to the analysis of the cases of internal interruption in the Np. As can be seen, the frequency of discontinuity due to interruption is extremely low in view of the large size of the sample examined, which seems to be motivated by the very nature of the phenomenon, since it is characterized precisely by the subversion of the most prototypical constituent ordering in Portuguese.

During the analysis, the occurrences are identified as follows: AC001 (corresponds to the text number); DE (corresponds to the textual type); and L.001 (corresponds to the line where the occurrence is located).

In the data collection, the strategy employed consisted of verifying whether there is interference of elements in the internal structure of the Np, that is, whether there is a rupture in the contiguity between head, pre- and post-nuclear determiners and modifiers caused by the interruption of intervening material. A simple quantification was applied to the sample data, which included parameters related to interpersonal, representational and morphosyntactic features of the Np, according to the constitutive levels of FDG. For the purposes of this work, the following criteria will be explored:

(i)   motivation for discontinuity;
(ii)   type of material intervening in the Np;
(iii) morphosyntactic configuration of the discontinuous Np; and
(iv)   structural weight of the element displaced from the Np.

Motivations for discontinuity of the Np internal constituents

Discontinuous Nps are understood as the Nps that have constituents extracted from its domain due to disruptions in the morphosyntactic linearity. First, we discuss the motivations for this discontinuity, in order to, after that, analyze the nature of the intervening materials that cause the rupture of the constituents.

Table 2 shows the motivations for the discontinuity of the Np constituents, accompanied by the frequency and the percentage of occurrences for each category.

Table 2 – Motivations for discontinuity of the Np constituents

Motivation for discontinuity	N	%
Focus function	73	94,9
Focus function and morphosyntactic complexity	2	2,6
Preservation of scope relations	2	2,6
Total	**77**	

Source: Souza-Martins (2020b, p. 64).

Regarding the principle of end-focus (KEIZER, 2007), one of the main parameters in the analysis of the discontinuity phenomenon, the sample includes 94.9% of the cases of displacement of the Np modifiers to the end of the sentence due to the pragmatic status of the information they convey. It is, again, the assignment of the Focus function, as can be seen in (8-10).

(8) *a minha mãe morava em São Pau::lo e ela namorava o::/ um mari/ um:: um rapaz daqui de Rio Preto… eles::… ela conheceu a partir de uma tia dela que ele chama C. né? o ex-namorado dela… ele morava aqui ele é irmão de um/ do marido da minha tia… então eles namoravam só que assim mais por car::ta por telefone porque como ele morava aqui era mais difícil o conTAto… até que ele começô(u) a fazê(r)* **escolinha** *[em São Paulo]* **da polícia** (AC046; NR: L.156)

(My mother lived in São Paulo and she dated a guy from Rio Preto. Her aunt introduced him to her, and he is called C., right? Her ex-boyfriend lived here, he is the brother of my aunt's husband… So they dated, but mostly by letter or phone, because, since he lived here, it was more difficult to stay in touch… until he joined the **school** [*in São Paulo*] **of the police**)

(9) *vamo(s) supor num TEM aquela que ela qué(r)… então você fala assim… ah por exemplo ela ela… ela qué(r) uma saia PREta…* **e uma blusa...** *[vamo(s) supor]* **ROsa**... *cê num tem a rosa...* (AC130; RP: L.371)

(Let's suppose there's not the one she wants… then you say… for example, she wants a black skirt and **a blouse**… [*let's suppose*] **pink**, you don't have the pink one)

(10) *Doc.: cê lembra assim de alguns móveis espeCÍficos que tinha em cada cômodo? Inf.: lembro Doc.: que que tinha? Inf.: eu lembro:: de todos os móveis mas o que mais me chama atenção é* **uma copinha** *[que a minha mãe tinha]* **de made(i)ra...** (AC099; DE: L.317)

(Interviewer: do you remember some specific furniture that there were in each room? Speaker: I do. Interviewer: what were there? Speaker: I remember every furniture, but what draws my attention the most is a **little cup** [*that my mother had*] **of wood**)

It is possible to notice that the selection of the Np focused on (8) involves a competition between the principle of structural complexity, contemplating the Morphosyntactic Level, and the principle of end-focus, contemplating the Interpersonal Level, and that is the one that prevails, since the adjective clause [*que a minha mãe tinha*] has a greater degree of structural complexity than the PP [*de madeira*]; even so, the speaker places the most complex constituent in the immediate post-nuclear position,

leaving the focal item in the final position, which means giving greater weight to a pragmatic ordering principle than to a morphosyntactic one. Other similar examples are the occurrences in (11-14).

