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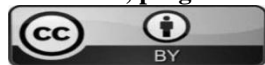
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The Grammar, Meaning, and Usage of Interfaces in Functionalism: A Pragmatic Study

A B S T R A C T

This study tries to analyse how the Syntactic- pragmatic interface plays a dominant role in the variation of the order of constituents in the sentence, particularly in the respective placement of the subject, objects, and verb, and according to the intervention of adverbs of different classes. This work aims to point out the similarities and specificities of the relationship between syntax, semantics, and pragmatics in different current proposals for functionalism. More precisely, the role of the Information Structure (IS) in the order of constituents is no longer to be demonstrated. Those transformations, mainly displacements, bring into play the informational structure of the sentence. It focuses on the displacements of arguments (subject, objects) and of the verb and their effects on the placement of adverbs. This study also discusses the possibility of an interface between Text Linguistics and North American Functionalism by resuming their basic theoretical assumptions, elucidating their points of contact, and illustrating their possibilities for theoretical-analytical approaches. To this end, the bases of both methods are explored, and research by Castanheira et al. (2021) is presented. The study concludes that adverbs have stable places in sentences; however, some can shift to the left peripheral. The floating positions of arguments and verbs interact with the SI system, which controls information dissemination. It emphasises the similarities between Text Linguistics and North American Functionalism, emphasising functional linguistic uses and discourse-grammar links.

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القواعد النحوية ومعناها واستخداماتها في الوظيفية: دراسة تداولية

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الملخص:

تحاول هذه الدراسة تحليل كيف تلعب الواجهة النحوية- البراغماتية دوراً مهيماً في تنويع ترتيب العناصر في الجملة، وخاصة في المواضيع الخاصة للفاعل والمفعول به والفعل، ووفقاً لتدخل الظروف من فئات مختلفة. يهدف هذا العمل إلى الإشارة إلى أوجه التشابه والخصوصيات في العلاقة بين النحو والدلالة والبراغماتية في المقترحات الحالية المختلفة للوظيفية. وبصورة أكثر دقة، لم يعد من الممكن إثبات دور بنية المعلومات (IS) في ترتيب العناصر. تعمل هذه التحولات، وخاصة الإزاحات، على إدخال بنية المعلومات في الجملة. وتركز على إزاحات الحجج (الفاعل والمفعول به) والفعل وتأثيراتها على وضع الظروف. تناقش هذه الدراسة أيضاً إمكانية وجود واجهة بين علم اللغة النصي والوظيفية في أمريكا الشمالية من خلال استئناف افتراضاتهما النظرية الأساسية، وتوضيح نقاط اتصالهما، وتوضيح إمكانياتهما للنهج التحليلي النظري. ولتحقيق هذه الغاية، تم استكشاف أسس كلتا الطريقتين، وتم تقديم بحث أجراه كاستانهيرا وآخرون (٢٠٢١). وختمت الدراسة إلى أن الظروف لها أماكن مستقرة في الجمل؛ ومع ذلك، يمكن لبعضها أن تتحول إلى الطرف الأيسر. تتفاعل المواضيع العائمة للحجج والأفعال مع نظام SI، الذي يتحكم في نشر المعلومات. كما تؤكد على أوجه التشابه بين لغويات النصوص والوظيفية في أمريكا الشمالية، مع التركيز على الاستخدامات اللغوية الوظيفية وروابط الخطاب والقواعد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الوظيفية، الواجهات، بناء الجملة، الدلالات، البراغماتية.

1. Introduction

When a grammar scholar looks at the history of grammar in the West, he or she quickly observes that the initial undertakings – admirable, yes – were carried out without this source of methodological rigour that would come, much later, from linguistic science that is, without the guarantee of the unequivocal establishment of a theoretically constituted object, and, from then on, without rigorous support for the necessary creation of grammatical facts to describe. This grammar gives us lessons in acuity of analysis, coming from philosophical knowledge and the anchoring in the profound Greek thought on language revealed in the literature that civilisation produced. However, for the linguistic investigations of the 21st century, there is constituted a science of support, an autonomous theory of language. Analysis no longer needs to resort to devices provided by other fields of knowledge, such as logic or rhetoric, which, as we know, so decisively guided the first incursions into the study of the functioning of language. Today, linguistic science guarantees theoretical principles that guide the institution and vision of the objects of analysis. The theory in question in these reflections is linguistic Functionalism, brought, in a practical exercise, within the most general of its principles.

Grammar includes both the operations internal to the sentence – for example, the syntactic constitution of predications (with entities such as subject-predicate or predicate-complement) and their semantic counterparts (with entities such as agent-patient) – and the interactional determinations that motivate and configure the illocutionary force of the uttered sentence (with entities such as Theme-Rheme, in addition to semantic-pragmatic entities, such as new

data), all operated in syntax. From this, it is implied that the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic components are necessarily linked, the latter on two levels: (i) the one that is resolved more internally to the statement (for example, the packaging of information and the organisation of its flow, in textuality); (ii) the one that properly motivates and directs the act of language (the interlocutory determinations involved in interpersonally).

1.1 Review of Literature

On the cognitivist side, Langacker (1987) argues that constructs identify the dynamic process by which the speaker conceptualizes a situation for communication reasons. On the functionalists' side, remember, first and foremost, the proposal of Discursive-Functional Grammar regarding the way of organizing the components, as described by Hengeveld (2005), which configures the "conceptual component" as "the driving force behind the grammatical component as a whole". And we insist again on the fundamental equation of Abu et al (2019), that I presented at the beginning. According to Goldberg (2006), in linguistic theory, Usage models, under the banner of socio-cognitivism (a term that, in its composition, is already highly significant), devotes himself to his constructionist enterprise, establishing the fundamental reality of language as the enunciation of one person to another in specific occasions of use, a reality in which speakers "generate" the statements.

