

HOUSE DEFEATS DILMA, AND MINAS FAILS AÉCIO: A FUNCTIONAL-COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF BRAZILIAN NEWSPAPER HEADLINES¹

(Câmara derrota Dilma, e Minas falha com Aécio: uma análise cognitivo-funcional das manchetes de jornais)

Dionei Moreira Gomes²
Universidade de Brasília

Letícia Sallorenzo³
Universidade de Brasília

ABSTRACT

This paper intends to evaluate Brazilian newspaper headlines under the perspective of functional-cognitive Linguistics. How do headlines affect the cognitive process of reality and ideology acquisition? We analyzed headlines published at O Globo and Folha de S. Paulo newspapers, collected between October 6th and October 31st 2014 (from the 2nd round definition to the election results). We evaluate features such as: metaphors and metonymies; strategies of voice changing; choices of (non-)prototypical alignments between grammatical relations, semantic and pragmatic roles; and the relation between such alignments and the representations built by the speeches produced by the politics section of Brazilian newspapers. Preliminary results show how headlines work characters: President Dilma does not have control over the situation, and Aécio is a victim of the circumstances.

Keywords: *Functional-Cognitive Linguistics. Ideological Manipulation. Brazilian Elections 2014. Newspaper Headlines.*

RESUMO

Pretendemos avaliar manchetes de jornal sob a perspectiva da Linguística cognitivo-funcional. Como manchetes interferem no processo cognitivo de construção da realidade e da ideologia? Analisamos manchetes publicadas nos jornais O Globo e Folha de São Paulo, entre 6 e 31 de outubro de 2014 (da definição dos candidatos do segundo turno das eleições presidenciais até os resultados do pleito). Avaliamos fatores como: metáforas e metonímias; estratégias de mudança de voz; opção por alinhamentos (não-)prototípicos entre relações gramaticais, papéis semânticos e pragmáticos; e a relação entre tais alinhamentos e as representações geradas nesses discursos produzidos pela editoria de política dos jornais brasileiros. Os resultados preliminares mostram como as manchetes trabalham os personagens de forma oblíqua: Dilma não tem controle sobre a situação, enquanto Aécio é vítima das circunstâncias.

Palavras-chave: *Linguística Cognitivo-Funcional. Manipulação Ideológica. Eleições Presidenciais 2014. Manchetes de Jornal.*

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² É Professor Associado II do Departamento de Linguística da Universidade de Brasília (UnB), atuando no desenvolvimento de pesquisas sobre línguas indígenas, língua portuguesa, língua brasileira de sinais (Libras) e formação inicial e continuada de professores. Possui licenciatura em Letras pela UnB. Concluiu mestrado e doutorado em Linguística na UnB, tendo sido, durante este último período de formação, pesquisador visitante nos seguintes centros de pesquisa franceses: Centre d'Études de Langues Indigènes d'Amérique (CELIA/Paris) e Laboratoire Dynamique du Langage (DDL/Lyon).

³ Jornalista formada pela Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro; Graduanda em Letras pela Universidade de Brasília e Mestranda de Pós Graduação em Linguística da UnB (PPGL/UnB).

INTRODUCTION

Brazilian media takes sides. It is biased, especially when it comes to political ideologies. This can be identified in the very newspapers' headlines. An in-depth and focused reading of these texts, adopting a usage-based (functional) Linguistics approach of language, makes even more evident a large part of the manipulation mechanisms used in the texts. The use and the choice of certain linguistic formulations have the purpose to emphasize this or that bias, highlight details of given news that should not be highlighted, and, mainly, instill into readers' minds a sense of grounded opinion in seemingly unbiased news, which, in fact, are built on ideological manipulation.

The main purpose of this text is to present a preliminary analysis of the linguistic mechanisms of ideological manipulation found in the headlines of broad circulation newspapers in Brazil, taking into account the syntactic, semantic, pragmatic levels, as well as the context of discourse. Which linguistic mechanisms does the media employ to *manipulate* information with the aim to **forge a parallel reality**? And how can usage based Linguistics contribute for this analysis? These are the questions we seek to answer here.