(11) *tem a **fabriquinha** [que meu pai trabalha lá] d**e marcenari::a**... ele trabalha às vezes* (AC025;DE: L.096)

(There's **the little factory** [*where my father works*] **of woodwork**… he works sometimes)

(12) *e pegava duas:: mad/ tipo duas made(i)ras né? finas relativamente finas... onde colocava os rolemãs né?... aí na parte de trás... dessa made(i)ra... da ou/ d**a o(u)tra made(i)ra** [que eu tava falan(d)o] **plana** né?* (AC049; RP: L.195)

(I took two woods, right? Fine woods, relatively fine… where I put the rollers, right? And then on the back of that wood… **the other wood** [*I was talking about*] **plane**, right?)

(13) *e aí você tendo seu próprio dinhe(i)ro seu próprio sustento... porque é n**essa sociedade** [em que a gente vive] **capitalista...*** (AC148; RO: L.186)

(and then you having your own money, your own livelihood… because it is in **this society** [*where we live*] **capitalist**…)

(14) *A. eu gostaria que você me contasse **alguma histó::ria** [que alGUÉm te contô:: (u)] **aLEgre ou triste** que você se reCORde* (AC001; NR: L.60)

(A., I would like you to tell me **a story** [*that someone told you*] **happy or sad** that you can remember)

As we can see, all these cases violate the Principle of Increasing Complexity, since more complex structures, such as relative clauses, are positioned before the less complex ones, words and phrases, thus placing the focal and most salient element in the absolute position P^F. In this case, the speaker sacrifices the formal Principle of Increasing Complexity for the pragmatic one, the End-Focus.

In two other cases, (15) and (16), the two principles favor the same word order, since both contribute to place at the end of the phrase the item that contains, at the same time, the newest information of the speech and the most complex one morphosyntactically.

(15) *aí tinha **uma prima minha** [na ocasião] **que fazia Engenharia de Alimentos** eu vi com ela mais ou menos como era o curso...* (AC083; NE: L.076)

(there was **a cousin of mine** [*at the time*] **who was studying Food Engineering**, I checked with her more or less what the course was like...)

(16) *em cima da bancada ficam os equipamen::tos as balan::ças éh:: polaróide::*
      *bom **os equipamentos** [enfim] **que são usados pra pesquisa...** e só* (AC083;
      DE: L.225)

      (on the bench there are the equipments, the weighing scales, the polaroids,
      well, **the equipments** [*anyway*] **that are used for research** ... and that's it)

Finally, as a last motivation for discontinuity, we detected 2.6% of occurrences in
which the rupture of the constituents' adjacency is due to the scope relations between
the Np and its modifiers, as seen in (17) and (18).

(17) *eu senti uma responsabilidade tudo nas minhas costa num tinha como...*
      *[Doc.: hum ((concordando))] eu senti::... **treze ou catorze pessoas** [eu num*
      *me lembro...] **comPLEtamente dependente de mim** dentro de um ônibus...*
      e eu num era culpado... (AC109; NE: L.192)

      (I felt responsible, everything on my shoulders, there was no way... [Doc.:
      hum ((agreeing))] I felt... **thirteen or fourteen people** [*I can't remember...*]
      completely dependent on me inside of a bus... and I wasn't to blame)

(18) *então aí eu peguei... e montei um novo escritório novamente... éh:: **alguns***
      ***clientes** [que eu tinha::...] **do meu escritório antigo.**.. me deram apo::io*
      vieram pra mim pra que eu pudesse começá(r) novamente... (AC099; NE:
      L.078)

      (so then i took it and set up a new office again… **some clients** [*that i had*]
      from my old office gave me support, came to me so that I could start again)

In both cases, the interfering elements, namely modifiers that have scope only
over the Np head, break up the constituents' adjacency. An alternative ordering that
maintains this adjacency could compromise an adequate interpretation of the speaker's
communicative intent, as shown by the examples (17') and (18').

(17') *treze ou catorze pessoas completamente dependente de mim... eu num me*
       lembro.