The current study fills a research gap in cognitive linguistics by elucidating how meaning is not inherent in lexical items or expressions but is constructed through interaction. The current literature indicates that context activates the interpretation of linguistic elements, which are then directed by preexisting concepts, conventions, and knowledge. However, how these cognitive processes permit limitations and flexibility in meaning construction is unclear. Context and speaker intention are known to influence linguistic meaning, but the relationship between constrained constraints and broad interpretation options has not been thoroughly studied. To close this gap, this study will analyse functionalist approaches from various angles and evaluate how well they capture the intricacies of meaning-making in spoken interactions. This will show how various functionalist ideas can advance a more sophisticated comprehension of language use and its relationships to other knowledge domains.

The most decisive assumption, with such assumptions, is that the complex that represents the linguistic activity of speakers is ultimately resolved in basic duplicity, submission to restrictions (much more limited than one might think), and freedom of choice (much more extensive than one might think). When looking at absolute statements, one sees constant categorical slippages and functional overlaps that insert the interacting agents and their purposes more clearly into the statement without disturbing the interpretation or invalidating the grammar. This study is significant for examining the equilibrium between constraints and freedom in linguistic activity, elucidating how restrictive rules and broad options influence language use. The study enhances comprehension of meaning construction in real-time communication by examining the "basic duplicity" of linguistic behaviour, specifically how speakers concurrently manage structured constraints and the flexibility of choice. The study emphasizes the importance of analysing absolute statements in language, highlighting persistent functional overlaps and categorical transitions that clarify interacting agents' roles and intentions while preserving the interpretive process and grammatical structure.

2. A configuration of the possibilities of analysis in this framework

Negation is an operation that operates at the syntactic-semantic level but also at the pragmatic level since it is a meaning-forming process that operates as an instrument of interaction endowed with intentionality. In connection with this, negation is a strong argumentative (or counter-argumentative) resource. The type of negation most widely considered in the grammatical tradition is that of predicative negation, the one that makes the proposition negative (constructing a negative assertion), a negation that, from a pragmatic point of view, we can call descriptive. The negation operation, however, is widely used in situations and conditions that are much more than “descriptive” and for reasons that are quite evident from the observation of the interaction event. “I have already stated, based on Givon”, when the speaker composes a negative statement, he indicates that he has more assumptions about the listener's knowledge than when he composes an affirmative statement. From a communicative point of view, it can be said that negative statements are not used primarily to express new information but rather to establish a statement about information already expressed or assumed in the linguistic interaction. Among the many cases from which one can reflect on the pragmatic developments of the linguistic operation of denying, a few will be discussed below.

Let us begin with those cases that the traditional view of grammar has called rhetorical negation precisely because the result of the application of the negation operator *par excellence* - which is not - ceases to constitute a negatively polarised statement and serves other (even contrary) purposes:

1. • *How many oxen had he not already crushed!* - with an exclamation mark.
2. • *How many guests have not arrived since you arrived?* - with a question mark, but also with exclamatory force.

We can say that what is responsible for this effect of the application of the element that would express a negation (the “*no*”) is, firstly, the nature of the speech acts represented there - two exclamations, the second of which has an interrogative component -, to which is added the emphatic quantification that governs the intended meaning (with “how many”): assertively, these speech acts correspond to the following effects of emphatically positive polarity and great assertive force (which is why it is exclamatory), respectively:

1. • *He had crushed many oxen!*
2. • *Many guests have arrived since you arrived!*

Let us continue this observation of the operation of denying, which leads to the creation of pragmatic-discursive effects, specifically in the direction of denying (formally) to accentuate (semantically-pragmatically). Other constructions that are especially representative of this effect are the following:

1. • *And the fence really did give way!*- with an exclamation mark
2. • *Wasn't he wearing a wig?* - with a question mark

In the examples above, the negation operator *par excellence* (not) comes within a crystallized cleavage niche (*it is not that*) that governs the enunciative force of the sentence (a sentence

that is an exclamation or an interrogation). However, what is focused on by this cleavage is a proposition. Thus, the act is expressed as assertive as declarative but covered by an exclamatory component, which configures it as emphatically assertive/declarative and, therefore, pragmatically marked, something like:

1. • *The fence really gave way!*
2. • *He was wearing a wig, yes ...*

In many other ways, one can examine the pragmatic force of the mechanisms in the Portuguese language for negation. Let us move on to negation itself, especially considering statements, which - remember - contain propositions. This functional-discursive force can be illustrated especially in cases where the polarisation operation is done in reverse (going from “no” to “yes”), that is, from the marked to the unmarked, in an argumentative direction that is completed at the positive pole, as in

1. • *The important thing is not whether we have more or less foreign companies in the country; the important thing is that the law to which they are subject is fair and convincing [...].*
2. • *The important thing is not that I believe in him but that he believes in me.*
3. • *The important thing is not how long I stay on the court but the quality of this training.*

This is a true argumentative “game”: a denial is launched that is focused, intensified, and valued, already establishing with the interlocutor a cognitive coordination that leads to accepting what can be stated in the opposite pole of what is stated (negatively) in the initial sentence. The connection established leads to the expectation of a replacement affirmation that can take the place of what was discarded (with the denial), with the validity of the positive pole following the negative being practically agreed upon between the parties, given the vehemence of the discard, something like: “Absolutely, what matters is not what is stated in this initial sentence, it is what is stated in the following sentence.”

It is easy to predict, however, that the discarding may not be total (that is, this emphatic negation may be “non-predicative”), and this represents different degrees and different types of discarding in the most diverse fields and points of insertion of information in the flow of the statement. Here we already penetrated the imbrication (process of overlapping or layering) of the operations of polarizing and comparing.