We collected 321 headlines published by *O Globo* and *Folha de S. Paulo* newspapers between 6 and 31 October 2014 (from the definition of the Presidential election's second round candidates until the result of the elections). 94 headlines were selected; each reported the evolution of the 2nd round according to the results of polls, and made it possible to assess linguistic aspects, such as the use of metaphor or metonymy; strategies of voice change; structures of increasing, reducing or rearranging verb valence; choosing prototypical alignments between grammatical relations, semantic roles and pragmatic roles, and, especially, non-prototypical alignments; and the relation between these alignments and the representations generated in the discourses produced by the politics editorials of Brazilian newspapers.

This paper is divided into 3 sections. In section 1, we present the theoretical and methodological background; in section 2, we bring the results, and in section 3, our final considerations.

1 THEORETICAL METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Usage-based (functional) Linguistics or cognitive-functional Linguistics

The theoretical perspective adopted here follows the principles of usage-based Linguistics, also known as cognitive-functional Linguistics. As Furtado da Cunha, Bispo and Silva (2013, p. 14) state in another study of this nature,

It comes from the notion that there is a symbiosis between discourse and grammar: discourse and grammar interact and mutually influence each other. Grammar is understood as a structure on constant change/adapting as a consequence of the vicissitudes of discourse. Therefore, the analysis of linguistic phenomena must be based on the use of language in a concrete situation of intercommunication. [our translation]

It is evident that language is not to be considered an autonomous entity, a module of the mind. It should also be noted the need to carry out morphosyntactic studies associated with discursive-pragmatic and semantic studies. Studies of this sort cannot prescind from real data, from real speakers in real situations of language being used in the world, for ‘the structure of language comes through to the extent that it is used (BARLOW; KEMMER, 2000; BYBEE, 2010, 2011)’ (FURTADO DA CUNHA, BISPO E SILVA, 2013, p. 15, [our translation]).

In an usage based research, it is key to bring functionalism and cognitivism together, since grammar is viewed as the result of a combination of cognitive, social and communicative factors (TRAUGOTT, 2004; TOMASELLO, 1998, 2003).

We understand, as Bybee (2010), that languages display a structural standard and regularity at the same time that they present a variation at all levels. A cognitive-functional theoretical framework is, therefore, required to address the identification of dynamic processes that create languages, and confer them with both their structure and variation. And as Bybee states (2010, p. 1), we will extrapolate structural analyses:

A focus on the dynamic processes that create language also allows us to move away from an exclusive focus on linguistic structures and formulate a broader goal: to derive linguistic structure from the application of domain-general processes. In this context, domain-general processes would be those that can be shown to operate in areas of human cognition other than language.

In the perspective of usage-based Linguistics, linguistic elements used, especially the ones frequently reiterated, have an impact in the cognitive representation of language and in the way it manifests in each language. As pointed by Oliveira (2015, p. 22), ‘linguistic uses result from, at least, three larger motivations (...): structural, cognitive and socio-historical’ [our translation].

This theoretical framework explained thus far strongly associated the formal dimension (specially the morphosyntactic one) with the dimension of meaning (semantic, pragmatic and discursive one). In the words of Martelotta (2011, p. 20), this dimension of meaning only actualizes itself in communicative contexts. As this author, in order to designate aspects associated with the so-called communicative contexts:

(...) we will use the terms: *semantic properties*, which designate the meaning conveyed by linguistic elements in the context of use; *pragmatic properties*, which relate to interactive aspects of the use of linguistic elements that reflect the attitude of speakers when producing their utterance and their concern with the reception of this utterance by the listener; and *discursive properties*, which refer to the textual aspects that interfere with the use of linguistic elements (...) [our translation]

This theoretical perspective is a result of the the sum of functionalist and cognitivist works from the past decades, especially the researches of Talmy Givón, Paul Hopper, Sandra Thompson, Scott DeLancey, Martin Haspelmath, Wallace Chafe, Joan Bybee, Elizabeth Traugott, Christian Lehmann, Bernd Heine, Charles Fillmore, George Lakoff, Ronald Langacker, Gilles Fauconnier, Adele Goldberg, John Taylor, William Crofts, Michael Tomasello, among others. In Brazil, names such as Maria Angélica Furtado da Cunha, Mário Martelotta, Maria Medianeira de Souza, Mariangela Rios de Oliveira, Maria Maura Cezario, Vânia Casseb-Galvão, Sebastião Votre, Ivo do Rosário, among others, have led studies of international quality in this field.

