

Dissertation Abstract

The Quantification / Qualification Operation in NPs (Quantificação / Qualificação em Sintagmas Nominais)

CLARA NUNES CORREIA

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This dissertation has the main goal of describing the nominal determination system of European Portuguese. It is developed under the proposals of “*Théorie Formelle Énonciative*”, proposed by Antoine Culioli.

According to this theory, determination is defined as a set of elementary operations, named QT, that can be associated in a complex operation (named Quantification/Qualification and represented as Qnt/Qty), which is responsible for the different values of the occurrences of a notion in a text defined as “enunciative events”. This theory considers a notion as being a “(...) complex bundle of structured physical-cultural properties (...) and are apprehended and established through occurrences (...)” (quotation based on Culioli, 1976/1990: 68).

It is possible to clarify the most important topics that characterize the epistemological bases of the Formal Utterance Theory in the debate that can be raised between its main proposals and the proposals of other theories in the field of syntax and semantics. For the purpose of that clarification, the study and explanation of some of the most significant concepts responsible for the unity of the theory is presented in the first part of the dissertation. Concepts such as ‘enunciation’, ‘representation’ and ‘hypersyntax’ are the main concepts that are dealt with. The latter is the most important one to define the boundaries of the work that was done: in the explanation of the markers that characterize nominal determination phenomena, only a global view of those phenomena can be handled. In this sense, the dissertation addresses the problems raised by the most relevant markers of nominal determination and, simultaneously, the answers that can be proposed by a ‘hipersyntatic’ approach.

In the second part of the dissertation a new configuration of the nominal occurrences based on a topological model is presented. It starts with a discussion of the traditional analysis of Noun classes, most of them centered on an ontological representation of the nominal entities. As an alternative, based on theoretical arguments, the proposed analysis defines the nominal forms within a *notional domain*. This proposal supports the idea of a new typology of Nouns: all the nominal occurrences are formatted inside a domain and we can figure out if a nominal occurrence is structured upon a center, directly segmented, or non-directly segmented. In the first case we are dealing with ‘discreet’ occurrences and, in the second case, with ‘dense’ entities. Taking the notional domain as a reference, we can also provide a new and stable explanation of the traditionally called abstract Nouns. Terms like ‘freedom’ or ‘happiness’ are *compact* occurrences that are understood as the representation of a notion and, necessarily, they cannot be fragmented, either directly, or indirectly; this approach provides an explanation for the reason why those entities appear in European Portuguese, among other languages, as entities that cannot be quantified. Assuming this new typology, the values of relative clauses and adjectives, as modifier entities of a NP structure, are discussed.

The third part of the dissertation is concerned with the characterization of nominal determiners and argues that each determiner represents a trace of underlying operations, such as a primitive elementary operation – the operation of location – which gives incidence on different notions. At the same time, working with the Qnt/Qlt operator, we try and verify how Extraction, Pinpointing and Scanning operations are represented by different markers. The analysis of the determiners in European Portuguese is the main goal of this part of the dissertation, in a comparative approach with the definite, indefinite determiner values in other European and non-European languages. Proposals about bare singular and bare plural entities, marked by a zero-determiner, which is described as a specified marker of the Scanning operation, are a main topic in this part of the dissertation.

Finally, in the fourth and last part of the dissertation, the value of the relationship between the nominal and verbal processes of determination is emphasized, giving evidence to the fact that the nominal typology is similar to the verbal typology. It is claimed that the linguistic relevance of framework adopted provides a set of tools that determines that the different parts of an utterance (*énoncé*) must be analyzed simultaneously. As a result, the values of the different categories found in an utterance interact with the construction of its meaning. To support this statement a transcategorial approach of linguistic phenomena is put forward.

The analysis of deverbal nominalization and the analysis of the active and passive voice processes are some of the topics claimed to contribute to that proposal: in the deverbal nominalization it is possible to verify that the Nouns behave semantically as the original predicates; in the analysis of the active and passive voices the relationship between the value of Nouns and determin-

ers, and the values of the abstract *Subject-Time/Space* parameter are dealt with.

The approach undertaken in this dissertation contributes to a new characterization of the nominal determination system in European Portuguese, overcoming some of the major difficulties presented by other approaches.

Note: A revised version of this Dissertation will be published as a book by the *Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian / FCT* publications in 2003; some of the most important topics have been already presented in national and international seminars and conferences.

Universidade Nova de Lisboa
Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas
claranc@netcabo.pt