Very frequent and very significant is the negation that, also in cleavage, makes a gradation of some component of the message, and, from there, involves, with some evidence and with great effect, the mechanism of comparison, as in

1. • *After that, it wasn't that Italian cinema went into decline [...]. It was discarded in the priority that American distributors once again gave... to American cinema.*

It turns out that the negation of the proposition “Italian cinema has gone into decline” - which is the focus - does not have the central purpose of negating the predicate itself, and, in this way, its effect is only to relativize the degree of applicability of “it has gone into decline”. This partial negation makes room for the following sentence, in which, in place of what was

discarded, comes a proposition in the form of an affirmative statement. However, even without the canonical mark of negation, it also brings, concerning the topic (“Italian cinema”), a predicate with negative content in the same direction (in the morphological constitution of the verb itself, “to discard”), although it is minimized, and with an explicit mark of this minimization (“it was only discarded”).

In the following sentence, we also see an emphatic counterpoint in the predicate, this time more restricted to the actuality of the events:

1. • *It's not that I don't even worry about earthquakes anymore. I worry about them every time the experts up their risk predictions.*

We have here: “it’s not that today there is no X; today, yes, X, in certain situations). In this case, the marking of an emphatic negation of the initial process is even more focal because a highly marked operator negates the initial proposition: note the predicative negation with the element *not* (that *I don’t even worry about*). It turns out that the adverbial element *does not never negate* neutrally “since it has a restrictive meaning component that places the negated portion of the statement as an extreme that is reached in the act of negating”.

Through this notion of “extreme,” we return to the approach of the discursive operations of transiting through polarizations and making comparisons. This game of inverting polarities, with the prior position of the negative pole, which I have illustrated here, is relevant in the comparative mechanism in general and has a great semantic-pragmatic effect. Let us take, for example, an excerpt from the *Sermon of the Mandate* (1643), by the sacred orator Father Vieira, with extremely rhetorical language:

1. • *[The cause of Magdalene's weeping] was not so much because Magdalene loved Christ, as because of what she feared for herself [...].*

It can be seen that this inversion of polarities - from denying to affirming - manages to constitute new information that would be given. This denial of a comparison of equality (marked) corresponds, *roughly speaking*, to a comparison of inequality (not marked), which can go in either of two directions, that of superiority (“the reason for Magdalene's weeping was more because Magdalene feared for herself than because she loved Christ”) or that of inferiority (“the reason for Magdalene's weeping was less because Magdalene loved Christ than because she feared herself”), always with the pragmatic prevalence of the interpretation of inferiority. However, from a pragmatic point of view, the comparison of equality obtained by the focused denial of that which is considered “lesser” (love for Christ) plays with the force of the interlocutory fact that this denial is not what is expected, since, from the biblical passage, what is understood is that the motive of Magdalene’s attitudes would have been precisely the love for Christ. This placement as “lesser” of that which is not small - on the contrary, it is very large - is what causes the reversal of focuses and the creation of reliefs that the speaker obtains, in the service of his argument: that which is more (that which is greater) is even maximized, and markedly: the information in relief, which in the comparison of inequality would be that Magdalene loved Christ very much, becomes that she feared herself very much.

The mechanism of comparative expression can be explained, very advantageously, by the notion of “focus”: in principle, the elements being compared are in focus (with “focus

markers”), and the rest is “residue”, which makes up the topography of the terrain of comparative expression. If one invokes the model of analysis supported by Peirce's perceptive laws, the comparison is governed by the law of redundancy, by which a form constitutes a figure for the sender (who tends to reinforce it) and constitutes a background for the recipient.

The fact is that just as was observed in the case of polarities, in the case of comparisons a semantic-pragmatic game of opposites/different is also efficient, as seen in the phrase from a strip by cartoonist Bob Thaves in which the character Frank says to Ernest:

1. • *The teacher said I'm as fit as a man half my age who drinks twice as much beer as I do.*

Here is a construction that, precisely to create a pragmatic effect, formally makes a comparison of equality (as *much... as*), but strongly involves in the comparison an inequality (*twice as much... as*), in order to highlight the unexpectedness of the situation. This is how we can emphasize the great importance of this unexpected “equation” of the two individuals (“I = the man who drinks more than me”).

What is clear is that, although in tradition the comparison has always been resolved in a simplistic division between “equality” and “inequality”⁶, the two types do not have the same pragmatic bias. Comparisons of equality are more suggestive than those of inequality (of superiority and inferiority), because the latter simply open the stage wider for a quantitative comparison (obviously with the effects that this may suggest). The comparison of equality is so much broader (largely qualitative) in its meanings - and, consequently, in its effects - that it does not necessarily imply any quantifier element, being, in fact, a territory of expression and argumentation that remains separate, practically self-sustaining.

3. The role of the syntax-information structure interface in the variation of the order of constituents in the sentence

Syntax, as the study of word order and constituent formation, experienced its golden age in the 1980s, particularly following the impetus given by the American linguist Noam Chomsky to studies of formal grammar. Unification Grammars are also models of formal grammar often used in natural language processing. Kaplan & Bresnan's Lexicofunctional Grammar (1982) and Adjoint Tree Grammar (Joshi, 1987) also aim to formalize natural language. Generative Grammar aims to model speakers' linguistic knowledge of their language. In addition to this cognitive aspect, the comparative dimension of this linguistic theory emphasizes the properties common to all languages (the so-called principles constituting Universal Grammar) and, of course, their differences (expressed in the form of parameters).

The current article's theoretical framework is Transformational Generative Grammar, more precisely, the principles and parameters model, as it can be conceived from the perspective of Noam Chomsky's Minimalist Program (1995). According to this recent model, the derivation of syntactic structures operates recursively and optimally. The derivation starts from the lexicon by choosing the lexical terms involved. Rather than being an “interface”, the lexicon constitutes the source of the linguistic information that syntax will process. The lexicon is a repertoire of lexical items associated with formal (category, agreement inflexion, Case,

selection), phonological and semantic features. Syntax manipulates these features and transmits them to the relevant interfaces for interpretation. Phonology and morphology can be grouped as 'Interfaces' related to 'Form' and semantics and pragmatics as *Interfaces* about *Meaning*¹.

