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### **12th Workshop on Formal Linguistics**

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## SUMÁRIO

4	FOREWORD 12TH WORKSHOP ON FORMAL LINGUISTICS <i>Maria José Foltran, Patrícia Rodrigues, Roberlei Alves Bertucci e Thais Deschamps</i>
8	WHATEVER HAPPENED TO SEQUENCE OF TENSE? <i>Brenda Laca</i>
33	REDUCED PARENTHETICAL CLAUSES AND THE SYNTAX-DISCOURSE INTERFACE <i>Gabriela Matos</i>
58	A STUDY ON THE SEMANTICS OF PORTUGUESE IMPERFECTIVE MODALS IN EPISTEMIC CONTEXTS <i>Roberta Pires de Oliveira</i>
75	LEFT-ADJOINED BI-VALENT PREDICATES IN TWO CARIBBEAN FRENCH-BASED CREOLES: MARTINICAN AND HAITIAN <i>Anne Zribi-Hertz, Loïc Jean-Louis, Moles Paul</i>
101	Assessing the emergence of reduced clefts in Brazilian Portuguese: Rhetoric structure, information structure and syntax <i>Aroldo de Andrade</i>
127	OS DESAFIOS PARA O ENSINO DE PORTUGUÊS COMO SEGUNDA LÍNGUA EM CONTEXTO DE MUDANÇA – O CASO DOS PRONOMES POSSESSIVOS DE TERCEIRA PESSOA <i>Ana Regina Vaz Calindro</i>
154	CANCELAMENTO DE EXAUSTIVIDADE EM SENTENÇAS FOCALIZADAS: UM ESTUDO EXPERIMENTAL <i>Fernanda Rosa da Silva, Luciana Sanchez Mendes</i>
177	DIFFERENTIAL OBJECT MARKING IN BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE <i>Sonia Cyrino, Monica-Alexandrina Irimia</i>
202	O SISTEMA NOMINAL DO YE'KWANA: UM EXPERIMENTO SOBRE A DISTINÇÃO CONTÁVEL-MASSIVO <i>Kayron Beviláqua, Isabella Costa</i>

# The 12th Workshop on Formal Linguistics\*

## *Foreword*

*Maria José Foltran (UFPR), Patrícia Rodrigues (UFPR),  
Roberlei Alves Bertucci (UTFPR) e Thais Deschamps (UFPR)*

4

**W**e are pleased to present the Proceedings of the 12th Workshop on Formal Linguistics, held at the Federal University of Paraná (UFPR), in Curitiba, Brazil on November 19-23, 2018.

The Workshop on Formal Linguistics is a biennial event. From its first edition 20 years ago, its main contribution to the field has been to gather Brazilian and international scholars interested in the formal descriptions of languages, expanding the scope of Brazilian research into international grounds. This edition further consolidated the event's purpose of bringing together academics and researchers within the field of Formal Linguistics, in semantics, morphology, phonetics, phonology and their interfaces.

The original focus of the event was on formal semantics. A rather young field of research, formal semantics had its beginning mainly with Barbara Partee in the 1970s, but has since seen a steady growth; it is now a well-established field, whose studies have allowed a much more precise comprehension of natural languages. In Brazil, albeit incipient, the field has advanced in the last few years. The Workshop has accompanied and supported this development from its first edition, eventually expanding to other fields of Formal Studies due to the growing concern with interfaces.

More thorough accounts on the history of the WFL can be read on the proceedings published as dossiers in this same journal throughout the years<sup>1</sup>.

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\* We would like to thank CAPES and UFPR for financially supporting the event.

<sup>1</sup> Namely, Foltran (2002), Pires de Oliveira (2006), Foltran (2007a, 2007b) and Quadro Gomes, Foltran & Pires de Oliveira (2017).