       (thirteen or fourten people completely dependent on me… I can't remember)

(18') *alguns clientes do meu escritório antigo que eu tinha.*

       (some clients from my old office that I had)

In (17'), the position of the modifier [*eu num me lembro*] at the end of the phrase
produces ambiguity in the content of the information about which the speaker expresses

doubt, no longer dealing with the number of people involved in the story, but, now, with the Communicated Content as a whole.

Similarly, in (18'), the modifier [*que eu tinha*] does not seem to have scope over "the clients", but over the "old office", producing ambiguity in the interpretation of the statement. Consequently, placing these elements in the immediate post-nuclear position seems to be the most appropriate decision for the speaker so that the message is not misinterpreted by the interlocutor.

Having discussed the motivations that underlie the discontinuity of the Np, it is also necessary to describe the nature of the elements that can interfere in the adjacency of its constituents. This intervening material received the following classification:

(i)   phrasal modifier;
(ii)   clausal modifier (clause); and
(iii) operator.

Table 3 shows the different elements that can intervene in the ordering of the Np constituents and the number of occurrences for each type.

Table 3 – Types of intervening elements in the Np.

Types of intervening element	N	%
Clausal modifier	31	40,3
Phrasal modifier	30	39
Operator	16	20,8
Total	**77**	

Source: Adapted from Souza-Martins (2020b, p. 67).

First, phrasal modifiers of different levels and layers can be responsible for the interruption of the Np constituents, which applies to 39% of occurrences. They can be classified as a Referential Subact modifier (19), which is a layer of the Interpersonal Level, and a State-of-Affairs modifier (20a-c), which are modifiers at the Representational Level.

(19) *então eu acho que é até explicável o fato de... **os docentes** [por exemplo] **de uma universidade pública** não terem essa iniciativa... pra... interferí(r) no ensino... fora da universidade... no ensino básico...* (AC082; RO: L.439)

(so I think it's even explainable the fact that **the professors** [*for example*] **of a public university** do not have this initiative to interfere in teaching outside the university, in basic education.)

(20) a. *fui entran(d)o na sociedade assim... eles gostava muito de mim era muito de confiança... eu ia na Redentora lavava **o carro [lá na Redentora] do pessoal tudo** eles me considerava muito... eu trabalhei pa muito juiz tam(b) ém* (AC097; NE: L.031)

(I joined the society like this... they liked me a lot, I was very trustworthy, I went to Redentora, I washed **the car** [*there at Redentora*] **of all the folks**, they all appreciated me a lot... I also worked for many judges)

b. *Selma também foi uma pessoa interessante na história de Rio Preto... é: **a vinda [em trinta e oito...] do:** (barulho de carros) **Getúlio Vargas...** presidente... presidente entre aspas... [Doc.: risos] né?... é: da República...* (AC146; NE: L.057)

(Selma was also an interesting person in the history of Rio Preto... **the arrival** [*in nineteen thirty-eight*] **of** (car noise) **Getúlio Vargas,** president... president in quotes... [Interviewer: laughs] right? of the Republic)

c. "*olha se eu dé(r) uma:: **dosagem normal [pra ele…] de de antibiótico** num vai resolvê(r)... amanhã esse menino tá morto... de uma mane(i)ra ou de o(u)tra… agora:: se a gente aumentá(r) isso… se eu dé(r) uma uma dosagem dupla pra ele talvez ele:: sobreviva... se o senhor autorizá(r)*" (AC143; NR: L.138)

("Look, if I give **a normal dosage** [*for him*] **of antibiotics**, it will not work, tomorrow that boy is dead, one way or another. Now if we increase this, if I give a double dose for him, maybe he will survive, if you authorize.")

In (19), the Referential Subact modifier indicating exemplification should, ideally, stay within the limits of the phrase that it restricts, as understood by Pezatti (2014). However, having a pragmatic focal status, the PP [*de uma universidade pública*] is placed in P^F of the Np, which takes the exemplification modifier to the relative position P^{F-1}. The same applies to the State-of-Affairs modifiers in (20a-c), which maintain a preference for the domain of P^F.

When it happens, the displacement takes place, indeed, in relation to the canonical position that the constituents would fill if there was not the speaker's decision to highlight the information conveyed only in part of the whole Np, which is, in fact, the motivation for the final ordering of constituents.