Syntax Interface (SI): This section will consider how transformations, i.e., movements, interact with the Information Structure.

Subject Positions (Argument Movement): The short subject rise in SI illustrates the movement of noun phrases. It is dictated by nominative case assignment and subject-verb agreement, purely formal properties. Case theory also motivates passive transformation in the generativist tradition (Laenzlinger 2003 for a review). Consider the active and passive sentence pair in (1).

(1) a. *The teacher congratulated this student.*

b. *This student was congratulated by the teacher*

No reference is made to Information Structure in the generativist analysis of the passive sentence. Yet, it is clear that the movement of the logical object *this student* the subject position in the passive affects the information structure since the theme (Topic-about)-heme bipartition (the division of something into two separate parts or section) is expressed differently in (1b) than in (1a). This informational difference is represented in (2).

(2) a. {The teacher} {congratulated this student}

Topic (top)

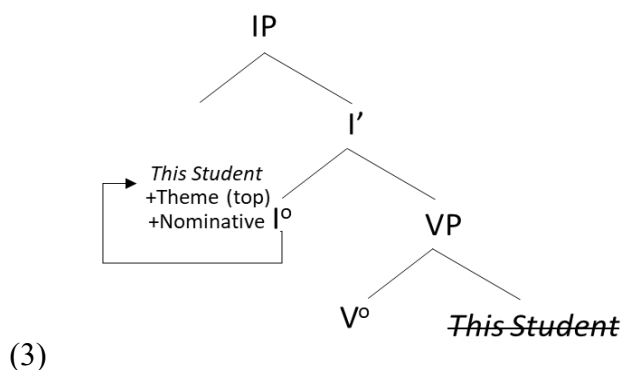
Rheme

b. {This student} {was congratulated <this student> by the teacher}

Topic (top)

Rheme

The passive, being a movement from the logical object to the subject position, makes the former the Topic (Topic-about) of the sentence. Thus, the movement in (2b) must also be associated with informational properties. To do this, it suffices to say that the Specifier position of IP (inflectional phrase) is that of the Topic-about in English (and in many other languages). This is represented in (3).



Another type of argument movement concerns rising verbs such as *seem*, *appear*, etc. These verbs allow two kinds of construction illustrated in (4).

(4) a). *It seems that John is sleeping/sleeping.*

b). *John seems to be sleeping.*

In (4a), it is an impersonal construction, while its periphrasis in (4b) involves raising the subject of the embedded sentence to the subject position of the main sentence. Raising is a noun phrase movement that, again, changes the informational structure of the sentence. While the Theme (Topic about) is on the predicate *seems* in (4a), it is on the subject *John* in (4b). Thus, the subject movement entails the interpretation of the Topic of the latter.

The ergative construction illustrates the same informational difference as raising. Consider the pair of sentences in (5).

(5) a). *A professor entered the room.*

b). *A professor entered the room.*

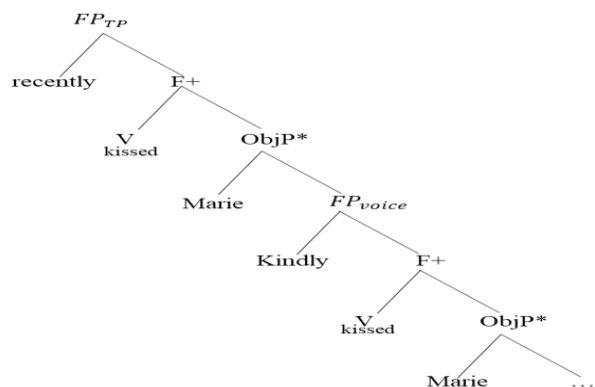
The subject in (5b) is the logical object of the verb *entered*, as shown in the sentence in (5a). The informational structure of (5a) makes the predicate the Theme (*topic – about*) of the sentence, whereas in (5b) it is the subject that is the Theme of the sentence. Therefore, the movement of an argument significantly affects the informational structure of the sentence. The A-system (*Case, agreement*) alone needs to be more comprehensive to account for the motivations of the movement of arguments. The informational system works in parallel since the movement of a noun phrase leads to the expression of a distinct and specific informational structure.

Verb Positions and Adverb Placement: In this section, we will study the position of the verb with that of adverbs in more detail. The paradigm in (6) clearly shows that the position of the participle verb can “float” before or after that of an adverb-like sentiment. The sentences in (6) indicate this is also the case with an adverb of time like *recants*.

(6) a). *He kissed recently Marie.*

b). *He recently kissed Marie.*

Following our objective, the lexical verb moves in (6a) on the fixed position of adverbs. Since the adverb of time is in the TP (Tense Phrases) Specifier and the adverb of manner is in the VP Specifier, it is the verb that can move above VP (Verb Phrase) to beyond TP.



(7)

As observed, the (non-)movement of the verb affects the informational structure of the sentence, in particular by reorganizing the sequence [adverb + verb] and the relation of informational prominence between them. The verb (V°), therefore, targets a floating position, which is, in fact, the head of one of the semantic-functional projections carried out. The complements, for their part, also have floating positions but which require the realization of one or more ObjP projections between the adverbs (up to ModeP). We therefore obtain pieces of structure such as in (7) in the middle of the sentence.

The structure in (7), therefore, makes it possible to generate the desired orders in (34).

- (8) a. He has [TP recently kissed [ObjP Marie [VoiceP kindly]]]
 b. He has [TP recently kissed [VoiceP kindly [VP Marie]]]
 c. a [TP recently [VoiceP kindly kissed [VP Marie]]]

Variation in the order [subject, verb, object] and intervention of adverb

In this section, we will examine the distribution of arguments and verbs concerning adverbs in three specific contexts (i) SVO, (ii) VSO, and (iii) VOS. A comparative approach between English and Romanian will be carried out for this.