As Traugott & Dasher (2002, p. 7) state, ‘we regard the basic function of language to be to convey meaning. We also take as fundamental the notion that meaning is both cognitive and communicative’. Concerning *meaning*, the authors point out that it is negotiated by speakers in interactive ways, both responding to context and creating context. This gives language a strongly developing nature, dynamic, maleable, adaptable to the contexts of use, to the needs, and, especially, to the objectives speakers intend to attain.

Givón (1995, p. 9), listing the premises of functionalism, reminds us, among other factors, that:

- language is a social-cultural activity;
- structure serves cognitive or communicative function;
- meaning is context-dependent .

Concepts by Lakoff, Van Dijk, Givón and the principles of usage-based functional Linguistics have been applied in order to analyze newspapers’ headlines regarding manipulation of information, as: ‘*Em dois meses, Dilma esteve cinco vezes no Planalto*’ (‘In two months, Dilma was five times at Planalto Palace’] (Folha de S.Paulo, 8/1-/2014), in contrast with ‘*No Senado, Aécio priorizou*’

candidatura’ [‘At Senate, Aecio prioritized his candidacy’] (Folha de S. Paulo, 19/10/2014). Before presenting the results, it is necessary to check out some theoretical cornerstones that our analyses are based on.

1.2 Categorization, stereotypes, metaphor, metonymy, frames and day-to-day clichés

Givón (1995, p. 12) reminds us that ‘most functionalists are currently working, whether explicitly or implicitly, with within a distinct approach to categorization, Roschean prototypes’. Rosch *et al* (1976) explain that ‘Categorizations which humans make of the concrete world are not arbitrary, but highly determined. The authors define category as a number of objects which are considered equivalent, usually designated by names. Rosch’s works contributed to identify what would later be called the ‘prototype effect’ (BYBEE, 2010, p. 30; LAKOFF, 1987, p. 7). Such effects emerged from the moment it was possible to identify that certain members of a given category were considered to be better or more essential than others. Lakoff (1987, p. xiii) explains that

Most of our words and concepts designate categories. Some of these are categories of things or beings in the physical world – chairs and zebras, for example. Others are categories of activities and abstract things – singing and songs, voting and governments etc. to a very large extent, the objectivist view of language and thought rests on the nature of categories.

Bybee (2010, p. 7), when studying domain-general cognitive processes employed in the use of language, defines categorizations as

(...) the similarity or identity matching that occurs when words and phrases and their component parts are recognized and matched to stored representations. The resulting categories are the foundation of the linguistic system, whether they are sound units, morphemes, words, phrases or constructions (...). Categorization is domain-general in the sense that perceptual categories of various sorts are created from experience independently of language.

Lakoff & Johnson (1980, p. 36) explain that ‘metaphor is principally a way of conceiving one thing in terms of another’. Ideas such as *time is money* or *war of ideas* rely on our conceptual system playing a central role in defining our everyday realities. Whereas metonymy (specifically synecdoche), on the other hand, has primarily a referential function, where the part stands for the whole. It allows us to use one entity to stand for another, a part to explain the whole, such as in *there are a lot of good heads in university* (= intelligent people).

The conceptual systems of cultures and religions are metaphorical in nature. Symbolic metonymies are critical links between everyday experience and the

coherent metaphorical systems that characterize religions and cultures. (LAKOFF & JOHNSON, 1980, p. 40)

Traugott & Dasher (2002, p. 34) claim that, 'in the on-line production of language, the SP/Ws uses mechanisms such as metaphORIZATION, metonymization (including invited inferencing, subjectification, intersubjectification), and objectification in the context of spoken and written discourses'.

