Foreword

In spite of the variety of topics addressed in this issue of the *Journal of Portuguese Linguistics*, the four articles share a combination of concerns in linguistic work that I attach great importance to, and, as a consequence, strongly recommended as editor. One of them is the fondness for systematic-ness in the identification and characterization of the subjects under study, and more specifically of the constructions they involve. This attitude is, of course, not always viable, unproblematic, or even recommended, particularly with theoretically groundbreaking work, or when genuine findings (which are and will continue to be possible in linguistics, even regarding a particular language like Portuguese) are being disclosed. But when there is room for tentative systematic accounts, they should always be pursued.

A second concern that brings together the articles in this volume is the idea that associating syntax and semantics is, vis-à-vis most topics in gram-mar, a necessary condition for achieving reliable characterizations that can be of any use (besides, of course, constituting a joyful recreation for solely the authors of the papers and their closest theoretical mates). Hopefully, the once so cherished idea of an "autonomous syntax", which can only make sense in connection with restricted (and certainly not very fascinating) micro-domains of language structure, is nowadays a piece of heavily dusty linguistic archaeo-logy. More then being simply naïve, such posture is provably incapable of producing any solid account of language, as witnessed by half a century now of obstinate practice.

All the articles gathered in this volume take semantics as their vantage point, given the background of the authors. Nonetheless, in every case, a permanent concern for characterizing the syntactic facts at issue is present. This does not mean that a specific model of syntactic theory is adopted in any of these works. Instead, only the more neutral and widely accepted descriptive syntactic notions are adopted. I believe this is all to the benefit of both the research and the reader.

In the first article, "Multi-headed comparatives in Portuguese", Rui Ribeiro Marques tries and differentiates a complex subclass of comparative constructions with more than one comparative operator that have to be proc-essed together (hence the label "multi-headed comparatives"). Beforehand, he provides a comprehensive view of comparative constructions in general, proposing objective semantic and syntactic criteria for defining the class. As a final result of his work, Marques suggests a typology of multi-headed comparatives encompassing four subtypes. Besides linguistic aspects, these constructions are of particular interest for being a specialized natural language tool for expressing certain types of mathematical information.

In the second article, "Portuguese expressions of duration and its English counterparts", Telmo Móia addresses the system of duration in Portuguese (in the European and Brazilian varieties), although aiming at a portrayal of cross--linguistic import. He shows that the notion of duration has to be decomposed in various semantic subdomains, sometimes, but not always, corresponding to different means of expression. These subdomains are defined in terms of rather diverse linguistic features, which cover, among others, the interaction with temporal location values, the *aktionsart* of the relevant situations, the syntactic status of the duration expresser, or the (dis)continuity of the durative period of time. To my knowledge, Móia now makes public an account of duration that is possibly the most comprehensive ever offered in the literature.

In the third article, "Anaphoric temporal locators and discourse in Portuguese", Ana Teresa Alves, in a synthesis presentation of her 2003 doctoral dissertation, focuses the area of temporal location as expressed by anaphoric means, that is, by what she names "anaphoric temporal locators". The author relates the temporal location values of these diverse expressions to some properties of the linguistic context, and to temporal relations holding between the sentences containing the anaphoric expression and that containing its antecedent. In an original contribution, Alves claims that the kind of anaphora she analyses is also influenced by cause-effect and mereological relations between situations. She expresses the semantics of her data and her findings in the language of Segmented Discourse Representation Theory.

Finally, in the fourth article, "Notes on propositional relations (predominantly) in Portuguese", by Salvador Mascarenhas and myself, we address the issue of inter-sentential connections with an explicit connective, aiming at proposing a basis for a sound typology, both syntactically and semantically adequate. We take a previous proposal by one of us, proceeding then to a revision, which leads us to a comprehensive view of the inter-sentential connection system, which encompasses coordination, subordination and its subtypes, and still other processes. In the final part of the paper, a sort of case study on explicative connections in Portuguese linguistics is presented. Confronting the evidence that this kind of connection is, across grammars and linguistic essays, a real messy domain, and upon searching the possible reasons for this situation, we suggest that the combination of proper and accurately defined semantic and syntactic properties is the only way, in this and similar cases, to reach an improved depiction of the system of inter--sentential connections.

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