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LARISSA PICINATO MAZUCHELLI

STEREOTYPES AND REPRESENTATIONS: DISCOURSES *ON* AND *IN* AG(E)ING

ESTEREÓTIPOS E REPRESENTAÇÕES: DISCURSOS *SOBRE* E *NO* ENVELHECIMENTO

CAMPINAS
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Orientadora: Profa. Dra. Rosana do Carmo Novaes-Pinto

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the organism and the outside world meet here in the sign
V. N. Voloshinov, 1973

After I wrote the trilogy, Leo was also absolutely shocked.
He thinks I made my prestige end. I always like to remember that prestige
comes from the Latin word praestigia, praestigiae, which means illusion.
I told him, "Run it down. Write an article saying it's horrible.
That's better than complete silence." And this is general,
because when I published Glittering Nothing[1]*, which was awarded*
and has nothing to do with the so-called porn series,
there was a general boycott in São Paulo.
Only in Rio there was a beautiful review.
I think it's because I'm getting old. But I consider myself
a very interesting old woman. And I'm still brilliant.
I'm no longer with my 10 million neurons – I drink a lot
and I must have already lost 1 million. But I still have 9 million.
Hilda Hilst, 1994

the elderly, being the farthest from the experience of the young
and middle-aged researchers, comprise the age group that is most
subject to stereotyping in linguistics as well as other research.
J. K. Eckert, 1984

[1] "Glittering Nothing" (1999). Translation by David Willian Foster. In: Cristina Ferreira Pinto - *Urban Voices - Contemporary Short Stories from Brazil*. New York, University Press of America. See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

To the ag(e)ing participants of this research

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RESUMO

O processo de envelhecimento, muitas vezes descrito como "o destino a que estamos todos *condenados*", é um fenômeno complexo investigado por diversas áreas, como a Psicologia, a Gerontologia e a Antropologia. Na Linguística, no entanto, o trabalho mais relevante sobre o tema ainda é "A linguagem dos *idosos*: um estudo de análise da conversação", de Preti (1991), cuja reflexão baseia-se em um *corpus* restrito de enunciados de duas pessoas com mais de 80 anos falantes da norma culta urbana de São Paulo. Considerando o crescente número dessa população no Brasil e a relativa falta de reflexão linguística, esta tese investigou aspectos da relação entre *linguagem e envelhecimento*. Fundamentada na perspectiva sócio-histórica da Neurolinguística e desenvolvida dentro dos estudos do GELEP/CNPq-Lattes, a pesquisa teve como objetivo descrever e analisar algumas características linguístico-cognitivas que pudessem nos ajudar a melhor compreender os discursos produzidos *sobre* o envelhecimento e *por* indvíduos nesse processo, respondendo a três questões: i) quais estereótipos são difundidos nos discursos sobre envelhecimento que circulam e constituem seu *ethos* na sociedade?; ii) o que a análise da produção linguística mostra sobre as estratégias utilizadas pelos participantes na busca por palavras?; e iii) como essa discussão contribui para a discussão sobre a relação normal/patológico? Para responder à primeira questão, articulo reflexões desenvolvidas no âmbito da Saúde Pública, Psicologia e Antropologia à análise de comerciais de televisão, transmitidos entre 2007 e 2017, e a narrativas dos participantes sobre o que significa *para eles* envelhecer. Para responder às segunda e terceira questões, investigo o fenômeno *Dificuldade de Encontrar Palavras* através da análise da produção de *circunlóquios* – muitas vezes considerado como um sintoma de déficit e tipicamente associado ao processo de envelhecimento – em interação. Tais discussões fundamentam-se na análise de entrevistas semi-estruturadas realizadas com onze voluntários (com e sem distúrbios de linguagem) que viviam sozinhos, com suas famílias ou em uma instituição de longa permanência sem fins lucrativos em Campinas, SP. Alguns participantes também faziam parte do Centro de Convivência de Afásicos – IEL/UNICAMP – ou estavam a ele ligados. As entrevistas foram vídeo-gravadas e transcritas discursivamente. De maneira geral, o estudo dá visibilidade para como a circulação recorrente de estereótipos não apenas fundamenta as representações de envelhecimento na mídia e a avaliação da produção linguística de indivíduos em processo de envelhecimento, mas *reforça* experiências limitantes. A pesquisa pretende, assim, desmistificar um discurso hegemônico que concebe o processo apenas em termos de déficit, perdas, ou como declínio inevitável, oferecendo contranarrativas de envelhecimento e uma interpretação crítica da produção de circunlóquios, aqui entendido como estratégia comunicativa e não apenas um sintoma. O estudo busca, portanto, contribuir com as discussões atuais e necessárias sobre a intricada relação entre linguagem e envelhecimento, chamando atenção tanto para a heterogeneidade constitutiva desse processo, quanto para a necessidade da inclusão dessa discussão nas investigações de fenômenos a ele associados. Além disso, a análise e discussão aqui realizadas, fundamentadas na perspectiva sócio-histórica da Neurolinguística, contribuem de maneira significativa para o questionamento e combate da criação de *categorias sem sujeitos*.

ABSTRACT

The ag(e)ing process, often described as the "destiny to which we are all *condemned,*" is a complex phenomenon that has been investigated in varied areas such as Psychology, Gerontology, and Anthropology. In Linguistics in Brazil, however, the most relevant work on the topic is still "A linguagem dos *idosos*: um estudo de análise da conversação" ("The language of *elders*: a study of conversation analysis"), written by Preti (1991), which is a reflection based on a restricted *corpus* of utterances of two individuals over 80 who speak standard São Paulo Brazilian Portuguese. Considering the growing number of the ag(e)ing population in Brazil and the relative lack of linguistic reflection, this doctoral dissertation investigated aspects of the relationship between *language and ag(e)ing*. Grounded in a social-historical perspective in Neurolinguistics and developed within GELEP/CNPq-Lattes, the research aimed to describe and analyze some linguistic-cognitive features that could help us better comprehend discourses produced *about* ag(e)ing and *by* ag(e)ing individuals. The research answered three research questions: i) what stereotypes are pervasive in discourses about ag(e)ing that circulate and constitute its ethos in society?; ii) what can our analysis of language in ag(e)ing show about strategies used by the participants in the search of words, considered a major difficulty in language production; and iii) how can such discussion contribute to better understanding aspects of the relationship between normal and pathological speech production? To answer the first question, I articulate discussions developed within Public Health, Psychology, and Anthropology to the analysis of Brazilian television commercials, broadcast between 2007 and 2017, and to the participants' accounts of what it means *for them* to grow old(er). To answer the second and third questions I investigate the phenomenon of *Word Finding Difficulties* through the analysis of the production of *circumlocution* – often regarded as a symptom of deficiency and typically associated with ag(e)ing – in interaction. Such discussions were drawn on the analysis of semi-structured interviews conducted with eleven ag(e)ing volunteers (with or without language disorders) who either live by themselves, with their families or in a non-profit care home in Campinas, SP. Some participants were also related to or members of the Center for People with Aphasia at IEL/UNICAMP. The interviews were video-recorded and discursively transcribed. The study gives visibility to how the recurrent circulation of stereotypes not only ground the representations of ag(e)ing in media and the evaluation of speech production of ag(e)ing individuals but *reinforces* limiting experiences. The research thus hopes to demystify a hegemonic discourse that conceives the process only in terms of deficit, losses, or as an inevitable decline, offering counter-narratives of ag(e)ing and an analytical interpretation of the production of *circumlocutions*, here understood as a communicative strategy rather than uniquely a symptom. The study thus aims to contribute to the current and necessary discussions on the intricate relationship between language and ag(e)ing by drawing attention to the constitutive heterogeneity of the ag(e)ing process and the need for the inclusion of such reflections in investigations of phenomena related to ag(e)ing. Besides, the analysis and discussion developed, based on the theoretical and methodological assumptions of the social-historical perspective in Neurolinguistics, significantly contribute to questioning and combating the creation of *categories without subjects.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD 13

INTRODUCTION 18

CHAPTER 1 24

CONVERSA A DOIS: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THIS STUDY 24

1.1. Introduction 24

1.2. *Subject*, *language*, *utterance*, and *sign* 27

1.2.1. The concept of *subject* in this work 27

1.2.2. *Language:* utterance as the *real unit* of communication 33

1.3. The concepts of *brain functioning*, *extracortical organization*, and *neuroplasticity* 41

Figure 1: Mechanisms of neuroplasticity and moderation factors 50

1.4. Subjects that are ag(e)ing, *constitution* of data, and analysis 52

1.4.1. Qualitative Research, *constitution* of data, and analysis 52

1.4.2. *Loci* of the study 56

1.4.3. Ethical Aspects of the research 60

1.4.4. The participant-subjects of this research 60

1.4.4.1. Helena, Catarina, and Heitor (Group I) 60

1.4.4.2. Paulo, Francisco, Luiz, and Carlos (Group III) 63

1.4.4.3. Pedro and Ana (Group II) 65

1.4.4.4. Isabel and Zilda (Group IV) 66

Table 1: Summary of participants' information 68

1.5. Retomando *um* fio da meada 69

CHAPTER 2 72

STEREOTYPES AND REPRESENTATIONS: DISCOURSES *ON* AG(E)ING: 72

2.1. Introduction 72

2.2. Discourses *on* age(ing) and discriminatory practices 73

Figure 2: Post on Facebook 78

2.3. Meanings of ag(e)ing: stereotypes and their circulation in TV commercials .. 85

2.3.1. The relevance of mobilizing the concepts of *parody* and *stereotype* to the analysis of TV commercials 85

2.3.1.1. Baking pizza on a *Lenovo* computer 88
Figure 3: Using a butcher's knife over the laptop..... 89
Figure 4: Washing the notebook in the sink 89
Figure 5: Preparing a pizza over the laptop 89
2.3.1.2. The BomBril Family 91
Figure 6: Grandfather of the BomBril Boy..... 91
Figure 7: The "advanced old age lady" in BomBril's commercial..... 92
Figure 8: The "deaf old lady" from "A praça é nossa"..... 93
2.3.1.3. The *beatbox* of Lubrax/Petrobras..... 94
Figure 9: Passengers beatboxing..... 94
2.3.1.4. The DIGITAU series..... 95
Figure 10: For those who don't *grasp* technology..... 96
Figure 11: It's as easy as *that* Facebook 96
Figure 12: The app works *even* on your phone..... 97
Figure 13: Everybody uses the Itaú app..... 98
2.4. Meaning(s) of ag(e)ing in dispute..... 102
2.5. Retomando *outro* fio da meada... 105
CHAPTER 3 107
STEREOTYPES AND REPRESENTATIONS: DISCOURSES *IN* AG(E)ING 107
3.1. Introduction..... 107
3.2. Language and ag(e)ing: a brief panorama of studies about this 108
interrelation 108
3.3. A discursive approach to reflect on *Word Finding Difficulties* in the context of ag(e)ing 114
3.4. The production of *circumlocutions*: from "empty speech" to "communicative strategy" definitions..... 125
Figure 14: Interaction in CIN therapy..... 132
Figure 15: Categories of circumlocution production (Antonucci & MacWilliam, 2015, P. S830)..... 134
3.4.1. What happens when a word does not come: a discussion about *circumlocution* in the context of *WFD*..... 135
Circumlocution 1..... 137
Circumlocution 2..... 138

Circumlocution 3 140
Circumlocutions 4 and 5 141
Circumlocution 6 142
Circumlocution 7 143
Circumlocutions 8 and 9 145
Circumlocution 10 146
3.5. Retomando *mais um* fio da meada 147
RETOMANDO OS FIOS DA MEADA: FROM A ONE-WAY ROAD TO OFF THE BEATEN PATH 150
REFERENCES 162
APPENDIX A 173
APPENDIX B 196
APPENDIX C 199

FOREWORD

It is not a coincidence that I understand those who seek the way. How hard I sought mine! And as today, I search with coarseness and roughness my best way of being, my shortcut, since I no longer dare speak about a way. Me, who had wanted to. The road, with a capital letter, today I grip myself fiercely looking for a way of walking, a certain step. But the shortcut with refreshing shadows and reflection of light between the trees, the shortcut where I am finally me; that I did not find. But I know one thing; my way is not me, it's the other, it's the others.
When I can fully feel the other, I will be saved, and I will think: this is my port of arrival.
Clarice Lispector, *Discovering the world*, 1992[2]

Before presenting the main questions of this study and the structure of this doctoral thesis, I turn to some of the paths I followed before deciding to investigate certain linguistic processes in ag(e)ing[3].

As a junior majoring in Linguistics at the State University of Campinas, in 2007 I met the Group 3 of the Center for People with Aphasia (CCA[4] – acronym in Portuguese), coordinated by Dr. Rosana do Carmo Novaes Pinto. What struck[5] me the most visiting the group was the *resilience* and *creativity* of the participants to overcome the obstacles imposed by their condition, so that they could continue to communicate. However, I did not fully comprehend, at that time, what was involved in those interactions I accompanied and why, for example, it seemed "easier" for some individuals to communicate while it looked much harder to others to follow what was happening.

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[2] The first version of this dissertation was written in Portuguese and discussed during the qualification exam. For this final version, and in order to help English readers, I translated the excerpts of the readings I did in Portuguese. Poems were a special challenge because I could not always have access to their translation in English. In these cases, they were noted as "My translation" in the footnotes – as is the case of the excerpt above. Whenever necessary, I provided further explanation on my translation decisions in the footnotes. The Portuguese version of the excerpts can be found in Appendix A.

[3] As it will be discussed, an essential aspect that I want to stress in this work is treating ag(e)ing as a biological, subjective, cultural, and social *process*. Besides examining the relevance of such understanding of the phenomenon, I decided to refer to it by highlighting the "e" in the word in all its occurrences. Much of this reflection is based on the discussion conducted by Margaret Gullette (2004) in "Aged by Culture."

[4] In Portuguese, "Centro de Convivência de Afásicos." The word *convivência* is challenging to be translated to English, since it evokes the ideas of "living together" (as in a house), "sharing some time, trajectories, and stories of life," as well as "working together in an activity" and "establishing relationships." It is closer to notions conveyed by *convivialité*, in French, and *zurechtzukommen*, in German.

[5] At the time I visited CCA I had already taken the course "Neurolinguistics," with Dr. Maria Irma Hadler Coudry with whom I had the opportunity to begin studying Aphasia.

It is not an overstatement, thus, to say that meeting those individuals with aphasia affected me academically and personally. Moved by the linguistic richness of the interactions and puzzled over their linguistic abilities, I started shadowing graduate students and speech therapists in their language work with them. Throughout 2007 and 2008 then I delved into readings of this multidisciplinary field and initiated investigating the language use of AJ[6] – the first participant of Group 3 – characterized as a *limit-case* for presenting signs (symptoms) due to aphasia and the degenerative processes he also battled. This experience with AJ was crucial for my decision to enter graduate school. In 2010, under the supervision of Dr. Novaes-Pinto, I decided to explore some aspects of AJ's trajectory with social practices of reading and writing and its influence on his linguistic-cognitive (re)organization, considering his special relation with these modalities prior to the neurological events he endured, and the strategies of meaning-making that he developed at CCA to surpass the difficulties imposed by his condition[7].

The study provided evidence of a strong relationship between these practices and the semiotic and linguistic strategies AJ used to continue to communicate; to be in the "game of language" (Coudry, 1988 [1986]). It also showed that there are crystalized ideas that deserved to be better investigated as the assumption that individuals who develop dementia would be "incapable" of learning – a belief closely related to limiting assumptions about ag(e)ing.

After finishing my Master's program, I followed a different path. I went to the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, USA, to teach Portuguese as part of the *Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Program*. Along with teaching beginner and intermediate levels of Portuguese, between 2013 and 2014, I had the chance to take four graduate-level courses at the same institution: *Aphasia*, *Psycholinguistics, L2 Teaching*

---

[6] AJ joined the Group 3 of CCA in 2006. He has been diagnosed with Primary Progressive Aphasia (PPA). For further details, see Canoas-Andrade (2009), and Espert et al. (2003).

[7] *O efeito de práticas sociais com leitura e escrita no caso de uma afasia progressiva: (re)encontros (2012) (The effect of social practices with reading and writing in a case of progressive aphasia: (re)encounters).* Master thesis. State University of Campinas, Institute of Language Studies, Campinas, SP. The term "limit-case" was suggested by Dr. Maria Bernadete M. Abaurre during the qualification exam. It is important to point out that my master research was also based on the work of Canoas-Andrade (2009), who evaluated the case as a Progressive Aphasia. In her master thesis, the author describes the various neurological episodes that AJ suffered – an ischemic stroke in occipital area, an aneurysm clipping in the Right Hemisphere, involving the frontotemporal-parietal region, followed by a frontotemporal stroke in Broca's area – and the positive effects of the work developed at CCA for the his linguistic-cognitive reorganization, as well as for improving his quality of life.

Methodologies, and *Diversity in American Literature*. This experience in an American university provided me with the opportunity to develop my English and academic skills, and encouraged me to continue my education.

In 2014, after returning to Brazil, I decided to delve into issues more directly related to ag(e)ing, after resuming some of my master's thesis questions. Due to the lack of discursive and interactional studies in Linguistics in Brazil concerning ag(e)ing, I decided to conduct an exploratory study considering individuals who were either in "normal" ag(e)ing processes or who had been diagnosed with communication disorders. In 2015, I started my Doctoral program, again under the supervision of Dr. Novaes-Pinto, and at the end of the same academic year I obtained a 3-year fellowship research grant from the São Paulo Research Foundation[8].

Because of the complexity of what we have been calling the phenomenon of ag(e)ing (and all it encompasses), I felt it was important to consider in my research distinct perspectives on ag(e)ing, which led me to a *wide* range of readings – throughout the doctoral program, but especially during the first two years – from different fields and theoretical frameworks. Realizing, from these readings and reflections, the centrality of interdisciplinary work to understanding ag(e)ing processes, in 2017 I applied to the *Fulbright Doctoral Dissertation Research Award Program* to work with Dr. Julie Hengst, from the Department of Speech and Hearing Science at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. The great previous experience in the US also motivated me in pursuing this opportunity to further develop my English and academic skills, but it was especially stimulating the chance of working with researchers in SHS.

Working with Dr. Hengst – from August 2018 to May 2019 – and participating in the weekly meetings of the Discourse Analysis Lab provided me with a rich environment to continue to think about, for example, the transcription process and analysis of the data I compiled while in Brazil – an important theoretical and methodological practice that I first encountered when I joined, in 2010, the Group of Studies of Language in Aging and in Pathologies (GELEP – acronym in Portuguese)[9].

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[8] I thank the São Paulo Research Foundation (Fapesp – Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de S. Paulo in Portuguese) for the financial support which has been fundamental for the development of my doctoral research and for my participation in scientific and academic events in Brazil and abroad.

[9] In Portuguese, the "Grupo de Estudos da Linguagem no Envelhecimento e nas Patologias" (GELEP – registered in Lattes/CNPq Platform) was created in 2010 and is coordinated by Dr. Novaes-Pinto.

Besides having the opportunity to take my research to the US and learn with students and scholars there, participating in the weekly meetings of CCA since 2007, when I first joined the group, has also had an immeasurable influence in this work as well as in how I believe research should be conducted. It was during the activities developed at CCA that I learned how to challenge theoretical assumptions of language functioning that disregard subjects and their work with and in language.

Another extremely important encounter for the development of this doctoral study occurred between 2016 and 2018, when I joined some of the activities developed in the nursing home where some of the participants of this research lived. It was a really challenging experience, especially at the beginning when most of the afternoons I spent there was devoted to explaining to the people who lived there and the caregivers that there was a *reason* for my visits, since most of them did not see much purpose in spending afternoons "just talking" to them. Dealing with their suspicions and worries was important to my research path and to thinking about the role of researchers in spaces such as that. Having the chance of sharing birthday parties, fundraising activities, daily discussions and afternoon snacks while I could talk to some residents and participants gave me the undeniably enriching experience of trying to better understand some of the dynamics of communication and social life in the nursing home.

The whole research process can be very lonely sometimes, so having the chance of talking about all it entails throughout the Doctoral program with my colleagues and friends from GELEP, with Dr. Marcus Vinicius Borges de Oliveira and Dr. Marco Antonio Villarta Neder during the qualifying exam of this doctoral thesis, as well as taking these discussions to the US[10] and reflect about them with other scholars and colleagues were decisive to the reflections I present here. It also makes me think of the great value of such conversation opportunities at any level of research – which are at risk in the actual political and economic scenario in Brazil.

I also believe that creating opportunities to share different cultural and research viewpoints is increasingly necessary – inside and outside academia. It is because of that

[10] One of the objectives of the Fulbright program is to foster cultural and international understanding. Conducting part of my research in an inspiring, welcoming, and academically challenging environment as the UIUC and the SHS department was fundamental not only for helping me develop my doctoral work and academic skills and confidence, but also to better understand different research cultures and practices. For such a great opportunity I have an immense gratitude.

that I decided to write the dissertation in English: creating a space to have a far and wide *conversation* (what a challenge!).

In times when the hegemonic narrative is still of a dominant single story, of a brain without a body and a body without a history or subjectivity, of empty interactions and conversations, I hope this doctoral study, which is the organized reflections carried out during the course of the PhD program and that have been influenced to a lesser or larger extent by each of the encounters I had, is also perceived as an attempt to foster discussions that can help us move forward in our interests of better understanding human phenomena.

INTRODUCTION

To investigate language *and* ag(e)ing is not a simple task. Their limits have been discussed by different areas that dispute their nature and functioning[11]. I dare to say, however, that besides being an object of interest of a wide range of areas, ag(e)ing is today a source of great *preoccupation*, especially due to the implications of a fast world demographic growth, as in countries like Brazil.

Such preoccupation bears on fundamentally two issues: (i) medical, especially in relation to the (possible) growth in the number of pathological conditions more typically associated with longevity (dementia and aphasia, for example)[12]; and (ii) economic, in which the main debates revolve around justifying public policy changes[13]. Both sides

[11] Some argue, for example, that Linguistics should not have the status of "science." Rajagopalan (2003, p. 76) states that Linguistics "is much more a discursive practice than a field of knowledge." Although it is not the purpose of this doctoral dissertation to discuss the position of Linguistics as a science, I bring this reflection by considering, as Giacomelli & Sobral (2016) point out, that the most diverse linguistic developments since the emergence of the "General Linguistics Course" (GLC) reaffirm both the originality of this work at the time and the need to discuss language (and its use) in its most diverse spheres. In the words of the authors: "if GLC is the founding discourse of modern Linguistics, it is also the one that enables others to do something about language, no matter how different they may be. It is these movements of retaking, evaluating, refuting, and overcoming that make a scientific discipline evolve and allow to shelter, in its field, the multiplicity of the theories from which they arise. To evolve, in the case of Linguistics, as the course shows, does not mean erasing or replacing one theory with another, nor simply accumulating theories or knowledge about the object, but rather to resume and re-found – either by assimilating or refuting the founding moment. *The fact that GLC becomes unnecessary thus seems to be proof of its success in founding the science of language*" (Giacomelli & Sobral, 2016, p. 78; *emphasis* added). See appendix A for the version in Portuguese. As it will be discussed (see footnotes 17 and 19), the limits and objectives of what constitutes (or not) "the science of ag(e)ing" has also a history of debate.

[12] The prediction is based, fundamentally, on statistical data that indicates a vertiginous growth of the number of this population in Brazil. According to data revised in 2018 by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE – acronym in Portuguese), the population in Brazil is expected to reach 233 million in 2047, gradually dropping to 228 million in 2060. Today, 9% of the population (about 19 million) is over 65. In 2060, the percentage will reach 25.5, representing about 58.3 million people. The state of Santa Catarina, in the south of the country, is expected to have the highest life expectancy (81.5 years) and Piauí, in the northeast of the country, the lowest (77 years). Data retrieved from: https://agenciadenoticias.ibge.gov.br/agencia-sala-de-imprensa/2013-agencia-de-noticias/releases/21837-projecao-da-populacao-2018-numero-de-habitantes- should-stop-growing-in-2047 Last access: July 2019. The *Inequality Map* (developed by the civil organization *Rede Nossa São Paulo* – Our São Paulo Network) indicates that the average expectancy in the city of São Paulo varies enormously and is associated with economic class. While in 2018 it reaches 81.58 in average in Jardim Paulista (upper class neighborhood in São Paulo), the average is 58.45 in Cidade Tiradentes – a lower class neighborhood known for its high level of violence and lack of infrastructure. The document can be found in Portuguese through the link: https://www.cidadessustentaveis.org.br/arquivos/mapa_desigualdade_2018_completo.pdf Last access: August 2019.

[13] As in other countries, the pension reform has generated passionate discussions in Brazil. While the main argument supporting a reform is the rapid demographic increase of this population, some experts point to state inefficiency and the collection mechanism ("lighter" for large fortunes, and "heavier" for the middle and lower classes) as the main responsible for the so-called (and controversial) "bubble of social security."

require equating adjustments in order to meet the population needs and societies' changes, demanding scientists and scholars to engage in constant effort to help better inform public policies.

These two dimensions of ag(e)ing studies, while encompassing essential issues, can limit their understanding since they depart, to a large extent, from the observation of the phenomenon essentially from *chronological* and *biological* lenses. According to Prado & Sayd (2006), biopsychosocial aspects are recurrent in works published in Brazil, but the concept of ag(e)ing is still tied to biological terms as referred by the authors: "ag(e)ing comprises the processes of transformation of the organism that occur after sexual maturation and that imply the decrease of the probability of survival" (Neri, 1991 *apud* Prado & Sayd, 2006, p. 493)[14].

Hamilton (2001), discussing this conceptual inadequacy, argues that chronological age is an aspect of the ag(e)ing process, but it can become a problematic notion leading to hasty conclusions. Debert (1997) also explains that research interested in the ruptures with modernity that, according to her, constitute the contemporary experience have been turning to "de-chronologize life." As she argues: "It is a question of whether the idea of sequenced roles, extremely divided by ages, would capture the social reality of a society that reached the level of technological development of contemporary society[15]" (Debert, 1997, p. 04). Staudinger (2015, p. 187), in the same direction, also states that:

In this regard, I suggest reading Gentil (2006): "A política fiscal e a falsa crise da seguridade social brasileira: análise financeira do período de 1990-2005" (in English: "Fiscal policy and the false crisis of Brazilian social security system: a financial analysis of the period 1990 – 2005").

[14] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[15] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

> Chronological age is but one, and not the most accurate, indicator of human aging. Multiple outside (i.e., objective) and inside (i.e., subjective) perspectives on aging need to be considered to do justice to the **multidimensionality of human development and aging**. Outside perspectives are, for example, biological, social, and psychological ages. A chronological age of 75 years, for instance, may be linked with a different biological as well as cognitive age. **Human development and aging is not only a biological process but is interactive in nature**. As a result, it is characterized by impressive plasticity which entails the relativity of the meaning of chronological age. Outside perspectives are closely linked with inside perspectives on aging such as societal stereotypes, images about one's own old age and metastereotypes, that is, what we think others might think about old age. **These inside perspectives, even though "invisible," are very powerful and exert effects on biological, social, and psychological ages alike and are affected by them** (**emphasis** added).

Such claim – of treating ag(e)ing beyond its purely chronological and biological aspects – stems from decades of reflection[16] but seems to be still necessary despite the increasing interest in the topic in the most diverse fields of knowledge (e.g. Geriatrics, Gerontology[17]). One of the main reasons for that is the challenge of expanding and deepening transdisciplinary studies[18], which depends on loosening research and field

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[16] In view of the innumerable literature available it seems important to highlight that what I seek, first and foremost, is to give visibility to *some* possible points of convergence between studies that relate language and ag(e)ing based on my reading path traced in Neurolinguistics.

[17] In general, the two areas are relatively recent, the number of jobs having increased in the 1980's. According to Prado & Sayd (2006), at an international level, Gerontology would be responsible for the *study of ag(e)ing*, including Geriatrics – which focuses on the prevention and treatment of diseases – and Social Gerontology – which is constituted by areas such as Psychology, Social Work, and so on. In Brazil, however, according to the authors, although the literature corroborates the above descriptions, other elements should be considered. The *Brazilian Society of Geriatrics*, founded in 1961 and officially named the *Brazilian Society of Geriatrics and Gerontology* in 1968, has in its presidency the exclusive exercise of physicians, although the participation of other professionals is accepted. According to the authors: "This is a history marked by fierce corporate disputes, which included, even twice, the creation of the *National Association of Gerontology*." In addition, Gerontology, according to Prado & Sayd (2006), continues to be criticized for its so-called "conceptual laxity" because of the diversity of approaches that addresses ag(e)ing. In this respect, they ask: "When a psychologist-gerontologist, for example, acts in the field of aging, to whom actually respond the process of intervention – psychology or gerontology? [...] Is there in fact a theory and methodology specific to gerontology?" (Prado & Sayd, 2006, pp. 493-494). See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[18] When I speak of transdisciplinarity, I mean the encounters of different areas and knowledges, but not under a possible naive reading of "offering something that another field cannot;" transdisciplinarity refers here to encounters that strain knowledge – since one also does science through the contrast of ideas –, sliding senses and making us (re)think postures, practices, methodologies, and the very way we observe the

boundaries that not rarely are stiffened up, leading ag(e)ing to be understood only through a single set of lenses (Hamilton, 2001).

In this sense, it is interesting to think of this doctoral work in the scope of what we can refer to as *Ag(e)ing Studies*[19] in a more broad sense, a reflection also inspired by the discussions in the Group of Studies on Language in Aging and Pathologies (GELEP - Lattes / CNPq), which have been incorporating this theme to Linguistic studies in Brazil. Researchers who seek to critically investigate issues related to ag(e)ing should therefore be attentive to the limits of their educational training as well as pursue collaborative conversations across fields. This requires some resilience and persistence to walk, with not much certainty, among the various theoretical lines, methodologies, population cohorts, and interpretation(s) of results.

Finding myself in the middle of this minefield was the first great challenge of this work. How could I contribute, from the standpoint of language studies, to the comprehension of ag(e)ing with this uninterrupted, heterogeneous, and long-lasting scientific production on the topic? As stated above, some perseverance and relentlessness guided me in the first years of the doctorate in search of different understandings on the

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investigated phenomenon, including delimiting different objects of research. In this respect, Job (2013 *apud* Fabrizio, 2017, p. 600) states: "There is no kind of 'multi' or 'inter' knowledge; knowledge has always been trans, crossing, alliance of intuition with life. Neither a pure ontology, much less an epistemology, but an epistemontology, since knowledge does not operate through dualities, but by composition: there is no isolation in knowledge, but only relations of relations […]. For it is evident that all knowledge is transknowledge, a supposed knowledge never isolates itself, for it is the practice of wisdom to relate." See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[19] This reflection is also recent in the area of Classical Studies in Brazil, which have been in the search to approach and enable researchers from different backgrounds (Latin American scholars, historians, philosophers, linguists, archaeologists, and so on) to dialogue and collaborate in a more direct way, recognizing themselves *as members of the same field of knowledge*, despite the inevitable – and desirable – differences. It is worth noting that I have not found, in Brazilian literature, any interesting discussion proposing treating ag(e)ing within an area as Ag(e)ing Studies, which justifies my reflection on the topic, even if it is an initial one. Although many Brazilian universities have been creating discussion spaces on the subject (Prado & Sayd, 2004) with research groups and greater exchange opportunity between areas, we still struggle to recognize ourselves – researchers interested in ag(e)ing issues – as collaborators or partners of research. What such discussion claims is change in research practice in view of the indisputable understanding that scientific inquiry should be assumed "in its fragmentary dimension, for science is not unity but multiplicity" (Giacomelli & Sobral, 2016, p. 78), which presses us to work more collaboratively across areas. It is also relevant to say that Ag(e)ing Studies would then entail studies of different ages – childhood, adolescence, and what is more traditionally referred to "aging" as in the "last stage of life." It is because of this attempt to treat phenomena of age(s) outside the idea of "purely chronological developmental stages" that I decided to refer to such phenomena highlighting the vowel "e," as explained earlier. In other words, I am talking about an age and a process that does not start when a certain chronological date is achieved (Gullette, 2004). I take this opportunity to thank Prof. Dr. Patricia Prata, from the Department of Linguistics at the State University of Campinas, for the very fruitful conversations on the topic in 2017.

topic, which led me to read texts and authors of a wide range of fields. It is worth noting, as we will see more closely in **Chapter 3,** that Linguistics, and more specifically Linguistics in Brazil, dealt very little with issues related to ag(e)ing, which was one of the first justifications to conduct this work[20]. And here is the second challenge in the development of this research: the need (perhaps a little ambitious) of contributing to this broad conversation about ag(e)ing. In this context, I believe that Neurolinguistics, as we present in **Chapter 1**, is a privileged *locus* for discussions of this nature, since it relies on the search for possible dialogues between Psychology, Linguistics, Semiotics, Philosophy of Language, Speech and Hearing Science, Neuropsychology, and, more recently in Brazil, Geriatrics and Gerontology.

This doctoral research, therefore, investigated aspects of the relationship between *language and ag(e)ing*. It aimed to describe and analyze linguistic-cognitive features that could help us better comprehend discourses produced *about* and *in* ag(e)ing. It thus sought to broaden the understanding of this field, attending to Jakobson's understanding that "Linguistics is concerned with language in all its aspects – language in operation, language in drift (see Sapir, 1921), language in the nascent state, and language in dissolution" (Jakobson, 1995 [1954], p. 116). The study also intended to demystify a hegemonic discourse that conceives ag(e)ing only in terms of deficit, losses, as an inevitable decline and, on the other hand, to examine current neoliberal discourses that deny biological, social, and subjective changes that arise from the process.