Lakoff (2008, p. 22) defends a cognitive model in which

Complex narratives-the kind we find in anyone's life story, as well as in fairy tales, novels, and dramas-(or even stories made up by everyday news on the papers, we should add) are made up of smaller narratives with very simple structures.¹ Those structures are called "frames" or "scripts." Simple frames can be combined to form more complex ones. A field hospital in a war, for example, might have all the doctors, nurses, and patient's being soldiers; the hospital might be a tent on a battlefield; and the injuries would be war wounds. (...) A hospital, for example, has roles like doctors, nurses, patients, visitors, operating rooms, X-ray machines, and so on, with scenarios like checking in, being examined, having an operation, being visited, and so on. The frame structure would be violated, or "broken," if, say, the visitors were performing operations on the doctors at the check-in desk.

According to Lakoff, these frames work in our minds in the following manner: the history of Rocky Balboa activates in people's minds feelings and words to define the character, which are very different from those activated by, for instance, Snow White – but not very different from those activated by Capitain Nascimento, of Brazilian film *Elite Squad*. It is impossible to associate Rocky and Capitain Nascimento with words such as *young innocent and defenseless princess, victim of the misdeeds of a witch*. These are the words and the semantic field activated by Snow White; instead, both can be associated with: *rough, violent, strong and powerful hero, who solves every situation by means of his strength* – unimaginable words for Snow White. And all these definitions are just clichés of small stories.

By taking this thought to real life stories, people categorize real characters in clichés. Thus, in 1990s Brazil, a congressman that had reported an embezzlement scandal was framed as a hero. Twenty years later, this same congressman, convicted by the Supreme Court in the trial of another corruption scandal, called *Mensalão*, is framed as a despicable villain to be excoriated by society. Opposing clichés that adjust themselves in people's minds according to the story told.

1.3 Inference and implicature

Martelotta (2011, p. 67) states that,

while processing discourse, the speaker updates a series of mechanisms of cognitive nature, which are essential to human beings, such as symbolization, domain transfers, information storage in memory, processing and interpretation of information, among others. Grammar, in an usage based conception, is essentially related to these general mechanisms.

[our translation]

What is important to us at this moment is the concept of inferences and implicatures that dwell in this way of seeing linguistic data. Martelotta (2011) cites Tomasello (2003) to detail the relationship between language and cognition. This author speaks about social and cognitive skills, and particularly, a set of skills that interests us:

b) Skills of perception of intention:

- a) the skill to share the attention with another person to objects and events of mutual interest;
- b) the skill to share the attention and gesture of other people towards distant objects and events, on the outer side of the immediate interaction;
- c) the skill to actively direct the attention of others to distant objects, pointing, showing or using non-linguistic gestures;
- d) the skill to culturally (imitatively) learn others' intentional actions, including their communicative acts, founded on communicative intentions.

(MARTELOTTA, 2011, p. 70-71) [our translation]

Taking from these skills of perception of intention, we reach the concept of conversational implicatures: the ability to perceive what can be inferred, despite not being literally said, communicated. These inferences happen all the time in our communication and direct our attention. Martelotta (2011, p. 24) states that 'speakers infer from linguistic elements some values that these linguistic elements do not have in their literal sense, due to contextual coordinates that allow the inference' [our translation]. How does press uses such mechanism to forge reality? That's what will be shown in the next section, which deals with data analysis. Before that, however, let us take a look at how the functional-typological perspective of voice and valence can be useful for the analysis that we have aimed at presenting here.