Other occurrences reposition the modifiers of the Np head, as seen in the examples (21a-b), making it imprecise, in these cases, to determine whether the phenomenon is an interruption. The most appropriate methodological decision for this repositioning seems to be the same that was made for the interruption cases, that is, to place them, for analysis purposes, in the "interruption by modifiers" category.

(21) a. *Doc.: éh eu gostaria então agora de sabê(r) qual que é sua opinião a respeito do do d**o time** [do São Paulo] **novo** o novo time que o... técnico montô::(u)... se ele vai dá(r) certo no campeona::to que que você acha*? (AC095; RO: L.107)

(Interviewer.: I would like, now, to know what is your opinion regarding **the team** [*of São Paulo*] **new**, the new team that the coach arranged... whether it will work out in the championship, what do you think?)

b. *sei que elas inventaram a maior sopa... e conversan(d)o conversan(d)o os maridos chegaram começaram a tomá(r) uísque... e conversando tal e a sopa foi cozinhando e **essa irmã** [da minha mãe] **mais velha** ela sempre contava* (AC148; NR: L.084)

(I know that they invented the biggest soup... talking and talking, the husbands arrived, started to drink whiskey... and talking about it and the soup was getting ready, and **this sister** [*of my mother*] **older,** she always told us)

Cases like (21a) affect the scope relations of the head modifiers, since *novo*, which has *time* in its scope, when inserted after the apposition, causes a situation of ambiguity due to the fact that, when relocated, it seems to have its scope now over the PP [*do São Paulo*].

It is worth mentioning that the adjective *novo* (new) focused here, synonymous with *recente* (recent), consists of a deictic time modifier; as his insertion takes place at the Interpersonal Level, Portuguese has a special order for it, which is in the pre-nuclear position; if allocated in the post-nuclear position, it has a representational value and concerns the age of the referent (NHOATO, 2018).

In the specific case of (19a), it is possible to affirm that, when perceiving the ambiguity activated by the discontinuity, the speaker reformulates his speech as *o novo time que o técnico montou* (the new team that the coach arranged), in attention to the scope and the ordering relations. The consequence is not only to insert the modifier in the position adjacent to the head, but also in the pre-nuclear one, which implies reestablishing the typically pragmatic values involved in this morphosyntactic coding.

Similarly, there is also an ambiguity value, in (19b), due to the repositioning of the modifier [*mais velha*] to the end of the phrase, which now seems to have its scope over the PP [*da minha mãe*]. Unlike (19a), what we have here is an ambiguity in relation to the semantic value of *velho*, antonym of *novo*, since it is limited to the typically representational content of age, not to the interpersonal one of time. In this case, however, what is mistaken is the interpretation [*a minha mãe mais velha*] (*my older mother*), because the Addressee, making use of his/her world knowledge, does not ignore the impossibility of someone having, at least from the biological point of view,

two or more maternal kinship relationships.[13] As a result, his/her cognitive option turns to the most appropriate interpretation, which is, despite the discontinuity, to understand the phrase [*mais velha*] as a modifier only of the head [*essa irmã*].

Second, in 40.3% of the cases, the element that causes the interruption in the Np is a relative clause (22a-b) or an adverbial clause (23a-b).

(22) a. *e é **a parte** [que eu mais fico] **da casa** é no meu quarto [Doc.: sei] porque até assistí(r) televisão ma/ eu mai/ eu assisto mais no meu quarto do que na sala a sala eu de(i)xo po/ pos menino...* (AC110; DE: L.239)

(and **the part** [*that I stay the most*] **of the house** is in my room [Interviewer: right] because I even watching TV, I watch more in my room than in the living room, the living room I leave it to the boys)

b. *sabe **aquelas po(l)pas** [que cê compra] **de maracujá...** [Doc.: sei] tem de todos... sabor... [Doc.: sei] no mercado... então a polpa da Bras/ Brasfrut... [Doc.: ah sei] tem de maracujá... cê... bate [(uma/)] Doc.: [é melhor] que fica mais firminho? Inf.: fica mais firme...* (AC090; RP: L.389)

(You know **those pulps** [*you buy*] **of passion fruit** [Interviewer: I know] there are lots of flavors [Interviewer: I know] in the supermarket... so the *Brasfrut* pulp [Interviewer: ah, yes, I know] there is the one of passion fruit, you blend it [Interviewer: it is better] that it gets firmer? Speaker: it gets firmer)