3.1 The SVO order: This order is attested in English and Romanian, with the difference that the SVO order is marked in English and neutral in Arabic. Nevertheless, in both languages, the SVO configuration expresses the subject (S) as the topic-about (Theme) of the sentence. This is illustrated in (9a-b).

(9) a). *John read this book*

b). قرأ جون هذا الكتاب

The subject in (10) has moved from its VP-internal thematic position to the position we identified as the SubjP specifier (=IP). This position is marked as the Topic-about of the sentence. A particularly interesting difference between the two languages is the possibility for some adverbs to intervene between the subject and the conjugated verb (simple or auxiliary) in Arabic, but not in English, as shown by the contrast between (10a-b) and (10c-d).

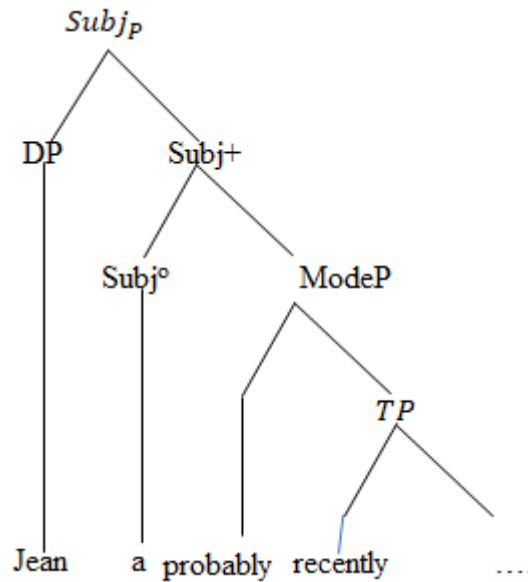
(10) a). Ion probably read this book.

b). لقد قرأ أيون هذا الكتاب مؤخرًا.

c). * Jean should read this book.

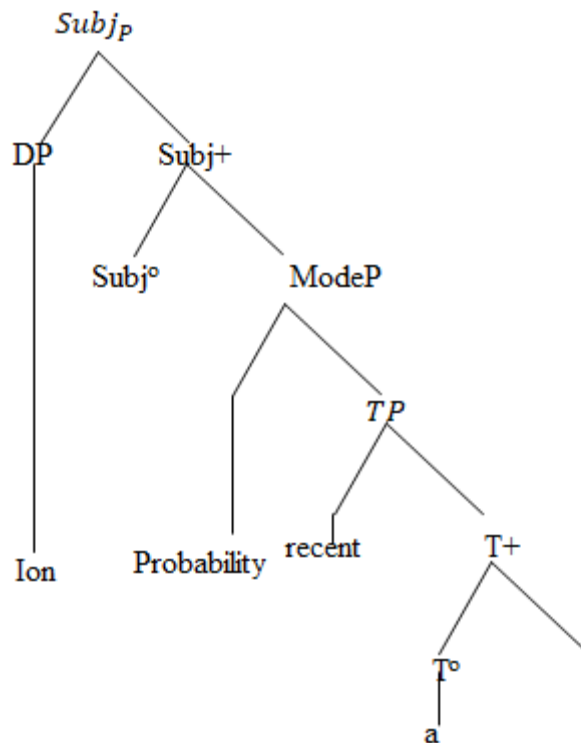
d). * جين قرأ هذا الكتاب تقريبًا.

It is clear that in English the conjugated verb rises to the head of the projection in the specifier of which the subject is found. This is the IP represented, renamed SubjP by analogy with the ObjP position for complements. This projection is found above TP or ModeP, as shown in (11).



(11)

In Arabic, on the other hand, the inflected verb does not have to rise as high as in English. In (10a-b), the auxiliary is lower than the adverb of mood and time, more precisely in T- according to (12).



(12)

The remote configuration between subject and verb in (12) raises the problem of the non-locality of subject-verb agreement, which for English is expressed in terms of the local specifier-head relation (within SubjP). A possible solution to this problem is that agreement occurs in passing, although this is quite difficult to conceive of in the structure in (12).

3.2. The VS(O) order: As just mentioned, the VSO order in Arabic is an appropriate answer to the question What happened? as in example (13a). In English, this order is simply impossible, as shown in (13b), the VSO order being the only possible one.

(13) a. أيون قرأ هذا الكتاب.

b. *Jean read this book.

The VS inversion exists in English, but it requires a trigger such as an interrogative element, as in (14).

(14) What did Jean read?

This stylistic inversion is impossible in a “neutral” (out-of-the-blue) context. The example in (13a) from Arabic shows a lower subject position than that of the participle. Such a position is not available for the subject in English. The possibilities of intervention of adverbs in the VSO contexts of Arabic indicate that this subject position is, as for the object, floating. Let us consider the sentences in (15).

(15) a. Has probably/recently/often/carefully read this book. ‘I have read probably/recently/often/carefully this book.’

b. ربما قرأ أيون هذا الكتاب بعناية/مؤخرًا/في كثير من الأحيان/ بعناية.

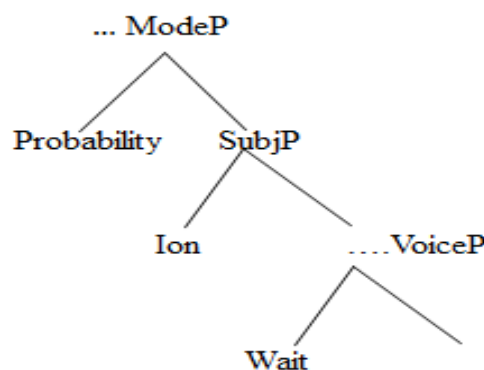
Based on the assumption that adverbs have a fixed position within the sentence, we are led to propose for Arabic that the subject in (15) can occupy a position that floats between those of the adverbs. Let us consider the analysis of the sentence in (16).