In order to reach such objectives, I tried to answer the following research questions:

a) What stereotypes are pervasive in discourses about ag(e)ing that circulate and constitute its ethos in society?

b) What can our analysis of language in ag(e)ing show about strategies used by the participants in the search of words (in the context of the so-called Word Finding Difficulties studies)? How can such discussion contribute to better understanding aspects of the relationship between normal and pathological speech production?

[20] An interesting fact is that, in addition to the scarce literature on the subject in Linguistics, our presence at academic events about ag(e)ing has always been intriguing, causing laughter – and even discomfort at times – as we needed to explain what *linguists* were doing there. These experiences, however, have always been enriching since having the chance to explain what contributions Linguistics can offer was exciting (see also footnote 18).

In **Chapter 1 – *Conversa a dois:* theoretical and methodological framework of this study –**, I present the theoretical and methodological foundation of this doctoral research. First, I turn to important concepts in Neurolinguistics as those of *subject*, *language*, and *utterance*. After that, I bring the concepts of *brain functioning, extracortical organization*, and *neuroplasticity*, which are fundamental for thinking about the relation between brain, subjectivity, and history. Finally, I discuss the role of the participants with whom I have worked during the development of this study, describing the process of *constituting* data, as well as transcribing and translating them.

Chapter 2 – Stereotypes and Representations: Discourses *on* Ag(e)ing – addresses aspects of discourses about ag(e)ing. First, I articulate works developed within Public Health, Psychology, and Anthropology in order to base the following discussion on stereotyping and discriminatory practices against ag(e)ing individuals. Such discussion is also drawn on the analysis of Brazilian television commercials broadcast between 2007 and 2017 in which ag(e)ing individuals act as characters in the commercial narratives but do not constitute the direct target audience, and the participants' accounts of what it means for them to grow old(er).

In **Chapter 3 – Stereotypes and Representations: Discourses *in* Ag(e)ing –**, I turn to the language production of ag(e)ing individuals. First, I present a critical literature review developed on this topic. Drawing attention to the scarcity of linguistic works concerning the relationship between language and ag(e)ing in Brazil, I investigate the phenomenon of Word Finding Difficulties through the analysis of the production of *circumlocution* – often regarded as a symptom of deficiency – in interaction. The idea is to reflect about how analyzing such production from a discursive and socio-historic standpoint can help us demystify the linguistic production of ag(e)ing individuals as well as challenge the boundaries between normal and pathological speech productions.

The **final discussion session – *Retomando os fios da meada:* from a one-way road to off the beaten path –** is dedicated to articulating the reflections presented in the previous chapters, considering the route taken to explore the interrelationship between language and ag(e)ing and some of the ethical aspects about research in the field, as the need of active answering – the responsible act, according to Bakhtin.

CHAPTER 1

CONVERSA A DOIS[21]: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THIS STUDY

"*That's the girl who came to talk to you, Mrs. Ana*".
"*Just come and talk? Tell me, why such a young girl would waste time with us, a bunch of old people?*"
Conversation between **Tânia**, a caretaker, and **Ana**, one of the participants of this study, in 2016.

There are so many interfaces that are emerging that this phenomenon seems to refuse to be captured as a whole. Age(ing) seems to slip through the fingers, as something very complex and much larger than geriatrics and gerontology can imagine[22].
Prado & Sayd, 2006.

1.1. Introduction

Every work developed within Neurolinguistics, since the publication of Diário de Narciso by Coudry (1988 [1986])[23] is based on the principle that theory and practice are dynamically interwoven. It is by understanding the importance of such premise that I start this dissertation presenting its theoretical-methodological framework. It is not only then a question of text organization, but an effort of giving more visibility to the intense movement of comings-and-goings of research-doing throughout the process of the doctoral program (e.g.: literature review, interviewing people, data compilation and analysis, and so on).

As important as understanding theory and methodology as a *moving unity* to this reflection is considering that any investigation has an intrinsic limitation of trying to

[21] "Conversa a dois" in Portuguese refers to a conversation between two people that is usually less formal and more intimate than an interview.

[22] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[23] Coudry's doctoral dissertation (1986), entitled "Narcissus' Diary – Discourse and Aphasia," was published as a book in 1988, and is regarded as the founding work of the studies of aphasia in a linguistic and discursive perspective in Brazil. For its 30th anniversary, a journal issue celebrating the works developed in the area was published in *Caderno de Estudos Linguísticos*: https://periodicos.sbu.unicamp.br/ojs/index.php/cel/issue/view/1470

account for, explain, and theorize aspects of "the never-repeatable uniqueness of actually lived and experienced life," as stated by Bakhtin (1993 [1920-1924]). However, attempting to establish communication between the two "mutually impervious worlds" – the "world of life" and "the world of culture" – is not only an interesting intellectual exercise but also a necessity for what I understand a scholar work should be[24]. For Bakhtin, the unity of culture and life is only possible through an individually answerable deed. The act of research-doing (and all the acts that constitute this activity) requires this understanding. It can perhaps reflect in both directions: in its *sense* and in its *being*.

> An act of our activity, of our actual experiencing, is a two-faced Janus. It looks in two opposite directions: it looks at the objective unity of a domain of culture and at the never-repeatable uniqueness of actually lived and experienced life. But there is no unitary and unique plane where both faces would mutually determine each other in relation to a single unique unity. It is only the once-occurrent event of Being in the process of actualization that can constitute this unique unity; all that which is theoretical or aesthetic must be determined as a constituent moment in the once-occurrent event of Being, although no longer, of course, in theoretical or aesthetic terms. An act must acquire a single unitary plane to be able to reflect itself in both directions – in its sense or meaning and in its being; it must acquire the unity of two-sided answerability – both for its content (special answerability) and for its Being (moral answerability). And the special answerability, moreover, must be brought into communion with the unitary and unique moral answerability as a constituent moment in it. That is the only way whereby the pernicious non-fusion and non-interpenetration of culture and life could be surmounted (Bakhtin, 1993, pp. 2-3).

The thread that drives this dissertation, therefore, takes us to consider two aspects : **i)** this work is not trying to account for the entirety of the ag(e)ing experience of the participants, or to say what ag(e)ing *certainly* is (or is not), although discussing the problematics surrounding the effort of defining it is inevitable; and **ii)** the responsibility

[24] This positioning seeks to distance myself from the so-called "theoreticism" that produces a deletion of life in the sense that it moves so far away from the analyzed phenomenon that it becomes something else. In this respect, Miotello (2011) reminds us that such deletion produces "an erasure of my way of being, of my everyday life, of my singularity" (p. 38) – see appendix A for the version in Portuguese –, a criticism that I make to ag(e)ing studies that exclude subjective experiences.

– "the actual answerable act or deed" (Bakhtin, 1993 [1920-1924], p. 42) –, which requires diligence and "theoretical vigilance that submits ideological references to the constant control of reality" (Souza Santos, 2018, p. 72).

In this chapter then I review some concepts that are important for the work developed within Neurolinguistics and which constitute the backbone of this dissertation. First, I critically turn to the notion of *subject*, based on some of the studies in Linguistics that have been focusing on the topic, besides reinforcing aspects that are more relevant to the present study. After that, I review how our field comprehends *language* and the relevance given to the concept of *utterance*[25], as defined in Bakhtinian studies. This first articulation aims to highlight the value of bringing these notions together[26], but it is also fundamental for the development of the following discussion concerning the neuropsychological notions of *brain*, *extracortical organization*, and *neuroplasticity*. Such mobilization is justified by the need to examine aspects of a *brain that ages* without dissociating it from the *subject* that grows old(er) – and all it entails: personal struggles related to biological ag(e)ing; pressupositions of the society; the change in how they are perceived and how they perceive themselves; and so on. All these issues cannot be apart from the metaphoric concept of the "work" that the subject exercises *with* and *in* language in meaning-making, despite eventual losses or difficulties along the process.

After these first discussions, I present the participants of this research, reflecting on their role in helping me understand, theorize, and answer my research questions. I also explain the process of compiling data – from the semi-structured interviews to the language analysis. In this way, I believe to be able to show both the dynamics of the mobilized concepts and their fundamental role for the discussion throughout the following chapters.

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[25] Broadly speaking, the notion *utterance* is generally associated in Linguistics with the work of Benveniste for whom it is the product (*énoncé – utterance*) of an appropriation act (*énonciation - enunciation*): "the speaker appropriates the formal apparatus of language and utters their position as speaker by means of specific signs" (Benveniste, 1970 [1966], p. 84). However, *utterance,* as understood in this doctoral study, is based on the reflections developed by Bakhtin (and other scholars in the Bakhtin Circle – see footnote 30) for whom there is no separation between the process and the act, as it will be discussed further.

[26] It strikes us the necessity to always come to this articulation, but we believe it is fundamental considering the effects of such reflection to the field of Discursive Neurolinguistics.

1.2. *Subject*, *language*, *utterance*, and *sign*

1.2.1. The concept of *subject* in this work

The greatest wealth of man
is its incompleteness.
There I'm wealthy.
Words that accept me how I am – I don't accept.
I can't stand being a person who only opens doors,
who pulls valves, who looks at the clock,
who buys bread at 6 p.m.,
who goes out there, who sharpens pencil,
who sees the sea etc etc.
Forgive me
But I need to be Others.
I think of renewing the man using butterflies[27].
Manoel de Barros, *Retrato do artista quando coisa*, 2009

It might sound unnecessary to return to the concept of *subject* because a great number of studies have already addressed the topic in Linguistics in Brazil (see, for example, Franchi, 2011 [1977], Osakabe, 1979, Coudry, 1988 [1986], and Novaes-Pinto, 2012a). The point in question, however, is how this discussion might help us alter the way we conceive phenomena related to ag(e)ing and language. It also reinforces the relevance of such a theoretical notion for studies carried out within the scope of Neurolinguistics because of questions related to the clinical field – with which the area has always sought to dialogue (Coudry, 1988 [1986]).

Besides that, and maybe more important at this moment, discussing the concept of *subject* brings us closer to real, non-idealized individuals – the participants of this research. As I hope to show, such discussion is still current and relevant since it is also connected to the epistemological dissociation of *brain*, *body*, and *subjectivity*[28] – practice that assumes the division of the two worlds – the world of life and the world of culture (see Bakhtin, 1993) –, as argued before.

[27] Manoel de Barros brings a nation-wide famous reference of a tedious literacy activity to write the letter "v" ("vê a uva" = "sees the grape"), which I decided to translate to "sees the sea" in order to capture the relation sound-letter of that activity. See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[28] There has been more interest in articulating these aspects. See, for example, De-Campos & Winograd (2010).

The first author who brings a fruitful theorization of the concept of *subject* is Vygotsky, for whom it implies "being in constant metamorphosis." Another aspect of his reflection is the relevance given to collectivity in the process of continual transformation, since it is through accessing culture (customs, information, and varied values in the collectivity) that "the human being constructs their conception of the world and of themselves (re)creating themselves as a human subject" (Freitas et al, 2015, p. 51)[29]. It is, thus, not only through the contact and mediation with cultural artifacts that re-creates the human being that is important to Vygtosky, but the fact that the human being retains the unparalleled ability to rebuild and intervene in the "world of life." It is the *double birth* (natural and cultural) essence of the subjectivity – this uninterrupted dialogic interaction – on which Vygotsky bases his reflections to establish the nature of *subject*.

Another author whose contribution is essential within the scope of our studies is Bakhtin. It is especially in the works *Art and Answerability* (1919), *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* (ca. 1920-1924), and *Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity* (ca. 1920-1923) that we find aspects of such a notion[30]. In general, and quite briefly, we can say that the notion *subject* within the Bakhtin Circle[31], as other concepts in his architectonic, is constitutively relational, demanding to consider other notions as *otherness*, *dialogism*, *exotopy*, *chronotope*, and *excess of seeing*, to name a few. Considering the limits of this research and the complexity of the theme[32], I emphasize, to address the notion of *subject*, the concepts of *dialogism* and *otherness*. Dialogical relations, central in Bakhtinian thinking and to understand Bakhtin's concept of language, can be understood as

[29] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[30] It is important to note, however, that there is no explicit theory about *subject* in any of the works developed within the circle. What scholars can do, regarding it, is "extract indications of the privileged places, by the Bakhtinian thinking, and deal with these indications according to our own studies" (Geraldi, 2015, p. 134) – see appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[31] The issue regarding authorship within what has been referred to as the "Bakhtin Circle" is not an objective of this dissertation. The discussion, however, is important and has been addressed by numerous scholars: Brait (2005), Clark & Holquist (1984), Faraco (2011), Medvedev & Medvedeva (2014), Souza (2002), to name a few.

[32] There are numerous works about the concept of *subject* within the Bakhtinian architectonic. To suggest some of the most important references on the topic in Brazil, I cite: Sobral (2005a), Sobral (2005b), Geraldi (2010).

> (...) relations of meaning that are established between utterances, having as reference the whole of the verbal interaction and not just the event of face-to-face interaction. Thus, any utterance, if put side by side in the plan of meaning, "end up establishing a dialogical relationship." **Even utterances separated from one another in time and space and which know nothing of each other, if confronted in the plan of meaning, will reveal dialogical relations**. And this at any point in the vast universe of ideological creation, of sociocultural exchange. Dialogical relations – Bakhtin says in the same manuscript – cannot be reduced to logical, linguistic (in the strict sense of the term), psychological, mechanical, or natural relations. **They are relations of meaning of a special type that are established between utterances or even within utterances** (Faraco, 2009, pp. 65-66; **emphasis** added) [33].

It is, therefore, immersed in these dialogical relations that the subject is in contact with different voices and it is from these permanent encounters with discourses and counterwords that subjectivity emerges and changes continuously. It is also from this dialogical understanding of discourse encounters that the importance and centrality of the notion of *otherness* arises, since my words, within the whole of interaction, will also be other's words. The concept *subject* must thus be understood within this interwoven relationship. One of the main characteristics seems to be the impulse that links man to the world, and, above all, their relationship with the other. Regarding the Bakhtinian principle of having no-alibi in existence, Miotello (2011) states that:

> This place where I am, the place where each of us is, is a unique, irreproducible, unrepeatable place, where I alone see the world, where I alone see others; In this place I necessitate to think. That word *necessitate* is important. I have a necessitament, a necessitation to think. Because from this place where I am, no one else will be able to do it for me. (...) I am in a place where only I can think what I think. (...) I do not have alibi not to think. I do not have alibi for not responding. I do not have alibi to not take position. (...) All things exist because I ethically attribute my point of view to them, my look, my ideas, the way I see the world, how I think things (Miotello, 2011, p. 26)[34].

[33] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[34] Miotello plays around the word "necessitar" ("need", "necessitate" in English). For the translation, I decided to use the latter in order to be able to also play with it. See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

To illustrate this discussion and its relevance for reflecting about ag(e)ing, I bring the story of Irmela Mensah-Schramm who, for over 30 years, has stripped the streets of Berlin, in Germany, from Nazi propaganda: she has been cleaning subway walls, covering up xenophobic graffiti with paint, and removing Nazi stickers since she first saw one at a bus stop while waiting to go to work. The idea to scratch it off stood to her for hours. After her work shift, she went back to the bus stop and with her keys scraped the wall. In some of her many given interviews, she recalls the gratification she felt at that moment and argues: "If you don't do it yourself, who will do it? And if you don't do anything you won't obtain anything."

What could have been a mere anecdote became a story of activism against hate speech[35]. It is not rare, however, to witness her political and challenging actions be treated as an "amusing old lady story." She has been referred various times, for example, as the "graffiti grandma/granny,"[36] despite not having had any children – a stereotypical characterization of an old woman, as we will further discuss in **Chapter 2**. The more than 70,000 stickers taken from the streets and kept by her in a personal archive draw less attention, to many, than her white hair; her intervening force of action is second only to her appearance and chronological age. In other words, it seems that what get others to notice her story is more the possibility of an ag(e)ing woman, that *despite* being 71 years old, acts politically, as if she would be "stuck to the past" – one of the usual stereotypes about ag(e)ing.

This responsibility – these actions of deed – towards the other and the world is what seems to move Irmela. This story directs us to the fundamental idea to understand subjectivity: the capacity of *transformation* and all it encompasses – (re)creation, transmutation, destruction, and so on. Irmela's story is thus an example of what both Vygotsky and Bakhtin discussed throughout their work: being in constant meaningful relation and creation with the world is what constitutes the subjectivity and reveals the

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[35] The documentary "The Hate Destroyer" (2017) narrates her activism and was directed by Vincenso Caruso.

[36] See for example: https://qz.com/724765/berlins-sprayer-granny-has-been-purging-her-city-of-racist-propaganda-for-30-years-one-flyer-at-a-time/; https://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3903671,00.html; https://imgur.com/gallery/rQgFR?fbclid=IwAR3nIPEsB5qFCMYKmiQ6uOaZhxA5jfoLTekHTIXNnjE3vh3jN_aTPbjLwDY; https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/berlin-neo-nazi-graffiti-cover-up-70-grandmother-irmela-schramm-a7483136.html; A brief news report in Portuguese can be found in the link: http://www.dw.com/en/en-berlim-idosa-limpa-asruas-de-cartazes-e-adesivos-de-extrema-direita/av-39064586 Last access: May 2019.

subject's great capacity of linguistic, social, and political articulation. In this regard, Souza Santos (2018) explains this complexity referring to the different kinds of knowledge necessary to support the relation with the world:

> knowledges that support them and give them meaning, such as, for example, the awareness of unjust suffering, of arbitrariness of power, and of frustrated expectations; the critical analysis of the actual situation; deciding on how to resist in the concrete context by pushing opposition to the limit without direct confrontation; carefully pondering past situations and how they evolved; and anticipating what may happen according to action to be taken or not taken. **All of these require the application of complex, experienced knowledges closely linked to the life worlds** of those for whom to live is to engage in struggle or otherwise not survive (Souza Santos, 2018, p. 66-67).

The concept of *subject* in this dissertation is not the biological and chronological one (i.e., defined by their date of birth); nor is it a subject separated from history, from any ideology and of a social place. The concept that interests us is that of a subject who is always *in relation* – to the *Other*, to their past, to becoming, to the conditions in which they live – and survive –, in a constant process of creation[37] and, therefore, who is always incomplete, unfinished. As Geraldi (2018) states, based on the works of Bakhtin:

[37] It's important to note that I am not talking about *identity*, but of a fundamental creative capacity. Although a wide range of work in Neurolinguistics has already addressed the creative aspects surrounding the use of language of people with aphasia (Coudry, 1988 [1986]). Also, I do not refer to "creativity" as typically associated with the arts and imagination (although it surely is part of it), but as the idea of creation and transformation.

> while the artistic work knows finishing, an end (not a definition, because when it is done, the work opens to the innumerable "readings" that give it life), we do not know completeness: we live with provisional finishings that the other gives us because he has an excess of seeing capable of producing, from its exotopic position, a complete whole that gives it to us, but which does not close us, does not complete us. In the world of life, there is an incompleteness and an inconclusiveness: there is always a possible future, it will always be possible to calculate horizons of possibilities from which, in the present state, we choose one of them that we have reached through the past that produced the possible but that only a memory of the future may justify the choice made (Geraldi, 2018, p.15)[38].

It is partly due to this reflection that I decided to refer to the participants of this research with fictitious names instead of using acronyms, as it is traditionally done – until a day it will hopefully no longer be necessary. The need to "hide" the names of the participants stems, to a great extent, from the committees of ethics in research that aim at protecting their integrity. While recognizing the importance of seeking such protection, it is curious to note how it also reflects the distancing – "the abyss" to which Bakhtin refers – and the difficulty of conducting "science[39]" and overcoming this separation. It is indicative of a limitation: while it marks the presence of these subjects in research, the acronym covers one of the first inscriptions of subjectivity in the world and of the culture in us.

This debate is aimed also at giving greater visibility to the strong presence of the participants in this research and to my researcher-becoming process, even though I understand that this work (or any theoretical work, I venture say) will never be able to bring to its reflections the uniqueness of the event-existence that encompasses the life of each of the subjects involved, as stated above.

In my research path I had the chance of meeting, talking, and learning with the following participants: Helena, Catarina, Heitor, Pedro, Ana, Paulo, Francisco, Luiz, Isabel, Carlos, and Zilda. In addition to each of the participants with whom I spoke, I also bring stories of ag(e)ing I found and read which made me reflect on my questions in a

[38] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[39] It is important to remember, as Faraco (2011) argues, that Bakhtin does not claim his analysis and reflections to be "scientific," in the sense, for example, that it should be replicable. His critique is anti-systemic and detotalizing (Petrilli, 2008).

significant way. Although it is necessary to resort to the fictitious names, their voices echo in this text and for me[40].

1.2.2. *Language:* utterance as the *real unit* of communication

Besides the concept of *subject*, another important reflection for the phenomenon investigated concerns how the notion of *language* is comprehended. In order to discuss it, I start by turning to the work of Franchi (2011 [1977]), whose essential assumption rejects language only as a *tool* of communication (a "code") and in which the individuals are treated as "coders" and "decoders" of information. In the author's words:

> Certainly language is used as a tool of communication, we certainly communicate through it, to others, our experiences, we establish through it, with others, "contractual" ties through which we interact and understand each other, we influence the others with our choices regarding particular ways of seeing and sensing the world, with consequent decisions about how to act in it. But if we want to imagine this behavior as a free and active and creative "action," capable of at least renewing itself beyond conventions and inheritances, a process in crisis of who and agent and not mere receptacle of culture, then we have to apprehend it in this unstable relation of interiority and exteriority, of dialogue and soliloquy: before being for communication, language is for the elaboration; and before being a message, language is the construction of thought; and before being a vehicle of feelings, ideas, emotions, aspirations, language is a creative process in which we organize and inform our experiences (Franchi, 2011 [1977], p. 55)[41].

Franchi also discards theories that define language as "a closed formal system" – because they boast of a reflexive activity that freezes the language at a certain moment

[40] Bosi's celebrated work, "Memory and Society," (1994) in its 13th edition, presents the participants with their real names partly due to the permission of the participants' family members but also because of what the work came to mean in the history of the workers of São Paulo who were, above everything, *heard* by the researcher. Also, in Lourenço and Massi (2011), a work that gathers biographies written by seniors who participated in a Writing Workshop – a project developed in partnership between the University of Paraná and the City Hall of Curitiba –, the participants signed their texts with their names. In a more recent context, Maia (2017) shows how his academic and life trajectories were profoundly modified from his doctoral research and from the dialogue with residents of Alemão Complex slum, in Rio de Janeiro. Marilúce, one of the focal participants, besides receiving the dedication of his doctoral thesis, joined the committee defense revealing the importance of her story in the trajectory of his work.

[41] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

(in a synchronous system) to give account of a specific phenomenon – and those that consider the use of language as secondary, which Clark (1992) has regarded as the "product tradition" in the studies of language. The main reference of such framework, according to Clark, is Chomsky's, whose concern was distinguishing people's linguistic *competence* from their linguistic *performance*, leading investigations in discovering the principles of linguistic performance aiming at confirming the "psychological reality of linguistic structures" (Clark, 1992, p. xii).

The "action tradition," on the other hand, has emerged in Philosophy spreading to Linguistics and other areas as Psychology, and reflects another approach to language studies with centrality on its use. According to Clark (1992), it is most closely associated with the works of Austin, Grice, Searle and is representative of William Labov's sociolinguistic work, Harvey Sacks', Emanuel Schegloff's, and Gail Jefferson's conversational interaction studies, and Erving Goffman's sociological investigation of language in interactional settings. In other words, the action tradition, as described by the author, is interested in *what people do with language* and how that works.

We also find in Bakhtin (1986) and Vygotsky (1999) relevant reflections on language. Although it is not the purpose of this dissertation to retake all the discussion carried by the authors, it is important to state that, for the former, the linguistic view of language is problematic since it is "regarded from the speaker's standpoint as if there were only *one* speaker who does not have any *necessary* relation to *other* participants in speech communication[42]" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 67). Such model of understanding language, conceived through the ideas of a "listener," an "understander," and the "unified speech flow" is considered a *fiction* for Bakhtin, since it produces "a completely distorted idea of the complex and multifaceted process of active speech communication" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 68)[43].

For Vygtosky (1999), the primary function of language is not properly to convey to others our experiences but to *constitute* them as well as making it possible for intellectual thinking to be developed. This idea is convergent with Franchi (2011 [1977], p. 64), when the author states that:

[42] Bakhtin's *emphasis*.

[43] For Bakhtin (1986, p. 68), the listener, in the process of understanding the meaning, takes simultaneously an "active, responsive attitude toward it (…) Any understanding of live speech, a live utterance, is inherently responsive, although the degree of this activity varies extremely."

> There is nothing immanent in language except its creative and constitutive strength, although certain methodological "cuts" and constraints can show a stable and constituted framework. Not there is nothing universal except the process – the form, the structure of this activity. Language, then, is not a given or a result; but a work that "shapes" the variable content of our experiences, construction work, rectification of the "lived", which at the same time constitutes the symbolic system through which one operates on reality and constitutes the reality as a system of references in which makes it significant[44].

The concept of language that interests us is therefore derived from human activity, emerging within interaction between the subjects who participate in the communication event. It is then socially and historically situated, indeterminate, incomplete, and prone to (re)interpretation. Through language the subjects actively constitute themselves and constitute the language system itself.

Besides the concepts of *language* and of *utterance* it is necessary to discuss how the notion *sign* is understood and its relevance for this study.

Voloshinov (1973) starts his reflection by stating that any physical object[45] can be converted into a sign. While it does not cease to be a part of material reality – whether in sound, physical mass, or movements of the body –, the main characteristic of the sign is the fact that it *reflects* and *refracts* another reality: “Therefore, it may distort that reality or be true to it, or may perceive it from a special point of view, and so forth” (Voloshinov, 1973, p. 10). The sign thus has to be understood within the chain of ideological creativity, which “is perfectly consistent and continuous: from one link of a semiotic nature (hence, also of a material nature) we proceed uninterruptedly to another link of exactly the same nature. And nowhere is there a break in the chain, nowhere does the chain plunge into inner being, nonmaterial in nature and unembodied in signs” (Voloshinov, 1973, p. 11). In other words, the sign does not “simply” reflect the reality; it twists it, diffuses and diverts it, having thus a double effect: it diffracts in the complex system of the superstructure while it also diffracts an ideology in the inner discourse. The sign is

[44] This passage has been cited many times, initially with the doctoral dissertation of Coudry (1986). Its presence here reinforces its explanatory power and synthesis, as well as its beauty. See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[45] Bakhtin’s example of two tools (a hammer and sickle) that are converted into an ideological sign (the insignia of the Soviet Union) is emblematic of such process.

therefore in this arena of ideologies and, as other concepts within the Bakhtin Circle architectonic, is always *in relation*.

From this comprehension that any materiality can be a sign, Voloshinov argues that the *word* is as well an ideological phenomenon. However, an important feature of the word is that its reality is resided between individuals (in the dialogical sphere). As it is argued by the author:

> No cultural sign, once taken in and given meaning, remains in isolation: it becomes part of the *unity of the verbally constituted consciousness.* It is in the capacity of the consciousness to find verbal access to it. Thus, as it were, spreading ripples of verbal responses and resonances form around each and every ideological sign. Every ideological refraction of existence in process of generation, no matter what the nature of its significant material, is accompanied by ideological refraction in word as an obligatory concomitant phenomenon. Word is present in each and every act of understanding and in each and every act of interpretation (Voloshinov, 1973, p. 15).

Understanding the functioning of the sign helps us comprehend that the use of a word is not a "mechanical process of lexical selection," which would concern only structural linguistic issues, a notion that grounds the reflection in **Chapter 3**. What Voloshinov argues is that the word – as an ideological sign – carries a memory that is *doubly historical*: it relates to the more or less stabilized choices in the history of a particular *language* as well as to a history of the subjects with the discourses and counterwords in their lives. Lexical choice will also reflect, to a greater or lesser degree of control, the subjects involved in the various enunciative situations. Writing each line of this dissertation, for example, involves more than the mastery of English syntactic and lexical structures; it comprises more than just choosing the right words according to my understanding and the trajectories of my studies for this research. It involves imagining the counterwords that the committee members, for example (and possible other interested readers) can employ from the choices I have made. All these voices (though projected and imagined) cross – often determine – the choices. No wonder, for example, that we provide traits to certain words over others and that we can inflict on certain words a tone depending on a particular relationship or circumstance[46]. As argues Bakhtin (1986, p. 88):

[46] As an anecdote, my advisor almost always remembers me as she reads "ademais" (an old-fashioned version of "moreover") mainly because of a text I wrote while in the master's program. Because she did

> The words of a language belong to nobody, but still we hear those words only in particular individual utterances, we read them in particular individual works, and in such cases the words already have not only a typical, but also (depending on the genre) a more or less clearly reflected individual expression, which is determined by the unrepeatable individual context of the utterance.

This chain of utterances that appears with words allows us to understand, as we will see in **Chapter 2**, how senses of ag(e)ing are in constant dispute and debate, on the one hand, and on the other the effects of such on understanding the ways ag(e)ing stereotypes circulate in society.

After presenting the concepts of *language* and *sign*, we can turn to the concept of *utterance* since it is regarded as the *real unit* of speech communication, according to Bakhtin (1986). The importance of this conception derives in part from the understanding that linguistic studies in disregarding the active role of the *Other* in the process of speech communication – revealed in the vague use of terms as "speech" or "speech flow" –, lead to "terminological imprecision and confusion in this methodologically central point of linguistic thinking [that] result from ignoring the *real unit* of speech communication" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 71). Differently from formal approaches to the study of language, the concept of *utterance* here proposed goes beyond its structure. That is what *translinguistics*[47] means for Bakhtin, as beautifully explained by Hill (1986, p. 92)[48]:

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not associate that word with my personality, it was awkward for her to read it in my text. It was so unexpected that years later we still laugh at it.

[47] Bakhtin´s science of language is generally regarded as *translinguistics*, according to Todorov´s translation of Bakhtin's work (Todorov, 1981 *apud* Hill, 1986). The term has also been translated as *metalinguistics* by Emerson (from *metalingvistika*, *apud* Hill, 1986). For Petrilli (2008), who also prefer the term *metalinguistics*, the core idea within Bakhtin's science of language is the shift he creates from *identity* to *otherness*, which makes linguistic value coincide with dialogical values.

[48] It is important to note that Bakhtin's critique regards the structuralism, as developed by Saussure, in which Linguistics is grounded in the dichotomy between *langue* and *parole*, excluding the subject from the "science of language."

> Translinguistics will be the science of the totality of utterances and utterance potential in the verbal life of a community, whereas linguistics in the strict sense will continue to exist, but will take as its special domain the centripetal forces, among which are found the systemic constraints on the freedom of utterance, whether deriving from biological or social limitations on the possibilities of expression. Translinguistics focuses on the uniquely contextualized actions of speaking subjects, while linguistics will focus on the constancy of formal means and their systemic relations. Translinguistics will take up the domain of the expressive point of view, which is meaningful only in the context of a unique dialogic confluence, while linguistics will address propositional designation with its eternal truth values. Translinguistics will admit to scholarly study the momentary, the individual, the performative, the disorderly – all of those aspects of the human voice, which linguistics considers beyond the scope of systemic order. Most importantly, translinguistics has a moral goal: to interpret and analyze the multiple words of the voices of a speaking community without making these into objects by incorporating them within its own discourse – that is, by dominating these voices within a transcending monologue. For the essence of the dialogic – the domain of translinguistics – is the freedom, the irreducibly heterogenous subjectivity of each individual voice within human social practice.

The problem thus in referring to formal linguistic units (such as sentence) to describe and explain speech communication is leading to a kind of scientific inquiry that is disconnected from reality – as discussed previously. It is through the production of *utterances* – and not the production of *sentences*, for example – that the national language (and the broad cultural, social, and historical aspects of human activity) is embodied in the individual form. In other words, for Bakhtin, the grammatical forms are distinct from the utterance, since their realization is only potential; that is, they are dependent on the dialogical spheres – the sphere of Being – where they can become a "totality." Such process of transformation of linguistic propositions into utterances are dependent of forces (social, cultural, individual, psychological) that despite being external to language are inside the utterance.

The centrality of the studies in verbal communication for Bakhtin is in the encounter of subjects in the production of utterances and it is in this sense that the speaker is always a "respondent to a greater or lesser degree," since he is not

> the first speaker, the one who disturbs the eternal silence of the universe. And he presupposes not only the existence of the language system he is using, but also the existence of preceding utterances – his own and others' – with which his given utterance enters into one kind of relation or another (builds on them, polemicizes with them, or simply presumes that they are already known to the listener). **Any utterance is a link in a very complexly organized chain of other utterances** (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 69; **emphasis** added).

The utterance is therefore "an exceptionally important node of problems" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 63) since its investigation allows us to better understand how macro and micro-structures are dynamically interwoven[49]. In order to understand how an utterance is constituted, Bakhtin describes the three constitutive characteristics that define the individual speech act, differentiated from linguistic units (for example, isolated words or sentences). Any utterance, regardless of its length – a single-word or a large novel – has a relative[50] absolute beginning and an absolute end that is marked by the **(i)** *change of speaking subjects* – the first feature of the *utterance*. It is the precedent and the subsequent ones that bound the utterance, even though it may be performed as a silent reply or a gesture, for example.

The second characteristic of the utterance is the **(ii)** *finalization*, or as argues Bakhtin (1986), the "*inner side* of the change of speech subjects" (p. 76); that is, the possibility of responding to the utterance – or the possibility of assuming a responsive attitude toward it, as in executing an order. As Bakhtin states: "any understanding of live speech, a live utterance, is inherently responsive… any utterance is a link in the chain of communication (Bakhtin 1986, p. 69)." The finalization is determined by the a) exhaustiveness of the theme (that can be partial depending on the sphere of communication – a scientific work, for example, does not need to be exhaustively treated

[49] It is interesting to note that a rather recent movement in the studies of Linguistic Anthropology has been made in trying to approach micro and macro phenomena. In this regard, Koven (2015, p. 402) states that: "In earlier scholarship, scholars referred to this as the "micro-macro" problem, that is, how broad social, cultural, political, and economic orders are both reflected in and accomplished in individual encounters. Scholars have more recently critiqued such a binary approach to the complexity of social phenomena, arguing that one must empirically discover the multiple relevant time scales (Wortham, 2005; 2012; Wortham et al. 2011) that inform trajectories (sources and effects) of meaning of different figures of personhood as these emerge across multiple sites."