(23) a. *Ah agora eu lembrei... eu tinha **uma mania** [quando era pequena] **de colocá(r) as coisa na gelade::(i)ra....** -- o meu pai -- (o pai passa de moto na frente de onde estávamos gravando a entrevista) é:: eu tinha mania d/ mania de colocá(r) as coisa na gelade(i)ra... JÁ coloquei hominho do meu irmão* (AC006; NR: L.200)

(Ah, now I remembered, I had **a habit** [*when I was a child*] **of putting things on the fridge** - my father - ((her father passes by motorbike in the front of where we were recording the interview)) I had a habit of putting things on the fridge, I even put my brother's action figure)

b. *HÁ cinco departamentos há vários departamentos mas... o prédio principal... é o E um o prédio principal... havia antes pra inauguração o projeto pra tê(r) **dois prédios de oito andares** [se eu num me engano...] **de vidro...** mas um SÓ tem hoje né* (AC081; DE: L.120)

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13 It cannot be ruled out, however, the possible situation of a lesbian couple, one woman older than the other, having adopted a child who, as an adult, could refer to one of them as 'my older mother'.

(There are five departments, there are several departments, but the main building… there was, for the inauguration, a project of **two eight-story buildings** [*if I am not mistaken*...] **of glass**, but there is only one today, right)

It is relevant to state that, although these clauses act as Np modifiers as well, we created a separate category due to the difference in complexity between phrasal modifiers and clausal modifiers. Thus, the analysis of this type of occurrence points to the violation of the morphosyntactic principle of increasing complexity, because, even though phrasal modifiers are less complex than the clausal ones, there is a preference to place them in the final position of the Np on account of their pragmatic status, even if this preference produces discontinuous phrases with a high degree of ambiguity, as observed in (24) and (25).

(24) *Doc.: A. eu gostaria que você me contasse* **alguma histó::ria** *[que alGUÉm te contô:: (u)]* **aLEgre ou triste** *que você se reCORde* (AC001; NR: L.60)

(Interviewer: A., I would like you to tell me **a story** [*that someone told you*] **happy or sad** that you can remember)

(25) *Doc.: seu pai era o pior deles? Inf.: meu pai... PElo que FAlam e depois fui crescen(d)o e ven(d)o os outros tio... tem:: ti::os né? [uns que já faleceram]* **de gênio forte** *mas acredito que o do meu pai é... foi o pior* (AC110; NR: L.171)

(Interviewer: was your father the worst of them? Interviewee: my father, for what they say and then I grew up and saw the other uncles, there are **uncles** right? [*some who have passed away*] **with bad temper**, but I believe my father is… he was the worst)

It is clear that the displacement of the modifiers [*alegre ou triste/happy or sad*] and [*de gênio forte/with bad temper*] to the end of the phrase causes a certain semantic imprecision regarding the denotative character of the element over which it has its scope, making room for misinterpretations such as the way someone told the story, in (24), and the cause of the death of their uncles, in (25). This ambiguity would be solved with the linearization of these modifiers right after the post-nuclear position of the Np, which would also meet the Principle of Increasing Complexity. However, despite producing discontinuity, the speaker's choice, at the moment of interaction, is the one he/she deems most efficient to accomplish his/her communicative purposes.

Finally, we also detected operators from different layers, interfering in the constituents of the Np, being equivalent to 20.8% of the occurrences: Ascriptive Subact operator (26); Referential Subact operator (27); Contrast operator (28); and argumentative operator (29).

(26) *ele contô(u) que ele tava na::... numa casa lá tinha mu/ eu num lembro num sítio... lá no Ceará tam(b)ém... aí de repente parô(u) um caminhão:: na estrAda...* **um estradão [*assim*] de TErra...** *pa pedí(r) informação né?...* (AC054; NR: L.133)

(he said that he was at… in a house, there was... I can't remember, in a farm... there in Ceará too, then suddenly a truck stopped on the road, **a big road** [*like that*] **of soil ground** to ask for information, right?)