1.4 Voice, valence and transitivity

There are many linguistic strategies of expressing our will, desires and thoughts. The manipulation of verbal voice and valence is one of them. Verbal voice is defined as the study of interaction between semantic roles, pragmatic roles, grammatical relations and morphological processes (*stricto sensu* voice):

$$\text{Phonology} + \text{Morphology} + \text{Syntax} < \text{Semantics} + \text{Pragmatics} + \text{Discourse}$$

Every language has adjustment operations for the relations between semantic, pragmatic and grammatical roles. For instance, let us take a look at the difference between active and passive:

1. [Suiane]^(agent/topic/subject) **baked** [the cookies]_(patient/focus/object).
2. [The cookies]_(patient/topic/subject) **were baked** [by Suiane]_(agent/focus/oblique).

Example 1 shows a prototypical relation (*normal arrangement*) between thematic roles (agent/patient), grammatical relations (subject/object) and pragmatic roles (topic/focus). Whereas the example 2 breaks this prototypical relation: a patient in the position of subject and topic of the utterance. There comes the questions:

1. What does a change in this prototypical relation mean?
2. Which communicative issues would be included in such situation?

The possible answers to these questions will show up during our headline analysis.

The relation between voice, valence and transitivity will be approached. Classic transitivity is centered on the verb. In contrast, we adopt here Hopper's & Thompson's (1980, p. 252) perspective, who discuss this concept from a gradient prism:

| Parameters | High Transitivity | Low Transitivity |
|------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Participants | 2 or more participants, A and O | 1 participant |
| 2. Kinesis | action | non-action |
| 3. Aspect | telic | atelic |
| 4. Punctuality | punctual | non-punctual |
| 5. VOLITIONALITY | volitional | non-volitional |
| 6. affirmation | affirmative | negative |
| 7. Mode | realis | irrealis |

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 8. Agency | A high in potency | A low in potency |
| 9. Affectedness of O | O totally affected | O not affected |
| 10. Individuation of O | O highly individuated | O not individuated |

Table 1: Transitivity gradient model Hopper & Thompson (1980, p. 252)

Therefore, the more parameters of ‘high transitivity’ an utterance should present, the more transitive it will be. The perspective of discourse is added to this notion, in an analysis that will bring discourse as a *locus* of ideology.

1.5 Discourse and ideology

Van Dijk (2000, p. 6) explains that ‘ideologies have something to do with systems of ideas, and especially with the social, political or religious ideas shared by a social group or movement’. Ideologies are positive or negative depending on our own point of view, or on whether we belong to this or that group. Van Dijk states that members of a group that shares the same ideology defend very generic ideas, which constitute the ethical and moral principles a person adopts in order to relate to the world and perceive right and wrong, good and evil.

It is important to remember that ideology influences the use of language and discourse, as much as these two influence the former, since it is through language and discourse that we learn and apprehend – and change – ideologies. Van Dijk (2000, p. 25) claims that ‘the semantic representations that define the *meaning* of discourse are only a small selection of information represented in the model that is used to understand such discourse’.

Van Dijk (2000, p. 9) defines *discourse* as ‘(...) language use, text, talk, verbal interaction, and communication’. Through the discourse, ideologies are expressed in an explicit manner, which makes them easily detectable. But they can also be expressed in an indirect, implicit, occult manner, or in less obvious structures of discourse, such as intonation, hesitation, a pronoun or quotation marks. The strategies of ideological dissemination in discourse are pretty simple and efficient according to the author (VAN DIJK, 2000, p. 44), i.e:

- Emphasize positive things about Us;
- Emphasize negative things about Them;
- De-emphasize negative things about Us;
- De-emphasize positive things about Them.

How does this ‘emphasis’ or ‘de-emphasis’ work in linguistic terms? It is part of the objectives of this paper to point out these linguistic strategies present in newspaper headlines.

1.6 Methodological Approach

This work aims to analyze newspaper headlines. The content of the following stories will not be addressed. Develotte & Rechniewski (2000) say that headlines reach an audience considerably wider than those who read the article. The impact of headlines is still larger considering that those who read the headlines are not necessarily buyers or readers of newspapers. Furthermore, the impact of headlines on the reader is strong due to certain linguistic features that make them memorable. Also, according to Develotte & Rechniewski (2000, p. 1): ‘(...) headlines are particularly revealing of the social, cultural and therefore national representations circulating in a society at a given time’. As these authors, we also believe that headlines play an essential role in the subsequent interpretation of ‘facts’ featured in the news, since headlines guide this interpretation. This is what Develotte & Rechniewski call perspective.