[50] It is *relative* because, as argues Bakhtin (1986), the boundaries can vary "in nature and acquire different forms in the heterogeneous spheres of human activity and life, depending on the functions of language and on the conditions and situations of communication" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 7).

to be perceived as *momentarily* finalizable and thus prone to be replied[51]); b) the speaker's speech will, which can be understood as

> we embrace, understand, and sense the speaker's speech plan or speech will, which determines the entire utterance, its length and boundaries. We imagine to ourselves what the speaker wishes to say. And we also use this speech plan, this speech will (as we understand it), to measure the finalization of the utterance. This plan determines both the choice of the subject itself (under certain conditions of speech communication, in necessary connection with preceding utterances), as well as its boundaries and its semantic exhaustiveness. It also determines, of course, the choice of a generic form in which the utterance will be constructed […]. This plan – the subjective aspect of the utterance- combines in an inseparable unity with the objective referentially semantic aspect, limiting the latter by relating it to a concrete (individual) situation of speech communication with all its individual circumstances, its personal participants, and the statement – utterances that preceded it (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 77).

And c) the typical compositional and generic form of finalization, which briefly speaking, are "relatively stable typical forms of construction of the whole." As states Bakhtin (1986, p. 79): "We learn to cast our speech in generic forms and, when hearing others' speech, we guess its genre from the very first words; we predict a certain length (…) and a certain compositional structure; we foresee the end." According to Bakhtin (1986), thus, from the very beginning we "sense" the speech as a whole.

Finally, the last feature that determines the utterance is its relation to the speaker and to the other participants in the interaction. The **(iii)** *expressive aspect* of the utterance, the evaluative attitude toward a topic, also determines the lexical and grammatical choices:

[51] Bakhtin states, in this regard: "we do not objectively exhaust the subject, but, by becoming the theme of the utterance (i.e., of a scientific work) the subject achieves a relative finalization under certain conditions" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 77).

> The neutral meaning of the word applied to a particular actual reality under particular real conditions of speech communication **creates a spark of expression**. And, after all, this is precisely what takes place in the process of creating an utterance. We repeat, only the contact between the language meaning and the concrete reality that takes place in the utterance can create the spark of expression. It exists neither in the system of language nor in the objective reality surrounding us. Thus, emotion, evaluation, and expression are foreign to the word of language and are born only in the process of its live usage in a concrete utterance (Bakhtin, 1986, pp. 86-87; **emphasis** added).

In order to conclude this discussion, I believe it is important to consider that the architectonic of Bakhtin provides interesting theoretical and analytical tools to understand how ag(e)ing stereotypes circulate in society and determine (to a greater or lesser extent) our experiences of ag(e)ing, as it will be further discussed in the next chapters.

1.3. The concepts of *brain functioning*, *extracortical organization*, and *neuroplasticity*

The brain is wider than the sky,
for, put them side by side,
the one the other will include
with ease, and you beside.
The brain is deeper than the sea,
for, hold them, blue to blue,
the one the other will absorb,
as sponges, buckets do.
The brain is just the weight of God,
for, lift them, pound for pound,
and they will differ, if they do,
as syllable from sound.
Emily Dickinson, *Complete Poems*, 1924

Coherent with the notions of *subject* and *language*, we draw from Luria (1973) the description of brain functioning, portrayed as a Complex Functional System (CFS)[52]; that is, in which all regions work in a supportive way, even though some areas are more directly related to certain processes. One of the consequences of such an understanding of brain functioning is that any change in a region – whether due to a neurological impact,

[52] The term was developed by the Russian physiologist and biologist P. K. Anokhin, author of Systems Theory Functional and the concept of Systeogenesis, and was widely discussed by Luria (Beilke, 2010).

adaptation or through a rehabilitation process – will entail changing the system as a whole[53].

Luria divides the brain into five major regions – subcortical, frontal, parietal, occipital, and temporal – organized into three principal functional units that act together in performing any complex mental activity and are *hierarchical in structure*: "Man's mental processes in general, and his conscious activity in particular, always take place with the participation of all there units, each of which has its role to play in mental processes and makes its contribution to their performance" (Luria, 1973, p. 43).

The **first unit** regulates the cortical tone, the vigilance and the selection of stimuli, being its functioning prerequisite for all brain work: "the maintenance of the *optimal level of cortical tone is essential for the organized course of mental activity"* (Luria, 1973, p. 45). It is composed by structures located in the subcortex and in the brain stem (hypothalamus, opthalamus, and reticular fibers).

The **second unit**, responsible for receiving, analyzing, and recording information from the environment, consists of structures of the lateral regions of the neocortex, occupying the posterior area and including the visual (occipital), auditory (temporal), and general sensory (parietal) regions. This unit is formed by the *primary* (or *projection*) areas of the cortex, which distinguishes visual, auditory, and tactile stimuli and are surrounded by systems of the *secondary* (or *gnostic*) cortical zones, which interprets and synthetize the incoming information received from the primary area. It is in the *tertiary* (or *overlapping*) zones that qualitatively different information is simultaneously integrated, being therefore considered the most complex level of operation of this second unit. According to Luria (1973, p. 74):

[53] According to Luria (1980, p. 30), "from the point of view of modern psychology, the higher human mental functions are complex reflex processes, social in origin, mediate in structure, and conscious and voluntary in mode of function. (…) the child does not live entirely in a world of ready-made objects, produced by the work of society. From the very beginning of his life he must always be in contact with other people, and, in so doing, he must objectively master the existing language system and, with its aid, profit from the experience of other generations. This contact becomes the decisive factor in his future mental development, the decisive condition for the formation of the higher mental functions distinguishing human from animals."

> This work of the tertiary zones of the posterior cortical region is thus essential, not only for the successful integration of information reaching man through his visual system, but also for the *transition from direct, visually represented syntheses to the level of symbolic processes* – or operations with word meanings, with complex grammatical and logical structures, with systems of numbers and abstract relationships. It is because of this that the *tertiary zones of the posterior cortical region play an essential role in the conversion of concrete perception into abstract thinking,* which always proceeds in the form of *internal* schemes, and for the *memorizing of organized experience* or, in other words, not only for the reception and coding of information, but also do its storage (author's emphasis).

Finally, the **third unit** is responsible for programming, regulating, and verifying the activities. As Luria explains, it is through the functioning of this unit that "man creates *intentions*, forms *plans* and *programs* his actions, inspects their performance, and *regulates* his behavior so that it conforms to these plans and programs; finally, he *verifies* his conscious activity, comparing the effects (…) and correcting any mistakes" (Luria, 1973, p. 80, author's *emphasis*). The structures that form this unit are in the anterior regions of the hemispheres, anteriorly to the precentral gyrus, and are "in intimate communication with nearly every other principal zone of the cortex" (Luria, 1973, p. 89).

This third unit is also formed by three areas – the primary, secondary, and tertiary – but the processes are initiated in the tertiary area, which plans the execution of the action and verifies its effectiveness. In turn, the secondary area prepares programs of action based on the information received from the tertiary area, composing, as Luria states, the "kinetic melody," and generating conditions for the operation of the motor apparatus, performed by the primary areas. As Luria (1973, p. 89) explains: "*the tertiary portions of the frontal lobes are in fact a superstructure above all other parts of the cerebral cortex, so that they perform a far more universal function of general regulation of behavior* than that performed by the posterior associative center, or, in other words, the tertiary areas of the second functional unit" (*emphasis* added).

It is also noteworthy that the most important characteristic of the regulation of human conscious activity is that it occurs with the participation of *speech*:

> Whereas the relatively elementary forms of regulation of organic processes and even of the simplest forms of behavior can take place without the aid of speech, *higher mental processes are formed and take place on the basis of speech activity*, which is expanded in the early stages of development but later becomes increasingly contracted (Vygotsky, 1956; 1960; Leontiev, 1959; Zaporozhets, 1960; Galperin, 1959). It is therefore natural to seek programming, regulating and verifying action of the human brain primarily in those forms of conscious activity whose regulation takes place through the intimate participation of speech (Luria, 1973, pp. 93-94; author's *emphasis*).

Taking this "ideal" function as a parameter, one can think about the changes through which an ag(e)ing brain can go. Hearing loss – typically associated with the advance of age – generally results from neuronal degeneration of the primary areas of the second unit, which can lead to alterations (or difficulties) of the functioning of the secondary areas responsible for the interpretation of sensory information, such as acoustic signs. The tertiary area of this unit, which integrates information of different nature (e.g. visual, perceptive, and auditory), needs to be able to adapt functionally to that change. Such adaptations, arising from possible losses associated with the regions of input of external sensory information, should however be interpreted as part of the normal functioning of an ag(e)ing brain.

What we observe in the more traditional literature, however, is that a number of studies on ag(e)ing emphasize accumulated losses. Gutchess (2014), in a review on the advances of neurosciences for the understanding of the ag(e)ing brain, shows the importance of the advent of Functional Magnetic Resonance (fMRI) to rethink what we understand about brain ag(e)ing, despite the inherent losses in the process. In general, the author states that although many studies show less active neural regions with the advance of age, others call attention to how these brains can recruit, in a different way, other regions of the brain to support cognitive functions (despite the primary deficits, according to Luria, 1973). The author explains:

> Whereas regions such as the left frontal cortex may be specialized in young adults to manipulate large amounts of verbal information in working memory – for example, rehearsing a phone number – older adults exhibited less specialization in their recruitment of neural regions. Although young adults primarily drew on the left frontal cortex for these tasks, older adults also recruited the right frontal cortex, a region typically specialized for visuospatial information, such as remembering a map. Findings of bilateral activation (of both hemispheres of the brain, rather than just one) in older adults, and greater engagement of frontal cortex rather than middle or posterior brain regions, generated much interest in how the brain adapts to aging (Gutchess, 2014, p. 579).

In this sense, and intimately related to the concept of "cognitive reserve," Stern (2002) argues that "the changes in brain recruitment associated with reserve are normal response to increased task demands." He suggests that such ability of the brain "is present *in both healthy individuals and those with brain damage*. In essence, an individual who uses a brain network more efficiently, or is more capable of calling up alternate brain networks or cognitive strategies in response to increased demand may have more cognitive reserve" (Stern, 2002, p. 451; *emphasis* added). He argues, therefore, that cognitive reserve is dynamic in nature and should not be understood as fixed but constantly developing set of skills. Stern also shows the indispensable presence of the subject and his work by the language in the establishment of this relationship between the environment and the brain. As Kotik-Friedgut (2006) points out, this reflection is fundamental to understand how the environment and the activities carried out by the subjects influence the systemic-dynamic organization of the higher psychological functions, which, according to her, should be the main objective of neurolinguistic historical-cultural studies.

Shafto and Tyler (2014) also point to studies that show an increase in neuronal activity, particularly in the prefrontal regions, with the advance of age. This recruitment, which often involves bilateral activation, suggests reorganization of functions in which regions of the left hemisphere assume the functioning of areas of the right hemisphere. The increase in frontal activity, according to the authors, is often accompanied by decreased activity in later regions such as the occipital-temporal cortex, suggesting that the prefrontal cortex may be a "general source" of neurons that flexibly support performance.

Also, more recent studies, such as Geerligs et al. (2014) and Meunier et al. (2014), which deal with brain changes based on the dynamics of neural networks rather than investigating individual regions, suggest that the prefrontal cortex may be important for compensation in a variety of cognitive contexts due to its involvement in a wide range of functional networks that support different cognitive processes. Although, therefore, brain specialization is relevant in understanding its functioning, Neuroscience has been investigating how the brain *adapts* to ag(e)ing.

In addition to considering this specialization, important for understanding the brain functioning as an "orchestra," it is also necessary to ponder, for the discussion here, the traits that characterize the conscious activity of man, which, according to Luria:

> *is not necessarily linked to biological motives* (...), is not necessarily determined by obvious impressions, received from the environment, or by traces of immediate individual experience (...) [and], lastly, the last trait [concerns the fact that] the great majority of man's knowledge and skills are formed through the *assimilation of the experience of all mankind,* accumulated in the process of social history and in the process of learning (Luria, 1991, pp. 72-73; author's *emphasis*)[54].

The role of learning becomes then fundamental in Luria's theory of development and functioning of the conscious activity of man. Such an effect on the nervous system is illustrated by the research work developed with peasant communities in Uzbekistan. Luria (1976) argued, with this study, that the peasants who had been formally educated categorized geometric forms "more abstractly," while those who had not been school educated characterized the same geometric shapes based on their home and work experiences: circles were categorized, for example, as dishes, pans, and other household or working utensils. Luria concluded that the difference in categorization of these elements was evidence of *different ways higher cognitive functions* can take, and that it was a result of the experience of socialization and work with the language.

Although the establishment of such a relationship has been interpreted as deterministic, Luria's work can be considered pioneer in the search for an understanding of how different modes of social and cultural organization are related to the development

[54] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

and functioning of higher cognitive functions[55]. The theoretical framework developed by Vygotsky and Luria shows us that it is the course of life of the individuals and the relation they establish with social practices of language use (and those most typically associated with the school) that allow us to talk about the cognitive functioning of the ag(e)ing brain.

When Vygotsky and Luria deal with the social and historical influence on the brain, it also means considering that each individual, insofar as they are immersed in the culture to which they belong, shares not only more localized aspects of that culture, as their languages, but all the cultural and historical development and knowledge of humankind. Such learning process occurs through the life course and inside and outside school settings – in so many contexts, despite the school. According to Luria:

> In order to explain the highly complex forms of human consciousness one must go beyond the human organism. One must seek the origins of conscious activity and "categorical" behavior not in the recesses of the human brain or in the depths of the spirit, but in the external conditions of life. Above all, this means that one must seek these origins in the external processes of social life, in the social and historical forms of human existence (Luria, 1981, p. 25).

Such a theory that seeks to understand the relation between history, culture, and the brain does not allow us to affirm (or better, determine) that an individual who has not learned to read and write does not have access to more abstract modes of reasoning. This argument disregards both the heterogeneous constitutive nature of writing (cf. Corrêa, 2004, 2006, 2010) – that is, the crossing of writing by orality(s) – as manifestations of orality that are deeply marked by written practices (e.g., TV news, although some of them have been seeking to adapt their texts and include more typical oral marks[56]). This is not to diminish, I must emphasize, the importance of writing; rather, it means reflecting on

[55] The deterministic reading of Luria's studies leads, however, to the assertion that individuals who were not school educated have cognitive developmental constraints. Nonetheless, as Kotik-Friedgut (2006, p. 49) shows us, regarding studies on the effect of writing development on cognitive functioning: "the neuropsychological test scores indeed do not exactly predict learning-to-read scores, but learning to read reinforces the abilities required to obtain a high performance in neuropsychological tests. This observation may be important in the cognitive testing domain and in the analysis of the relationship between education and cognitive test performance."

[56] A recent discussion on the relationship between Linguistics and the media and on changes in television news took place at a panel during the 62nd Seminar of the São Paulo Group of Linguistics Studies (GEL – Grupo de Estudos Linguísticos de São Paulo in Portuguese), held at Unicamp in 2014. The panel was headed by the linguists Dr. Ataliba T. de Castilho and Dr. Valéria Paz de Almeida, and the journalist Maria Teresa Garcia.

the modes of social organization and work with language that mark both the individual's relation to language and its effect on brain organization. That does not mean, however, that formal school education is unnecessary. What I argue is that, if you accept Luria's above assumptions concerning man's conscious activity, it is necessary to understand the historical and social conditions in which we find ourselves and then reflect about the brain of ag(e)ing individuals. As a consequence, it should not be disregarded, for example, the effect of new technologies in the brain organization; that is, not only children's brain functioning is influenced by these new technologies that not always are learned in school, but all the individuals immersed in this context[57]. According to Luria (1991): "The vast majority of knowledge, abilities, and procedures of man's behavior *is not the result of his own experience but acquired by the assimilation of social and historical experience of generations*. This trait radically differentiates the conscious activity of the man from the animal behavior" (Luria, 1991, p. 73; *emphasis* added).[58]

Turning more specifically to the context of the pathologies associated with ag(e)ing, it is questioned a *direct* relation between illiteracy/low schooling and dementia[59], indicating not only a misinterpretation of works like those of Luria, but the

[57] As an example, I have been interested in stories such as that of my mom, who saw Facebook as a place to organize herself politically. She, a political activist, observing the difficulty of organizing the party to which she is affiliated, created a group on this platform where she began to manage the addition of new members in the community and in the party, as well as to promote debates and meetings. Although she needed help to learn to use some of the social networking tools, investigating her motivation and use of social media tools instead of focusing solely on transient difficulties seem to be more interesting. It is important to note that it is not rare to find users of any age encountering difficulties in adapting to a design change of a webpage, for example. This crosses all users, to a greater or lesser extent, *depending on their background and their practices with digital tools and platforms*. As an example, I cite the design change in the online student and staff platform of Unicamp in 2017, which generated a considerable wave of online complaints from most users. What I argue, therefore, is that any difficulty with technology cannot be solely and directly attributed to ag(e)ing processes.

[58] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[59] Many works point to such relation without considering the subjects' history, nor their social practices with and through language. See, for example, Foss et al. (2005) and Guerreiro et al. (2006). More recently, the project entitled "Cognitive aging: illiteracy, low education, and the possibility of intervention" (Yassuda, 2014) aims to "advance the knowledge about the relation between cognitive performance in old age and schooling, the latter understood as a measure of cognitive reserve, and investigate the influence of schooling on cognitive plasticity in the context of a working memory training" (Yassuda 2014). Although studies such as this one are supported by the high number of dementia diagnoses in rural areas/among illiterate individuals in Brazil, as these researchers argue, caution is needed since, as has often been pointed out, Neuropsychological assessment is questionable (see Kotik-Friedgut, 2006 – see note 52). In addition, Vygotsky (1998), as well as most recent research on literacy studies, shows how the development of writing is, in fact, prior to the school education which, once again, question the premise of investigations such Yassuda's; that is, schooling should be *directly* related to possible "protection" from the development of dementia, but instead to practices with writing (and other semiotic systems) that are (re)established throughout the course of

support of prejudices that have long been opposed, especially in human sciences and literacy studies.

The *brain*, therefore, is strongly influenced by conditions that are external to the subject: their history, their culture, their relation to the outside world, which presupposes not a direct relation, but the presence of the *subject* in this relation and their *work* with and through the *language*. This principle is known in the neuropsychological literature as *extracortical organization* (Vygotsky *apud* Kotik-Friedgut, 2006), also referred in contemporary works as *epigenetic influence*.

We can refer to Luria to think about cognitive development as *a dynamic process that comprises the whole course of the subject's life*:

> The facts we obtained, which for a fragment of a more extensive undertaking, yield certain major conclusions of great importance for understanding the nature and structure of human cognitive processes. **The facts show convincingly that the structure of cognitive activity does not remain static during different stages of historical development and that the most important forms of cognitive processes** – perception, generalization, deduction, reasoning, imagination, and analysis of one's own inner life – **vary as the conditions of social life change and the rudiments of knowledge are mastered** (Luria, 1976, p. 161; **emphasis** added).

In a similar way to Luria's work, Lent (2001) shows how changes in the Nervous System are linked to the subject's relation with the environment.

> The adaptive capacity of the nervous system, especially the neurons, to changes in the environment conditions that occur in the daily life of individuals, is called neuroplasticity, or simply plasticity, a broad concept that ranges from responding to destructive traumatic injuries to the subtle changes resulting from learning and memory processes. **Every time some form of energy from the environment somehow affects the nervous system, it leaves some mark on it'; that is, it modifies it in some way** (Lent, 2001, p. 135; **emphasis** added)[60].

Gutchess (2014) also shows that there is evidence in recent studies in cognitive neuroscience that the birth of new neurons can occur throughout adult life. As the author

[60] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

argues, neurogenesis, however, should not be considered the only factor associated with the functioning of the brain along life. A very interesting scheme taken from his article is presented below and takes up several factors related to plasticity.

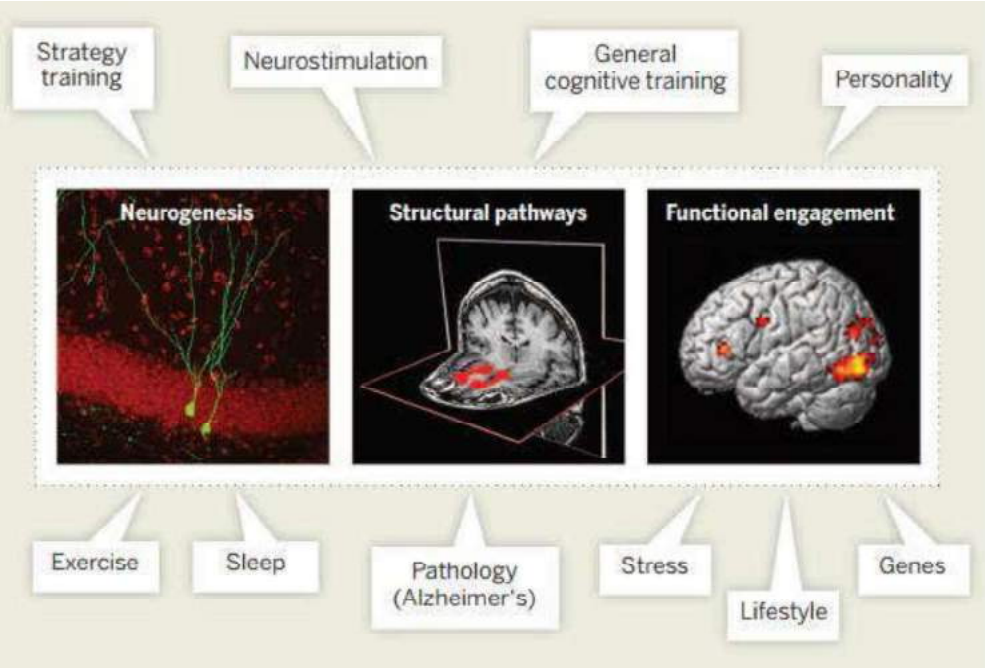

Figure 1: Mechanisms of neuroplasticity and moderation factors (Gutchess, 2014, p. 579).

Regarding this scheme, attention is drawn to the concept of personality, usually little explored in the literature and that can be understood as a label to various questions of human nature such as subjectivity, the relationship of the subject and the world and his work with and through language. This relates to the so-called *external agents* that contribute, in these dynamics between subject-brain-environment, to the development of a possible force of resistance and adaptation – that is, *resilience* – throughout life, against neurodegenerative diseases, for example.

Luria (1981, p. 21) had already drawn attention to the importance and care for establishing a similarity relationship between the environment, less developed organisms, and man.

> The organism, which experiences a certain need and which has certain forms of activity, reflects the conditions of the external world and elaborate certain information. In the elementary biological systems, interaction with the environment is the process of exchanging substances, assimilating those that are essential for the organism and eliminating those products that have resulted from vital activity. At more complex physiological levels, the basis of life is the reflection of external and internal influences. The body receives the information, refracts it through the prism of its needs or tasks, and elaborates it. With the help of "early stimulation," creates a model, a determined scheme of the expected results, and if the behavior coincides with these schemes, the behavior ceases, otherwise the excitation circulates again through the circuit and the active search for a resolution extends (Bernshtein, Miller, Galanter, Pribram, et al., 1996). In principle, the same can be said about the organization of the more complex forms of conscious life, but here it is about the elaboration by man of more complex information in the process of object activity [practical action with objects both externally and internally - "objects in a mental or representative form"], elaboration that is realized with the help of language (Luria, 1981, p. 21).

In order to conclude this session, I bring an excerpt from Sacks (1995), who draws our attention to the great ability of the brain to adapt to the most diverse circumstances, as we have showed.

> That the brain is minutely differentiated is clear: there are hundreds of tiny areas crucial for every aspect of perception and behavior (from the perception of color and of motion to, perhaps, the intellectual orientation of the individual). **The miracle is how they all cooperate, are integrated together, in the creation of a self**. This sense of the brain's remarkable plasticity, its capacity for the most striking adaptations, not least in the special (and often desperate) circumstances of neural or sensory mishap, has come to dominate my own perception of my patients and their lives. So much so, indeed, that **I am sometimes moved to wonder whether it may not be necessary to redefine the very concepts of "health" and "disease," to see these in terms of the ability of the organism to create a new organization and order, one that fits its special, altered disposition and needs, rather than in the terms of a rigidly defined "norm**" (Sacks, 1995, pp. xvii-xviii; **emphasis** added).

Sacks' understanding of "brain functioning", "health" and "disease" is grounded on the *subject's* role in these concepts, a theoretical-methodological decision that is fundamental to the reflection I bring here, more specifically about an "ag(e)ing brain," a discussion that we continue in the next section.

1.4. Subjects that are ag(e)ing, *constitution* of data, and analysis

1.4.1. Qualitative Research, *constitution* of data, and analysis

After discussing the importance of the concepts of *subject*, *language*, and *brain functioning*, for the development of this doctoral dissertation, I reflect on another fundamental point that relates more directly to the methodology. Freitas (2010), based on Bakhtin, argues that the "object" of historical-cultural approaches is "the man." Such understanding leads us to comprehend the relationship between the subject-researcher and the subject-participant in a distinct way from other approaches in which the researcher contemplates the object (the phenomenon) and speaks *about* it.

According to Freitas (2010), the only methodological framework consistent with this theoretical approach is the Qualitative Research (QR). According to Damico et al. (1999, p. 652), QR can be understood as "a set of systematic and interpretive practices designed to seek answers to questions that stress how social actions and social experiences are created and sustained." Such approach demands therefore a frequent reformulation of hypotheses, since it is founded on a *movement* of data collection strategies, analysis, verification, identification of the phenomenon investigated, return to the collected data and to the analysis, and so on[61]. Thus, it requires being "pragmatic, strategic, and self-reflexive" (Nelson, et al., 1992, p. 2 *apud* Damico et al. 1999, p. 653). In this context, Hamilton (2001, p. 572) calls attention to the relevance of case studies and small-scale investigations (with a small number of subject-participants), in studies interested in ag(e)ing related processes, for enabling a deeper examination of the interrelationships

[61] It is interesting to note, as Damico et al. (1999, p. 652) argue, that much "of what we know and apply regarding such complex social phenomena as language and cognitive development has been gathered primarily through qualitative research methods (e.g. Bloom 1971, Brown 1973, Bruner 1975, Piaget, 1974)."

between the various discursive and social factors involved in the observed phenomena. This approach is therefore based on the understanding that the phenomena should be studied considering *internal* and *external* aspects – as I have tried to show throughout this chapter – through different systematic methods, such as case studies, bibliographical and ethnographic investigations, and so on.

Another important point frequently associated with QR is the fact that aspects of the investigated phenomenon are apprehended *intuitively by the researcher*. In this sense, it is interesting to note, as Coudry (2018, p. 328) points out, that the apprehension of the phenomenon is possible at the moment of the data analysis because the investigated processes may go unnoticed by the investigator during the communicative event: "discursive evaluation always has something unexpected, which arises in the very discursive event and that is beyond the control of the interlocutors.[62]" As Coudry (2018, p. 329) continues:

> Returning to the discursive event *posteriori* requires the researcher an arduous work of *mining* audio and video records, as well as the research diary, aiming the transcription of the language data and annotations of the conditions of their production (...). It thus requires a *contemplative* attitude from the researcher: to move away from the moment of the interlocution to find in it a good explanation. For this, the data must have *visibility* in the complexity of its event (author's *emphasis*)[63].

In this respect, it is necessary to return to a point already presented concerning the place of the subject-participants in this research; that is, *repositioning* the phenomenon investigated *from* the researcher *to* the encounter between the subject-researcher and the subject-participant. In other words, it is possible to stress, in a more evident way, the indispensable presence of the subject-participants in this research process, seeking to bring the "world of life" closer to the "world of culture" as discussed above.

Such a discussion does not aim, however, to deny the importance of the work of authors, but it intends to shift, to unbalance (in the sense of seeking another balance) the participation in the construction of knowledge, *collaboratively*[64]. It is from this

[62] See appendix A for the Portuguese version.

[63] See appendix A for the Portuguese version.

[64] The idea of collaboration is not new in discursive analysis in studies of aphasia. See for example, Coudry (1988 [1986]), Hengst (2001; 2003).

cooperation and reflection that emerged the need to abandon the idea, still quite strong even in human sciences, to *collect* data. According to Bilbeny (2016), the main characteristic of QR is precisely the fact that it is not possible to *add people*[65] – nor *collect* data in the human sciences or sciences that involve subjects. We *create* together – in this dynamic and tense relationship between the subject-researcher and the subject-participant of the research – dialogues through which we reflect and that will allow us to speak about their linguistic and cognitive aspects; that is how we *constitute* data[66].

I believe that by doing so we can take a step further in the direction of transformation and re-signifying research-doing, recognizing the strong presence of these subjects in the entire investigation process. We already know that the intuitions and experiences of researchers are a fundamental part of any work – the result of any reflection already carried out within the framework of historical-cultural approaches and qualitative research – and therefore cannot be disregarded.

For the researcher who adopts the perspectives defended by Vygotsky and Bakhtin, *heuristic clues* are fundamental for the evaluation of the investigated phenomena, since they make it possible to reconstitute the subject's work with the resources of the language (phonetic/phonological, lexical, semantic-grammatical), as well as on the pragmatic-discursive contexts of its production.

As we will see throughout this work, these issues converge in the analyses of the interviews that I conducted between 2016 and 2018. I chose semi-structured interviews because there were issues (social, cultural, and personal) about which I wanted to talk, as well as because I intended to create conditions for the subjects to tell me what was of interest to them and that was not foreseen by the questions, which served only as a roadmap to these conversations. Here is the interview outline[67]:

1. Tell me a little about yourself. What do you like to do? What was your main occupation? Where did you study and/or work?

[65] Conference held on September 7, 2016 at the University of Barcelona, entitled: "Ethics in la Investigación Qualitativa en Salud," part of the program of the Ibero-American Congress of Qualitative Research in Health.

[66] I believe, it is worth noting, the need, for example, to return to these subjects so that we can, together, talk about the more theoretical issues as well as the analysis of some of the processes I investigated. This is not about "validating" the research through the reading of these participants, but to bring the "world of life" closer to the "world of culture," and giving more visibility to the indispensable presence of these subjects in this reflection and in my trajectory of researcher.

[67] See appendix for the version in Portuguese.

2. What does ag(e)ing mean to you?
3. Do you follow newsletters? What do you like to watch and/or read?
4. What do you think of today's youth compared to yours? Has anything changed, improved, or worsened?
5. How is your relationship with the people you live with? Who do you usually have more opportunities to talk to? What do you like to talk about?
6. What difficulties do you think you have? Is there anything that have improved or got worse with ag(e)ing?

The interviews, which were around 30 minutes long, were recorded and transcribed discursively. At first, the transcriptions were adapted from the guidelines of the NURC Project (Cult Urban Linguistic Norm – Norma Linguística Urbana Culta in Portuguese), which was created in 1970 and aimed to document and describe the standard urban Portuguese spoken in five Brazilian capitals[68]. In a second moment, I adapted the transcriptions to the guidelines of Hengst (2001; 2003) mainly because "playing" with the two guidelines offered me a chance to see the data – and the phenomenon investigated – from different perspectives. Hengst (2001), based on Goffman (1981), designed the transcription system to include

> all behaviors and activities that talk is a part of. Specifically, then, the entire transcription system I am using is structured to display the kind of complexity of communication that Goffman was describing. First, it highlights the way talk is embedded in activity by presenting a gloss of ongoing activity throughout the transcript. Second, the usual emphasis on speakers alone is downplayed by having all participants in the gathering continuously represented in the transcript. Finally, the transcript de-emphasizes turn-by-turn talk by having the segment or line breaks unrelated to utterances or pauses (Hengst, 2001, p. 88).

The whole process of transcription and data analysis can be summarized in three phases: first, the interviews were transcribed in Portuguese according to the NURC guidelines and adapted to the phenomenon I was investigating; second, I readapted the transcriptions to a different system noticing the possibilities this new system was

[68] For more details on the project, see Silva (1996).

offering[69]; and third, I translated the selected episodes to English[70]. The whole process, although time-demanding, was fundamental for the reflections and this study.

Both guidelines and transcription processes were fundamental for the data analysis while seeking to answer the questions of this research, which justifies bringing this discussion here. Since QR is oriented towards evidence that contributes to the understanding of a phenomenon, this means, on the one hand, to closely observe the data in search of the clues that contribute to explain the phenomenon investigated; on the other hand, this type of research demands (re)thinking the ways the data are analyzed. It is, therefore, to assume the responsibility of adapting the analysis to what is investigated, as Damico et al. (1999) argues, that it is important to have the *flexibility* to adjust the methods, both in terms of the data and in the analyzes.

It was, therefore, in the process of returning to the interviews and the transcriptions – assuming a contemplative position while facing the data (Coudry, 2018) – that I included, for example, time marks[71]. and reflect about how this information could reveal important aspects of the process, namely, the speed with which new and relevant information was presented. This allows us to observe which linguistic and cognitive strategies the subject employs at times of difficulty in word-finding, as well as it becomes an important element to question the naturalization of discourses that take *slowness* as an inherent characteristic of ag(e)ing, as we will see in the next chapters.