In its 12th edition, the Workshop kept its tradition of combining conferences and a Linguistics School, where keynote speakers shared their ongoing research in minicourses. It also continued the initiative first took in its previous edition of setting a main topic of interest. The 11th WFL centered around the count-mass distinction across languages. The 12th WFL, in turn, had as its main theme the formal description of Creole languages, with special regard to Haitian creole. This choice was mainly motivated by the recent migration trends of Haitians to Brazil, as well as by the involvement of UFPR and its Postgraduate Program in Linguistics with the teaching of Portuguese as a Welcoming Language (PWL). Therefore, PWL was also a main topic of interest: participants were invited to discuss the importance and contribution of theoretical Linguistics to language teaching.

The 12th WFL featured five keynote speakers. Two of them contributed to the discussions about Creole languages: professor Anne Zribi-Hertz (Université Paris 8 (retired); Faculté de Linguistique Appliquée de Port-au-Prince, Haiti) delivered a talk and a minicourse (titled *Aspects of Haitian syntax (from a typological point of view)* about her work on the morphosyntax of French-based creole languages (amongst which, Haitian creole); and professor Nélia Alexandre (Universidade de Lisboa), who has in recent years dedicated herself to Portuguese as a Foreign Language (PFL), gave a minicourse on PFL practices at Universidade de Lisboa, titled *A área do Português Língua Estrangeira na ULisboa: aspectos de investigação e ensino*, as well as a talk on the Portuguese-based creole of Cape Verde.

Beyond its main theme, the Workshop also continued to promote discussions on the general area of Formal Studies. Three keynote speakers were invited to present their research on the fields of formal syntax and semantics: professor Gabriela Matos (Universidade de Lisboa) delivered a lecture and a minicourse (titled *Ellipsis: a comparative approach to TP ellipsis, VP ellipsis and Null Complement Anaphora in Portuguese*) on her research interests, involving parataxis (co-ordination, juxtaposition and parenthetical sentences) and its specificity with respect to hypotaxis (subordinate sentences), focusing on European Portuguese (EP) Adult grammar; professor Brenda Laca (Université Paris 8), who also delivered a talk and a minicourse (*Formal semantics meets variation and change*) on recent work, focused on time, tense and aspect in natural languages; and professor Roberta Pires de Oliveira (Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina), who gave a lecture on the semantics of Portuguese Imperfective Modals in epistemic contexts.

We are very thankful to all our speakers for their inestimable contribution. Their talks and minicourses have undoubtedly stimulated the many academics and researchers who attended the event.

The selected papers for the Proceedings of the 12th Workshop on Formal Linguistics cover different fields. Regarding the semantic/pragmatic domain, the opening paper, *Whatever happened to sequence of tense?*, by Brenda Laca, discusses apparent violations of temporal sequences in subjunctive clauses in Spanish. Laca conducts a corpus-based investigation of the [PRESENT UNDER PAST] pattern in indicative and subjunctive complement clauses in Argentinian Spanish, whose results indicate that there are two distributionally and semantically distinct manifestations

of this pattern, one involving indicative and polarity subjunctive clauses, the other involving intensional and factive subjunctive clauses.

In this same field, the paper *A study on the semantics of Portuguese Imperfective Modals in epistemic contexts*, by Roberta Pires de Oliveira, discusses imperfective modal auxiliaries in Brazilian Portuguese. Pires de Oliveira proposes that: i) in ignorance contexts both present and past perspectives are felicitous; ii) in some contexts, the present perspective gives the wrong interpretation; and iii) the past imperfective inflection allows for two anchors (past or present anchor), which is related to what the speaker knew or knows.

Another paper on this perspective is *Cancellation of exhaustivity in focused sentences: an experimental study*, by Fernanda Rosa da Silva and Luciana Sanchez Mendes. Based on an experimental approach, the paper investigates the possibility of cancelling exhaustivity inferences in focused sentences in Brazilian Portuguese, considering both sentences with and without dislocated focus to the left periphery. Results show different degrees of acceptability regarding these constituents: sentences with focus dislocation were more accepted than sentences without it. These data oppose the general view in the literature which proposes that dislocated focus phrases are related to pragmatic motivations, such as exhaustivity.