In order to carry out this study, we selected a *corpus* of 321 headlines of *Folha de S. Paulo* and *O Globo* newspapers, in the period of 6-31 October 2014 – from the definition of the second round Brazilian presidential elections ticket to the consequences of the second round results. Headlines containing the words ‘Aécio’, ‘Dilma’ or ‘Lula’ were selected. The headlines were collected on the clipping website of EBC (Brazilian Communications Company), for it showed only the headlined, not the stories.

94 headlines that portrayed the evolution of the 2nd round from the results of polls were selected. It made possible to evaluate factors such as the use of metaphor and metonymy, strategies in voice change, structures increasing, reducing or rearranging verbal valence; options for prototypical alignments between grammatical relations, semantic and pragmatic roles, and, especially, the non-prototypical ones; and the relation between such alignments and the representation generated in these discourses by the politics section of Brazilian newspapers.

2 RESULTS

The results presented here are preliminary, since the research is at an early stage. However, it doesn’t reduce the value of the analyses that assemble the theoretical frameworks of cognitivist-

functionalism with a discursive perspective. 11 headlines and the linguistic analysis about them will be presented.

Headline 1

Dilma ‘premiou’ tesoureiro do PT com Itaipu (21/10/14G)⁴

Dilma ‘awarded’ Workers’ Party treasurer with Itaipu (10/21/2014G)

This is a first page headline in active voice with high transitivity, reaching the maximum degree in the transitivity scale of Hopper & Thompson (1980), presented on table 1. ‘Dilma’ is, prototypically, the subject/agent/topic. The direct object (patient/focus) of the enunciation – ‘*tesoureiro do PT* (Workers’ Party treasurer)’ – had his position highlighted. This is a type of metonymy that explicit/highlights his work and the political party; his work is to manage money. The quotation marks in ‘*premiar* (to award)’ confer the utterance a series of inferences, all negative. ‘*Com Itaipu* (with Itaipu)’ is the whole standing for the part strategy that motivates a conceptually more complex reading that leads to an inference of stronger domain/power of the treasurer over Itaipu.

Headline 2

Vaccari foi nomeado por Dilma para Conselho de Itaipu (21/10/14G)

Vaccari was appointed by Dilma for the Council of Itaipu (10/21/2014G)

On this headline, passive voice was chosen in order to topicalize the patient Vaccari, targeted by accusations of corruption since then; the agent, however, is not hidden (‘*por Dilma* [by Dilma]’). The President still must be held accountable for naming Vaccari; inferences that are also negative are generated by this construction. ‘*Para Conselho de Itaipu* (For the Council of Itaipu)’ cannot be eliminated from the enunciation, since, from a syntactic-semantic point of view, it mandatorily completes ‘*nomeado* (appointed)’ and, from a pragmatic-discursive perspective, it establishes the *locus* of Vaccari’s action in the company, a prominent decisive position; hence the inference he would strongly interfere in the affairs of Itaipu.

Headline 3

⁴ Between brackets there is the date of the headline and the initial ‘G’ for *O Globo* or ‘F’ for *Folha de S. Paulo*.

Dilma pede paz a militantes; campanha foi sórdida, diz Aécio (24/10/14G)

Dilma asks militants for peace; campaign was sordid, says Aécio (10/24/14G)

If Dilma asks for peace, it is inferred that there is WAR. This is the frame immediately activated by the word ‘*paz* (peace)’. Moreover, if she makes that plea to the militants [of PT/the Workers’ Party], it is inferred that militants [of PT] are violent, activating another frame: THE VIOLENCE OF PT’S MEMBERS. If the campaign was ‘*sórdida* (sordid)’, it is inferred that Aécio was a victim of PT’s militants, activating another frame: SORDID MEMBERS OF PT. ‘*diz Aécio* (says Aécio)’ provides the source of information that, at the same time, exempts the newspaper/journalist from what is being presented to the public and also a message to Aécio’s supporters. This headline has an unusual size, being too long; this can be revealing a strong conceptual appeal (diagrammatic iconicity).