1.4.2. *Loci* of the study

In order to talk to the participants of this research, I have attended the activities developed in two groups of the Center for People with Aphasia (CCA – acronym in Portuguese)[72]. The activities of the first of them – Group 3 – occur every Tuesday

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[69] One of the aspects that became more evident during the process of adapting the transcription system was the co-occurrence of body and gestural movements in the process of meaning-making, especially during word-finding process, a topic I would like to delve further in future work.

[70] I had the great support and help of the lab assistants of the Discourse Analysis lab, coordinated by Dr. Hengst. Whenever it was necessary, I provided further explanation about translation decisions. In some contexts, however, I did not adapt the translation to the English system, keeping what might seem incorrect so that the phenomenon in Portuguese would not be completely lost when translated into English.

[71] See appendix C for the key to transcription conventions.

[72] The activities in the Center for People with Aphasia (CCA) started in August 1989 as a partnership between the Faculty of Medical Sciences and the Institute of Language Studies of the State University of Campinas. There are currently three groups that join people with and without aphasia in weekly sessions in

morning, from 8 AM to 12 PM. The work gathers undergraduate and graduate students in Linguistics and Speech Therapy undergraduate students from the State University of Campinas. The second group I participated, between March and June 2018, is Group 2. Their activities take place on Friday mornings and also count on the work of graduate and undergraduate students in Linguistics and Speech Therapy[73].

As presented in the introduction of this dissertation, my life was significantly changed when I joined CCA in 2007. Working with people with aphasia and following up on the committed effort of all speech therapists have helped me to grow immensely academically and personally. There is no exaggeration in saying that CCA became more than a place to work and study; it became a reference of a work developed ethically at the service of Campinas community. I feel fortunate enough to say that it was – to a great extent – during the weekly meetings with the subjects of these groups and their relatives, dealing with the most diverse situations – from the difficulties with language (the first and foremost reason for them to join the groups) to finding ways to make sure some of the participants could continue to participate (either by convincing their families or by contacting various public systems so that transportation to CCA would be guaranteed, for example), that I gradually became a researcher[74].

The second institution is a non-profit association devoted to receiving ag(e)ing individuals who need assistance. The organization, whose name will be preserved for ethical reasons, has been operating in Campinas for more than twenty years and currently houses about 30 ag(e)ing individuals most of which do not have cognitive-linguistic disorders.

I visited this institution on a weekly basis for 2 years, between 2016 and 2018, mostly in the afternoons between their meals breaks (between 1 and 4 PM) for around 2 hours. During the visits, I sought to talk with people as much as I could. Not all of them became participants of this research, but I consider these encounters as important to my reflections because I had different senses of what meant for them to live in the institution, for example. In our conversations, we talked about various topics: we shared our lives,

social activities with language. The groups are coordinated by Drs. Edwiges Maria Morato (Group 1), Maria Irma Hadler Coudry (Group 2), and Rosana do Carmo Novaes-Pinto (Group 3). Group 3 started in 2006.

[73] For further details about the work developed in CCA, see Morato (1999), Morato et al. (2002), and Sampaio (2007).

[74] The relevance of the CCA to my trajectory deserves a greater space for reflection and, therefore, should be deepened in future work.

our worries and expectations about news and politics, our interest in music and TV shows, and so on. Most of the individuals were surprised by my presence there "just to talk," as Zilda used to say with a bit of suspicion and shock. However, at the end of most of my visits, it was common to see some of them asking me to come back the following week and that they would be waiting for me.

One of the most remarkable experiences of these visits was meeting Maria, one of the residents who asked me *every week* to take her away with me. Maria developed a dementia due to poor nutrition. Her son kept her locked in her bedroom for months, feeding her only the bare minimum and using the pension she received from her deceased husband. The niece, suspicious of her aunt's absence, reported her cousin to the police. In order to avoid criminal investigation, the son agreed to abdicate his rights to his mother's care, losing her pension and the right to see her[75]. Finding stories like Maria's was one of the most painful experiences during my visits to the institution. Not only because I know that such stories are more frequent than we would like to believe, but because they reminded me of the feeling that often accompanies us when we work with subjects who suffer: a great helplessness.

However, not all experiences in the institution were gloomy: while Maria asked me every week to take her away, Pedro, for example, told me that he was more than pleased living there, since he would not have to "deal with family problems." Although most ag(e)ing individuals who live in the institution had a similar opinion, it was inevitable to think, at first, of a certain kind of loneliness that for me accompanied them in their constant expectation of being visited by family and friend. As a researcher, my interpretations were highly marked by stereotypes of a life within an institution, so I frequently felt, for example, that I was not doing much for them. It took me some time and constant reflection to realize that there were different forms of care and affection in the institution, whether from caregivers or housemates: many of them, for instance, share various stories of disagreement, fights, and celebrations. Ana, for example, always complained about José, another resident, whose jokes tired her immensely, even though he did not tell *her* the jokes. Rosa, on the other hand, did not like any person in the institution but the caregivers. Her discontent and complaints were such that some other

[75] Maria's niece told me the story adding that the only reason she kept her aunt in the institution was to make sure her cousin would not find his mother.

residents did not really want to spend much time around her. She always made me laugh telling me all sorts of gossips about everybody living there.

Another meeting was also noteworthy. The institution manager, who had approved my research and my visits as a volunteer, did not think it would be necessary to contact the relatives of the participants to advise them of my presence in the institution, despite my suggestions for her to do so. What happened next should not be a surprise for anyone. The moment I started recording the interview with Zilda, her son, who had just arrived at the institution for a visit, told me that I could not record the interview because he did not had authorized it. I explained that I had the authorization of the institution, but that I would end the interview right away so that we could talk about the misunderstanding. He talked to the manager and then, again with me, when I was able to explain the motivations of the research and how the interview would be conducted. After clarifying the issue and talking about his concerns, he allowed me to continue and even offered to talk about ag(e)ing, since he was a geriatrician.

All these encounters reveal important aspects that dialogue with other issues of this study. The first is the difficulty and the challenges of establishing institutional support outside academia; that is, the effort necessary in establishing dialogues between universities and society. The second is reflecting about the various kinds of *stereotypes* that – to a greater or lesser extent – pervade the research development. It is not rare, for example, to see institutions for ag(e)ing individuals essentialized to "warehouse of seniors," caregiving as a "second-class job[76]," and families considered "abandoning" their relatives in the institutions. Researchers are also frequently seen as people who "collect data, criticize the institution or family, and never return," a concern Zilda's son revealed, and the families, considered by many to "abandon" their relatives.

Although these issues cannot be further explored in this work, given its scope, the reflection on the meetings and dialogues with these family members and the institutions (managers and caregivers, for example), as well as the research subjects, were fundamental not only to answer the questions of this study, but because they contributed to help me identify and question assumptions and stereotypes about ag(e)ing that constitute me. Important movement that reinforces, for me, the constant necessary caution with generalizations about language and ag(e)ing.

[76] See Panhoca (2008) and Panhoca & Pupo (2010).

1.4.3. Ethical Aspects of the research

All participants or their legal representatives signed the Informed Consent Form (Termo de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido, in Portuguese) in order to join the study. The project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the State University of Campinas under the process number 51794415.7.0000.5404.

1.4.4. The participant-subjects of this research

Before concluding this chapter, I present each of the participants with whom I had the opportunity to talk and learn during this study. For a reflection and analysis of the data, the subjects were divided into four groups:

Group (I): Helena, Catarina, and Heitor – individuals who were not institutionalized and who did not have any diagnosis of language alteration; that is, understood in this research as in the process of normal ag(e)ing[77];

Group (II): Pedro and Ana – participants living in a nursing home in Campinas and also in the normal ag(e)ing process;

Group (III): Paulo, Francisco, Luiz, and Carlos – subjects who were not institutionalized, had language alterations (aphasia) and who attend (or used to attend) Groups 2 or 3 of CCA - IEL/UNICAMP[78];

Group (IV): Isabel and Zilda – institutionalized subjects that received diagnoses of pathologies that alter the linguistic-cognitive functioning (aphasia and dementia, respectively).

1.4.4.1. Helena, Catarina, and Heitor (Group I)

Helena and Catarina were the first ag(e)ing women I interviewed. Helena was born in the countryside of São Paulo in 1939, having moved to Campinas in 1967. I met

[77] Caregivers and/or family members of people with aphasia attending Group 3 of CCA were invited to participate in the study, as well as individuals from our relationship circles, from different backgrounds.

[78] Unfortunately, due to technical problems with the camera that I used to record the interviews, the conversation I had with Carlos, which occurred in early 2018, was lost. As my diary and notes of the conversation are considered valid and relevant procedure in qualitative research (Damico et al., 1999), I decided to maintain him among the participants.

her through her grandson who is also a graduate student at UNICAMP and with whom I have friends in common. During a lunch when I explained to him that I was ready to start interviewing ag(e)ing individuals, he said his grandmother would be a "great interviewee" because of her mood and "all the stories she could share with me." He told me he would explain to her about my research and check if she would be interested in participating.

Throughout the interview, she was cheerful and humorous. Although she repeatedly said that she did not truly understand why she was being interviewed since her life was "not interesting," but of "suffering and too many difficulties," the meeting was out-of-ordinary for her that I offered making a copy of the interview so that she could show and tell others she had been interviewed. She also showed interest in being updated about common problems that affect her neighborhood and the city.

Retired and widowed, she studied only up to the first grade and lives currently with one of her four children in Campinas. One of the aspects of her life that struck me the most was her incredible ability to deal with life and the energy she had to talk about it: her accounts of how she used to work as a housemaid and how she dealt with disrespectful bosses (sometimes even playing pranks!), and of how she managed to own two apartments without having the chance of counting on the money of her husband. These are just some examples of her resilience in surviving social-economic difficult times, and contrast with the narrative of inability to do "real work," or of feeling "illiterate" and "stupid" – as she describes herself – to which she aligns to and which suggests the echo of a broad sense of what illiterate people should/could/were allowed to behave or have.

Catarina was also born in the countryside of São Paulo in 1945 and moved to Campinas in 1952. I first met her in a religious gathering where she taught courses about her faith alongside other instructors. After weekly meeting her for around six months and feeling she could be interested in participating in the research, I invited her to join the study and recorded an interview that took place at her home in the center of Campinas. Throughout the conversation, she repeated several times how she would have liked to continue studying and to have graduated from higher education. Her trajectory of education is similar to many women's stories of this generation: with the death of her mother, she and her sisters had to give up studying to help with household chores while

the brothers went to work. At the age of 16, she finished the so-called "normal classic"[79] and did not return to school.

Currently, Catarina is divorced and resides alone in Campinas, working as a volunteer in her religious institution in a prison teaching courses on Spiritism. In the interview, Catarina showed how her daily practice of studies, due to the demands of the religious institution, was important for her to assume a self-taught and continuous learning posture.

Heitor was also born in the interior of São Paulo in 1955. I have known him since 2010 when his wife joined the Group 3 of CCA. Because he is very enthusiastic and joyful, always willing to help other members – he has created good relationship with all the participants of Group 3, including other people with aphasia and students –, and participate in the activities of the group, supporting his wife and greeting us always with a smile – besides joking around about soccer games – I thought he would enjoy participating in the research.

He and his wife currently live in Valinhos, a city nearby Campinas, so they travel around 40 minutes every Tuesday so that she can participate in the activities of our group. He has completed high school and worked as a train driver until he retired. After that, he went back to school and took short courses at SENAI – a technical industrial school –, complementing the family income with the work as an electrical technician. Besides traveling whenever possible with his wife, daughter, and son-in-law, Heitor participates in some activities especially developed for ag(e)ing individuals in his hometown. He is also very committed to gardening, being responsible for the one we have in front of our lab.

Catarina, Heitor, and Helena have in common an exciting personality: they like to talk and share their views of the world, either by joking around about current affairs, telling anecdotes, or simply enjoying another person's company.

[79] In 1942, under the Getúlio Vargas' government, the Capanema Reform of Education was instituted, which divided the secondary education into *classical* and *scientific*. While the former was more focused on philosophy and language learning (including Latin, Spanish, and Greek), the latter offered courses focused on the natural sciences. In 1946, the *normal education* was instituted, which prepared students (practically only women) to work as teachers of primary schools.

1.4.4.2. Paulo, Francisco, Luiz, and Carlos (Group III)

Paulo, Francisco, Luiz, and Carlos have in common the fact that they live with their families in Campinas and deal with the difficulties in communication imposed by the neurological events that made them aphasic.

Paulo was born in the countryside of São Paulo in 1936 and finished the first year of Elementary School. He has two children, lives with his wife in Campinas and has worked most of his life in construction. He has always been a strong man (he used to walk around 15 km every day before he had the stroke) with strong opinions (some of which were very controversial during the group sessions).

In 2009, he had an ischemic stroke[80] and at the same year joined Group 3 of CCA. His aphasia is characterized as fluent, and his speech production is marked by semantic and phonetic-phonological paraphasia, pauses, and hesitations in search of words (see Fugiwara, 2013; Souza-Cruz, 2017)[81]. Although fluent, the difficulty to find words often made him very frustrated during the sessions of the group, as well as in the interview. Despite these issues, though, Paulo developed artistic skills after some of the activities we developed. He started carving wood figures, especially of animals, which he would bring to show in the group sessions: he would bring them inside a box and play with the other participants to see who would guess which animal he had created. Eventually, he became proud of his work, which led us to organize a small exhibit in one of our end-of-semester activities.

In 2017, Paulo stopped attending CCA due to health problems, especially because it became difficult to walk. It was challenging for him thus to take a bus to attend the weekly activities and since he could not count on any other support for transportation and considering the danger, at that time, to commute by himself, he and his family decided not to join the activities any longer.

Francisco was born in the countryside of Minas Gerais in 1952. He is married, has 4 children, is a technician in industrial mechanics with incomplete secondary

[80] According to Fugiwara (2013, p. 33), the medical report, in 2009, shows: "peripheral hypo attenuation in the frontal lobe and left insular vein suggestive of recent ischemia and vasogenic edema; presence of left fronto-temporo-parietal subcortical hemorrhage with no significant expansive effect." See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[81] As discussed earlier in this chapter, I propose referring to the participants with pseudonyms. Previous works about Paulo, though, have used the acronyms – *AC* in this case –, as it is the tradition in the field.

education. In addition to the ischemic stroke he had in 2005, Francisco has a psychiatric history, with depression prior to the stroke. His aphasia can be characterized also as fluent and his main difficulty is searching words, which leads him to produce many and long pauses and phonological paraphasia[82]. According to Cazarotti-Pacheco (2012), he also has dysarthrophonia, which can be generally described as a vocal alteration typically associated with paralysis, spasticity, athetosis, tremor, and so on.

He has joined the activities of Group 3 of CCA in 2006. He is our "anchor," since he watches the daily news and brings some of the main events for our group sessions. He is also quite religious. Prior to the neurological episode, Francisco had prominent roles in his church community. Although not being able to communicate as before, participating in some of the activities has become more challenging since then. He also became sad with not being able to read and understand the texts of the Bible as he used to.

During the interview, Francisco was quite detailed oriented. He likes to talk and does not measure efforts to tell how his life was, leaving the ranch where he first lived in Minas Gerais until moving to Campinas where he finally settled after working in different cities across the state of São Paulo.

Luiz was born in 1955, is divorced but lives with his ex-wife since he had an ischemic stroke, in 2016[83]. He has two children and a newborn grandson. He is an agronomic engineer and had traveled throughout the state of São Paulo for the bank for which he worked most of his life. He joined the Group 2 of CCA and according to his language evaluation, he does not write, but speaks and reads with extreme difficulty.

My interview with Luiz was one of the shortest, because of his great difficulty in maintaining attention and continuing a conversation, as well as understanding. He needs frequent help to achieve his *speech will*. In order to get to know him a little more, I attended some of the meetings of Group 2, when I was able to confirm the first impressions I had, during the interview, related to his difficulty of attention, understanding and initiating and maintaining dialogues with their interlocutors.

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[82] Francisco has been referred in previous works as *SR*. According to Fugiwara (2013, p. 32), his medical report (from 2010) states that there is "subacute sequalae of stroke in the artery cerebral cortex, compromising from the frontal region to the insula, left parietal, temporal and occipital lobes." See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[83] According to the medical reports, Luiz had a lacunar ischemic stroke, compromising the posterior central artery.

Carlos[84] was born in 1938. He lives in Santos, on the coast of the state, with his wife. He has worked as an architect all his life and has aphasia due to multiple infarcts. He arrived in Group 2 of CCA in the beginning of 2018. Our interview happened in same day he was evaluated[85]. One of the first aspects of the interview and the evaluation that struck me was his ability to tell and analyze historical facts: from his participation in the construction of *Teatro Oficina* – a prestigious theater company in São Paulo – to his political activism in the 1960's and 1970's, during the military dictatorship in Brazil.

It also caught my attention his excitement at some moments of the interview, as well as his ability to express in detail his criticism of the architectural and urban planning policies in São Paulo and Campinas, where he also worked. An interesting opinion he expressed was his disapproval of the new trend of housing neighborhoods *for* ag(e)ing individuals, the so-called "elder's villages." For him, urbanistically speaking, such a growing trend can lead to greater isolation and the formation of "ghettos." The solution, in his opinion, should follow an intergenerational integration path.

1.4.4.3. Pedro and Ana (Group II)

Pedro was born in São Paulo in 1932. He has lived for years in the nursing home and tells everyone that he is happy living in the institution because he is free from "problems of the family." One of the reasons why he has appreciation for the institution – besides feeling comfortable, having his apartment with his own furniture and decoration, for example – is the fact that he is very involved in most of the activities they offer. Not only did he help with the tidying up of the kitchen, setting the tables, and arranging chairs for meals, but he also helped with the garden, which made him feel proud. Besides helping the institution, he is also devoted to studying and reading religious books. It took me then a long time to get an interview with him because it was difficult to fit the conversation to his schedule.

When he finally agreed to take part in the research, he told me with enthusiasm about his life in Campinas and in São Paulo, his work in a company that produced store

[84] As mentioned earlier, because of a malfunctioning of the memory card of the camera with which I recorded the interview, I was no longer able to count on his linguistic production.

[85] The evaluation was conducted by Dr. Coudry and I shadowed it.

signs, his family travels, and the situation of the "meat crisis"[86] that he followed at the time of the interview with surprise on television. As other participants, Pedro is well-opinionated and likes to interact with the other people who live in the institution.

Ana was born in the countryside of São Paulo in 1922. She is the oldest of the interviewees and has always been very excited to talk to me. She was very friendly, smiley, and always wanted to know what I was doing there. One of the most striking characteristics of Ana is that she has dealt with depression her whole life. She even argues that *now* she is finally happy because she has overcome the disease – despite "living in the institution" and "being old," as she says herself. During the interview, we talked about her life, her experiences, her two children, and about her friends and the activities at the nursing home. She always had something to tell me about someone else. She was not interested, though, in talking about anything outside the institution, other than her story. She also repeatedly mentioned how she likes living there, and how she is grateful to the caregivers.

Both Pedro and Ana share, then, a sense of belonging in the institution that seems to show how happy they are. Both are also very focused in the institution life – Ana more than Pedro, I would say – because he also has other interests (his religious practice and following the news, for example). They both also had a hard time remembering me. Sometimes they thought I was somebody else's child, or a new caregiver, but I always had to remind them that my purpose visiting the institution was researching and learning with them.

1.4.4.4. Isabel and Zilda (Group IV)

Isabel was born in the countryside of São Paulo in 1934 and moved to the nursing home especially due to the advance of her husband's condition, who has Alzheimer's. As they lived alone and because she walks with great difficulty, having to use a wheelchair sometimes, she asked her son to take them to an institution so that her husband could have "someone to look after him." Isabel was one of the interviewees with whom I spoke the most. We got along right away. She is a very sweet, simple, and calm

[86] After two years of investigation, Brazilian Federal Police revealed aspects of a criminal organization that sold expired meat products which triggered a crisis in the domestic and international meat market, since Brazil exports beef to more than 150 countries. The operation became known as "Weak Flesh." A report on the subject can be found in Portuguese here: https://istoe.com.br/a-crise-da-carne-brasileira/ and in English here: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-corruption-food-exports/operation-weak-flesh-takes-bite-out-of-brazils-meat-exports-idUSKBN16V281 Last access: June 2019.

woman, who was not happy living in the institution but tried to adapt as much as she could. She always told me she wanted to see me again the next week and "learn more about my life," so it was not difficult to invite her to join the research as a participant. At first, she said that she did not really understand how her story and a conversation with her could be interesting to my research or to anyone, but when I explained we could always learn something from each other, she agreed to be recorded.

During the interview, she was very emotional, especially when she remembered her parents. She has been a housewife her whole life and did not have much opportunity to study, having only completed elementary school. She was always very worried about her husband. That was, clearly, her main preoccupation. Her routine in the institution was more restricted to his daily activities, which revolved around the meals, watching TV, and having conversation or other activities outside. Differently from Pedro and Ana, for example, she did not have much independence or autonomy.

Zilda was born in Campinas in 1943. She moved to the institution about the same time I started to volunteer. According to her son, who is a geriatrician, she has Alzheimer's disease. When I met her, she was still adapting to her medication and to the institution, and it was very frequent to hear her saying she wanted to "go home." I remember, for example, one day when she ran away while one of the caregivers was leaving from work. Although some of the caregivers quickly perceived her absence and nothing traumatic happened while she was walking around the neighborhood, it became frequent to be asked to "keep a good eye on her," whenever we were left together. On her turn, Zilda would constantly avoid other people's company, including during meals and lunch breaks, and would wander around the garden by herself. She would also ask me to "help her leave," whenever we were alone, explaining that all I had to do to help her was to leave the door "a little open" because her house was "really close to the institution." The moments we shared together were mostly marked by this type of interaction, but when I was finally able to interview her, she was cheerful and seemed attentive, although she repeated quite frequently that she wanted to "go home."

In order to summarize the information presented about the participants of this research, find below a table with key inform.

Participant	Age	Formal Education/Occupation	Interview	Group	
Helena	77	1st Elementary School / Housemaid	32:17:00	no diagnosis /not institutionalized	**GROUP 1**
Catarina	71	High School / Housewife	26:42:00	no diagnosis /not institutionalized	
Heitor	63	High School / Train driver	28:42:00	no diagnosis /not institutionalized	
Pedro	86	High School /	29:13:00	no diagnosis / institutionalized	**GROUP 2**
Ana	96	1st Elementary School / Housewife	31:54:00	no diagnosis / institutionalized	
Paulo	80	1st Elementary School / Construction	27:31:00	aphasia / not institutionalized	**GROUP 3**
Francisco	64	High School / IM Technician	43:07:00	aphasia / not institutionalized	
Luiz	63	Higher Education / Agr Engineer	15:02:00	aphasia / not institutionalized	
Carlos*	80	Higher Education / Architect	-	aphasia / not institutionalized	
Izabel	84	4th Elementary School / Housewife	17:01:00	aphasia / institutionalized	**GROUP 4**
Zilda	75	3rd Elementary School / Housewife	40:28:00	AD / institutionalized	

Table 1: Summary of participants' information

1.5. Retomando *um* fio da meada[87]:

As we have seen along this chapter, a question present throughout the research, which I sought to give more visibility – while also discussing theoretical and methodological aspects of this work –, was understanding the relationship between language and ag(e)ing from the assumption that *ag(e)ing brains should not be dissociated from ag(e)ing subjects* and, therefore, from what they live today and their trajectories of life. In this way, I believe to be able to follow a path that takes ag(e)ing issues beyond purely chronological and biological markers, as Hamilton (2001, p. 570) argues:

> Even well-meaning researchers in gerontology may unwittingly contribute to this situation by "expect [ing] that **age will have a central significance** and… look[ing] **for its effects in our research of the elderly**" (Ward, 1984, p. 230) rather than striving to understand lives of the elderly "as they are lived" and highlighting age only when it is salient.

Moving forward in ag(e)ing studies thus means reflecting on what practice of research moves us; that is, if we look for subjects that *fit into* our expectations or if we are interested in *listening* to their stories, to (re)think practices that erase the presence of these subjects in the research process, and other possible ways of doing research.

I believe that this reflection on the concepts that underlie the research, as well as the way we *constitute* the data and the place(s) of the subjects in this process reflect the movement of going-and-coming between theory and practice. There were several moments when the meetings with the subjects *moved* me, from another place, to reflect once more about the reasons that led me to this research and the ways in which I could answer each one of the questions presented.

As we will see in **Chapter 2**, these meetings also *move* the participants who not always understand why I was interested in listening to them, as was the case with Ana, who asked me how could someone "so young want to waste time" with "a bunch of old people." What interest can there be in this meeting? Perhaps not of "collecting" data –

[87] In Portuguese, the expression "perder o fio da meada" (literally translated as "to lose the thread of skein") generally refers to the thread of a conversation. It is commonly used with the idea of confusion, when some misses, for example, the topic of the conversation and is frequently regarded as characteristic of ag(e)ing discourses. Considering this widespread stereotype, I decided to use this metaphor to conclude each chapter of this dissertation pulling the threads of the main aspects discussed so that we hopefully do not miss them.

like a biologist who enters a forest to collect rare specimens – but to enable a "conversa a dois" to, from this conversation, reflect on aspects of the relationship between language and ag(e)ing that perhaps cannot be understood outside these encounters.

This search for a non-symmetrical alignment between researcher-participant, an option historically marked in Neurolinguistics, since the first work of Coudry (1988 [1986]), is evident in the speech of the Brazilian actor Lázaro Ramos, the main interviewee of a panel about his new book "Na minha pele,"[88] at the International Literary Fair of Parati[89], in 2017, which I bring to synthesize the reflection developed so far.

Lázaro was moved by the story of Diva Guimarães, who talked about the racism that she suffered throughout her childhood and thanked her for her courage in sharing such a painful story with all the audience that watched the panel. To the teacher's speech, the actor adds: "You said something very important that I want to *speak with you*: we need to make a pact to invest in good public education."

Lázaro's reply to the teacher is an acknowledgement of the words of the *other*: "I want to speak together," as opposed to "speaking for you," "speaking without you." Such movement, although small in the life history of the teacher, *unbalance* more stable narratives that silence the ag(e)ing individuals and not recognize them as subjects who work *with* and *in* language. In addition, they recognize the importance of the other for our reflection. I would like to end this chapter with the words of Geraldi (2010, p. 88):

[88] Lázaro Ramos (2017). *Na minha Pele*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Objetiva.

[89] The interview is available in Portuguese on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjuH1NJMjTg Last access: April 2019.

> Assuming that the relation to the singularity is of the nature of the constitutive process of subjects, with the precariousness of the temporality that the specific of the moment implies, the instability of the subjects – and of history – is not a problem at to be discarded, but instead it is inspiration to recomprehend life, assuming the irreversibility of its processes. As we have different stories of relationships with others – whose "excess of seing" (Bakhtin) we seek in our constitution processes – **we are building our consciousness with different words that we internalize and that work as counterwords in the construction of the senses of what we live, see, hear, and read**. **These are the stories that make us unique and "unrepeatable."** Uncertain unicity, since if we understand with words that before being ours were and are also others', we will never be sure if we are speaking or if something speaks for us (**emphasis** added)[90].

I hope that the discussions developed in this chapter should ground and enlighten the reflections presented in the next chapters.

[90] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

CHAPTER 2

STEREOTYPES AND REPRESENTATIONS: DISCOURSES *ON* AG(E)ING:

People speak to be 'heard', sometimes to be respected and also to exert an influence in the environment in which they perform linguistic acts. The power of the word is the power to mobilize the authority accumulated by the speaker and concentrate it in a linguistic act.
Maurizio Gnerre, 1988[91]

You can chase your dream at any age; you're never too old. Sixty-four. A thing that no one, at any age, any gender, could ever do, has done it. And there's no doubt in my mind that I am at the prime of my life today[92].
Diana Nyad, 2013

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter, I aim to answer the first research question of this study – as presented in the introduction – which seeks to understand what stereotypes are pervasive in discourses about ag(e)ing that circulate and constitute its *ethos* in society. To reach such a goal, I articulate four points of observation and reflection: i) how ag(e)ing is being discussed in different fields of research; ii) what has been investigated about discriminatory practices against ag(e)ing individuals in Brazil; iii) how ag(e)ing is represented in TV commercials; and iv) what *senses* of ag(e)ing emerge in the interviews with the participants of this research when they reflect about their own experiences.

[91] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[92] Diana Nyad is the first athlete to cross the Straits of Florida, between Cuba and the United States, without a shark protection box. Since the 1950's, athletes of all ages, men and women, have tried to cross what is considered one of the most dangerous water stretches of the world – either because of its strong currents or the presence of some of the most poisonous sharks and jellyfishes. Nyad achieved her goal at the age of 64 – after four unsuccessful attempts (in 1978, twice in 2011, and in 2012) – after swimming 164 km (around 102 miles), without resting, for 53 hours. Nyad talks about her experience and career here: https://www.ted.com/talks/diana_nyad_never_ever_give_up#t-821827 Last access: April 2019.

Initially, then, I turn to some of the main issues on the subject from perspectives within Gerontology[93], Anthropology, and Linguistics, for their relevance to the broad discussion about ag(e)ing and for considering that approximating them helps us answer the questions of this study. After that, I discuss ag(e)ing discriminatory practices because they are recurrent and naturalized instances that are interrelated with stereotypes of age. After this reflection, I bring an analysis of how ag(e)ing has been represented in television commercials (broadcast in Brazil between 2007 and 2017), mobilizing the concepts of *parody* (Hutcheon, 1985) and *stereotype* (Carmelino & Possenti, 2015)[94]. Finally, I contrast the above-mentioned *senses* of ag(e)ing to the accounts of the participants of this research.

As presented in **Chapter 1**, the articulation of these reflections is based on the concept of *utterance* – the real unit of communication. Each of these units is a link in the chain of communication (Bakhtin, 1986), which allows us to better comprehend how micro and macro structures are interwoven. I hope thus that this discussion helps us to advance in understanding how the circulation of discourses mark and sustain (im)possibilities of experiences of ag(e)ing.

2.2. Discourses *on* age(ing) and discriminatory practices

Before discussing the ways in which discriminatory practices occur, I address, although briefly, some of the discourses that circulate in different fields of research in Brazil.

In Public Health, Lima et al. (2013) synthesize the main scientific publications in Brazil between 2002 and 2012. Of the 40 articles selected as a sample, the authors observed that they generally addressed: **i)** issues related to the "challenges" of ag(e)ing, demography, and public policies in the care of the ag(e)ing individuals (Freire Junior & Tavares, 2006; Cupertino, Rosa & Ribeiro, 2007; Veras 2009; Guerra & Caldas, 2010 *apud* Lima et al., 2013); **ii)** the perception of ag(e)ing individuals of their process of becoming old(er), pointing to the importance of their participation in society (Frumi &

[93] It is interesting to note that although Gerontology is a field of knowledge, as defended by Prado & Sayd (2006), literature review works in Portuguese are limited to other areas, such as "Health," "Anthropology," "Psychology," and so on, which reinforces the limits and difficulties of defining Gerontology as an area, as I pointed out in **Chapter 1.**

[94] I presented part of part of this discussion and the analysis of the data at the Aging & Social Change: VII Interdisciplinary Conference, held in early November 2017 at the University of California - Berkeley, USA.

Celich, 2006; Guerra & Caldas, 2010 *apud* Lima et al., 2013); **iii)** issues related to dependence due to diseases, and their impact on family dynamics and home economy (Caldas, 2003; Souza, Skubs & Brêtas, 2007 *apud* Lima et al., 2013); **iv)** studies on the specificities of ag(e)ing of women (Lima & Bueno, 2009; Paz, Santos & Eidt, 2006 *apud* Lima et al., 2013); **v)** the importance of physical activity as a relevant factor for healthy ag(e)ing (Matsudo, Rodrigues Matsudo & Barros Neto, 2001 *apud* Lima et al., 2013); and **(vi)** diseases associated with ag(e)ing, such as dementia, calling attention to the need for further investigation and specialization of health professionals – an issue that is still little discussed in Brazil among these experts, according to the authors (Caramelli, 2006; Honório & Santos, 2009; Fernandes et al., 2010; González et al., 2010 *apud* Lima et al., 2013).

In Psychology, Neri (2013, p. 17) considers that *ag(e)ing studies* aim to investigate "patterns of behavioral change associated with advancing age, distinguishing those that are typical of old age from those that are shared by other ages."[95] The author shows that the most recent scenario of a(e)ing theories reflects the development of life-course paradigms – a theory known as "life-span," originally developed by Paul Baltes – as summarized in the following passage:

[95] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

> The classical stage theories and data derived from longitudinal and cross-sectional surveys affiliated with the life cycle paradigm in biology and psychology paved the way for the preparation of the new views on development and aging. The great psychological theories of development that dominated the scene in the first half of the twentieth century and the attempts to establish great sociological theories about aging that were predominant between the mid-1950's and the mid-1970's gave way to micro theories on particular aspects of social, affective, and cognitive development. An important and growing number of longitudinal studies in the field of aging have looked at the gains and losses of aging through the lens of these micro theories. Through them and appropriate methods and techniques, the assumptions of the two paradigms have been empirically confirmed. In this context, new concepts have been generated that are useful for the discrimination of the specific nature of the behavioral changes that occur in aging and to the understanding of the continuity and discontinuity of developmental themes throughout the later years of life (Neri, 2013, pp. 40-41)[96].

The relevance of these new reflection parameters in Psychology is also observed in the increase of diversity in research themes as *resilience, physical and emotional fragility, depression, physical and psychological well-being*[97]*, death with dignity*[98]. Such

[96] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[97] An interesting study regarding *empathy* in Alzheimer's disease, for example, is Fisher et al. (2019), which suggests that "AD patients show a pattern of relatively preserved affective aspects and impairments in cognitive components of empathy and points out specific areas with the need for further research" (Fisher et al., 2019, p. 921).