(16) ربما قرأ أيون هذا الكتاب بعناية.

Probably Ion read this book carefully.

‘Ion probably read this book carefully.’

This sentence clearly shows that the subject position is between the ModeP projection, whose specifier is occupied by the *probable* adverb, and the VoiceP projection, hosting the adverb in a *wait* manner. The subject position being that of the specifier of SubjP, this projection can be realised between ModeP and VoiceP for (16), as represented in (17).



Given the possibilities of adverbial intervention given in (15), the projection SubjP is feasible between each semantic-functional projection linked to adverbs. Therefore, this subject position is recursive, just like the object position.

3.3. The VOS order

Italian, Spanish, and Romanian, unlike English, have the VOS order. However, in Italian, this order is quite restricted since the object (O) must constitute a given piece of information directly accessible in the context (through a question, for example), as in (18).

(18) A: Chi ha letto questo libro?

‘Who has read this book?’

B: Ha [letto questo libro] Gianni.

A [lu ce livre] Gianni.

‘Gianni has read this book.’

Romanian and Spanish allow the VOS order without such a contextual restriction. The final subject fulfills the function of a focus on the “new information” type (i.e. in response to a question on the subject of the action).

(19) a. A citit cartea Ion. (Romanian)

lu livre-le Ion.

‘Ion has read the book.’

b. A leído este libro Juan. (Spanish)

One might have thought that the final subject in (18b) and (19) is in its primary position inside the VP and that the object has moved above it. This analysis can be valid for Italian since no adverb, not even a manner adverb, can follow the subject, as indicated in (20a). This demonstrates that the subject cannot be higher than the VoiceP projection. Presumably, the subject remains in situ, i.e. in its position as the specifier of the VP, as represented in (20b). As for the object of the type “information given” (topic), it leaves the VP to go into an object position marked [+topic].

(20) a. Gianni has read (this book) (*carefully).

b. ... [VoiceP carefully [ObjP (this book) +topique [VP Gianni+focus]]]

This analysis is not tenable for Romanian (as well as for Spanish), since adverbs of manner, aspect and time can appear after the subject, as in the example in (21).

21) A citit această carte Ion recent/adesea/atent.

A lu ce livre Ion recent/often/carefully.

‘Ion has recently/often/carefully read this book.’

These facts indicate that the subject moves out of the VP to reach a SubjP position above VoiceP, AspP and even TP. In a configuration like (21), the informational flow is ascending at the end of the sentence, which means that the subject and the final adverb are of higher informational rank than the rest of the sentence.

The subject position after the object position in Romanian — a focus position of the “new information” type — is floating between the considered adverbs, since the subject can intervene between two adverbs. This is the case in the sentence represented in (22).

(22) A citit [ObjP această carte [TP recent [SubjP Ion [VoiceP atent]]]]

In general, the data from Romanian (as well as Spanish), given the permitted orders VOS, VSO and VOS, support the hypothesis that there are floating, therefore recursive, subject (SubjP) and object(s) (ObjP) positions between adverbs and that their effective realisation results not only from possibilities of agreement configuration (downwards for the subject in languages with free inversion) and Case but also from specific strategies to express a particular Informational Structure.

4. Functional Linguistics and Construction Grammar: Interfaces and Perspectives

In recent decades, linguistic studies anchored in a functionalist perspective have contributed significantly to the field of language sciences. Covering a series of theoretical currents and models, the term “functionalist” has come to designate a set of investigations that, to a greater or lesser extent, consider semantic-pragmatic aspects in their analyses based on empirical data from natural languages in a classic opposition to the so-called formalist models.

In general, all functionalist theories share the idea that language is shaped by social interaction, and is influenced by the context in which it is used, the communicative situation, and the cultural and historical environment of the speakers. According to Charles et al. (1988), language structure is shaped by the regularities in these situations. A key idea in functionalist theory is that language structures are deeply influenced by their functions, which include meaning and use in communication (Oller, 1972). This means that syntax, or sentence structure, is not independent but closely tied to meaning (semantics) and use (pragmatics). As Dik (1978) explains, pragmatics provides the framework for understanding both semantics and syntax, with meaning being influenced by context and social knowledge.

Construction Grammar (CG) brings together approaches that view language as a network of interconnected signs, with each “construction” being a pairing of form (structure) and function (meaning). These constructions are symbolic (arbitrary pairings of form and meaning) and conventional (shared within a linguistic community). Diesel (2015) emphasizes that language structures can be analysed as complex signs that link specific forms with particular meanings. He also notes that all linguistic signs, whether words or grammatical structures are interconnected in a network of relationships. Traugott and Trousdale (2013) point out that all constructionist approaches take a “holistic” view of grammar, seeing it as a dynamic system where phonology, morphology, syntax, meaning, and use all interact.

Recent research has explored the connection between functionalist approaches and Construction Grammar. For example, Andrade (2021) studies how relative clauses expand the main clause in English journalistic texts, showing how these structures relate to the genre and communicative functions. In political discourse, Beatriz and Flávia (2021) analyse the use of the conditional to express evidentiality, focusing on how this structure fits the communicative strategies of political texts. Gabriele (2021) looks at the use of the discursive marker “but” in

classes and interviews, examining its role in organizing conversations and topics. Other studies, such as Violeta et al. (2021), investigate informal language use, like WhatsApp posts, to study clause structures used as main clauses, illustrating the application of functionalist principles to real-life data.

Doğan et al. (2023) examine the phrase "new normal" from Twitter posts, using the constructionist perspective to explore how the phrase evolves in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. They find that the phrase takes on multiple creative meanings based on its social and pragmatic context. Poggian and Pires (2021) explore how reprimands are constructed in language, focusing on the expression "Who told me to invite me?" to show how a formal structure can function to criticize or censor.