(27) *vamo(s) lê(r)... num tenho muita leitura não... mas eu leio a bíblia tam(b) ém... leio... gosto muito de í(r) na igreja... traba::lho também assim... na igreja...* **na parte [*assim...*] dos pobre** (AC122; RO: L.474)

(let's read, I don't have a lot of reading, but I also read the bible, I read… I really like going to the church, I also work in the church, in **the part** [*like that...*] **of the poor people**)

(28) *e tem o éh::... éh:: uma quadra pra jogá::(r) basque::te vô::lei e tem* **a quadra [*tam(b)ém*] de futebol…** (AC030; DE: L.090)

(and there is a court to play basketball, voleyball, and there is **the court** [*also*] **of soccer**)

(29) *em cima da bancada ficam os equipamen::tos as balan::ças éh:: polaróide:: bom* **os equipamentos [*enfim*] que são usados pra pesquisa...** *e só* (AC083; DE: L.225)

(on the bench there are the equipment, the weighing scales, the polaroid, well, **the equipment** [*anyway*] **that are used for research** ... and that's it)

In addition to the motivations already discussed, the operator *assim/like that* interrupts the adjacency of the Np to indicate mitigation in (26) and (27). This factor does not determine the ordering of the elements of the two constructions, but it can interfere in the speaker's option for the most appropriate order of the construction in fulfillment of his/her communicative objective. Since they aim to cause this mitigation effect only in a part of the Np (that is, in the modifier), this type of operator is always placed before the element over its scope (PEZATTI, 2014), which also justifies the position it fills in (26) and (27).

The other two occurrences contain simple grammatical words, such as *também/ also* and *enfim/anyway*, acting as operators. In (28), the expansive contrast operator, coded as *também*, "indicates that the Addressee has a partial information that needs to be completed" (PEZATTI, 2014, p. 109, our translation).[14] On the other hand, the operator *enfim* in (29) seems to close an argument of the Speaker.

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14 Original: "*indica que o Destinatário dispõe de uma informação parcial que necessita ser completada*".

As a correlation between the results of Table 2 (motivations for discontinuity) and Table 3 (types of intervening materials), it appears that, regardless of the type of intervening material, it is the focal function that causes most interruptions in the Np, which represents 93.5% (29/31) of the occurrences of interruption by clausal modifier; 96.6% (29/30) of the occurrences of interruption by a phrasal modifier; and 93.7% (15/16) of the occurrences by an operator.

Now examining the results regarding the morphosyntactic configuration of the Np, Table 4 shows each type accompanied by the respective quantitative incidence in the sample.

Table 4 – Morphosyntactic configuration of the discontinuous Np.

Morphosyntactic configuration pattern	N	%
Determiner + head + intervening material + modifier	74	96,1
Determiner + head + intervening material + head	1	1,3
Determiner + head + modifier + intervening material + modifier	2	2,6
Total	**77**	

Source: Souza-Martins (2020b, p.73).

Most of the cases, a rate of 96.1% of the occurrences, present the pattern [*determiner + head + intervening material + modifier*], which allows us to consider that the prototypical discontinuity is motivated by the interference of intervening material between the head and the post-nuclear modifier, in view of its major incidence in the focal function (as already seen in Table 2), which, in turn, is characterized by positioning itself more frequently towards the end of the expression.

Other morphosyntactic organization patterns were found in the sample, but, as you can see in Table 4, their occurrence rates are extremely low and not significant when compared to the prototypical template.

In addition to this prototypical morphosyntactic configuration, some examples present interferences between the Np modifiers (30) and between pre-nuclear modifiers and head (31).

(30) *então eu acho que deveria tê(r)... uma faculdade? NÃO... mas **um curso... BÁ::sico** [sei lá] **de administração...** certo?... e a pessoa teria que tê(r) um mínimo de estudo pra podê::(r)... sê(r)... um... um político* (AC075; RO: L.293)

(so I think it should have a degree? No, but **a basic course** [*I don't know*] **of administration**, right? and the person should have studied a bit at least to be able to be a politician)

(31) *Doc.: assim eu sei que você faz balé... tem como você falá(r) como você faz* **determinados...** *[não sei se é esse o termo]...* **passos** *tem como você falá(r)?* (AC018; RP: L.120)

(Interviewer: so I know you do ballet, can you tell me how you do **certain...** [*I don't know if that is the term*] **steps**, can you tell me?)

The low rate of interference between pre-nuclear modifiers and head in contrast to the large number of cases in which there is an interruption between head and post-modifiers is a finding that is in line with what Van de Velde (2012, p. 14) postulates: "postmodifiers – even if they qualify as complements rather than as adjuncts – are argued to stand in a more loose relationship to the Np than premodifiers (including the determiners)". This configuration would more easily license the linear distance between head and post-nuclear modifiers caused by the intervention of different elements.