[98] In this regard it is interesting to notice, for example, that the Chilean pension system was considered the 8th best in the world according to the Melbourne Mercer World Pension Index 2018. While in financial terms the pension system is rated as positive and is being used as a reference to the current pension reform in Brazil, the question that remains is the reality of ag(e)ing individuals. There are numerous and growing cases of elderly people in Chile who are committing suicide due to financial difficulties. Between 1990 and 2011, only 6 countries out of the 36 OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) had high suicide rates. Chile has the second highest increase in the world, second only to Korea and ahead of Japan and Russia. The adoption of a private pension system in 1981, during the Pinochet military dictatorship, has been associated with the increase in suicide rates in Chile (see for example Oliveira, Machado & Hein, 2019); The average of suicide among individuals over 80 is twice the national´s: 17.7 / 100 thousand. Between 70 and 79 the average is 50% above the national average, reaching 15.4 / 100 thousand (data retrieved from https://www.gazetadopovo.com.br/vozes/a-protagonista/aposentadorianochile/ Last access: July 2019). In Japan, while people generally still believe the country to "respect" the elders, differently from the West, it is becoming more and more common to read news in which elders commit crimes to go to jail where they will find people with whom to talk. Stories of Japanese ag(e)ing individuals and the reason that led them to want to go to jail, including financial difficulties and loneliness, can be found in the link: https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-47033704 (Last access: July 2019). The widespread discomfort of living lonely and lack of social structure to live well seems to indicate a dark scenario for ag(e)ing: poverty, lack of social security, and isolation.

themes indicate changes of interest and the way of observing phenomena related to ag(e)ing, not only treating them in relation to losses and diseases.

In Anthropology, for instance, Debert (1999b) makes a rather interesting discussion about representations of old age in the context of what she refers as "a search for overcoming stereotypes and biological, physical, psychological, and social determinism." The author states that the new ways of experiencing ag(e)ing – much frequently materialized in a wide range of activities such as traveling and "dream fulfillment" – "do not necessarily lead to a more tolerant attitude towards old people, but rather, and above all, to a commitment to *a particular type of positive aging*" (Debert, 1999b, p. 72; *emphasis* added). For the author, new ag(e)ing representations emerge in a context in which "a set of widely media publicized discourses strives to destabilize expectations and images traditionally associated with advancing of age, (...) disseminating a series of recipes such as techniques of body maintenance, healthy meals, gymnastics, medicines, dances, and other forms of leisure seeking to *show how those who do not feel old should behave*, *despite their age*" (Debert 1999b, p. 72; *emphasis* added)[99].

The author refers to this phenomenon as "a reprivatization of old age," since it is a process in which:

> **dramas become the responsibilities of individuals who neglected their bodies and were unable to engage in motivational activities**. (...) The central argument is that the assessment of the character of transformations in the course of life – of the delusional or realistic of the suggested libertarian promises – only makes sense if attention is turned to how from these changes solidarity between generations is redefined and to the social hierarchies that these transformations put into action (Debert, 1999b, p. 72; **emphasis** added) [100].

In Linguistics, Novaes-Pinto (2008), dialoguing with Geriatrics and Gerontology studies, also argues that despite the observable advances in studies on ag(e)ing in Brazil, especially with regard to moving towards a more preventive and less "corrective" investigation, situations of great exclusion are still the norm.

[99] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[100] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

> Early retirement is often the fact that triggers brutal changes in these social circles. A minority of the population has in retirement a chance to improve their quality of life. Older adults belonging to higher social classes can cope with old age usually without many economic concerns; they have the opportunity to travel with no hurry to fulfill old dreams and to feed themselves well; they can buy the usually expensive medicines indicated by doctors, and so on. In these cases, the newly created term "best age" to replace "old age" seems to be adequate. In a situation like that of Brazil, however, it is not at all what occurs on a large scale. Retirement becomes a reason for more concern, with a progressive decrease in income and an increase in health spending (Novaes-Pinto, 2008, p. 17)[101].

More recently, Novaes-Pinto & Oliveira (2016) show how the presence of specific laws and of several public policies to meet the demands of this population reveal aspects of Brazilian society that still treat ag(e)ing individuals in a discriminatory and often violent manner[102].

After presenting some of the works that resonate more directly to the questions of this study, I turn to aspects related to discrimination. The prejudice directed exclusively at this population, known by the term *ageism* – coined by Butler & Lewis (1973), encompasses stereotypes, negative attitudes, and marginalization practices that affect both the mental health and the physical and social well-being of the subjects who grow older. An example of such stigmatizing attitude is well portrayed by Marcuschi in the presentation of Preti's (1991) work about the language of ag(e)ing individuals:

[101] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[102] As also briefly discussed in **Chapter 1,** the Brazilian pension reform – as it is presented and discussed by the time of the conclusion of this study – will impact the most vulnerable, increasing the inequality gap and impoverishing seniors – especially black men and women who respond to the majority of the population working in informal jobs; that is, whose employers do not contribute to the security system or who are autonomous workers. Regarding such issue, Oliveira & Oliveira (2018), for example, discuss how poverty, once interpreted as *individual failure*, can determine how difficulties that are characteristic of social exclusion are taken by health professionals as *deficit*. The authors call attention to the need to delve into such reflections in order to avoid violence and discriminatory practices.

> If someone asked you what you mean by the expression "elders' talk," you would certainly make observations of the type: **it is a long, endless, dragged conversation, paused, full of stories, memories of the past and so forth.** If on the one hand this would contain some truths, on the other, it would reveal a prejudiced and stigmatizing attitude. Clear proof that language is more than one simple communication tool; it is also a decisive component in the formation of social prejudices (Marcuschi, 1991, p. 9; **emphasis** added)[103].

To illustrate how current Marcuschi's description is, I present a comment, taken from a Brazilian cartoonist Facebook page about the 2018 Brazil truck driver's strike (also referred to as the "2018 diesel crisis")[104]. In the comment, it is possible to see the characterization of the driver as a "zap big uncle," who understands nothing (of Foucault, Marx, Adam Smith, and so on) and spreads fake news through WhatsApp – popularly known in Brazil as *zap*[105]. In addition, the drivers are opposed to a group of young people who are *assumed* to understand politics and the scholars mentioned.

> I think that we can already state without fear of making a mistake that the strongest political power in Brasil now is the BIG UNCLE OF ZAP. I find it wonderful how history bites youth's asses. They thought that technology would be an emancipatory bid for the greater good, Arab Spring, blah blah blah, but in the end what it allowed was the country to be governed by a zap group of seniors. The youth, poor them, thinks that they will earn hearts and minds sharing in social media their texts about Foucault, Marx, Adam Smith, and Milton Friedman, but in the end it's the gossip about Jean Wyllys marrying an animal that defines the country's future. I was told to create a comic strip about it, but the fact is that it is useless. Brazil is a joke-obsoleting machine.

Figure 2: post from a cartoonist on Facebook about the assumed circulation of fake news through WhatsApp[106]

[103] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[104] The 2018 Brazil truck drivers' strike was initially organized by self-employed truck drivers but that later included other sectors of society, as engineers of Petrobrás – the state-owned oil company. The protesters demanded a decrease of the price of diesel, exemption from certain tolls, as well as a legal and tax reform related to truck driving. Oil prices increased in Brazil after a policy change, under Michel Temer's government, that made them float with international market. The nationwide paralysis of roads caused a shortage of food, medicines, and oil across Brazil, with long queues of vehicles to gas stations.

[105] ZAP is a Brazilian Portuguese adaptation of the English pronunciation of "WhatsApp."

[106] "Tiozão" ("Big Uncle") in Brazilian Portuguese is used to describe, stereotypically, a middle-aged man who is ever-present in family reunions, has an outgoing personality, is outspoken in his conservative beliefs and struggles to adapt to technology. Jean Wyllys is a Brazilian journalist and politician who rose to fame after winning the fifth season of Big Brother Brasil, in 2005. He is Brazil's second openly gay member of parliament and the first congressman who is a gay-rights activist. In 2019, after receiving numerous death threats, he gave up on his Congress seat and left the country. See appendix A for the Portuguese version.

Although it is not the main objective of this study, it is worth noting that discriminatory practices, as in the above-mentioned example, are motivated by several factors. On the one hand, this phenomenon can be linked to a deep and irrational fear of death, as well as from ignorance about what the ag(e)ing process entails (Macnicol, 2004 *apud* Rozendo, 2016). On the other hand, such marginalization can be associated to the development of the capitalist system which, erected under the prism of mass production and individuality, would have contributed to the exclusion of ag(e)ing individuals from the culture, feeding stigmas of the ag(e)ing process (Beauvoir, 1990; Debert, 1999a; 1999b; Palmore, 2001; Macnicol, 2006).

In this context, many authors draw attention to the so-called "primacy of youth" in this process, as Py & Scharfstein (2001, pp. 123-124) argue:

> the exaltation of youth is ascribed, precisely, in the record of the exaltation of production and consumption, in the prevailing empire of homogenization and disposability. It is, at the present time, a construction based on the powers of production, reproduction, accumulation of wealth and consumption, under the primacy of youth (...). [Therefore] at one time [our culture] crowns two ladies: youth and longevity. Children's body craving the youth that longs for longevity; fantasy of perennizing the young body in the advancement of the years of life; desire to live long, horror of getting old! (...) **It is necessary to respond to the appeal of the social, translated into a true *marketing* of youth.** Efforts and adjustments, there, become necessary, illegitimate understandings of time, attempts to reverse the impossible, all in order to meet the expectations of the supposed interlocutor. Let's think, then, of the tendency to give the audience an idealized impression, an 'improved' version of the body, closer to that of young people, more to the taste of a valued identificatory pattern, of current society[107].

Preti (1991) also states that in order to be able to move socially, ag(e)ing individuals often need to adjust to meet the expectations of a society that operates according to these values. The author shows that this impasse "in search of more prestigious behavior patterns (…) makes this [social class] even more insecure, preoccupied with self-correcting, fearful of making mistakes that violate any models accepted by the younger" (Preti, 1991, p. 23)[108].

[107] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[108] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

The same can be said about other spheres of ag(e)ing, whether in how they behave, how they relate to others and the world, or even how they talk. Hockey & James (1993), for example, show how conceptions of childhood and youth metaphorically structure the experience of ag(e)ing. According to the authors, "the conceptual pairing of the very young with the very old in the use of language reflects a particular framing of the aging in Western cultures" (Hockey & James, 1993, p. 18). Youth, therefore, is one of the elements that often work as a *guiding compass* for the ag(e)ing individuals, since the latter seem to be in constant dialogue with the demands of the former. A more recent example emerges in the voice of some ag(e)ing individuals who do not want to use their cellphones to access the internet. The refusal to acquiring more modern gadgets is generally interpreted as a result of the difficulty these subjects face with their use – a mode of discriminatory interpretation because stereotypical of what can be considered, simply, as a will to live without this technology[109].

An excerpt of Helena's interview can help us understand how some ag(e)ing individuals evaluate their life trajectories. Throughout the talk, Helena told me why she moved from Tupã, where she worked for her brothers in ranches, to Campinas, where she began to work as a housemaid. She also revealed how she managed to convince a judge that she could take over the installments of a social mortgage program – at a time when only men could do it – since her husband had no formal income. In this part of the interview, Helena shows how she dealt with the difficulties in working as a housemaid and how she felt treated.

[109] It is interesting to note a movement that has been gaining prominence: life without smartphones ("phone-free life"). Among some famous people who have recently declared such a desire, I cite the actor Eddie Redmayne, the journalist James Brown, and the writer Peter Brown Hoffmeister. Everyone needed to justify this desire, whether in their personal circles, or in interviews, but in none of the cases did their interlocutors question their ability to use technology; their attitude and decisions have been framed only as "eccentric," by some, and "political" by others. The same phenomenon is observed with respect to cancellation of accounts, due to the recent scandals of private information leakage and disclosure of false news by social media. Some interesting articles are found in the links:

https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/nnqekb/confessions-of-the-last-human-being-without-a-cell-phone,

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/men/thinking-man/why-ive-ditched-my-smartphone-for-a-dumb-old-nokia/,

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/celebritynews/12096916/Eddie-Redmayne-reveals-he-ditched-his-smartphone-to-try-to-live-in-the-moment.html,
http://www.tvi24.iol.pt/tecnologia/privacidade/asempresas-que-ja-sairam-do-facebook-em-protesto-apos-o-escandalo Last access: April 2019.

Playing your cards right

Larissa: you have a very beautiful story…. Mrs. Helena.
Helena: a:: I don't think it's beautiful…
Larissa: a::: it's a story of victories
Helena: **But it's not a lie that I told or invented**
Larissa: I believe... it's a very beautiful story because it's such a battle right… of victory… yeah… so much difficulties…
Helena: much effort... and... as they said when I used to work as a housemaid… you battle a lot... and...you go and work as a housemaid... we… one treats you well... the other... doesn't care... so... and we used to say… I thought this way... this one treats me horribly today… tomorrow´s will treat me well…. When I get another one… I leave that one... yeah that´s how it works… because we can´t say a word… oh it's not good I won´t be back anymore… first you have to find another… when you find another… then I would call the woman and say that I wasn´t feeling well… that I would… then I would make a test to work with the other right? if she was the way I wanted… then I would dismiss the other… I never ran out of a salary… you have to play the right card

Despite all the achievements of her life, of being able to express her point of view on the most diverse subjects, and of presenting herself as dissatisfied with the presence of one of her newly divorced children back home, she felt a need to reaffirm that her story is *true*. Despite having two apartments – a rented one and another where she lives –, having learned to read "a little bit" as she says (on her own), and to know how to "play the cards right," she curtails the value of her accomplishments.

Understanding, therefore, the discourse *about ag(e)ing* means – as I have argued before – investigating how discriminatory practices operate in society as well as the ways through which the subjects *experience* these practices and the ag(e)ing process itself.

In gerontological studies, one of the main evaluation mechanisms of ageism is applying the *Ageism Survey*, elaborated by Palmore (2001), who sought to investigate, in the United States, how ag(e)ing subjects experience prejudice. This questionnaire was translated into several languages, being a reference in Brazil. Rozendo (2016, p. 84), for example, applied the instrument in a city in the countryside of Mato Grosso state, and concluded that the most common forms of discrimination were:

> a) to be the target of 'jokes' due to age; b) to be ignored, or not taken seriously as a result of age; c) to be offended as a result of age; d) to be called old; e) to be rejected as a result of age; f) to be treated with less dignity as a result of age; g) to have their advanced age linked to diseases, by doctors, or professionals in health; h) not be understood by others as a result of their age ; i) having people speaking loudly to their ears as a result of age; h) having people suggesting they are too old for certain activities[110].

The author, however, does not consider the instrument adequate enough for the investigation of the prejudices suffered by ag(e)ing individuals in Brazil, since the social and historical conditions of the country are different from those from where the instrument was created[111]. An example provided by Rozendo is the low percentage of subjects who had difficulty accessing loans. While such a discriminatory practice has increased, according to Palmore (2001), in the US[112], in Brazil ag(e)ing individuals are constantly assaulted for accepting "financial aid," which can even be directly debited from their pensions with high interest rates. This shows both the care that should be considered in generalizing reflections from other countries to Brazil – a rather recurrent practice in gerontological and geriatric studies, according to Neri (1991) – as well as the different modes of discriminatory practices that, in this case, reveal the greater/lesser difficulty to financial loan.

Considering, therefore, the limits of the survey for the research he carried out, Rozendo (2016) adapted the survey to the Brazilian reality, adding new questions[113]. From this new investigation, the research showed, surprisingly, that 80% of respondents declared that they began to feel *more respected* after reaching 60, and most of them did not feel old. According to the author, among those who felt old, the majority reported that

[110] See appendix A for version in Portuguese.

[111] The questionnaire contains 20 questions that aim to analyze: a) the prevalence of ageism; b) the most common types of ageism; and c) the subgroups of the ag(e)ing individuals who are most exposed to ageism.

[112] It is important to note that the cost of the American health system is extremely high, despite the increased number to cheaper treatments through the program popularly called "Obamacare." The high costs of treatment often lead to bankruptcy. Recent research estimates that 66.5% of people who file for bankruptcy in the United States do so because of medical bills or illness related issues, making it the leading cause of financial calamity that precedes life on the streets (Himmelstein et al., 2019).

[113] In the first phase of the study, 141 seniors from the University Open to Seniors (Universidade Aberta à Terceira Idade, a program from the Federal University of Mato Grosso – Rondonópolis) joined the research. The survey was translated into Portuguese as originally prepared by Palmore (2001), according to Rozendo (2016). The group analyzed was mainly constituted by low-educated women, many of whom were illiterate, according to the author.

the age milestone occurs between 60 and 65, when they *start to be treated as* old (Rozendo, 2016). In addition, health problems (21% of respondents) and the birth of grandchildren (10% of respondents) were associated with *feeling* old, whereas only 5% indicated retirement as a mark of the "onset" of ag(e)ing.

The study also showed that 60% of the ag(e)ing individuals who were interviewed believe that being updated with new technologies and trends is *fundamental for not being discriminated*. This information seems to be quite significant to demonstrate, once again, the demanded adaptation to the values of a society structured in the constant "updating of novelties" paradigms typically associated with the youth – as I discussed earlier.

Finally, the author considers that the low percentage of subjects who went through discrimination in his new study, contradicting previous research, is justified by the fact that:

> due to the poverty condition and low level of education, the participants [must have] experienced situations of discrimination and exclusion that were more acute than those that may be related to old age. Thus, the *third age* can mean a phase of access to rights, products and services understood as gains in quality of life, which impinges upon any perception on discrimination or exclusion. The low frequency of responses confirming situations of ageism, in research carried out by other scholars, was considered as a mechanism of defense in which the elderly did not admit going through episodes of discrimination (Couto, 2009). (...) According to Kite & Wagner (2004), people are motivated to see the group to which they belong as being better than the others, and thus, maintain a positive self-image (Rozendo, 2016, p. 86)[114].

Rozendo's research shows us that it is necessary to investigate the operating modes of discriminatory practices from different angles, since evaluation tools such as the *Ageism Survey*, although informative, do not contribute to the understanding of all the aspects involved in these practices. I believe, therefore, that this systematic discrimination – materialized, for example, in "antipathies and even escape of contact" –, is based on historically constructed *stereotypes* (Rozendo, 2016).

[114] See appendix A for version in Portuguese.

In this context, according to Pasupathi & Lockenhoff (2004), the means of communication are considered the most responsible for the propagation of negative representations of age in contemporary times. In this regard, Preti (1991, pp. 22-23) also stated that: "For this conception of a class on the margins of society, it has much contributed the vision that the media, especially the television, has divulged about the elderly, considering them useless, reason for derision in their mistakes and misunderstandings in social tasks[115]." In publicity, advertisement discourse can be regarded as a special *locus* of observation of the ways in which meaning(s) of ag(e)ing circulate in society since it uses cultural elements in their advertisement pieces while also feeding the repertoire of the community with new propositions (Carrascoza, 2007).

It is therefore with the aim of presenting another point of observation for these issues that I analyzed a set of commercials advertised between 2007 and 2017 that had the following characteristics: ag(e)ing individuals were protagonists in the narrative, but not the direct target audience of the products advertised. I believe that such an analysis makes it possible to observe some of the more naturalized senses associated with ag(e)ing processes that could be veiled in commercials whose target audience were the ag(e)ing individuals. Such theoretical and methodological decision, despite its limitations, offers visibility to the modes of circulation of the linguistic sign with its ideological implications and its constitutive heterogeneity. As Faraco (1998), based on Bakhtinian theories, reminds us:

> Our utterances emerge – as active responses they are in social dialogue – of the multitude of interiorized voices. They are thus composites of voices. From this point of view, our utterances are always quoted speech, although not always perceived as such as so many voices are incorporated that many of them are active in us without us realizing their otherness (we say so figuratively that they are words that have lost their quotes). Others, however, are in our discursive memory as words of others and as such are bivocalized in our utterances (that is, our utterances express both the word of the other and the perspective with which we take it): they are quoted directly or indirectly, they are mocked, parodied, stylized, hybridized (Faraco, 1998, p. 168)[116].

[115] See appendix A for version in Portuguese.

[116] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

The widespread circulation and actualization of senses that accompany the representations of ag(e)ing in these commercials carry stories and memories that reveal narratives that are more frequently "remembered," thus helping us understand how some senses are supported while others are "forgotten" (or made less evident). Grounded in Bakhtinian architectonic, It is through the observation of such movement to the past (as a sign linked to all the previous signs – "memory of the past") and to the future (as a projection to the possible future in form of actualization of senses – "memory of the future") that we can better understand how the stereotypes of ag(e)ing pervade our experiences. In the next session, I show how such a reflection can inform us about aspects of such modes of circulation of ag(e)ing stereotypes.

2.3. Meanings of ag(e)ing: stereotypes and their circulation in TV commercials

In the next item, I present a set of data to reflect on the discourses that circulate in commercial advertisements. Before turning to their analysis, I present, albeit briefly, a discussion developed by Hutcheon (1985) on *parody* and by Carmelino & Possenti (2015) on *stereotypes*, believing that such theoretical articulation contributes to understanding aspects of discourses about ag(e)ing, therefore giving visibility to the main discussions of this study.

2.3.1. The relevance of mobilizing the concepts of *parody* and *stereotype* to the analysis of TV commercials

In the work entitled "A theory of parody: teachings of the art forms of the 20th century," Hutcheon (1985) defends the need for revisiting parody, which she considers "one of the major forms of modern self-reflexivity" that permeated all the art production of the twentieth century, but which is nevertheless generally referred as "parasitic and derivative" (Hutcheon, 1985, p. 3). According to the author, such narrowed interpretation of parodic art is much due to a Romantic aesthetic that "values genius, originality, and individuality" that transforms parody in a minor form[117] (Hutcheon, 1985, p. 13).

[117] In this regard, the author also argues that parody "implicitly contests Romantic singularity and thereby forces a reassessment of the process of textual production," thus reflecting to what "European theorists see

To revisit such phenomenon, the author discusses the character and analysis of a great variety of cultural forms – from television commercials to movies; from music to fiction and the visual and plastic arts –, showing how the sense of *parody* has changed over time and calling attention to the fact that more "static" definitions are not able to explain the complexity of contemporary artistic constructions. The importance, for Hutcheon, of such an investigation – and expansion of what we might consider a parody – lies on the fact that looking at it from a less static perspective allows us to understand processes of "transference and reorganization of the past" since the parody, as she defends it, has a "very complex textual intentionality" that emerges *through* historical awareness. Parody is not, thus, "just that ridiculous imitation mentioned in the standard dictionary definition" (Hutcheon, 1985, p. 05); it is a form of imitation characterized by an ironic inversion; a repetition with distance that marks difference rather than similarity: "it is an integrated structural modeling process of revising, replaying, inverting, and 'trans-contextualizing' previous works of art" (Hutcheon, 1985, p. 11).

This double-voiced[118] nature of the parody also implies authority and transgression, since, as argues Hutcheon (1985, p. 75): "parody's transgressions ultimately remain authorized – authorized by the very norm it seeks to subvert. Even in mocking, parody reinforces; in formal terms, it inscribes the mocked conventions onto itself, thereby guaranteeing their continued existence."

Such a process of "trans-contextualization" – a "repetition with difference" – shows the "ability of our human systems to refer to themselves in an unending mirroring process" (Hutcheon, 1985, p. 1), which serves us as a fruitful conceptual tool to observe how images and senses of ag(e)ing are actualized – revisited, replayed, inverted – in the TV commercials, for example.

Another relevant concept to this discussion is that of *stereotype*, which, according to Carmelino & Possenti (2015), can be understood as the identification of an individual within a group. According to the authors,

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as a crisis in the entire notion of the subject as a coherent and continuous source of signification" (Hutcheon, 1985, pp. 4-5).

[118] Hutcheon is based on Bakhtin's theory, which allows for looking at parody as a form of "double-directed discourse" (Voloshinov, 1973) in the sense that the texts that dialogically constitute the parody do not cancel each other out; on the contrary, one of the effects of a parody, according to Hutcheon, is the visibility of these voices.

> The term stereotype – etymologically formed by the words *estereo* (meaning solid or rigid) and – *type* (which refers to impression, image, shape) – means, in a first sense, "a solid impression." (...) However, from the 1920's, the word gains another value. It is conceived in the semantic space of collective representation and belief. By evoking preexisting cultural schemes, by means of which people understand reality, the stereotype becomes the center of interest in the social sciences, the field in which the notion is situated, first, in epistemological terms. (...) In this sense, the stereotype started to be considered, in a more stable sense, as social, constructed, and imaginary. According to Amossy & Herschberg-Pierrot (2001), **it is a collective, simplified, and crystallized image of something** (a person, a group, a topic), which is the result – from a process that cuts or categorizes the reality – of expectations, habits of judgment or recurrent generalizations in society. That way of conceiving stereotype, plus the reflections on its social function and dissemination in discourses, creates around the term a constitutive ambivalence, which leads it to be interpreted in contemporaneity in two ways: a positive one, which links it to the idea of cohesion and social identity; and a negative one, which relates it to error and prejudice (Carmelino & Possenti, 2015, p. 418) [119].

For Carmelino & Possenti, stereotyping is inevitable, since it can either evoke a schematic and distorted view of the real, generating "false evidence," causing disqualification and judgement, or provide social and cognitive organization. Stereotypes are, therefore, important in that they help us understand certain aspects of society, even if they give visibility to negative or exacerbated senses of what is stereotyped. In this respect, the authors state:

> the stereotype does not consist merely of a negative simplification in jokes; it allows (and why not say, it promotes) the unsaid, and thus requires an interpretation that takes into account historical and cultural issues or, in other words, a certain memory. It is interesting, for example, to check the modalities and possible explanations for the fact that discourses retake and eventually rework "pre-discourses" (Paveau, 2013); that is, that ideological or cultural assumptions underlie and recover more or less solid cultural schemes (Carmelino & Possenti, 2015, p. 420)[120].

[119] See appendix A for version in Portuguese.

[120] See appendix A for version in Portuguese.

If, on the one hand, the stereotype is a reproduction (not always true) that in its repetition becomes stronger than other possible (perhaps even truer) characteristics of a person/group/topic, it also reveals aspects of what is true. In other words, it is possible that a stereotyped representation that is repeated and actualized in different discourses *naturalizes* senses, making them difficult to be questioned. Let's consider, for example, the fact that ag(e)ing is frequently associated with hearing loss. This degenerative change does not occur in the same way (when it does occur) for all people who grow old(er), and may differ in degree, for instance, but this belief circulates in society as *inherent in old age*, as seen in **Chapter 1**. As such, in a social and historical situated context in which *losses* are more "prominent," deafness becomes a *stereotype* of ag(e)ing; that is, any possible difficulty in listening, from a certain age, can be interpreted as "deafness of the old," which is actualized for example as "getting old is becoming deaf," or "all old people are deaf."

This reflection reveals something interesting about the ways in which *beliefs* about ag(e)ing circulate in society. The mobilization of these concepts proved to be important for understanding the structure of the narrative of the commercials analyzed. Let's turn now to the selected commercials that were divulged between 2007 and 2017 in Brazil[121].

2.3.1.1. Baking pizza on a *Lenovo* computer

Lenovo's 2008 American commercial[122] features a lady – depicted with white[123] hair, bottle-bottom glasses, flip-flops, and a sweater – in her kitchen, cutting vegetables and meat on the top of a brand-new laptop computer. Although using the notebook as a cutting board, wash it under running water, and open a pizza dough using the computer as a baking tray, *she does not notice her slip* (see figures 3, 4, and 5 below).

[121] See appendix B for a table with the synthetized data of the commercials analyzed.

[122] Available on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fS2EI6RtLPU Last access: April 2019.

[123] It seems necessary to emphasize that having *white* hair does not necessarily *sign* a stereotypical representation. I am calling attention to the *recurrent* mobilization of such element, alongside others, for the constitution of a stereotypical depiction of ag(e)ing.

Figure 3: Using a butcher's knife over the laptop

Figure 4: Washing the notebook in the sink

Figure 5: Preparing a pizza over the laptop

In all scenes in which she uses the notebook as a cutting board, the "Lenovo" logo appears silvery. The only person who realizes the mistake is her grandson, when she serves him, from his computer, the baked pizza. Unbelieving what he sees, his first reaction is to open the laptop and turn it on. Noting that it is working perfectly, he laughs

along with his grandmother while she tries to serve him another pizza slice without success.

The tone of the commercial is of humor, but the exaggeration ends up ridiculing the actions of the woman, who is not able to perceive that she is using a notebook as a kitchen appliance. The comicity is also constructed through the instrumental soundtrack of the commercial that evokes silent movies, such as Chaplin's, in which he, like the ag(e)ing woman portrayed, does not realize his own mistakes.

Each new culinary scene creates an expectation of what she will do with the "cutting board," leading viewers to associate her misunderstandings – as using the computer as a cutting board and a baking tray – to the characteristics of the notebook and its high resistance power. In the end of the advertisement, it is clear that the electronic product has gone through what appears to be the most difficult resistance test any computer could withstand: its use by an ag(e)ing woman.

Such a resistance value associated with the computer is restated in the commercial, when, to the sound of breaking glass, a logo with the writings "Grandma Proof" appears in the lower left corner of the screen, along with a goofy smile of the woman.

Besides this more evident associative play, the mobilization of the concept of *parody*, as defined by Hutcheon (1985), allows us to observe other aspects of the narrative construction of this publicity campaign. For example, the movement of identifying the resistance/quality of a product that is parodied in the commercial. The consumer, in order to recognize this mechanism, must be able to identify this game of "complicity and distance" between the parodic elements, which, on the one hand, in this case, refers to advertisements that use the resistance narrative as a reference to the quality and purchase value of the product. On the other hand, another parodic element is the stereotypical image of ag(e)ing individuals who would be constantly committing mistakes with technologies.

It is the articulation of both phenomena – the parody as an inter-art discourse and the use of stereotypical images – that structure the narrative of the commercial, guaranteeing and reinforcing their unremitting existence. This first commercial, although not related to the Brazilian context, was the starting point of my reflection on the mechanisms of stereotypes of ag(e)ing, justifying its analysis in the study.

The publicity campaigns, produced and divulged in Brazil, described and analyzed below, have a very similar structural composition.

2.3.1.2. The BomBril[124] Family

Two other commercials that represent the ag(e)ing individuals like the previous one (*Lenovo*'s advertisement) are part of the "BomBril Family" series of 2011[125]. In the first, the "BomBril boy's grandfather," as the narrator presents himself, declares in a trembling, slow-paced voice, laughing in the end: "I like Limpol because it has my grandson in the campaign. He said Limpol is biodegradable. That's really good. *Whatever that means*[126]." Similarly to *Lenovo*'s commercial, the value attributed to the marketed product is constituted from the comicity of *not-knowing*: the ag(e)ing man is here portrayed as a grandfather, with white hair, wearing glasses, a beret hat, a scarf, and holding a cane that he is not, interestingly, using (see figure 6 below).

Figure 6: Grandfather of the BomBril Boy

The commercial is structured then on an ag(e)ing man who, besides being stereotypically depicted, does not know what *biodegradable* is. He knows, however, that the product is *really good* because his grandson told him so. The fact that he does not know what the word means is not relevant for the marketing strategy. It is used only to validate the central value of the marketed product through the (young) grandson's voice. In other words, it is through the authority of a grandchild which emerges in the grandfather's voice that the commercial presents such a central characteristic of the product.

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[124] BomBril is a famous national cleaning product brand.

[125] Available on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-6TOELc6_Q Last access: April 2019.

[126] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

In the second commercial[127] analyzed, a male narrator voice begins the presentation of the brand warning that the "commercial is for the *advanced age ladies* of BomBril," to which an ag(e)ing woman replies by moving her body toward the camera and saying "hmmm ... good[128]? oh what? ah ah good ... cable car ... no? good?[129]" and the commercial ends.

Figure 7: The "advanced old age lady" in BomBril's commercial

In a very similar way to previous commercials, the ag(e)ing woman is depicted here with glasses, white hair, and gloves (see figure 7 above). However, it is interesting to note that the *steel wool* (the marked product) is not presented verbally, neither by the voice of the male narrator nor by the woman. A possible interpretation of such strategy is that the presence of the character and her hearing difficulty are considered enough to support the campaign strategy. The commercial structure, therefore, counts on the association of its target audience with external references through what could be understood again as a trans-contextualization movement – a parody of their own

[127] It is worth noting that it is not the interest of this work to discuss all aspects of the advertising commercial. However, BomBril commercials have a special characteristic, which is the emergence, in 1978, of the "BomBril Boy," developed by the famous Brazilian marketer Francesco Petit and Washington Olivetto and represented by the actor Carlos Moreno. He became so famous that the commercial structure is still used in the commercials of the brand.

[128] In order to understand the comicity presented in the misunderstanding of the ag(e)ing woman, it is necessary to know that "bom" – from BomBril – means "good" in Portuguese. She recognizes, therefore, only the first part of the name of the brand. In the sequence, she starts trying to guess what the narrator said, which explains one of her attempts: "bondinho," which is a "small cable car" in English. Note that the first syllable of "bondinho" is pronounced in Brazilian Portuguese as "bom" – nasal sounds in coda positions are usually pronounced as /N/.

[129] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

commercials –, important for the constitution of the commercial narrative and that actualizes ag(e)ing stereotypes – in this case, that ag(e)ing is *getting deaf*.

One of the possible external TV references, in this case, is the character "the old deaf lady,[130]" from the nation-famous Brazilian comedy show "A praça é nossa," aired in SBT channel since 1987.

Figure 8: The "deaf old lady" from "A praça é nossa"

The BomBril commercial derives from the idea that both the product and the comic character would be easily recognizable by the target audience of all ages (see figure 8 above). It is this association – the movement of repetition with difference – between the commercial narrative and the external references that would guarantee that the brand and its marketed product are still remembered by the consumers. It is this recurrence of such a portrayal of ag(e)ing individuals that supports and reaffirms their stereotyped representation – internally, it feeds the parody; externally, it links to a chain of discourses about ag(e)ing.