Headline 4

Ambição faz Dilma dizer coisas nas quais não crê (23/10/14F)

Ambition makes Dilma say things she does not believe in (10/23/14F)

This headline is not between quotation marks, but on top of it there’s the word ‘interview’. Only someone who reads the interview knows that this sentence is not said by the newspaper itself, but by the person interviewed. This does not diminish the weight of what is said about Dilma. The first inference a reader gets from this headline is that someone who says something they don’t believe is a liar, and ambition would be the cause of such a socially questionable behavior. In addition, ‘*Ambição* (ambition)’ occupies the position of the subject and establishes a semantic relation of superagent with the verb ‘*fazer* (to make)’, which rules Dilma. We have here a periphrastic (or analytic) causative, in which the real agent is put (in this case ‘Dilma’, the one caused!) as subordinate to the agent of the causative predicate, a non-prototypical agent in this case (‘*ambição*’ [‘ambition’]). Dilma is the object of ‘*fazer* (to make)’ and the subject of ‘*dizer* (to say)’; this choice for the infinitive also suggests a non-finite dimension of Dilma’s actions... In what tense does she say things she doesn’t believe in? In all, all the time! In what aspect? More durative, more repetitive, more unfinished... Again, we are sold an unusually too long headline, conceptually quite complex with an explicit predicate of cause and effect in clause form.

Headline 5

Aécio larga no 2º turno com 51% contra 49% de Dilma, diz Datafolha (10/10/14F)

Aécio widens lead in 2nd round with 51% against 49% of Dilma, says Datafolha (10/10/14F)

The result of the 1st poll for the second round was metaphorically compared to the initial moment of a race – the presidential race. The frame activated here is RACE. Aécio is the subject/top(ic) of the sentence, and Dilma is a mere complement of ‘49%’, hierarchically smaller from a syntactic and semantic point of view.

Headline 6

Aécio sai na frente, em empate técnico com Dilma (10/10/14G)

Aécio comes out ahead in technical tie with Dilma (10/10/2014G)

Again, ‘Aécio’ occupies the position of subject/topic of the headline, whereas ‘Dilma’ is relegated to a ‘empate técnico (technical tie)’ complement. Visually, ‘Aécio’ comes in first plane, and ‘Dilma’ comes in last.

Headline 7

Dilma perde votos, e PT encolhe onde nasceu (6/10/14G)

Dilma loses votes, and the Workers’ Party shrinks where it was born (10/6/2014G)

Metaphorically, PT is compared to a body/organism that shrunk in its birthplace. There are two independent clauses connected with a copulative conjunction. Why were these two clauses connected? What could have motivated such choice? The answer seems to be this: it is necessary to show that Dilma and PT were losing. But this headline was published right after Dilma came in first place at the first round. However, the verb commanded by the subject Dilma (subject/topic) is ‘perder (to lose)’. At the moment ‘Dilma’ occupies the position of subject/topic, the semantics of the verb is not favorable to her, in contrast with the position ‘Aécio’ is found in headlines where he occupies such syntactic-pragmatic position.

Headlines 8, 9 and 10

Desconfiada, Dilma tem poucos interlocutores e deixou na mão de Mercadante boa parte do seu plano (19/10/14F)

Mistrustful, Dilma has few speakers and left a great part of her plan in Mercadante's hand (10/19/2014F)

Derrotado em SP, Padilha vira coordenador (8/10/14G)

Defeated in São Paulo, Padilha becomes coordinator (10/08/2014G)

Associado a nazistas, Aécio diz que ignora Lula (23/10/14F)

Associated to the nazi, Aécio says he ignores Lula (10/23/14F)

(Emphasis added in bold by us)