It is worth considering, however, that the statement by Van de Velde (2012) applies to the Dutch grammar. In the case of Portuguese in general, the pre-nuclear position is reserved for modifiers who function at the Interpersonal Level (NHOATO, 2018). Therefore, we can conclude that the interference of elements in the Np constituents is rare in the pre-nuclear portion, since it is reserved for a set of modifiers with reduced frequency. As it is in the post-nuclear position that a large semantic variety of modifiers is most frequently applied, it ends up constituting the privileged space for discontinuity.

Moving now to another morphosyntactic criterion, which refers to the structural weight of the modifier extracted from the Np domain, in most cases, it is a prepositional phrase (Pp), as shown in the results in Table 5.

Table 5 – Structural weight of the displaced modifier.

Morphosyntactic configuration of the misplaced modifier	N	%
Prepositional Phrase (Pp)	54	72
Single adjective	17	22,7
Relative, adverbial or non-finite verb clauses	4	5,3
Total	**75**[15]	

Source: Adapted from Souza-Martins (2020b, p.75).

Reinforcing the analysis by Van de Velde (2012), the data in table 5 allows us to affirm that the Pp is the modifier that most tends to be separated from the Np head, which would be justified, once again, by the fact that it is a relationship established between the head and the modifier at the Representational Level. Due to this link, the Addressee is able to establish the semantic relations necessary for the interpretation of the message, even though there are discontinuity and distancing of these constituents

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[15] Cases in which the interference occurs between the pre-nuclear modifier and the head are excluded.

in the linear coding at the Morphosyntactic Level. In the case of the examined variety, this prepositional phrase is introduced, in the vast majority of cases, by the preposition "de", perhaps due to the multifunctionality and the high frequency of use of this operator in Portuguese.

Final words

The analysis of the discontinuous Nps proposed here started from a central hypothesis, based on a multifunctional theory, initially postulated by Dik (1997) and later incorporated by Keizer (2007). Two crucial parameters are at stake: the structural weight, morphosyntactically motivated, and the communicative weight, pragmatically motivated.

If, in general, as Keizer (2007) says, in the phenomenon of internal discontinuity of Nps, these two parameters can favor the same ordering together or can compete between them, in which case it is up to the speaker to decide which parameter surpasses the other in terms of communicative efficiency in discourse circumstances, what happened, in fact, was the most predominant action of the end-focus principle, determining, alone, the final ordering of the constituent elements of Np.

The principle of complexity is, on the other hand, an apparent morphosyntactic motivation, since its strength is to guarantee a cognitively acceptable ordering for the Np constituents, leaving the most complex formal units for final positions, which lightens the cognitive processing both from the point of view of the speaker and from the point of view of the addressee.

From the morphosyntactic point of view, a pattern of formal organization prevails in the analyzed data, which can also be considered the prototypical one of discontinuous Nps, contemplating the emergence of intervening material between the Np head and its post-nuclear modifier, which, in most cases, tends to be a Pp, certainly motivated by his interpersonal status of focus. This type of configuration points to what Van de Velde (2012) calls a "more loose" relationship between the head and the post-nuclear modifier, a privileged space for the intervention of elements and the consequent displacement of the Pp to the final part of the phrase.

A relevant question to ask is: how to guarantee, in case of discontinuity, a minimum degree of interpretability and semantic connection between the parts of the Np? The answer lies in the fact that the phenomenon of discontinuity corresponds to a specific circumstance in which pragmatically and semantically related entities are encoded separately at the Morphosyntactic Level. In this case, non-adjacent morphosyntactic elements cannot form a single constituent in a functional interpretation, but they can have a representational projection whose semantic value guarantees the formation of a unit (HUCK; OJEDA, 1987 *apud* GARCÍA VELASCO, 2010).

The theoretical model of FDG, organized in levels and layers, allows showing that, although separated in the Morphosyntactic Level, the head and the post-nuclear

modifier maintain a cohesive relation in the Representational Level. Observe, in the Np in (32), the way in which the FDG allows us to represent the phenomenon of discontinuity, shown in (33).