As in the *Lenovo* commercial, BomBril's two advertisements establish the value of their products from the image of an ag(e)ing individual who does not listen well, does not understand, is wrong or mistaken, and depends on someone else (be it the grandson, or the narrator) to be validated.

[130] It is interesting to note that this comic character, although presented as Byzantine Escatamáquia Pinto, is referenced only as "the old deaf lady," which stresses the effects of stereotypes about ag(e)ing, especially in relation to the generalizing character of this reference practice.

2.3.1.3. The *beatbox* of Lubrax/Petrobras

Another Brazilian commercial that presents a structure that is similar to the previous campaigns is Lubrax's car lubricant of 2017[131]. While four people leave a Petrobras gas station to start a trip, a narrator male voice asks: "Why so much technology in a lubricant? So that your trip is like this." Immediately after that, the front male passenger, who had just started to beatbox, invites his grandmother to join him: "Go, Grandma ... Let's go Grandma, come on." The two women on the backseat begin to snap their fingers and one of them starts to beatbox (see figure 9 below). When she finishes, the narrator returns and says, "*Whatever the engine of your car*, with Lubrax you feel more relaxed... then all you need is to enjoy the trip[132]."

Figure 9: Passengers beatboxing

At first, a comparison can be established between the grandson's ability to beatbox and the effort of his grandmother to follow him. It is worth noting that if the grandson was not present at the scene and had not invited her to beatbox with him, we would hardly associate the grandmother's production with what we recognize as the sounds of percussion.

However, in addition to this first association – the imitation with difference –, another comparison can be stablished by the narrator's statement that Lubrax car lubricant is perfect *for any type of engine*, since it becomes possible to relate to previous elements

[131] Available on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EovFaKeV4rQ Last access: April 2019.

[132] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

(opposition grandchild/grandmother) to different types of car engine (new and old engines, powerful or not so powerful). Once again, we associate her effort in *beatboxing* – to adapting to youth values – to an engine that is not as potent, or as *skillful*.

This advertisement, however, seems to distance itself from the previous commercials in two ways. The first concerns the fact that it is one of the only commercials in which one of the ag(e)ing individuals is black and does not dress stereotypically – with pearl necklaces, glasses, woolen clothes, and so on. In addition, it is also possible to interpret this relationship between the two characters that interact from the perspective of an intergenerational dialogue. Laughter is generated by the unexpected situation of the grandchild's invitation, and the fact that she *follows the rhythm;* she *plays along*. It is possible, therefore, to state that there is a different type of laughter here, which is not a mockery but a laughing together; a laughter that *approximates* them.

2.3.1.4. The DIGITAU series

Itaú – the largest private bank in Brazil – launched, between 2016 and 2017[133], a series of commercials to help users understand all its app tools. Mummies, statues, and other figures were used to show how easy and safe it is to use the application for numerous transactions[134]. Among the videos produced, we also find those in which the marketing strategy is constituted on the representation of ag(e)ing individuals.

In the first of them, entitled "Digitau: tips in the app for those who do not grasp technology[135]" (see figure 10 below), an ag(e)ing man holds an instruction manual and states: "You know, I don't like technology. It's complicated. That's why I love the Itaú app. It gives tips on the first access. Then it's easy. Try it. *If you don't grasp technology*,

[133] The campaign created fifteen different television commercials and short videos for YouTube.

[134] The video of mummies using the bank app can be seen at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8WksIzkPvHc. The commercial with the statue that uses the app can be watched here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGvy5yHZTbI. Other videos of the campaign: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGvy5yHZTbI; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=phuwk6ut5N8

Last access: April 2019.

[135] Available on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sR6CfTAODrA Last access: April 2019.

don't worry. Download it and you'll see. Not interested? Then see the next video[136]" (*emphasis* added).

Figure 10: For those who don't *grasp* technology

In a very similar way, the commercial "Digitau: our app is easy-peasy just like Facebook[137]" (see figure 11 below) also uses the presence of an ag(e)ing woman – portrayed as in previous commercials: white hair, pearl necklace, sitting in an old-fashioned decorated room – to show how easy it is to use the app because even *she* could learn. In addition, just like BomBril commercials, it was *her grandson* the one who taught her how to use the app and Facebook: "I love Itaú app because it's so easy, you know? Just like *that* Facebook. It was my grandson who taught me. Oh if he had taught me to use this remote control (she throws it behind her). Well, be Digitau. I am. Download the app too or watch another video[138]" (*emphasis* added).

Figure 11: It's as easy as *that* Facebook

[136] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[137] Available on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kimGRgCRN6w Last access: April 2019.

[138] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

Finally, following the same structure, the third video (see figure 12 below), titled “Digitau: the app works on most smartphones, including yours!,” features two ag(e)ing individuals playing chess in a very artificial scenario that refers us to the squares of small towns in Brazil. One of ag(e)ing man states: “Yeah, people think that just because I'm more experienced, *I don’t understand technology*. But I know that the Itaú app works on most smartphones, *even on mine*. Yes, the little old man here gets it. *If I'm in*, you should be. Download it there or wait for the next one" (*emphasis* added) [139].

Figure 12: The app works *even* on your phone

Once again, the narrative of the commercial puts in dialogue the idea that an ag(e)ing man does not know how to use technology and the fact that “*that little old man*” does. Thus, the easy use of the application is emphasized; if “he is in,” the consumer should not have trouble understanding and using the app. Other assumptions are implied in the commercial, for instance, that the old man does not understand anything about technology and probably does not have a “high tech” phone (as one might expect from someone who *really* understands technology). This contradiction highlights this game between *what he says he knows* and *what is usually expected from him to know*.

It is recurrent, in these three videos, both the rather stereotypical depiction of ag(e)ing as well as the parodic movement of approximation with difference. In all these

[139] It is interesting to note the association of “having more experience” with chronological age as a stereotypical image of what the ag(e)ing process is. It can be linked to the idea of *growing old and becoming wiser*.

commercials, the qualities emphasized by the brands – simplicity and ease of use – emerge from their contraposition to a stereotypical imaginary, as synthetized in the following items: **i)** in the presence of an instruction manual in the first video; **ii)** in comparison to the use of Facebook, which together with the app, is easier to use than a television remote control[140]; and **iii)** in the use of a "less technological" cell phone.

In addition to this series of short videos, Itaú created a campaign for television in 2017. The dialogue in one of the commercials is transcribed below[141]:

> **Granddaughter:** Hi, grandpa, do you need any help?
> **Grandfather** (turning towards the camera): People think we don't understand technology, right? I'm digitau. I only go to the bank through the phone. I pay bills in the app. I make transfers. I even post photos with hashtags
> **Grandmother**: It's [ˈræʃiˌtægi]"[142]
> **Grandfather**: Ah?
> **Grandmother**: It's [ˈræʃiˌtægi]
> **Grandfather**: I know, old woman's game[143], of course (turning to the camera and lifting his eyebrows).
> **Grandmother**: Old? Your grandmother!
> **Narrator**: Everyone is using the Itaú app. Be a digitau. Download the app.

Figure 13: Everybody uses the Itaú app

[140] I believe everyone would agree that remote controls can be challenging and frustrating for most people, regardless of age.

[141] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[142] Brazilian Portuguese speakers tend to insert the phoneme /i/ in the end of English syllables that end with consonants: "shop" [ˈshäp], for example, can be pronounced as [ˈshäpi]. Aspirated English sounds, as /h/, can be pronounced by Brazilian Portuguese speakers as /R/. Since her pronunciation is highly marked in the commercial, I decided to transcribe it following IPA.

[143] In Brazilian Portuguese, the hashtag symbol # is popularly known as "jogo da velha" ("old woman's game") and refers to the game that in English is known as "tic-tac-toe."

One of the first aspects that draw our attention is the attempt to approximate the knowledge on technology of the granddaughter and the grandfather. It is through the voice of the ag(e)ing man that the app functionality is explained; not through the authority of a younger character, as seen in other commercials. Such play with the authority of knowledge seems to sign an intent in changing the ways ag(e)ing is represented and might correspond to an effect of the effort of civil society to decrease discrimination against ag(e)ing individuals. However, the advertising strategy does not escape from stereotyping: it concludes with the ag(e)ing woman misunderstanding "old woman's game" with "old woman" (see footnote 142). It is also remarkable the imagery representation – white hair, glasses, pearl necklace, flowered pattern shirt, and so on.

It is interesting to note, as other authors also show, that men and older women are differently stereotypically portrayed. Hockey & James (1993), for example, when analyzing advertisements of American magazines, show how representations of older men tend to highlight aspects such as virility (either still very manly or losing it), while women become even more "fragile" or when they are represented as a crazy or a shrew[144]. If we look at the commercials analyzed so far, we realize that the place of confusion or the greatest difficulty in accomplishing something is portrayed by the ag(e)ing woman. Regarding such gender difference in ag(e)ing, Hokey & James (1993, p. 25) state:

> The elderly woman is portrayed as 'bewildered', childish perhaps, verging on the confused and senile; her question is reported for sentient adult amusement. An amusing tension is created between the commissionaire's 'real' masculine world of 'serious soldiering' and the marginal world of the little old lady. This parallels the way in which children's misperceptions and comments are quoted in women's magazines. Both are seen as beguiling in their silliness, charming in their naivety.

[144] In this regard, the actress Beatriz Segall – in an interview with Antônio Abujamra in the TV show "Provocações" ("Provocations") from Cultura channel, in 2014 – comments on the difficulty of being an actress after reaching 80: "(...)in theater, cinema, and television, the old do not have much time. They are not much called, they are not very useful, they are not much needed, so I really do not get many invitations, no." As they comment in the interview, the roles of "shrew" seem to be the only ones possible. The interview, in Portuguese, can be watched here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6MBM4H_jSgA Last access: April 2019.

What we observe, thus, in all commercials analyzed is that the product value is sustained through the contraposition of capacities and incapacities, or abilities and dis/in-abilities. In such a discursive game, the figure of an ag(e)ing individual emerges as the central articulation element through which the commercial can highlight the positive aspects of the marketed product and putting an emphasis on the negative values associated to ag(e)ing. It is this movement of *repetition with difference* between old/not-old (and all it entails: depictions of clothing, hair, and so on) that sustains – by actualizing some senses (by revisiting and replaying them) – a *stereotypical discourse* about what it is to grow old(er).

Analyzing the *stereotypes* of ag(e)ing and the *parodic* discursive movements in these advertisements contributes to understanding aspects of the *naturalization* of certain narratives of what ag(e)ing can or cannot be. The systematic reproduction (actualization) of these negative stereotypes of ag(e)ing – depictions of incapacity, stupidity, and fragility, for example – become stronger than rational explanations that may deny them, making those senses associated with ag(e)ing experience almost indisputable[145]. The effort, thus, becomes to question the grounds from which these assumptions grow.

Finally, the analysis of these commercials, based on the theoretical articulation of *parody*, as understood by Hutcheon (1985), and *stereotype*, as discussed by Carmelino & Possenti (2015), helps us to better understand meanings that circulate about ag(e)ing. This discussion seeks, therefore, to draw a path of interpretation for the movement of some of the senses on ag(e)ing that, through the ideological nature of the signs, *reflect* and *refract* certain beliefs/memories/images of the ag(e)ing process, based, in particular, on "partial evidence," as I have tried to show. In this sense, Voloshinov (1973) argues that:

[145] Numerous were the times when I heard – inside and outside academia – statements like: "oh, but to age is *really* awful," or "that's the way it is; there's nothing anyone can do about it; ag(e)ing is about decaying."

> no cultural sign, once taken in and given meaning, remains in isolation: it becomes part of the *unity of the verbally constituted consciousness*. It is in this capacity of the consciousness to find verbal access to it. Thus, as it were, spreading ripples of verbal responses and resonances form around each and every ideological sign. *Every ideological refraction of existence in process of generation*, no matter what the nature of its significant material, is *accompanied by ideological refraction in word* as an obligatory concomitant phenomenon. Word is present in each and every act of understanding and in each and every act of interpretation (Voloshinov, 1973, p. 15; author's *emphasis*).

In this way, we can also say that the circulation of certain meanings of ag(e)ing, by its recurrence and frequency in commercials, structures possibilities of the *experience of ag(e)ing*. Hockey & James (1993, p. 27), in this regard, argue:

> Once unpacked, however, these apparently trivial examples of the framing of old age reveal a persistent recourse to oppositional thinking. **Embedded within each everyday example are metaphoric strategies which create distances and make distinctions between the worlds of adulthood and old age,** worlds which, viewed from another perspective, could be seen instead as related points within a shared continuum (**emphasis** added).

Thus, we note that the stereotypical representation of ag(e)ing, in this repetition discursive game, pervades both the way we relate to ourselves in old age, as the way we relate to others as they age.

The commercials analyzed seem to support a partial view on what it means to grow old(er), as Mucida (2006) also shows of "living old age." The author affirms that there is massification of information and models of behavior, which Debert (1999a) also indicates as a tendency of living our lives as a "a single possibility," in which there are silencing of both particularities of experiences and their diversity.

In the next item, I reflect on the utterances of the ag(e)ing individuals interviews in order to contrast with the more stabilized underlying and recurrent narratives in commercials, which I have discussed so far. By doing so, I hope to contribute to *denaturalize* stereotypes of ag(e)ing, which is one of the goals of this doctoral research.

2.4. Meaning(s) of ag(e)ing in dispute

The words and accounts of ag(e)ing individuals who participate in this study show how far the commercials analyzed are from the realities and the experiences of ag(e)ing individuals. On the one hand, very few advertisements portrayed a more positive experience of ag(e)ing, either by depicting happiness and satisfaction of being well, or by considering the idea of learning throughout life, for example, as Rozendo's study has indicated and previously discussed. On the other hand, the commercials that use representations of ag(e)ing do not generally consider solitude and the difficulties of living with an illness and possible physical impairments[146], for example, since their target is to sell whatever to whoever. In other words, in these commercials, the ag(e)ing experience is, at the same time, "clean" of difficulties and partially focused on portraying ag(e)ing in comparison with values of a young society.

As presented in **Chapter 1**, one of the objectives of the interview was to reflect about the participant's ag(e)ing experiences. What I bring below, thus, are excerpts from these interviews in which they talk about what it means to grow old(er)[147].

> **Pedro:** ag(e)ing? good question... I think that ag(e)ing is a physical necessity ... that gives the mind mental maturity... do you understand? Why mental maturity? 5 years ago, 10, I would not have in my brain the accumulation of life experience I have today ... everything here [points to the head] ... our brain is a computer... you look for what you used to think, do, liked when you were 10 and compare now when you are 85... you see?
>
> **Ana:** ag(e)ing? I was old when I was young because I had to deal with depression for a long time... I wanted to die... (...) I cured my depression with charity... (...) it was wonderful then to grow old... now... now I'm happy!
>
> **Catarina:** well, for me... it's fantastic... because we learn so much... we've seen so much... and that enriches us... you know?
>
> **Isabel:** what I think… well… it is not very good no… we depend a lot... like now… I'm here right? I need to depend on everything…. they [the caretakers] are all good but if I was stronger it'd be better right?
>
> **Paulo:** I do not even know what that is ... I got old ... not knowing what it is.

[146] It is reasonable to consider that commercials would not structure their marketing strategies on aspects of ag(e)ing that are more painful. The purpose of bringing such reference, however, derives from the attempt of accounting for a wide range of possible experiences of ag(e)ing.

[147] All excerpts were translated. See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

> **Larissa**: really? when you realized...
> **Paulo**: I was already...
> **Larissa**: do you feel old? what does it mean to be old?
> **Paulo**: look... af/aft/af after I got a stroke… I got discouraged, get it? I don't want to do anything (...) the leg here does not work well [he pats his right leg]
> **Larissa**: what about before the stroke? did you feel old?
> **Paulo**: no... no because I worked as if I was young, get it? the stroke messed up everything... everything everything

> **Helena**: for me... I think it was good... because I have everything that I want... nobody's against me, right? because it's bad when we depend on others... right? That's what I think... you don't need to look at me I'll talk [looking at her grandson who was accompanying the interview] because when we depend on our children for everything... maybe it's kind of difficult... because sometimes the children cannot give what the mother wants and then it's that fuss in the family right ... but thank God ... not mine no... it never never happened... right?... I hope it never happens

Firstly, the subjects who describe themselves as well and happy – Helena, Catarina, Ana, and Pedro – are not restricted to those who live alone or with their family members, since we find this claim also among those who are institutionalized, as can be seen, for instance, in Pedro and Ana's accounts. As Rozendo (2016) pointed out, many subjects seem to have a positive experience of ag(e)ing, even better if compared to their adult lives, as we saw earlier. This is especially noteworthy because it is still recurrent the view that characterizes life in institution as solitary (Preti, 1991).

These short accounts present, from the point of view of those who are ag(e)ing, *other* discourses on the process. A fundamental point, therefore, which must be always on the horizon of those who seek to understand the complex relationships involved in ag(e)ing, is its constitutive "extreme heterogeneity." As Hamilton (2001, p. 570) argues, the individuals "differ greatly in terms of memory, cognition, attitudes toward self and others, physical health, and communicative needs."

The association of a phenomenon, even if recurrent, to the categorization of a group of people[148] (that is, to consider that "old people are uniquely this or that way," subtracting them from their heterogeneity, their uniqueness and unicity) is the basis for the creation of stereotypes – as we have seen – that not only support our interactions with

[148] Afterall, to a large extent, we categorize various groups, people, and situations. The discussion here, however, is how can a process or a phenomenon (and not another) become *characteristic* of a group. The answer is neither in the interior (i.e., it is not the biological processes, such as hair color, that determine the characterization of a group), nor in the exterior (that is, it is not only the social or cultural processes), but perhaps in the interaction of external and internal elements, as suggested by Staudinger (2015).

ag(e)ing individuals, but also the very possibility of interacting with them. By critically discussing these aspects of dialogic processes, we can contribute to fight discriminatory practices.

However, when we realize, in stories like those of Irma, Helena, Ana, and of those who continue to struggle despite their health conditions – such as Paulo and Isabel who have learned to live with the consequences of neurological episodes –, we start thinking of ways of experiencing ag(e)ing that differ from the more normalized senses.

In addition to materializing in the signs, this dispute also mobilizes the language as a barrier to communication and consequent exclusion of the subjects from the interlocution process (Coudry, 1988 [1986]; Novaes-Pinto, 2008), either by the content (with the use of a non-shared lexicon, for example) or by the conceptualization of the speaker as a mere coder/decoder, not as a subject working with/through language in the enunciation process, as discussed in **Chapter 1**.

The diversity and constitutive heterogeneity of ag(e)ing can only be understood from the recognition of the importance of the relationship with the other. As Geraldi (2008, p. 155) states, "(...) a relationship with the other is not built without their participation, without their presence, without both leaving this relationship modified.[149]" Still concerning this matter, we turn to the words of Miotello (2005, p. 172):

> It is in this relation, therefore, that Bakhtin/Voloshinov argues that the smallest, undermost, and most ephemeral social changes have immediate repercussions on language; **the inter-agent subjects inscribe in the words, in the appreciative stresses, in the intonations, in the scale of index of values, in the ethical-social behavior, the social changes.** The words, in this sense, function as agent and memory because the same word appears in contexts differently oriented (**emphasis** added)[150].

What happens, numerous times, is that the subjects in the process of ag(e)ing no longer find *communication partners*[151] (Bakhtin, 1986) – which I could observe, for example, in the surprise and even the estrangement that my presence caused in one of the

[149] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[150] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[151] It is important to note that the concept of *communication partners* as used by Bakhtin does not refer to a "transparent and neutral negotiation" between social partners, since there are varying degrees of opacity and different kinds of confrontation of cultural, ideological, and political nature (see Signorini, 1992, 1995, 1998).

institutions where this research was conducted to an extent that some of the participants stated quite frequently that they "would not have anything interesting to say."

The circulation of other narratives about ag(e)ing seems to be vital to denaturalize stereotypical discourses. As I have previously emphasized, the discussion carried out in this chapter does not aim to treat exhaustively *all* the meanings of ag(e)ing, but to give evidence to some *disputes* of senses that circulate in society. On the one hand, we find scientific discourses that reflect and theorize about what ag(e)ing is – representing an "official ideology" that is validated, for example, by physiological and medical issues. On the other hand, we have the stories of people who are facing the ag(e)ing process, dealing with all that such experience entails. Such "unofficial ideologies" (Ponzio, 2008) should be considered in the attempt to better understand ag(e)ing phenomena, as well as denaturalizing stereotypes.

2.5. Retomando *outro* fio da meada...

As I have tried to show throughout this chapter, discourses constituted by stereotypes are historically and culturally actualized. It is thus imperative to look at issues associated with ag(e)ing, either through the voices of the subjects who are ag(e)ing, or through the analysis of the discourses circulating in society and that contribute to the persistence of prejudices, discrimination, and violence (Novaes-Pinto, 2008, Novaes-Pinto & Oliveira, 2016; Oliveira & Oliveira, 2018).

In this way, it is essential to denaturalize discriminatory practices and advance in the discussion in the same way other important movements – such as the anti-racial and feminist ones – have done. As Hockey & James (1993, p. 17) point out on this issue, "when the language of age is subject to the same scrutiny, it becomes apparent that subtle and similar practices of discrimination conceptually operate to marginalize and diminish the social status of people who grow older."

In this sense, Py & Schafstein (2001, p. 128) call attention to the fact that longevity, while perceived "as a democratic gift these times, strictly speaking, offers itself – in the social – unequally, discriminatorily, and cruelly. And that touch us all, human and social beings, in our aging bodies[152]". This discussion moves towards, thus, the understanding that recognizing transformations of the ag(e)ing subjects means to include

[152] See appendix for the version in Portuguese.

them in the register of *difference* and *heterogeneity* – issues that will be further discussed in the final reflection of this dissertation.

After such discussion, in the next chapter I make a reflection on how phenomena typically associated with speech production in ag(e)ing have been approached. In this way, I address questions concerning how these stereotypical views on ag(e)ing pervade our perception of the linguistic abilities and strategies of this population, a process also interwoven with narrow concepts of language and subject, as discussed in **Chapter 1**.

CHAPTER 3

STEREOTYPES AND REPRESENTATIONS: DISCOURSES *IN* AG(E)ING

The river that would turn
behind our house
was the image of a soft glass…
a man passed by and said:
this turn the river makes…
it is called cove…
it wasn't any longer the image of a glass snake
that would make a turn behind the house.
it was a cove.
I think the name impoverished the image
Manoel de Barros, *Book of ignorances*, 2001[153]

I have to the extent that I determine – and that is the splendor of having a language. But I have much more to the extent that I am unable to determine. Reality is raw material, language the way I seek it – and how I don't find it. But it is from seeking and not finding what I have not known is born, and I instantly recognize it. Language is my human endeavor. I have fatefully to go seeking and fatefully I return with empty hands. But – I return with the unsayable. The unsayable can be given me only through the failure of my language. Only when the construct falters do I reach what it could not accomplish.
Clarice Lispector, *The passion according to G. H*, 1988[154]

3.1. Introduction

As I presented in the beginning of this doctoral dissertation, one of the challenges of this research was articulating its questions to the scientific knowledge developed in different fields about the interrelation between *language* and *ag(e)ing*. To address this issue, I present reflections on the topic based on the works developed by Brandão & Parente (2001), Brandão (2006), and Shafto & Tyler (2014) for the comprehensive nature of their discussions, articulating such reflections to the work of Preti (1991), for his pioneering work in Linguistics in Brazil. After that, I present a discussion on the notion of *circumlocution* in the context of *Word Finding Difficulties*

[153] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[154] Lispector, Clarice. (1988) Translated by Ronald W. Souza, University of Minnesota Press.

(henceforth WFD) in ag(e)ing, articulating it to the analysis of the utterances produced in interviews with the participants of this study. By doing so, I believe that such reflection also contributes to the understanding of aspects of the relationship between normal and pathological language.

3.2. Language and ag(e)ing: a brief panorama of studies about this interrelation

The literature review on the interrelation between language and ag(e)ing reveals that the main issue on the topic is whether linguistic functions change with the advance of age[155] – do they decline or improve? Which aspects are perhaps maintained?

A first point to be considered is that, historically, studies on such intersection can be divided in two moments of overall interest: At first, research was concerned in describing and explaining changes and deficits *due to* ag(e)ing. Afterwards, the investigations had a more subjective approach, with topics including well-being and quality of life, for example (Brandão & Parente, 2001). Such turn seems to be accompanied by shifting the focus from understanding organic deficits to approaching issues about functionality and subjectivity (Brandão, 2006).

Another interesting characteristic of this area is that most studies are based on a division between language *production* and *comprehension* – a distinction believed to be fundamental to define and explain linguistic changes through language processing models. Brandão (2006) mentions three of such models for their relevance in the field. The first one, postulated by Garret (1975), indicates that the different levels (semantic, syntactic, morphological, and phonological) of linguistic production are processed in *parallel*, acting simultaneously. The second one, as developed by Dell (1986), claims that linguistic processing is *serial*; in other words, there would be no interaction between the stages of conceptualization, formulation, and articulation for speech production. Finally, the model postulated by Van Dijk (2003)[156] divides speech production in two phases – a pragmatic and a syntactic one – that would occur almost completely in parallel and

[155] Chronological age, here, is taken as one of the major variables in these studies.

[156] Functional Grammar (as the one developed by Van Dijk) has become a relevant theoretical framework in a discursive approach of Neurolinguistics because of its explanatory power. See Lima (2017).

interact with each other. Also, according to this model, pragmatic processing could interfere in the syntactic one (Brandão, 2006).

Such models of language processing base the studies on comprehension and production, which have an experimental design and propose the accomplishment of tasks – usually of single-word[157] or single-sentence – by seeking to control the communicative context and certain variables that may affect the speech production and comprehension processes. Resuming such studies, Shafto & Tyler (2014) state that comprehension abilities remain steady and word knowledge even improves, declining only in very old age. According to the authors, automatic access to lexical representations and online syntax, as well as semantic representation constructions, would be well preserved throughout life.

Shafto & Tyler (2014) also observe that older adults seem to present a worse performance in comprehending fast pace speech or in noisy environments, although such differences are less evident when the speech is *in context*. Also, differences in comprehension of sentences syntactically more complex arise in activities that require "explicit" responses such as judgment of grammaticality. Thus, in general, although the debate on how comprehension might change throughout the ag(e)ing process, Shafto & Tyler (2014) literature review suggests that age does not affect sensitivity to syntactic ambiguity and that sentential processing is preserved in *real time*. As stated by the authors:

> In sum, the online syntactic processing during natural language comprehension does not conform to frameworks of aging where preserved cognitive performance is underpinned by compensatory functional reorganization. Although functional connectivity analyses suggest that age affects the organization of functional networks underpinning syntactic processing, the residue of the left hemisphere syntax system may normally be sufficient to enable syntactic computations when sentences occur in typical contextually rich environments (Shafto & Tyler, 2014, pp. 585-586).

[157] Word production, for example, is often examined using picture-naming or TOT-inducing tasks. In these paradigms, younger and older adults experience sporadic problems accessing phonological representations, leading to dysfluencies and errors, slower naming, or TOTs (Shafto & Tyler, 2014; Kavé & Goral, 2017).

Shafto & Tyler (2014) also state that the increased interhemisphere connectivity associated with ag(e)ing adults is related to reduced neural specificity (known as dedifferantiation), decreased "gray matter, poorer performance and reduced network efficiency." Studies (Wierenga et al., 2008; Capell, 2010 *apud* Shafto & Tyler, 2014) suggest, however, that although ag(e)ing individuals "over-recruit" regions associated with cognitive control performance in challenging tasks, the network dynamics that support good performance *do not fundamentally change with age*: "both younger and older adults experience phonological retrieval problems and, provided sufficient partial activation, they both recruit cognitive control to support recovery" (Shafto & Tyler, 2014, p. 586). In other words, both young and older individuals engage similar systems in response to naming difficulty and ag(e)ing individuals' brains *continue reactive and able to perform flexible network interactions*. These studies indicate, thus, that the functional changes in brain do not correspond *necessarily* to losses, especially if we consider the adaptations that occur through life[158].

Shafto & Tyler (2014) also return to works investigating possible changes in language *production*, which, in natural contexts, is generally assumed to be syntactically and propositionally simpler than that of young adults. In addition, the speech of ag(e)ing individuals would be characterized by an increase in the "production of less clear phonemes" and "speech and articulation losses," as well as the presence of a greater number of "vague terms," of "empty" pauses, and greater slowness to "access" phonological information in experimental contexts (Brandão & Parente, 2001; Brandão, 2006; Shafto & Tyler, 2014) [159].

According to Shafto & Tyler (2014), such characteristics are consistent with the findings in the literature reviews that older adults have more difficulty in finding words both during naturalistic linguistic production and in experimental tasks with a focus on the production of single words (Kemper, 2001 *apud* Shafto & Tyler, 2014). Also, in picture naming tasks they would be slower and less accurate, with an increase in the frequency of the tip-of-the-tongue (TOT) phenomenon. Generally, TOT is characterized

[158] It is important to note, however, that in the context of pathologies, the presence of lesions does impact brain's network and its ability to reorganization and adaption, as seen in Chapter 1.

[159] It is important to emphasize, as Scarpa (1995) argues, that *disfluency* is constitutive of *fluency* and the normal functioning of language. In this regard, Novaes-Pinto (2012b), resuming Scarpa's discussion, states that fluency should be "understood as a function of speech as a whole, involving the performance of subjects in the semantic, syntactic, morphological and prosodic dimensions, since fluency is a phenomenon that belongs to speech and at the same time to language" (Novaes-Pinto, 2012b, p. 122) – see appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

as when the meaning of a word is available, but its phonological/acoustic form seems to be out of the subject's reach. Still according to Shafto & Tyler (2014), older adults fear that TOTs might indicate serious memory problems, although research suggests that they are not caused by difficulties in accessing meanings, but by selective deficits to access phonological representations – as if the memory problem was more important than not being able to articulate the words, for example.

In this regard, I highlight the reflection on TOTs carried out by Oliveira (2015) from a discursive theoretical-methodological perspective. The author critically discusses the ways in which TOTs have been approached, from their earliest studies, and proposes alternative forms to treat the phenomenon. Based on qualitative procedures, Oliveira approaches TOT as "enunciative and dialogic events," relating the phenomenon to higher psychological functions and to the dialogical nature of the sign (Voloshinov, 1973). His study, therefore, also seeks to question the classical dichotomies and stresses the integrated functioning of linguistic levels.

Another phenomenon typically attributed to ag(e)ing individuals concerning their speech production is the so-called Off-Topic Verbosity (OTV), which is generally characterized as "increased speech and sudden changes of topic (...), which demonstrates lack of coherence in discourse" (Brandão, 2006, p. 143)[160]. Overall, most studies suggest that OTV would be justified either because of a deficit in the inhibition mechanism – an executive function of the prefrontal lobe assumed to be compromised with the advance of age – or due to a pragmatic change, associated with social context and with the identity of the speaker. Such hypothesis is generally based on the stability of various linguistic abilities – especially related to comprehension, thus suggesting that OTV would occur due to psychosocial factors. Another frequent argument is that OTV does not appear in picture-naming tasks, for example. As we will critically discuss in the next section, OTV resembles a current notion in Neuropsychology of *circumlocution*.

It is important to note that Brandão & Parente (2001), Brandão (2006), and Shafto & Tyler (2014) refer to psychometric investigations conducted in Europe and the United States. While, on the one hand, we acknowledge the relevance of such works – despite questioning some of their theoretical and methodological choices (as addressing language comprehension and production separately and independently[161]) –, on the other hand, the

[160] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[161] See Fugiwara (2013) on this regard.

predominance of works in such approaches in Brazil underpins Neri's (1991) observation of *the need to conduct studies about ag(e)ing in Brazil*, as I pointed out earlier, because of cultural and historical differences, but also because of the conflicting data of the research carried out abroad.

On this regard, the only *linguistic analysis* carried out *with* and *about* ag(e)ing Brazilian Portuguese speakers is Preti (1991), which according to Marcuschi (1991, p. 17 *apud* Preti, 1991) is based on a limited corpus:

> In our research on the language of the elderly, we made 25 recordings, most of them around 15 to 30 minutes long, with speakers ranging from 80 to 101 years old. **In this work [Preti, 1991], however, the theory is documented, in most cases, with only one of the recordings.** This is the dialogue number 396-D2, which also belongs to the project standard uban linguistic norm of São Paulo (NURC-SP Project) and is 75 minutes long. In addition to being much longer, this dialogue proved to be qualitatively better than the other surveys. (...) In Chapter V, regarding the problem of the survival in the memory of words of dicourses of decades ago, we also included two other dialogues (**emphasis** added)[162].

There is, therefore, scarcity of linguistic analysis that considers investigating language production and comprehension in more natural contexts. On this matter, Shafto & Tyler (2014, p. 581) defend that:

> It is especially important to investigate the ways in which context facilitates word production in old age, thus allowing older adults to speak more fluently than is expected by their single-word production difficulties. It is possible that aging impairs performance on tests of single-word production rather than the production process itself. This review might shift researchers' focus from looking for evidence of age-related impaired retrieval in connected speech to looking for evidence of compensation strategies.

It is interesting to note that, for Shafto & Tyler (2014), ag(e)ing is still considered *the cause* of linguistic and cognitive deficit issues. Despite acknowledging that studies on language, cognition, and ag(e)ing should move "away from a focus on the functional role of individual brains regions to understanding the network dynamics that characterize the

[162] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

effects of aging on cognition" (Shafto & Tyler, 2014, p. 583), language is still essentialized, since it is seen *only* as a cognitive behavior. Considered as an *ideal model system*, language is investigated disconnected from the activities of the subjects; it is thus a-historical, a-political, de-situated.