The pragmatic/semantic field meets syntax in *Reduced Parenthetical Clauses and the syntax-discourse interface*, by Gabriela Matos. The author focuses on comment reduced parenthetical clauses in European Portuguese. She proposes that, differently from English or Dutch, the word order patterns in these structures are relevant to set the discursive and pragmatic values of the comment, since post-verbal focused subjects stress the mitigative meaning of the parenthetical clause.

6

Aroldo de Andrade, in *Assessing the emergence of reduced clefts in Brazilian Portuguese: Rhetoric structure, information structure and syntax*, continues the discussion on focus. Based on Segmented Discourse Representation Theory (SDRT), and looking at data from TV interviews, Andrade finds a complementary distribution between inverted and canonical clefts, according to rhetorical relations in the discourse. The author argues that canonical clefts may convey contrastive focus or informational focus in, whereas inverted clefts would convey a contrastive topic.

The paper *Differential Object Marking in diachrony: the case of Brazilian Portuguese*, by Sonia Cyrino and Monica-Alexandria Irimia, brings another Syntax approach to this volume. Based on synchronic data from Brazilian Portuguese, the authors assume that Brazilian Portuguese has preserved residual instances of differential object splits broadly regulated by animacy, a condition that is similar to robust differential object marking languages like Romanian and Spanish. However, they argue that animacy is the relevant trigger for *a*-marking in Brazilian Portuguese, and Case or agreement may be a parallel requirement in different languages.

The paper *Left-Adjoined Bi-Valent Predicates in two Caribbean French-based creoles: Martinican (MQ) and Haitian (HC)*, by Anne Zribi-Hertz, Loïc Jean-Louis and Moles Paul, focuses on a special theme of the Workshop: Creole Languages. The authors compare a class of Serial Verbal Class in MQ and HC and, contrary to the literature, argue that the so called 'take' SVC-type construction is productive

in these languages. Thus, they propose that the literature must be revised because: (French-based) Creole Tense systems cannot be regarded as incompatible with Left-Adjoined Bi-Valent Predicates; (ii) MQ evidence shows that the two components of Left-Adjoined Bi-Valent Predicates do not necessarily share the same external argument.

Sub-represented languages studies are always welcome in events like WFL. In these Proceedings, Isabella Costa and Kayron Bevilaqua present some semantic aspects on Ye'kuwana, a Caribbean language, spoken in Roraima (North of Brazil) and Venezuela. In *The nominal system in Ye'kuwana: a mass-count distinction experiment*, they present an experimental investigation on the semantic interpretation of singular and plural bare noun phrases in this language. The results show that both were accepted, and both admitted volume and cardinal readings in the interpretation tests and quantity judgments. These findings contrast what the literature proposes, since the denotation of an atomic domain for number neutral nouns does not explain the volume interpretation for the bare singular nouns found in the test results.

Turning to a teaching approach, another privileged topic in the 12th WFL, the paper *Challenges for the teaching of Portuguese as a Second Language in a context of language change: the case of third person possessive pronouns in Brazilian Portuguese* (in Portuguese), by Ana Regina Vaz Calindro, shows that the use of possessive pronouns like *seu* and *dele* poses some challenges to the teaching of Brazilian Portuguese. The problem is that *seu* can be ambiguous between second and third person interpretations in some contexts. This ambiguity is not clearly explained in grammars, nor in textbooks. Thereover, Calindro suggests that linguistic research, especially on language variation, must be considered in order to assist the process of teaching-learning of this topic.

Although limited to some papers, these Proceedings cover central subjects discussed in the Workshop, and the Organizing Committee is very glad to present them to the readers of *Revista Letras*. We are very thankful to all our reviewers, whose contribution was fundamental for the enrichment of all the studies included in this volume. Look forward to the next WFL. Enjoy the reading!

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