These studies demonstrate the growing integration of functionalist theories with constructionist perspectives, highlighting the importance of examining language not just as a system of rules, but as a tool shaped by its social and communicative functions. This research also reflects the ongoing dialogue between language theory and practical applications, such as language teaching and real-world communication..

5. Text linguistics and North American functionalism in dialogue: In defence of a research agenda -A proposal for dialogue

To strengthen the claims regarding the integration of Text Linguistics and North American Functionalism, additional empirical evidence and references can be drawn from various scholars who have explored the intersection of these two approaches, albeit from different perspectives.

1. Empirical Evidence and Existing Literature:

- Neves (2006) and Pacheco (2014) have contributed to the integration of Functionalism and Text Linguistics, though they do not explicitly engage with the North American strand of Functionalism or socio-cognitivist perspectives, as seen in more recent studies. Neves, for example, explores the textual dimensions of discourse, focusing on how language use reflects societal structures, but stops short of connecting these insights to cognitive-functional approaches.
- Abreu (2017) attempts a broader synthesis of Text Linguistics and Functionalism, linking them through a cognitive framework, but does not delve deeply into the functionalist assumptions of either approach. His work highlights cognitive issues as a common point of interest but lacks a detailed explanation of how specific theoretical concepts from each theory can be integrated.
- Cavalcante (2015) is one of the few scholars who have directly addressed the potential articulation of these two theories. He discusses how they could complement each other, especially in the analysis of language beyond the sentence level, but his work remains an outlier in the broader literature.

2. Theoretical Frameworks in the Literature:

- Text Linguistics and North American Functionalism have historically been more often associated with other fields. Text Linguistics has been linked with **Discourse Analysis**, often drawing on **Sociolinguistics** and **Critical Discourse Analysis**. Studies in this area tend to emphasize the role of language in shaping and reflecting social power dynamics and identity (e.g., Fairclough, 1992). North American Functionalism, on the other hand, has typically been connected to **Variationist Sociolinguistics** and **Cognitive Linguistics**, with scholars like **Labov (2001)** focusing on variation in language use and **Langacker (2008)** emphasizing cognitive processes in language structure.
- This gap in direct research between these two approaches highlights an important area for development, as their integration could yield new insights into how linguistic structures function within communicative contexts and align with cognitive processes.

3. New Directions and Critical Reflection:

- While studies like those of **Neves, Pacheco, and Abreu** lay important groundwork, they do not fully develop the cognitive-functional integration of Text Linguistics and North American Functionalism. The current study seeks to fill this gap by not only revisiting existing theories but also providing new reflections that critically engage with the theoretical assumptions underlying these approaches. This process will involve considering the sociocognitive elements that have been underexplored in previous works, particularly in terms of how language use is influenced by cognitive and social factors simultaneously.

4. Proposed Synthesis:

- This study aims to offer a more explicit and systematic articulation between Text Linguistics and North American Functionalism by connecting their core principles. Specifically, **North American Functionalism's** emphasis on semantic-pragmatic structures and **Text Linguistics'** focus on discourse organization can be integrated through a shared focus on the cognitive and communicative functions of language. By incorporating socio-cognitive insights into textual analysis, a richer understanding of the dynamic relationship between syntax, discourse, and cognition can be achieved. This study's critical approach to existing research will help establish a new theoretical framework that can more effectively analyse real-world linguistic phenomena.

Through these empirical and theoretical contributions, the study advances the claim that Text Linguistics and North American Functionalism can be more closely integrated, offering a robust model for analysing the interplay between syntax, discourse, and cognitive processes:

- a) North American Functionalism and Text Linguistics treat textual genres differently. While Functionalism tends to use them as an analytical factor or consider them more broadly as a contextual issue, Text Linguistics explores them in more detail, explaining their relationship with the construction of meanings.
- b) North American Functionalism is greatly concerned with studying linguistic change. Since the pioneering studies on grammaticalisation, functionalist research has been closely related to investigations on language changes. Recently, the focus on change has become even broader with the constructionist interface, considering modifications in form and function.
- c) North American Functionalism and Text Linguistics use linguistics as their object of study. Still, the textual approach aims to study the text and the pragmatic relations involved in its reading and production process. At the same time, North American Functionalism usually starts from a morphological or syntactic phenomenon to observe its discursive properties.
- d) Text Linguistics and North American Functionalism tend to adopt different methodological procedures. Text Linguistics generally focuses its analyses on a qualitative methodology, highlighting the role of linguistic elements in the construction of the text and the effects of meaning. North American Functionalism often starts from qualitatively and quantitatively controlled factors.
- e) Text Linguistics is often used more than North American Functionalism in works on teaching. It still seems challenging for functionalist studies to interface with pedagogical practices, whether through work with analysis and elaborating suggestions for teaching approaches/materials or based on intervention proposals. Cunha and Tavares (2015, pp: 157-176.) and Bishop, Cordeiro and Lucena (2022, pp: 192-207) are some functionalist works on teaching already developed.

However, we emphasize that these theories' trends are merely frequent guidelines. Thus, a functionalist study may start from a specific genre, and a Text Linguistics study may emphasise the construction of the genre-less strongly; a functionalist investigation may adopt a purely qualitative methodology, and a Text Linguistics study may also focus on quantitative issues.

In this sense, it is necessary to highlight what is relevant in this interface proposal so that a research agenda can be discussed. To associate Text Linguistics and North American Functionalism in studying a phenomenon, it is necessary to necessarily start from actual usage data, focusing on pragmatic and contextual issues in light of a socio-cognitive and interactional approach. Methodologically, a qualitative and quantitative approach may be adopted based on different genres and textual supports. This association can be made about teaching through analyzing and preparing teaching materials and broad reflections.