These headlines have a quite marked structure: the use of past participle topicalized in the left. The past participle can be a verb, a noun, or an adjective in Portuguese. In the three headlines above, it becomes the core of predication. Morphologically, it marks a state or a resultative form. The semantics of the participle in the first two headlines (*'desconfiada'* ['distrustful'] and *'derrotado'*['defeated']) is negative and debase the subject/topic of the following predication, respectively 'Dilma' and 'Padilha' (PT's strong hand). This displaced past participle constitutes a certain frame, in which the following information will be inserted. The third headline selected, which brings the past participle *'associado'* ('associated') refers to Aécio and does not bring a negative value in itself as the two former ones. On the contrary, it shows Aécio as the victim of someone else's speech: *'Aécio foi associado aos nazistas* (Aécio was associated to the nazi)'. This structure generates the semantic need of an agent. In this context, this agent, that is implicit, can only be 'by PT'. Finally, this past participle prepares Aécio's answer to this alleged accusation by PT, which comes in the following predicate: *'(...) Aécio diz que ignora Lula* (...Aécio says he ignores Lula)'. Hence, it is inferred that Lula was the one who associated Aécio to the nazi.

This same construction is also present in the following headline:

Headline 11

Discreto, irmão de Dilma só aceitou cargo em Minas (17/10/14G)

Discreet, Dilma's brother only accepted a position in Minas (10/17/2014G)

In this case, even though there is no typical past participle⁵, '*discreto* (discreet)' establishes the frame in which the rest of the headline is constructed. The meanings of '*discreto* (discreet)' in the Brazilian Portuguese dictionary are: '1. one who behaves in a cautious, prudish; reserved, circumspect way; 2. one who does not call the attention; who doesn't stand out, that doesn't reveal facts or the secrets of others (...)'[our translation].⁶ Which frame does the word '*discreto* (discreet)' establish? In the context of its use, probably it is that which is entailed in the second definition. It is inferred from this headline that Dilma practices nepotism, which is just not more serious because her brother wouldn't like to call too much attention to himself.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Preliminary results show how the headlines work with the characters in an oblique way: Dilma has no control over the situation she finds herself in, while Aécio is a victim of circumstances. We are still searching for a headline that portrays Aécio in a negative way. Our *corpus* has 321 headlines and we haven't found it... Newspapers claim to be unbiased and honest. In reality, they showed a stark defense of only one candidate.

These results are the beginning of a research that aims to strongly use the principles of cognitive-functional Linguistics in analyses that do not view discourse as solely the *locus* of enunciations. From the bottom to the top, from the top to the bottom, we seek to show in the most decisive manner the form-function pairing, which appears in recent advancements of this linguistic perspective (Construction Grammar). Although we have not yet specifically treated of the theme 'linguistic change', there are certainly constructions that seem to provide us with evidence on this. For example, the construction revolving around the past participle in the last headlines analyzed. But this and a deeper research of the points hereby presented will be left for the later stages of this study.

For now, it is worth highlighting the ideological value that is behind the linguistic act of writing newspapers – mostly newspaper headlines. There is a tacit use of linguistic strategies in the promotion of one discourse rather than another one, of one character rather than another one, of an

⁵ '*Discreteado*' would be the past participle of '*discretear*'. Not even the verb, nor this part participle are commonly used in Brazilian Portuguese. Perhaps that is the reason why the newspaper chose the form '*discreto* (discreet)', which we could interpret as an irregular past participle.

⁶ *DISCRETO*. In: DICIONÁRIO HOUAISS DA LÍNGUA PORTUGUESA. Electronic Version 3.0. Rio de Janeiro: Objetiva, 2009.

ideological bias rather than another one, falling under the perspective of inserting of ideology explained by Van Dijk (2000), once again presented here:

- Emphasize positive things about Us;
- Emphasize negative things about Them;
- De-emphasize negative things about Us;
- De-emphasize positive things about them.

This trend needs to be made explicit by Linguistics in order to provide readers with the support to improve their critical reading of newspapers and, consequently, of the reality built by them.

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dione98@unb.br
leticiasalorenzo@gmail.com
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