As I have been trying to show, it seems that the lack of socio-historical approaches to the relation between language and ag(e)ing leads to stereotypical ideas, such as that prolixity is *characteristic* in this population or that older people are more likely to produce "out of topic" or "irrelevant" speech, thus being linguistically more "inefficient," or having "performance impairment." That is, characteristics that may be associated with different age groups or that might be related to the methodological studies[163] become *symbols* of ag(e)ing and, very frequently, *symptoms* of a pathology – a deficit, a decline, an alteration.

The stereotypes that characterize the discourse on ag(e)ing individuals seem, thus, to be one of limit of the normal and the pathological, since this is not based on discursive linguistic analysis of the utterances of ag(e)ing individuals, or on theoretical and methodological approaches that understand language beyond its biological bases. As Novaes-Pinto (2008, p. 19) points out, such perception lacks linguistic reasoning: "what is perceived is that when the social role of the elderly changes, the characteristics of their language use are also refused or considered symptoms of a pathology,[164]" which leads to the creation of new evaluation categories – "categories without subjects,[165]" as we will see in further in this chapter.

This brief presentation – of how some of the relationship between language and ag(e)ing has been addressed – points to the necessity of: (i) expanding the scope of analysis of the language use of ag(e)ing individuals considering different age groups, different literacy histories and practices, as well as pathological aspects; (ii) taking into account the formal aspects of linguistic constructions, as well as their pragmatic-

[163] Preti (1991), who was was interested in understanding the vocabulary used by ag(e)ing individuals, conducted interviews with questions about their *memories* and their *past experiences*, which led him to conclude that ag(e)ing individuals used "outdated lexicon" and that narratives occur with great frequency among ag(e)ing individuals given their "natural tendency to become storytellers" (Preti, 1991, p. 40).

[164] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[165] This reflection is based on the discussion conducted by Skliar (2003) who talks about classification without subjects in assessment in educational settings. I first used the idea to think about categories (clinical and linguistic) without subjects in my master's research.

discursive contexts; and (iii) exploring theoretical and methodological aspects that consider the linguistic, cultural, historical, and social aspects in Brazil.

In this way, I believe it is possible to develop a reflection that could contribute to establishing a *panorama of language in ag(e)ing* that does not cross or silence the subjects, since global social structures (macro context) arise, manifest, and are sustained by local social actions (micro context). Therefore, the processes through which we observe the micro characteristics of social life are the main interest of a qualitative approach.

In the next session, I turn to the WFD phenomenon in the context of ag(e)ing, which among healthy individuals is responsible for most of their complaints about "forgetting a well-known word," as described by Burke & Shafto (2004):

> Older adults report that one of **their most annoying cognitive problems is the inability to produce a well-known word.** Although people of all ages suffer such word-finding failures, this type of error becomes **more frequent with age**, and older adults report that it is **the cognitive problem most affected by aging**. Understanding the nature and cause of *word-finding failures is an important goal for aging research* because these failures may diminish older adults' success in communicating, and weaken the evaluation of their language competence by themselves and others. Such negative self-appraisal promotes withdrawal from social interaction. (Burke & Shafto, 2004; **emphasis** added).

Considering all the issues discussed and the relevance and frequency of this phenomenon among subjects with and without language alterations, I deepen the discussion of this topic in the next session.

3.3. A discursive approach to reflect on *Word Finding Difficulties* in the context of ag(e)ing

Before proceeding with the reflection on *Word Finding Difficulties*, I bring an excerpt from Calvino's novel (1988) to support the discussion of the phenomenon.

A character, called *Reader*, buys an edition of Italo Calvino's "If on a winter's night a traveler." During the reading, he realizes that it is a "defective" version. He goes then back to the bookstore, gets a new one that is seemingly without fail, and while he is reading it, he discovers that this new book in no way resembles the novel that he had been

reading. The *Reader* starts then a ceaseless search for the continuation of the first novel, engaging in a real maze of stories, characters, and places. In his search, after having already begun to read other two novels without being able to conclude them (because the stories are suddenly interrupted), he finds Mr. Cavedagna, the editor, with whom he establishes the following dialogue:

> "What I know, I'll tell you gladly," the editor says. "Listen. It all began when a young man turned up in the office, claiming to be a translator from the **whatisitsname**, **from the youknowwhat...**"
> "Polish?"
> "No, no, Polish indeed! A difficult language, one not many people know..."
> "Cimmerian?"
> "Not Cimmerian. Farther on. **What do you call it**? This person passed himself off as an extraordinary polyglot, there was no language he didn't know, even **whatchamIcallit**, Cimbrian, yes, Cimbrian. He brings us a book written in that language, a great big novel, very thick, **whatistisname**, the *Traveler*, no the *Traveler* is by the other, *Outside the town*..."
> "By Tazio Bazakbal?"
> "No, not Bazakbal, this was the *Steep slope*, by **whosit**..."
> "Ahti?"
> "Bravo, the very one. Ukko Ahti." (Calvino, 1981, p. 98)[166].

This dialogue, in which Mr. Cavedagna, with the help of the *Reader*, seeks the name of the translator – a key information to explain and narrate the story of the unfinished books – reminds us of some peculiarities of the phenomenon known in neuropsychological literature as WFD and its relationship with language in ag(e)ing. It is my interest then to resume and reflect in this session about the following characteristics of WFD: (i) the phenomenon is recurrent in normal functioning of language; (ii) it is an interesting *locus* to investigate and understand the linguistic-cognitive strategies used by the subjects to achieve their *speech will* (Bakhtin, 1986); and (iii) it shows the mutual collaborations of the *partners of communication* (Bakhtin, 1986).

[166] Translated by William Weaver (1981), Harcourt Brace & Company, NY. It is interesting to note that the English translator kept Calvino's strategy of juxtaposing some of the expressions (for example, "**whatisitsname**"), what seems to mark an automatic production that emerges in the search of a word. It is also interesting that the Brazilian Portuguese version did not include and adapted such stylistic strategy.

The interest in investigating this phenomenon derives, then, from the desire for better understanding its nature and the strategies used by the subjects to deal with it, as well as to better comprehend some aspects of the relationship between language and ag(e)ing.

One way to investigate WFD is through qualitative procedures, which are more interested in the *processes* through which *social action*s are performed (Damico et al., 1999). In this regard, Vygotsky (1987, p. 243-244) states that "the basic methodological defect of nearly all studies of thinking and speech […] is the tendency to view thought and word as two independent and isolated elements whose external unification leads to the characteristic features of verbal thinking." His critical discussion may be read in the following passage:

> From the outset, then, we have tried to frame the entire problem in a new way and apply a new method of analysis. We attempted to replace the method based on decomposition into elements with a method of analysis that involves partitioning the complex unity of verbal thinking into units. In contrast to elements, units are products of analysis that form the initial aspects not of the whole but of its concrete aspects and characteristics. Unlike elements, units do not lose the characteristics inherent to the whole. The unit contains, in a simple, primitive form, the characteristics of the whole that is the object of analysis. We found the unit that reflects the unity of thinking and speech in the *meaning* of the word. As we have tried to show, word meaning is a unity of both processes that cannot be further decomposed. That is, we cannot say that word meaning is a phenomenon of either speech or thinking. The word without meaning is not a word but an empty sound. Meaning is a necessary, constituting feature of the word itself. It is the word viewed from the inside (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 244).

After such considerations, I bring and discuss three episodes from the interviews with Catarina and Helena to continue this reflection[167]. As presented in **Chapter 1**, in the interview, Catarina talked about how her daily studying practice – a result of the duties she has as a religious instructor –, was essential for her to assume a self-taught and continuous learning attitude. Among the various topics we talked about, in this part of the

[167] Catarina and Helena do not have any diagnosis of language disorder. As presented in Chapter 1, they live on their own apartments in Campinas.

interview Catarina tells me about her relationship with her children and grandchildren. The episode, which is a minute and a half long (starting at 8:57 and ending at 11:07) presents the moment in which Catarina explains the medical condition with which one of her grandchildren was born.

Episode 1: *Mielomeningocele*

Start: 8:57

L#: e me fala um pouquinho então dos seus filhos a senhora tem três?
and tell me a little bit then about your kids do you have three?
C#: ᵀentão eu tenho três filhos gostaria até
so I have three kids I wish I had
ᵀ 9:02

L#: [risos]
C#: de ter tido mais mas é a menina mais velha...tem 47 acabou de fazer 47 a minha filha do meio
more but uh the oldest girl... is 47 just turned 47 my middle daughter

L#: uhum
uhum
C#: tem...44 e o meu filho vai fazer agora 41 é em agosto né? ah são criaturas... cada um diferente do
is... 44 and my son will turn 41 uh in August right? oh they're creatures...each one different from

L#: uhum
uhum
C#: outro é claro ainda bem mas são criaturas pra mim são maravilhosas... é carinhosos... todos eles
the other of course thankfully but they're creatures to me they're wonderful... uh loving... all of them

L#: uhum
uhum
C#: se preocupam muito comigo e eu ajudo na medida que eu posso... sempre porque a minha filha do
they worry about me a lot and I help as much as I can... always because my middle daughter

L#: uhum
uhum
C#: meio teve um filho que nasceu com mielo meni meningocele está com 14 anos mas desde que
had a son that was born with myelo meni meningocele he's 14 but since he was
ᵀ 9:47 ᵀ 9:50

L#: o que que é? eu não conheço
what's that? I don't know
C#: nasceu eu estou sempre junto em todasᵀ as ocasiões mielomeningocele é a coluna
born I am always with them in every occasion myelomeningocele uh the spine
ᵀ 9:57

L#: ah::
C#: não fechou então nasce aberto e conforme a altura que nasce aberta os problemas são diferentes o
didn't close so it's open at birth and depending on the severity the problems are different

---

L#: é muito
yeah very
C#: dele é ficou aberta do cóccis quando ele nasceu tinha uns 8 cm aberto é MUIto pra um bebezinho
his uh was open from the coccyx when he was born it was 8 cm open it's a LOT for a little baby

---

L#: pequeno né
small right
C#: mas graças a Deus ele nasceu no HC em São Paulo e no dia mesmo lá ou no outro não me lembro
but thank God he was born at HC in São Paulo and the same day or the next I don't remember

---

L#:
C#: bem já f:: tentaram fechar o que foi possível porque inervação né? não é assim né?
well they already c:: tried to close what they could because the innervation right? it's not like that right?

L#:
C#: então é para ele é cadeirante paralítico da cintura pra baixo então é por consequência disso tem
so uh para he is in a wheelchair paralyzed from the waist down so uh as a consequence of this he has

---

L#: hmm
hmm
C#: hidrocefalia né? então a vida inteira com ele foi uma luta muito grande então eu chegava a passar
hydrocephalus right? so our life with him has been a really big battle so I spent

---

L#:
C#: dois anos direto em São Paulo quando ela morava lá é mas o marido dela... ele é ele prestou um
two years in a row in São Paulo when she lived there uh but her husband... he uh he applied to

---

L#: hmm
C#: concurso na USP lá de Ribeirão e passou então eles moram lá já há 8 anos eles moram lá
a position at USP there in Ribeirão and was accepted so they've lived there for 8 years they live there

End: 11:07

The first aspect that calls our attention in this episode is the apparent ease and speed with which Catarina brings new and relevant information to the topic discussed, which is introduced by me. In less than a minute (9:02 to 9:57 – marked in red in the transcript), she presents her sons and daughters, as well as their ages – drawing attention to the birthdays of two of them. She also mentions characteristics of their family relationship, for example when she says that they are "different creatures," "tender kids," and "care very much" for her, and that she helps as much as she can, besides referring to her grandson's pathology at birth.

It is interesting to note how she reveals details, in less than a minute, using relevant and appropriate lexicon such as "mielomeningoceli," "coccyx," "enervation," "paralytic wheelchair," "hydrocephalus" – without apparent difficulty. We can assume that Catarina's being so close to the reality of her grandchild and accompanying him from

birth, as she reported in the interview, reveals the importance of considering the social practices in which subjects circulate to analyze their lexical choices – instead of taking, for example, "word frequency" as an absolute variable that would be the same for any speaker.

Another interesting aspect is that the two moments in which Catarina seems to present some difficulties are solved quickly. In the first case, when mentioning the name of the disease that affected her grandson, she corrects herself immediately, taking about 3 seconds (9:47 to 9:50 – marked in blue in the transcript): "because my middle daughter has a child who was born with mielo/meni/meningoceli." Secondly, she says she is not sure if her grandson was operated the same day of birth or on the following day: "and the same day there ... I do not remember well in the other ..." but it does not seem relevant this information, at that time, to explain that the grandson was operated as soon as he was born. There has been so much information presented in a short time that the fact that she does not clarify this should not be understood as an indication of a *real* difficulty (neither of memory nor of phonological access) – as we have observed with aphasic subjects, who may take a very long time to reach a target word, for example.

This characteristic – the apparent ease with which she brings new and relevant information and discards others – also appears in the next episode. At that moment, Catarina tells me about her grandchild moving to Italy.

Episode 2: *Moving to Italy*

Start: 11:23

L#: é uma família grande né? NOssa que gostoso
it's a big family right? THAT's great
C#: é grande...eu tenho sete netos... é muito bom...a o o filho mais velho é dessa de
it's big...I have seven grandkids it's very good...ah the the oldest son is my daughter's from

---

L#
C#: Ribeirão que casou casou...engravidou na faculdade... ela fez arquitetura tava...lá em*... ᵀonde
Ribeirão that married married...got pregnant in college...she did architecture she was...there in...where
* looks down
ᵀ11:40

L#:
C#: que é... ᵀBauru e aí ela:: ficou grávida e é uma criança uma benção divina... está formado em
is it...Bauru and then she:: got pregnant and he's such a divine blessing... has a degree in
ᵀ 11:42

L#: hmm
hmm
C#: engenharia mecânica... se formou esse ano... vem almoçar domingo comigo porque ele
mechanical engineering... graduated this year... he's comming to luch Sunday with me because he's

---

L#: o seu neto né? a tá uhum
your grandson right? oh ok uhum
C#: sempre foi um exemplo meu neto mais velho e ele...o TCC dele...como ele fez engenharia
always been an example my oldest grandson and the...his TCC...as he did mechanical

---

L#:
C#: mecânica na cidade Rio Grande no Rio Grande do Sul é:: um aluno excelente ele trabalhava num
engineering in the city Rio Grande in Rio Grande do Sul uh an excellent student he used to work in a

---

L#: hmm
hmm
C#: laboratório que a Petrobrás mantém lá dentro...o TCC dele foi escolhido e ele foi pra Bolonha e
laboratory that Petrobrás keeps inside there...his TCC was chosen and he went to Bologna and

---

L#: NOssa que orgulho a::: por isso que ele vem agora
SO proud ah that's why he's coming now
C#: Rimini é pra apresentar os projetos dele...chegou segunda-feira agora
Rimini uh to present his projects...he came back this past Monday

---

L#: [ri]
[laughs]
C#: então ele vem agora...tá porque...ele veio pra pra cá porque... não podia ficar lá fazendo o quê...só que
so he's coming now...ok because... he came back because...he couldn't stay there doing what but

---

L#: ahh uhum
ahh uhum

C#: não arrumou emprego aí ele arrumou de...uma loja no shopping Iguatemi...tá vendendo camisa
didn't find a job then he found ...a store in Iguatemi mall...he's selling shirts

---

L#: uhum
uhum

C#: então...roupa lá...nem sei...nunca fui nunca fui lá e e como ele pediu licença pra ir essa semana
so...clothes there... I don't know... I've never been I've never been there and and because he asked for time off

---

L#: ahh
ahh

C#: pra lá pra Itália agora ele tá trabalhando dobrado mas ele vai ele vai só trabalhar por hora
to go there to Italy this week now he's working twice as hard...but he's going he's going only to work hourly

---

L#: a::... pra estudar?
oh... to study?
C#: porque ele foi convidado pra ficar em Bolonha pra fazer pesquisa no no laboratório da... ai
because he was invited to stay in Bologna to research at at the laboratory of...oh...of

---

L#: Ferrari? JUra?
Ferrari? REALLY?
C#: desses carros de corrida aí muito famosos não lembro agora o nome... Ferrari... *ele vai trabalhar
these very famous racing cars I can't remember the name now... Ferrarri...he's going to work
* nods confirming

L#: nossa que orgulho
so proud

C#: em Bolonha então ele vai embora* é uma graça...mas o outro que tem dezenove anos que é da
in Bologna so he's going away he's a blessing...but the other one that is nineteen that is
* smiles

L#:
C#: minha filha mais velha foi pra MESma faculdade dele... tá seguindo os MESmos passos...
my oldest daughter's went to the SAme university... he's following in his FOOTsteps...
Ends: 13:36

In this second episode, we notice two moments in which Catarina seems to feel a greater difficulty to reach the target word. In the first one, she remembers, almost immediately, the city where her daughter studied "she was… there in... where is that? Bauru," taking, again, about 2 seconds (11:40 to 11:42 – marked in red in the transcript). In the second moment, Catarina wants to tell me where her grandson will work. She informs the city but cannot remember the name of the laboratory. At that moment, she voices this difficulty, inviting me, even if not directly, to help her achieve her *speech will* (cf. Bakhtin), curiously the same strategy used by Calvino's character. It is also worth

mentioning that Catarina's clue “famous racing car” is perfect for the referential process: “to research at at the laboratory of...oh...of these very famous racing cars."

The next episode is from the interview with Helena, who was quite cheerful and good-humored throughout our conversation, even showing surprise for being interviewed since, according to her, she would not “have so much to say,” as already mentioned in **Chapter 1**.

Episode 3: *All righty*

Start: 0:36

L#: a senhora nasceu aqui em Campinas? a:::
were you born here in Campinas? oh:::

H#: não... nasci em Garça mas me criei em ᵀTupã e me casei em
no...I was born in Garça but I grew up in Tupã and married in

S#:

ᵀ0:40

L#: [ri] quando que quando que a
[laughs] when did you when did you

H#: Rinópolis e viuvei em ᵀCampinas mas é [rindo]... eu sou rápida* pra falar
Rinópolis and became a widow in Campinas that's true [laughing]...I'm fast to speak

S#: [gargalha]
[laughs loudly]
*opens the arms and looks to grandson

ᵀ0:43

L#: senhora mudou aqui pra Campinas? a:::
move here to Campinas? oh:::

H#: em sessenta e sete foi no mêsᵀ* eu viajei pra cá no mêsᵀ de agosto
in sixty-seven it was in month I traveled here in month of August

S#:
*looks above and closes one eye

ᵀ1:01 ᵀ1:08

L #: e:::
uh:::

H#: dia primeiro de agosto eu peguei o trem lá...que naquele tempo tinha trem...hoje não tem mais... daí
first of August I took the train there... that time there was train...today there isn't anymore...so
S#:

L#: lá onde? em em Tupã
there where? in in Tupã

H#: eu peguei o trem lá... em Tupã é... e daí... a minha mudança veio despachada
I took the train there... in Tupã yes...and so...my belongings were sent away with
S#:

L#:
H#: ᵀcom *quantos kilos gente?* ai eu esqueci os quilos*... ᵀtrezentos quilos * com máquina de costura

how many kilograms people? oh I forgot the kilograms... three hundred kilo with sewing machine
S#:
*looks above *looks down *touches head with left hand *raises left index
ᵀ1:14 ᵀ 1:18

300 kg = 661 lbs

L#: uau uhum uhum
wow uhum uhum

H#: e tudo... cama colchão tudo* veio despachada só não veio o guarda-roupa porque não tinha
and all... bed mattress everything was sent only the wardrobe didn't come because there wasn't
S#:
*pauses left hand open on her lap

L#:
H#: uma mala que veio lá os presentes que eu ganhei no casamento... eu fiquei quarenta anos casada
a luggage that came with the presents that I won in the wedding... I was married for forty years
S#:

L#: uhum
uhum

H#: e ainda tenho louça* que eu ganhei no casaMENto eu casei em ᵀnove em* cinquenta e nove eu me
and I still have tableware that I won in the WEdding I married on nine in fifty nine I
S#:
* raises left hand * looks above
ᵀ1:41

L#: nossa
oh wow

H#: casei* trinta e um do um de cinquenta e nove e eu enviuvei trinta e um do um de noventa e nove[T]
married on January thirty-first fifty-nine and I became a widow January thirty-first ninety-nine
S#:
* looks above, raises left index and smiles
[T] 1:48

L#: [ri]
[laughs]

H#: tudo certinho comigo tem que ser tudo certinho [ri]
all righty with me everything has to be alright
S#:

End: 1:54

We also note in episode 3, as in previous data, how Helena presents relevant information quickly. In only 3 seconds (0:40 until 0:43 – marked in red in the transcriop), she names three cities that marked her life: where she was raised (Tupã), where she married (Rinópolis) and where she lost her husband (Campinas). The information provided was so frank that it made me laugh, which Helena took as an opportunity to explain: “I'm quick to talk,” also laughing. She then informs us when she moved to Campinas, giving precise details (in only 7 seconds – 1:01 to 1:08 – marked in red in the transcript): “it was in month I traveled here in month of August first of August I took the train there.” In a similar way, Helena informs (taking 7 seconds – 1:41 to 1:48 – marked in red in the transcript) the date of her wedding and when her husband died: "I married on nine in fifty-nine I married on January thirty-first fifty-nine and I became a widow January thirty-first ninety-nine.”

It is worth noting that it is not a question of providing information that could be considered by an interlocutor as irrelevant to the dialogue. On the contrary, one observes how Helena appreciates precise information: "all righty with me everything has to be alright." This not only reveals her ability to select relevant information to achieve her *speech will*, but aspects of her personality that should not be confused (or directly associated) with being in the ag(e)ing process, as I have showed throughout this reflection. The “essentialization” of certain characteristics (partial, not always true, as we saw in **Chapter 2**) supports stereotypes associated with ag(e)ing.

What is possible to notice throughout the interview, however, is the presence of the determination of someone who: left the city where she was born because she was tired of working for her brothers, moved to Campinas to become a cleaning person in a dentist office, and who have today two apartments in the middle class region of Campinas. It is

not a question of valuing only the achievements of those who, despite so many difficulties, managed to raise their children, but to emphasize the relevance that this information can provide for the understanding of linguistic aspects.

However, as it occurs with other participants, there are moments of difficulty, as when she "apparently forgot" how many kilograms she brought in her luggage when she moved to Campinas. Like Catarina, she verbalizes this difficulty: "how many kilograms people? oh I forgot the kilograms... three hundred kilos." It only took her around 4 seconds (1:14 to 1:18), although, to reach the target word. In verbalizing, she invited me to help her, showing mastery of a linguistic-cognitive strategy to keep the conversation going while searching for the word.

The analysis of the data shows, although in a different way from what we saw in the episode 2 with Catarina, the collaborative work of partners of communication *in* the search for the target word, at the moment of the difficulty.

It is also necessary to take into account the fact that there is an important element that should be considered in this dialogue. Goffman (1980) called such strategy "face elaboration," which concerns a "positive social value that a person actually claims for themselves through what others assume to be the line they take during a specific contact" (Goffman, 1980, p. 76-77). Also, as Preti (1991) posits, ag(e)ing individuals may "adopt a very characteristic attitude of self-devaluation, underestimating themselves, which constitutes one of the most distinctive stereotypes of old age" (Preti, 1991, p. 28), partly because of their fear of making mistakes that could break any models accepted by younger people.

3.4. The production of *circumlocutions*: from "empty speech" to "communicative strategy" definitions

To begin this discussion, I turn to one of the most famous writers in English Literature, Charles Dickens, who coined the term "Circumlocution Office" in the novel "Little Dorrit" (Dickens, 1857)[168] to satirize the English bureaucracy. The excerpt of the novel, presented below, describes how people and projects get lost in the "most important department of government," as the author ironically defines it.

[168] It is interesting to note that, after more than 160 years since the publication of the novel, the term is still used to satirize the bureaucracy of the English state agencies.

> Numbers of people were lost in the Circumlocution Office. Unfortunates with wrongs, or with projects for the general welfare (and they had better have had wrongs at first, than have taken that bitter English recipe for certainly getting them), who in slow lapse of time and agony had passed safely through other public departments; who, according to rule, had been bullied in this, and overreached by that and evaded by the other; got referred at last to the Circumlocution Office, and never reappeared in the light of day. Boards sat upon them, secretaries minuted upon them, commissioners gabbled about them, clerks registered, entered, checked and ticked them off, and they melted away. In short, all the business of the country went through the Circumlocution Office, except the business that never came out of it; and its name was Legion (Dickens, 1857, p. 76).

The author associates circumlocution with this image of an *excess* of bureaucratization of public actions, in which people need, for example, to "fill forms to fill in other forms;" that is, people are demanded to perform endless tasks that do not seem to help them accomplish what they actually need. Interestingly, such is the description of the most striking feature of the circumlocution: its *indirect* nature – sometimes almost to no end – as we can see in the definitions of the dictionaries:

Portuguese Dictionary Priberiam[169]

1.1. A figure of speech that consists of saying with several words what can be said with one;
1.2. Circuitous;

Houaiss Dictionary[170]

1.3. Excessive use of words to utter a statement that does is not clearly expressed; rodeo, circumlocution, circuit of words;
1.4. Sequence of words or phrases used in place of a specific term; periphrasis, circumlocution;
1.5. By extension: evasive, verbal subterfuge;

Dictionary Aulete[171]

[169] Available on: https://www.priberam.pt/dlpo/circunl%C3%B3quio Last access: May 2019. See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[170] Available on: https://houaiss.uol.com.br/pub/apps/www/v3-3/html/index.php#1 Last access: May 2019. See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[171] Available on: http://www.aulete.com.br/circunl%C3%B3quio Last access: May 2019. See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

1.6. Use of phrases or analogous words instead; circumlocution: "Circumstances were used to mitigate the roughness of communication" (Alberto Pimentel, Lobo da Madragoa, p. 134, ed. 1904);

1.7. Use of too many words or too many phrases to express something indirect, or by allusions or vague references; speech or writing in which a topic is surrounded, without going directly to the point;

1.8. By extension: words or phrases that are said evasively, or as subterfuge;

1.9. Linguistics: word set, or expression, that is used to make reference to something in an allusive or figurative way, without using a specific term.

Both Dickens excerpt and the definitions of some of the most popular dictionaries in Brazilian Portuguese refer to the characteristic of vagueness and circuity from circumlocution. Dickens' characterization highlights the most elusive part of the circumlocution which, in the dictionaries, is presented through terms such as "use of many" or "excessive use of words" (as in 1.3 and 1.7); "evasive / evasively" (as in 1.5 and 1.8); "verbal subterfuge / subterfuge" (as in 1.5 and 1.8); "allusions or vague references" (as in 1.7); "without going directly to the point" (as in 1.7).

Surprisingly, if we include, among these dictionaries, the descriptions given in Linguistics, we will not find much more on the topic. The only dictionary in Portuguese that offers a more thorough discussion is the *Dictionary of Linguistics and Grammar*, written by Camara Jr (2002 [1956])[172].

The first aspect to notice on his description is that the entrance to "circumlocution," leads the reader to the term "periphrasis:" "cimcumlocution: see periphrasis" (Camara Jr., 2002, p. 191). Below, we find the complete description of periphrasis, according to the author, as well as its relation to circumlocution:

> Periphrasis: vocabulary concept presented through a syntactic expression. The periphrasis can be – a) morphological, or – b) lexical, as it consists of – a) a grammatical phrase, b) a phrase that conveys the same external meaning as a word in the language. Thus there is – a) the periphrastic grammatical form, in which an auxiliary word takes on itself the expression of the grammatical notions, or internal meaning, letting the external meaning to be expressed by the other word, called PRINCIPAL (v., e.g., periphrastic conjugations); b) the lexical periphrasis, or

[172] Joaquim Mattoso Camara Jr. (1904-1970) is one of the most important early linguists in Brazil, having studied with Roman Jakobson and Georges Millardet. The work of Camara Jr., also influenced by André Martinet's European functionalism, made him an unavoidable reference in the study of Portuguese linguistics. Among his main publications are *Principles of General Linguistics* (*Princípios de Linguística Geral,* 1941), *To the Study of Portuguese Phonemics* (*Para o Estudo da Fonêmica Portuguesa,* 1953), *Dictionary of Linguistics and Grammar* (*Dicionário e Linguístca e Gramática*, 1956), and *Portuguese Language Structure* (*Estrutura da Língua Portuguesa*, 1970.

> **CIRCUMLOCUTION, which replaces one word with two or more words**. Lexical periphrasis is used for three main reasons: 1) euphemism (e.g., *a friend of others*); 2) for purposes of definition (e.g. *the lines that never meet*); 3) the desire to allude to a circumstance that the word itself may not evoke (e.g., *the Eternal City*). There is, therefore, always a stylistic intention, and in the third case it is highlighted what is considered especially expressive and worthy of attention, deriving even from a metaphor; e.g., "*the sovereign / of the sinister empires from beyond the grave*" (Varela, Works, II, p. 41). In classical literature, it was a usual resort the periphrasis for mythological characters; e.g. "*the clear inventor of Medicine*" (Lusíadas, III, 1) (Camara Jr., 2002, p. 191; author's *emphasis*; **emphasis** added)[173].

The periphrasis is defined by the author as a vocabulary concept presented through a syntactic expression. It thus appears that the boundary – in terms of linguistic levels – of the periphrasis lies between the lexical and syntactic levels. The circumlocution, in this case, would then be a "lexical periphrasis;" that is, a lexicon – be it a single word or a set of them – that would replace a syntactic expression. It is not clear, however, how a periphrasis becomes a circumlocution and in which contexts the latter would be recognized as the former. It is also noteworthy, besides this apparent redundancy between the two phenomena, the fact that Camara Jr. also characterizes the circumlocution through more pragmatic-discursive lens, extrapolating the lexical and syntactic levels, even though the author does not call attention to that fact – once within the structuralist theory he developed pragmatics is not central. Thus, the circumlocution would be used, according to the author, to the construction of euphemisms, for example, for definition of a term or for "the desire to allude to a circumstance that a word itself could not evoke."

This *dual* nature of the circumlocution has been the object of investigation in areas such as Philosophy, Translation Studies, Media and Political Discourses, and even in the context of Second Language Teaching-Learning. In the latter, for example, the circumlocution is considered as a *necessary ability* so that the language learners are able to handle possible lexical difficulties, or even to demonstrate their pragmatic competence, for example, to deal with more controversial issues.

Within this field of investigation, Jourdain (2000) notes that while advanced students' production of circumlocution is quite similar to the production of native

[173] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

speakers[174], beginning students are rarely able to produce circumlocution whenever necessary. The author advocates the importance of the development of circumlocution production within language teaching settings, from initial levels in the most diverse areas of second language learning.

Other authors have also investigated the benefits of using circumlocution in the classroom, both in terms of lexical gain or for the development of pragmatic-discursive skills (Berry-Bravo, 1993; Salomone & Marsal, 1997; Kasper & Ross, 2007; Ross, 2007; Moskver, 2008; Hull & Saxon, 2009; Kitajima, 2009;). In this respect, it is interesting to turn, as Weyers (2010, p. 385) shows, to the characterization of the linguistic production of students according to the *American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language* (ACTFL) – one of the associations that determine the parameters of evaluation of second and foreign language:

> Speaking Strategies was designed to develop those skills necessary for performance at the ACTFL Advanced level as well as increase competence in Superior-level functions. As a point of reference, **Advanced-level discourse is characterized by full, complete descriptions and narrations** in all major time frames, with good control of linguistic aspect; discourse takes on paragraph-like qualities; speakers can deal effectively with unanticipated complications, **using communicative devices like circumlocution and rephrasing**; and speakers deal concretely with conversations in most formal and some informal settings (**emphasis** added).

In neuropsychological studies, however, the association of circumlocution prevails with aspects considered more negative, such as *vagueness*. If we take, for example, how the term is defined in handbooks of Neuropsychology, we see that the definition seems to have been taken almost directly from language dictionaries – even though they were not written in the same language. The "Encyclopedia of Clinical Neuropsychology" (Kreutzer, Deluca & Caplan, 2011, page 584), for instance, characterizes circumlocution in the following way:

[174] The term "native speaker" is quite problematic and is avoided whenever possible. However, I keep the term used by the author in the referred work.

> The use of an **unnecessarily large number of words** to express an idea. **Evasion in speech.** Circumlocutions are often used by persons with aphasia when having difficulty recalling or retrieving a word. In place of the target word, a description of the word is used (…) **Circumlocutions can represent a positive symptom of anomia** in which, upon failure to retrieve a word, the subject talks around the word by defining it, describing a referent, or even making sound effects. Pointing to his wrist, a patient might say, "I wear it right here, and I tell time with it; mine goes tick, tick." **The use of circumlocutions is indicative of intact semantic activation and a general capacity to retrieve lexical forms** (**emphasis** added).

Both the language dictionary and the encyclopedia definitions also show more positive aspects of the nature of the circumlocution, such as the possibility of using it to "mitigate the roughness of the communication" (under 1.6), through "figurative" use (in 1.9), or even when it is considered a "figure of speech" (in 1.1.) – in this case resuming the trajectory of the use of circumlocution in rhetoric. However, when the definition of the encyclopedia regards this production as *positive* it is generally referred as a *mitigation of a symptom*; that is, the circumlocution is taken as a symptom of a production that should be different, thus becoming indicative of a change or malfunction – a non-ideal functioning. As the authors reinforce, despite being *positive,* it is still a *symptom.* Therefore, while there is encouragement to the use of circumlocution in the context of language learning and teaching, the same phenomenon is regarded as problematic in neuropsychological studies, which affects clinical practices since they are guided by the results provided by studies that are usually derived from metalinguistic tasks (Goodglass & Kaplan, 1996).