In defence of a research agenda, we emphasise that it is necessary to theorise about this association and present descriptive-analytical paths. Because of this, we highlight some themes that can be observed in search of this interface: textual articulation, worked on in Castanheira (2017) and Castanheira and Caseira (2020a).

Castanheira (2017, p: 117) addresses the sequencing issue by studying modal adverbials, providing a qualitative and quantitative methodological treatment and an analytical

perspective in light of both theories. This articulation made it possible to map the frequency of use, as advocated by several functionalist investigations, and modellers' formal and functional patterns. Furthermore, this perspective was combined with a more accurate observation of the text and its effects of meaning, which enabled a broader view of the phenomenon.

In this study, we initially analysed how these elements were used in opinion articles – a genre chosen because it is predominantly argumentative, and modellers play an essential role in constructing this textual typology. To this end, these elements were mapped morpho-syntactically and discursively, based on their ordering, degrees of subjectivity, and effects of meaning, finding that these elements are often used less subjectively due to textual.

Another work developed on textual articulation is that of Castanheira and Caseira (2020a, p 34-52), in which the authors discuss how nine textbooks deal with the theme of conjunctions in chapters on word classes and clause articulation in light of the functional-textual interface.

In this investigation, the importance of the interface is evidenced by a broader perspective, emphasising the analysis of the contextualisation of the material and the role of conjunctions in the text. From this intertwining, the basic assumptions of both theories are considered, such as examples, context, pragmatics, cognition, sequencing, cohesion, and coherence.

The authors note that such materials still need to address the issue of the role of elements in the text. Still, they explore syntactic and semantic issues to conjunctions more systematically. According to Castanheira and Caseira (2020a, pp: 34-52), there is still a need for progress in connecting the theme with the textual genre and its function in the text without using it merely as a pretext for identification and classification activities. Thus, the authors argue that it is necessary to bring together these two perspectives and (re)think of the strategies for approaching conjunctions in textbooks.

In his results, the author finds that there is a direct relationship between the construction of the interview genre and the use of encapsulating anaphoras since such elements are responsible for the texture of the text, marking, for example, the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee and being primarily prospective in the initial part of the interviews, given their role of presenting the information to be developed. Castanheira (2020, p 235) also argues that encapsulations can highlight subjectivity and that this occurs differently depending on the interview topic and finds that these anaphoras have different sizes depending on the novelty of the information conveyed.

Here, given the assumptions discussed in the previous section and the clarifications made by such research, the following functionalist assumptions can be analysed in discussing these phenomena. To make this interface even more transparent, we have prepared Table 1:

Table 1: textual-functional theoretical relationship.

Textual phenomenon	Functionalist theoretical assumptions	Analytical application
Textual articulation	Iconicity	Analysis of the form-function relationship based on the morphosyntactic order of the adverbial articulator in the sentence
	Marking	Analysis of the frequency and cognitive and structural complexity of the textual articulator in a comparative way
	Grammaticalisation	Analysis of the role of grammaticalised elements in the construction of the text
	(Inter)subjectivity	Analysis of the (inter)subjective value through textual articulators
	Categorisation	Grouping of items into categories based on their frequency and common characteristics
Referencing	Iconicity	Analysis of the form-function relationship through ordering and size of the NP
	Informativeness	Analysis of the status of the NP referent
	Marking	Analysis of the frequency and structural and cognitive complexity of the NP in a comparative manner
	(Inter)subjectivity	Analysis of the (inter)subjective role of anaphora and deixis
	Categorisation	Grouping of elements into common categories based on frequency of use and their characterisation

Furthermore, mapping the multifunctionality of sequential and referential elements and observing morphological, syntactic, and semantic categories and their role in the text are central aspects of this interface. This is evidenced by discussing word formation processes and using hypotactic, paratactic, juxtaposed, subordinate, and correlated clauses, among other topics of functional-textual interest. For such a research agenda to be carried out, it is necessary to consider these and other phenomena to intertwine such discussions, respecting the basis of these theories and their methodological association with analytical aspects consistent with their fundamental theoretical assumptions. Work on teaching is also essential since this articulation can contribute to reflections on the role of grammatical elements in the construction of different textual genres. Thus, we argue that Text Linguistics and North American Functionalism are not theories that present exclusive aspects but focus on different issues in their work, adopting a different perspective of analysis, but which can be thoroughly combined. Although they show some tendencies, both theories can deviate from these directions and “move” towards other analytical and methodological possibilities, which can configure a necessary research agenda. Finally, it is emphasized that the interface defended here enables analytical gains by uniting theoretical assumptions of two approaches and generating a broader view of linguistic phenomena usually described separately from such biases. This connection is also relevant for teaching since, in the classroom, multiple perspectives must be combined to construct more plural strategies, and an approach based on use in grammar teaching is increasingly advocated, which contributes to a reflective pedagogical practice allied to the effects of meaning.

6. Conclusions

According to the study, adverbs typically take fixed positions within sentences, though some, such as manner adverbs, can shift to the left periphery. The arguments and verbs are in floating positions, influenced by the semantic-functional projections that house the adverbs. The SI system governs information distribution, whereas the system allows for variation in argument and verb positioning. Despite variations in constituent order, the Information Structure remains consistent. The study clarifies the roles of agreement, case assignment, and SI expression in various languages or language groups.

The comparison of Text Linguistics and North American Functionalism demonstrates that, while their theories differ, they share fundamental principles based on functional linguistic uses and the relationship between discourse and grammar. Both fall under the "functional pole" (Dik, 1987), emphasising their importance in addressing fundamental linguistic issues. This study emphasises the need for additional research to systematically investigate these theories, advocating for a clearer integration of their theoretical and methodological underpinnings. Such an approach will help us understand the relationship between linguistic structure, discourse, and information distribution, fostering more interdisciplinary dialogue in linguistic theory and practice.

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