(32) *e a sopa foi cozinhando e **essa irmã** [da minha mãe] **mais velha** ela sempre contava* (AC148; NR: L.084)

(and the soup was getting ready, and **this sister** [*of my mother*] **older,** she always told us)

(33) *Essa irmã da minha mãe mais velha*
IL: $(R_I: [(T_I) (T_J) (T_K)_{FOC}] (R_I))$
RL: $(x_i: essa\ irmã\ [(mais\ velha_{Mod})\ (da\ minha\ mãe_{Mod})]\ (x_i))$
ML: $(Np_i: essa\ irmã\ (Np_i)\ [(Pp_i: (Pp_i: da\ minha\ mãe\ (Pp_i))\ (Ap_i: mais\ velha\ (Ap_j)]\ (Np_i))$

The formal notation indicates that, at the Interpersonal Level (IL), a Referential Subact [*Essa irmã da minha mãe mais velha*] contains three Ascriptive Subacts, one of which is the focal one [mais velha]. At the Representational Level (RL), this Referential Subact corresponds to a first-order entity, or an Individual (x), specified by two modifiers, whose designation guarantees a denotative unit. At the Morphosyntactic Level, this referential and denotative entity is represented by three formal categories: a noun phrase (Np), an adjective phrase (Ap) and a prepositional phrase (Pp); it is at this level of codification that discontinuity is formalized, which is, as a rupture in the linear order of the sentence, a typically morphosyntactic phenomenon.

Finally, it is possible to conclude that a modular architecture, such as that of FDG, enables an interpretation of the discontinuity that allows us, on the one hand, to separate constituents, such as head and post-nuclear modifier, at the Morphosyntactic Level and, on the other, to connect them semantically at the Representational Level. What causes this incompatibility between the levels is clearly the violation of regular principles, especially that of Functional Stability, whose most general effect is, therefore, lack of linguistic transparency with regards to the correspondence between the Representational and Morphosyntactic levels.

It is the speaker's responsibility to favor a final order in which he/she believes that, in the discourse circumstances in which he/she finds his/her addressee, is the most efficient among those available, no matter if he/she has violated at least one crucial ordering principle, such as iconicity, functional stability and domain integrity.

The discourse itself, in fact, constantly violates these three principles, which play their role in the language more like the centripetal force of maintaining, in coding, an ordering of forms that are necessarily aligned with the categories realizing functions at the highest levels of formulation. By violating these three principles, the discourse shows a markedly centrifugal force, which is, in an intuitive quantitative comparison,

less frequent than the motivations that act as a centripetal force. The vast majority of Nps have canonical order, and are not, therefore, marked by a rupture of order, in obsequious respect by the speaker to the most general principles of grammar.

CAMACHO, R. G.; SOUZA-MARTINS, N. P. de. Sintagmas nominais descontínuos. **Alfa**, São Paulo, v.65, 2021.

- *RESUMO: O fenômeno sobre o qual este trabalho se debruça é o sintagma nominal (Np) que apresenta ordem não canônica de suas partes constituintes, denominado "descontínuo" por Keizer (2007). A análise e a descrição da descontinuidade têm por objetivo examinar, com base no arcabouço teórico da Gramática Discursivo-Funcional (HENGEVELD; MACKENZIE, 2008), que fatores pragmáticos, semânticos e formais motivam o falante a codificar ordenações específicas para esses Nps no Nível Morfossintático. O material de análise é constituído a partir de registros de língua falada retirados do banco de dados Iboruna, que representa a variedade falada no noroeste paulista, coletado pelo projeto ALIP, no interior do Grupo de Pesquisa em Gramática Funcional, na UNESP de São José do Rio Preto. Para os propósitos deste trabalho, exploram-se os seguintes critérios: (i) motivação para descontinuidade; (ii) tipo de material que intervém no Np; (iii) configuração morfossintática do Np descontínuo; e (iv) peso estrutural do elemento deslocado do Np. A análise dos dados mostra que a descontinuidade é, predominantemente, motivada por aspectos pragmáticos, em especial, pela focalização de informações veiculadas por parte do SN. Além disso, o Np descontínuo prototípico é caracterizado pela interferência de material morfossintático entre o núcleo do sintagma e seus constituintes pós-nucleares. Embora haja esse distanciamento linear, a compreensão de enunciados descontínuos não é prejudicada em virtude de um vínculo semântico preservado no Nível Representacional, interpretação possível num modelo teórico como a GDF.*

- *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: sintagma nominal; descontinuidade; foco.*

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