In the context of WFD studies, few have sought to further investigate the production of circumlocutions. I start by highlighting the work of Francis, Clark & Humphreys (2002), who created a therapy called "Circumlocution-Induced Naming" for people with aphasia with a focus on naming difficulties. According to the authors:

> It thus seems that cognitive neuropsychology can help to reestablish a specific vocabulary, but often falls short of improving an aphasic person's word finding abilities in general. (....) A different explanation posits that the problem may concern not so much which part of the language system is damaged as which *method* is used to *treat* it. Baddeley (1993) was the first person to voice concerns that theories of learning seem to play little part in cognitive neuropsychological rehabilitation, stating that cognitive models are good at identifying *what* to treat rather than *how* (Francis, Clark & Humphreys, 2002, pp. 244-245).

The discussion and the results of their research, from my understanding, are quite interesting for two reasons: the first of them is their theoretical and methodological reflection, since the work resumes the recurrent difficulty of neuropsychological studies and interventions in helping people with aphasia to overcome their difficulties outside the therapeutic environment. According to the authors, linguistic aspects that are treated in isolation through metalinguistic tasks (e.g. naming difficulties treated with single-word repetition tasks) are hardly generalized to other parts of the speech, a problem that is based on neuropsychological models that very frequently are capable of describing *what* should be treated, but not *how*[175]. However, as we have discussed in **Chapter 1,** that is only part of the issue, since the notions of *models*, for their *abstract objectivism* character, create what Bakhtin (1986) has regarded as "science fiction." The author argues:

[175] The discursive approach in Neurolinguistics has been pointing, since the first works developed, that this difficulty is also based on a compartmentalized view of the language. Coudry (1988 [1986]) recurrently states that, usually, researchers look to language phenomena through very narrow windows, referring to the formal theories such as structuralism and gerativism.

> What is represented by the diagram is only an abstract aspect of the real total act of actively responsive understanding, the sort of understanding that evokes a response, and one that the speaker anticipates. Such scientific abstraction is quite justified in itself, but under one condition: that it is clearly recognized as merely an abstraction and is not represented as the real concrete whole of the phenomenon. Otherwise it becomes a fiction. This is precisely the case in linguistics, since such abstract schemata, while perhaps not claiming to reflect real speech communication, are not accompanied by any indication of the great complexity of the actual phenomenon. As a result, the schema distorts the actual picture of speech communication, removing precisely its most essential aspects. The active role of the *other* in the process of speech communication is thus reduced to a minimum (Bakhtin, 1986, pp. 69-70)[176].

The second reason is precisely the fact that it is one of the few studies to approach circumlocution as a linguistic strategy. In the research, the subject referred as MB was able to name, in picture-naming tasks, all the figures of objects presented with the incentive to produce circumlocutions, as we can notice from the figure below:

THERAPIST	(placing picture in front of MB) "What's this called?"
MB	"Oh, I can never get this one ... I don't know, I'll never get it."
THERAPIST	"Well I heard you say it yesterday so I know you do know it! Tell me about it."
(encourages MB to start circumlocuting)	
MB	"It's ... you know, like, you'd put it on the wall."
THERAPIST	"And why would you want to do that?"
(encourages her to elaborate on description)	
MB	"Because like, you're proud."
THERAPIST	"What are you proud of?"
MB	"Well, like if you've won something."
THERAPIST	"That's right. So what is it?"
(reinforces MB's answer and encourages her to keep seeking the name)	
MB	"I don't know?"
THERAPIST	"You've told me you'd hang it on the wall if you'd achieve something—just imagine now, you've done something you're proud of—what would you hang on the wall?"
(Provides summary of information given by MB and continues to encourage name retrieval)	
MB	"A certificate."

Figure 14: Interaction in CIN therapy

[176] Bakhtin refers to the structuralist schematic diagram that divides communication in a "speaker" and a "listener," who "understands passively." As we have argued, the compartmentalization of language that grounds most language models is problematic (see Coudry, 1988 [1986]).

The authors call attention to the fact that the participant has worked "actively" to be able to name the target word (Francis et al., 2002, pp. 252-253)[177]. However, it is interesting to note, that this is not "active" *only* for the investigated subject, as the authors emphasize, but for *both* participants/interlocutors (MB and the therapist), since they act together so that MB can achieve his *speech will*, acting like *partners of communication* (Bakhtin, 1986)[178]. It is also quite interesting to notice that both have difficulty in finding words and both produce circumlocution. Indeed, the therapist produces – creatively and productively – a circumlocution to *help* the patient MB reach the target word, which once again reinforces how a pervasive linguistic strategy circumlocution is.

On the other hand, Antonucci & MacWilliam (2015) evaluate the circumlocution production of people with aphasia in order to explore how information differentiates sufficient (considered correct) from insufficient (considered incorrect) descriptions. In the work of the researchers, which had 21 participants with aphasia in activities of picture description of concrete objects, it calls our attention the fact that answers are considered *inadequate* or *incorrect* according to their informative potential – for example, there is no response or there is the production of “empty circumlocutions.” Also, it strikes the fact that the circumlocutions are considered "empty" when associated with *particular opinions and references*, as we can see below in the table presented by the authors in their article:

[177] The authors call the therapy “active” to counteract more traditional practices in which the activities used for this type of difficulty involve reading and repeating words, as well as matching images and words.

[178] It is also important to note that despite the emphasis on a model, the authors show an interesting attitude towards the interaction.

Table 2. Feature-type coding examples.

Category	Example
Superordinate	What broad category does the item belong to? e.g., dog—*animal*[a], mammal[a]; bicycle—*vehicle*
Coordinate	Belonging to the same category as the target item e.g., dog—*fox*; bicycle—*skateboard*
Subordinate	Subtypes or examples of items that belong to target item's category e.g., dog—*collie*; bicycle—*10-speed*[a]
Functional-shared	What do we use the item for that is common to other items? e.g., dog—*used for protection*[a]; bicycle—*used for transportation*[a]
Functional-distinct	What do we use the item for that is specific to the item? e.g., dog—*used as seeing-eye dog*; bicycle—*used for exercising*[a]
Visual-perceptual-shared	What is a visual description of the item common to other items? e.g., dog—*has four legs*[a]; bicycle—*has two wheels*[a]
Visual-perceptual-distinct	What is a visual description of the item that is distinctive? e.g., dog—*has a wet nose*[a]; bicycle—*has a chain*[a]
Action-shared	What common action does the item do? e.g., dog—*walks*; bicycle—*none*
Action-distinct	What distinguishing action does the item do? e.g., dog—*wags*; bicycle—*none*
Encyclopedic	Explicitly learned knowledge about the item e.g., dog—*"[wo]man's best friend"*[a]; bicycle—*once you learn how to ride, you never forget*
Associative	Entity commonly associated with the target item e.g., dog—*bone*; bicycle—*Tour de France*
Opinion/Empty Circumlocution	Personal view or reference e.g., dog—*My favorite creature*; bicycle—*My first was a Powder Puff.*
Auditory-perceptual (AudP)	What sound does the item make? e.g., dog—*bark*[a]; bicycle—*squeaks [when ridden]*

[a]In McRae et al. (2005) database.

Figure 15: Categories of circumlocution production (Antonucci & MacWilliam, 2015, P. S830).

Unlike the work developed by Francis et al. (2002), the research by Antonucci & MacWilliam (2015) treats the production of circumlocution as a way of observing the participant's difficulties in naming. That is, in the latter, the productions were compared and evaluated from an expectation, from a *target* word predicted by the evaluator, and not from the strategies used by the participants to name *through* the use of circumlocution. This approach shows a tendency to frame linguistic production and discard those considered "empty," which could reveal interesting aspects of the relation between the *subject* and the *language*. Instead, it focuses on the deficits, in this case, naming difficulty. By placing the emphasis on the "supposed" losses, the researchers also lose the opportunity to have a wider understanding of effective social-linguistic production.

In addition, it is worth noting that Antonucci and MacWilliam (2015) argue that the result of their research indicates the need for a greater investment in "semantic treatments" for participants with aphasia. By doing so, they believe that people with aphasia would produce "more efficient" circumlocutions. In their words, "perhaps treatments like the Semantic Features Analysis can be modified to focus more exclusively and explicitly on what is special about object concepts, access to these distinctive features more salient to an individual concept" (Antonucci & MacWilliam, 2015, p. S836). It seems thus that there is a search for *stabilization* and *regulation* of possible associative characteristics to certain objects/words, which may lead to the denial of the various possibilities of speaking along language therapy.

In analyzing these models that seek to explain linguistic functioning, it is becoming increasingly evident their focus on the instrumental function of language rather than taking it as a constitutive activity of subjects, as discussed in **Chapter 1**. One of the effects of such reproduction of an essentialist view of language, as also discussed before, is taking language elements – words and sentences, for example – as communication units. Contrary to this view, we can turn to what Voloshinov (1973) argues:

> The result of all this is a fundamentally erroneous theory of understanding that underlies not only the methods of linguistic interpretation of texts but also the whole of European semasiology. Its entire position on finding word meaning and theme is permeated through and through with the false notion of passive understanding, the kind of understanding of a word that excludes active response (Voloshinov, 1973 p. 73).

In contrast, the discursive view underlying this work seeks to offer an approach of the phenomenon that does not disregard the subject relation with language and all it encompasses. The question I bring to this discussion, therefore, concerns *how* circumlocution can be approached when its emergence is perceived as the moment when a word does not come; that is, in the context of WFD studies.

3.4.1. What happens when a word does not come: a discussion about *circumlocution* in the context of *WFD*

Taking into consideration the issues discussed so far in this chapter, I now reflect about the production of *circumlocution* in the context of WFD. In order to do so, and in view of the few descriptions that could help me in this investigation, I turned to the transcriptions and selected the moments the participants *signaled* they were having some difficulty in producing a target word[179]. Therefore, instead of considering a circumlocution as the production of "too many words" or as an "elusive description," and having in mind that the term is traditionally used in literature to name a *deficit* in the

[179] Because the context of this study is not experimental – in the sense that I did not choose the target words prior to the conversation with the participants – I refer as *target words* what the participants produce after expressing effort in searching for them. Oliveira (2015) refer to the "exact word" was the one that has a satisfaction sense, which is linked to speech will (Bakhtin, 1986). It is also important to note that I decided to limit the analysis of the productions of circumlocution to highly marked contexts.

context of ag(e)ing studies, I am referring to this linguistic process as *the embedment of single or multiple utterances between following parts of verbal communication*.

Before presenting the data, in order to better understand the phenomenon, I decided to create categories that could give visibility to the functions that constituted the circumlocution during the elaboration of the utterances. This analytical process, thus, aimed to help me unravel the motivations that underly the epilinguistic and metalinguistic processes that characterize the search of a word[180]. It was from the process of investigation and analysis, therefore, that I conceived the descriptions provided below ("voicing the uneasiness;" "spelling out;" "active dialogic work;" "reintroduction;" and "bridging the gap") [181].

Such interpretation of the production of circumlocution aims to give more visibility to the subject's strategies and choices, instead of looking at the production exclusively from a syntactic standpoint, for example, since we consider, as discussed in previous chapters, that the syntactic structure is organized around one's *speech will*.

In order to show how such investigation of the phenomenon might be interesting to help us better comprehend aspects of the speech production in ag(e)ing, I analyze below ten examples of circumlocution. The first one is retrieved from **Episode 2**, "Moving to Italy," analyzed earlier in this chapter, when Catarina was talking about one of her grandsons moving to Italy to work in a research laboratory.

[180] I am considering, thus, all the work developed within Neurolinguistics, since Coudry (1988 [1986]), who have been calling attention to the epilinguistic and metalinguistic work present in the utterances of people with aphasia.

[181] It seems important to mention here that I asked three lab assistants from the Discourse Analysis Lab (USA) to code the examples of circumlocution according to my descriptions in order to check if they were effective. The results suggest that the categories could be helpful to the analysis.

Circumlocution 1

L#:	a::... pra estudar? oh... to study?	
C#: porque ele foi convidado pra ficar em Bolonha because he was invited to stay in Bologna	pra fazer pesquisa no no laboratório da⌜[... ai to research at at the laboratory of..oh...of	⌜13:12
L#:	⌜]Ferrari? Ferrari?	JUra? REALLY?
C#: desses carros de corrida aí muito famosos não lembro agora o nome... these very famous racing cars I can't remember the name now...	Ferrari... *ele vai trabalhar Ferrarri...*he's going to work	⌜13:16 *nods confirming

At this moment, Catarina does not seem to recall the name of the racing car research laboratory, but she provides me some good clues ("famous racing cars") that, associated with the country we are talking about, help me understand that she is referring to *Ferrari*. It is interesting to note that when she pauses her speech right after "da" ("of"), a possessive used for feminine nouns (the word "Ferrari" is feminine in Portuguese), she is also providing a clue that indicates her linguistic organization process of searching for a word. She also verbalizes that she does not "remember the name now," another sign that she is organizing her speech while keeping the conversation going. It is also noteworthy that it took her only 4 seconds to reach the word she was looking for.

In order to better investigate *what happens* while the subjects are searching for words, I decided to look at the productions of circumlocution in terms of their functions when the target word does not come. As this example shows, Catarina expresses discomfort (marked in purple in the transcript) by stating she did not remember the word she was looking for, while she also provided a useful description (marked in blue in the transcript) for the name of the she was looking for. I decided to code these two occurrences as possibilities within the circumlocution production as the following:

> **Voicing the uneasiness**: when the speaker expresses discomfort, either by stating they are trying to reach the word, or that they are not being able to recall the target word. For example: "I can't remember the name now."
>
> **Spelling out**: when the speaker provides hints and descriptions of a target word. For example: "these very famous racing cars."

The second example is from the interview with Zilda. At this moment of our conversation, we were talking about her youth and how she suffered when she moved to a neighborhood where some of her colleagues teased her for being poor.

Circumlocution 2

L#:
Z#: as meninas né?... as mocinhas tinha algumas que eram dadas... nós tínhamos educação né? mas
the girls right?... some of the little girls were "easy"... we had education right? but

L#:
Z#: tinham outras que não minha mãe que falava "ah aquela lá é..." tem ᵀ[o como é que a minha mãe
others that didn't my mom used to say "oh that one there she's..." [what did my mom
ᵀ31:00

L#: o rei na barriga?
they were full of themselves?

Z#: falava?.... (2s.) tinha não sei o quê na barriga [ri] ᵀ]o rei na barriga isso!
use to say?... (2s.) they had I don't know what in the belly [laughs] they were full of themselves yes!
ᵀ31:06

In this episode, Zilda, diagnosed with Alzheimer's at its onset, as presented in **Chapter 1**, seeks an expression in Portuguese ("ter o rei na barriga" – literally translated as "having the king in the belly") that is used to characterize people or attitudes that are presumptuous and arrogant. In this search process, Zilda seems to use two strategies that constitute the circumlocution. The first is to bring back the memory of her mother using this expression to describe her neighbors ("como é que minha mãe costumava dizer?" – "what did my mom used to say?").

After checking if I was following her (marked in orange in the transcript) in the process of verbalizing the search, Zilda pauses for two seconds and provides important hints about the expression she is looking for: having something in the belly (marked in purple in the transcript), which was enough – given the context of our conversation and the fact that I know that there is a very popular expression in Portuguese that involves having something in the belly – to complete with "king in the belly." It is also important to note that it took her only 6 seconds to organize her speech, so that we could reach together the word she was looking for.

Returning to Franchi (2011 [1977]), who talks about language as a *work* (an activity), and also Bakhtin (1986), who argues that the speakers use the linguistic resources available to produce utterances at the same time they are *replying* the

interlocutor (i.e. they are providing an active response to the utterance of the other), I describe the first strategy that Zilda used as

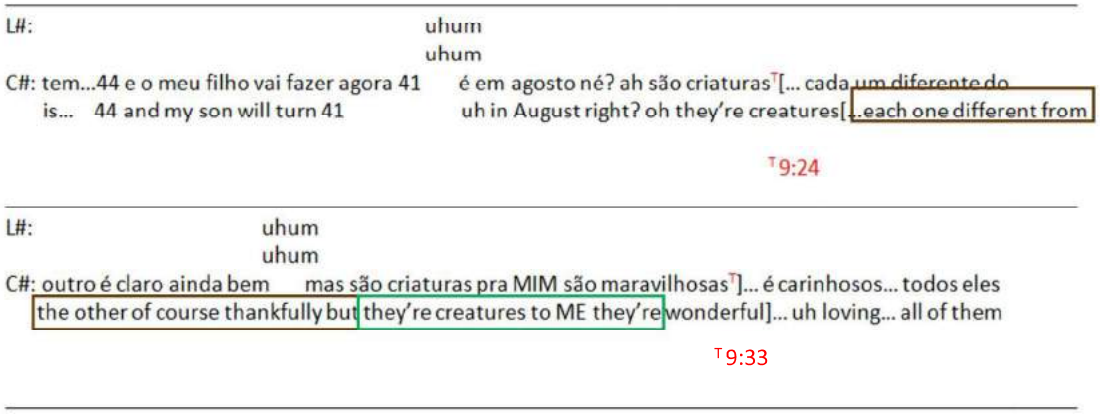
> **Active dialogic work**: the work of the speakers on language resources and their pragmatic competence in the dialogic play. For example: "what did my mom use to say?"

since it seems that it works as a question Zilda verbalized for herself since we do not share this information so I could not answer. However, while not evoking a direct reply from me, the question signals a demand for a reply – an active answer as her partner in this communication (in Bakhtin's sense), albeit indirectly, to pay attention to the fact that she is seeking an expression. It is in this sense of requesting for the communication to be open that Zilda strategically mobilized the remembrance/recollection of when her used to refer to her neighbors: as if it signaled that she expects me to be alert and to wait. This *strategy* – which is simultaneously of memory and of language – also shows how our experiences mark the utterances (Bakhtin's architectonic). Zilda resorts to other voices – of her mother's and of the known proverbs – that emerge in hers. It is also interesting to note how the articulation of all these voices constitutes not only the utterances but the strategies in the search of a word. The circumlocution is thus a pragmatic and discursive process of linguistic organization.

The next example was taken from the **Episode 1** "Mielomeningocele," when Catarina was talking about her children being wonderful "creatures[182]."

[182] I decided to keep the translation of "criaturas" as "creatures," even though it may cause some surprise in English readers mainly because Catarina is a very religious woman and the idea of creatures might be associated to "godly creatures." It is also worth noting that instead of bringing the adjective "wonderful" forward, I maintained the structure as in Portuguese, in which the adjectives more frequently occupy the position after the noun they qualify. It is because the noun phrase in Portuguese allows such flexibility that it seems possible to have an embedded utterance between the noun "criaturas" and the adjective "maravilhosas."

Circumlocution 3



If we return to the suggested characterization of circumlocution, Catarina interrupts her speech to include information she considers relevant to the discussion through a parenthetic structure[183]: "each one different from the other of course thankfully" (marked in brown in the transcript). Right after that, she reintroduces the information "they're creatures" (marked in green in the transcript), reinforcing that *for* her (with raised intonation) they are wonderful. These two processes, as described below, show the linguistic strategies Catarina employed while searching for the word "maravilhosas," a process that took her 8 seconds.

> **Reintroduction**: when the speakers rephrases, repeats or corrects what they have just said. For example: "they're creatures."
>
> **Bridging information[184]:** when the speaker introduces new information or an opinion, through a parenthetic structure. For example: "each one different from the other thankfully."

In a very similar way to Catarina's circumlocution production, we have the two examples, presented below, taken from the interview with Helena. At this moment of our conversation, we were talking about her travel to Campinas.

[183] It is worth noting that it is not an objective of this study to develop further analysis of parenthetic structures, but to call attention to the use of such structures, for example, to provide information considered relevant by the speaker within the context of word-finding. Also, it is interesting the fact that in the work of Preti (1991), the discourse of ag(e)ing individuals is frequently characterized as being "full of parenthetic structures" which might also be considered a stereotypical evaluation of the linguistic production of this population.

[184] I described this function based on the notion of *common ground*, which is generally understood as the fact that individuals engaged in conversation must share knowledge in order to be understood and have a meaningful conversation (Clark, 1992).

Circumlocutions 4 and 5

L#: senhora mudou aqui pra Campinas? a:::
move here to Campinas? oh:::

H#: em sessenta e sete foi no mês[* eu viajei pra cá no mês]de agosto
in sixty-seven it was in month[I traveled here in month] of August

S#: *looks above and closes one eye

0:54 0:58

L #: e:::
uh:::

H#: dia primeiro de agosto eu peguei o trem lá...[que naquele tempo tinha trem...hoje não tem mais... daí
first of August I took the train there... [that time there was train...today there isn't anymore...so

S#:

1:01

L#: lá onde? em em Tupã
there where? in in Tupã

H#: eu peguei o trem lá...]em Tupã é... e daí... a minha mudança veio despachada com
I took the train there...]in Tupã yes...and so...my belongings were sent away with

S#:

1:08

In the first case (circumlocution 4), Helena reorganizes her speech as she reintroduces the word "month," (marked in green) reaching right after "August". It is interesting to note that this process, which took her only 4 seconds, provides evidence that she was in the search for the word – a momentary difficulty of not being able to produce the exact word she needed immediately. This process is also reinforced by the gestures[185] that accompany the organization and the search for the word – she looks up and closes her eyes.

In the second example (circumlocution 5), Helena interrupts her speech to explain that at the time she was moving to Campinas, traveling by train was a possible means of transportation (marked in brown in the transcript), in comparison to today's transport possibilities. This interruption seems to have a distinct nature from the previous example. It does not seem that she is simply trying to gain some time to organize her speech and search for the word. Here, it seems that *our* relation plays a more relevant role in the organization process because it is certainly grounded in what Helena imagines that I know

[185] As discussed in Chapter 1, the relevance of studying the co-occurrence of gestures and body movements in the process of meaning-making and word-finding has become more evident throughout the process of analysis of this data and should be investigated in future work.

(or do not) about the city – the *shared knowledge*, according to Coudry (1988 [1986]). She *strategically* decides to include new information, which is also consistent with the matter discussed. This strategy seems to be a good example of the relevance of analyzing the process of word-search considering elements that might be "outside" the language formal structure, but that also constitutes the *utterance*, as discussed in **Chapter 1**, and that possibly motivate the production of this circumlocution. Finally, Helena reintroduces elements prior to this new information. All the circumlocution process took her 7 seconds.

Considering the strategy of reintroducing information or rephrasing it, the next example offers a different point of observation to the possibilities of language organization. In this context, Francisco and I were talking about the changes that the state of Paraná has gone through since the time he worked there.

Circumlocution 6

L#:	hmm hmm	[rindo] [laughing]	
F#: desolvolvendo o Paraná... ele tinha muito mato Paraná was devoloping... there were many weeds	ele agora não tem mais there's not any more		desmatou tudo... all was deforested...

L#:
F#: mas eu mas nós ficamos[T] [s seis sete meses... não...][T]sete Anos] no Paraná... eu eu estava com sete anos e
but I but we stayed[s six seven months... no...]seven Years] in Paraná... I I was seven and

[T]4:14 [T]4:20

Similarly to the previous examples of what has been characterized here as a circumlocution, Francisco wants to tell me that he lived for seven years in Paraná, in the South of Brazil. While he is organizing his language so that he can reach the target "seven years," he first starts by producing what seems to be a paraphasia: "six." Noticing that it is not the exact word he is looking for, he corrects himself to "seven months," having to rephrase once again, so that he can reach the target expression, stressing the first syllable ("Years"). The circumlocution here, which took him 6 seconds, encompasses the organization of the utterance in a phonological level. This example seems to corroborate the discussion developed by Oliveira (2015) about the semantic and phonological imbrication in language functioning.

From the same interview, we extract the following episode in which Francisco is talking about his work in Campinas. At this moment of the conversation, I was calling attention to how many stories he had already told me about his work experience and how

impressed I was with how much detail he could offer about each of the circumstances, places, and colleagues he had met in his life.

Circumlocution 7

L#: o senhor gosta de falar "olha eu trabalhei aqui eu fiz assim eu fiz assim" quer dizer é uma coisa muito
you like to say "look I worked here I did like this I did like this" I mean it is something very
F#:

L#: importante para o senhor né?
important to you right?

F#: é eu eu trabalhei com... T[no meio de sesse... seiscen...
yeah I I worked with... [in the middle of sixt... six hun...
T33:25

L#: Tsetecentos e setenta]
seven hundred and seventy]

F#: sessento... quase mil... seiscen seiscentos funcionários se se sete sete zero é
sixtie... almost a thousand... six hund six hundred workers se se seven seven zero yeah
T33:43

After he agreed that he did like to talk about the work and travel experiences he has had throughout his life, he starts a process of organizing his language to say that in one of the companies for which he worked he had around seven hundred and seventy colleagues. His process of reaching the target word, which took him here 18 seconds, shows a very similar process analyzed in the previous episode.

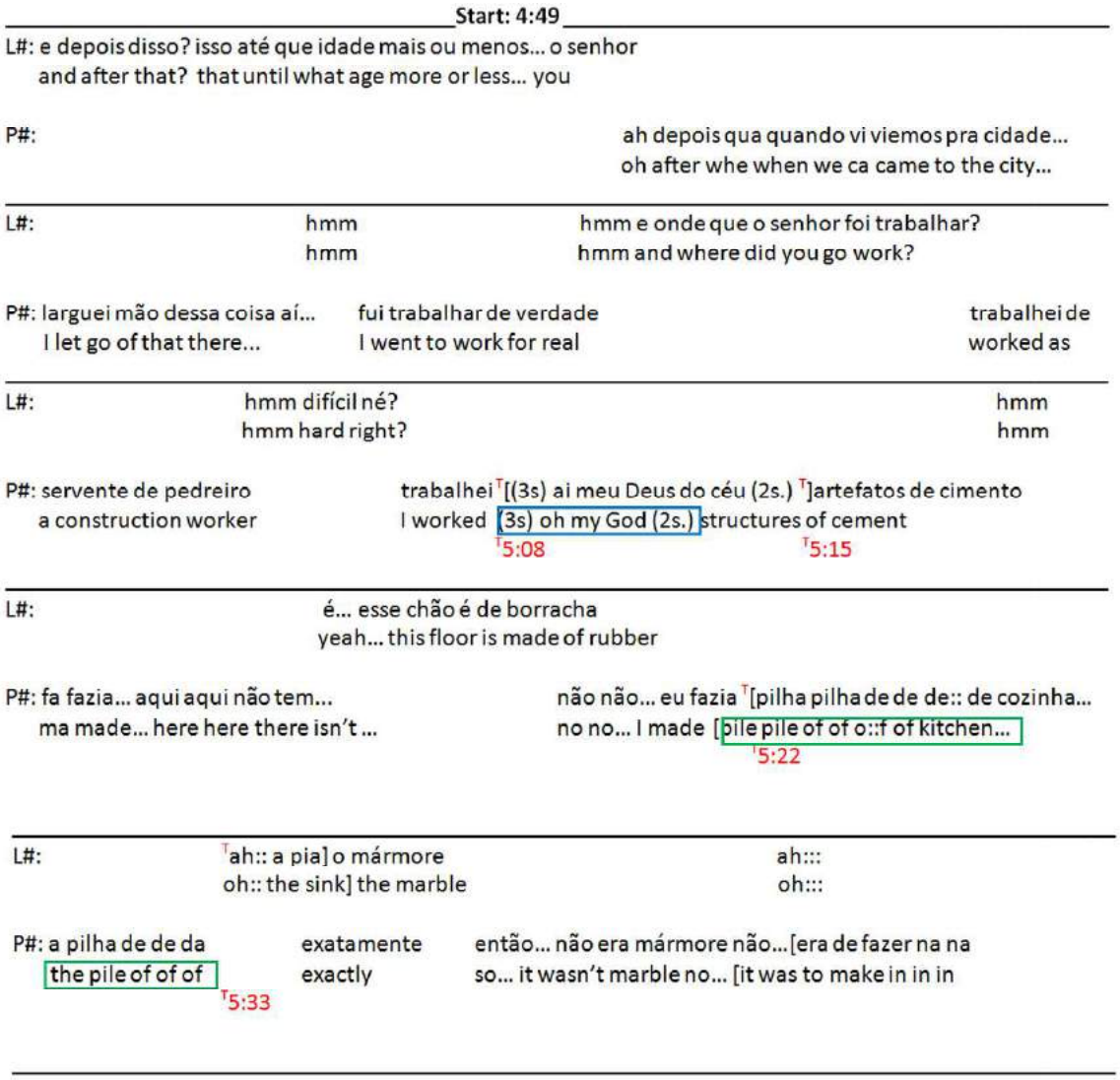
What I want to draw attention to, although we already know Francisco's difficulty in selecting and organizing his speech due to his aphasia condition (as discussed in **Chapter 1**), is that this process provides evidences of language reorganization through a movement of reintroducing linguistic elements. He starts the search for the word by trying to produce "seiscentos" ("six hundred") and does so through different attempts: "sesse" (first two syllables of "sessenta" – "sixty") that is corrected to "seiscen" (first two syllables of "seiscentos" – "six hundred"), altering it again to "sessento" (which seems to be a paraphasia of "sessenta" – "sixty"). These three attempts to produce "seven hundred" do not satisfy him, leading him to rearrange the linguistic structure through an approximation ("quase mil" – "almost a thousand"). This correction also seems to indicate the numerical unit he is seeking, providing important information to the interlocutor. It also seems to contribute to the process of organization, so that he can select and organize the following productions: "hundred" (the targeted numerical unit). Since this is not yet

the word he is looking for, Francisco makes one last attempt with another strategy, reintroducing the number, but in the decimal unit: "se seven seven zero." This whole path enables me to understand that he is looking for uttering "seven hundred and seventy."

What I emphasize in this analysis, then, when comparing the examples of Catarina, Helena, and Francisco's productions, is that although the *process* seems similar in the surface of the utterance, they are different in terms of their *speech will*. In other words, even though the utterances are similar in terms of the structure of the language (because that is what the language offers), underlying are all the voices, the psychological motivations, the production of paraphasia, and so on. In this sense, while Catarina and Helena reintroduce elements that help them organize syntactically (Catarina, for example, reintroduces "for me they are creatures"), Francisco, due to the characteristics of his aphasia, taker a longer route.

The next two examples are from the interview with Paulo, who also has aphasia. At this moment of our conversation, we talked about the professional activities that he developed, so in this section of the conversation he wanted to explain to me the kinds of manual work he did in construction.

Circumlocutions 8 and 9



In the first example (circumlocution 8), we note that Paulo's process of language organization occurs by verbalizing his difficulty (marked in blue in the transcript), accompanied by longer pauses of 3 and 2 seconds respectively. This process of verbalization and pause constitute the production of circumlocution, which in this case took 7 seconds.

In the second example (circumlocution 9), which took about 11 seconds, we observe a very similar process to that analyzed during the conversation with Francisco. Paulo, searching for the word "pia," organizes his language through a paraphasia "pilha" ("pile" [186]) which he repeats in the process of searching for the target word – production

[186] It is worth noting that "pilha," in Portuguese can be used both in the sense of "pile," and in the sense of "battery." I decided to translate to "pile" because it is closer phonetically to Portuguese.

that may be associated with difficulties of selection and organization at the phonological level, since the two words (the target "pia" and produced "pilha") are closely related phonologically in Portuguese. It is also interesting to note that the word "pilha" is accompanied by "de," which in this case indicates that he is looking for a qualifier for the noun[187]. When Paulo then produces the word "kitchen," he gives the lexical-semantic context necessary for me to understand, thus, that he was looking for the word "sink."

Finally, I bring an example of circumlocution produced during the interview with Ana. At that time of the conversation, she was telling me about her depression in her youth and how she felt better after participating in volunteer activities at an institution recommended by a woman who worked there. At this moment, she seems to look for the name of the neighborhood in Campinas where the institution was located.

Circumlocution 10

L#: hmm
hmm

A#: mulher que tomava conta aqui e e fe m me chamou pra nós irmos lá ᵀ[no... ele é engenheiro
woman that used to helped here and and she di called m me [for us to go there on.. he is an engineer
ᵀ29:32

L#:
A#: da DAP e ela... a dona Vandir é é cuidava é:: organizava né? e daí é é ela foi...
from DAP and she... miss Vandir uh uh helped uh:: she organized right? and then uh uh she was

L#:
A#: você vê como que eu estou com a memória ruim pra falar? eu sei dizer que (2s.) como que foi? ah! e eu
do you see how am I? with a bad memory to speak? I can say that (2s.) how was it? oh! and I

L#: uhum
uhum

A#: que tinha depressão... esperando um jeito de morrer... aí foi lá no ᵀ] alto do Taquaral
who had depression... was waiting for a way to die... then it was there on the top of Taquaral

ᵀ30:04

The first aspect that draws our attention in this circumlocution production, which took Ana 32 seconds (the longest of all occurrences found in the interviews), is the diversity of the phenomena that constitute it: there is reintroduction of elements (marked

[187] One of the possibilities of qualifying nouns in Portuguese is through adjective phrase, in which "de" establishes the adjective relation between the two nouns that might form the adjective phrase; that is, the noun "cozinha" ("kitchen") when connected to the noun "pia" ("sink") through "de" ("of") form the adjective phrase "pia de cozinha" ("kitchen sink").

in green in the transcript: “she organized right? and then uh uh she was”; “I can say that”; “oh! and I who had depression... was waiting for a way to die... then it was there on”), making sure I was listening and ready to give an active reply (marked in orange in the “how was it?”), verbalization of discomfort with the difficulty of word selection (marked in blue in the transcript: “do you see how am I? with a bad memory to speak?”), and insertion of new information that Ana seems to consider important (marked in brown in the transcript: “he is an engineer from DAP and she... miss Vandir uh uh helped”).

In the elaboration of whole utterance it is interesting to note that the information presented at the beginning of the circumlocution – regarding a man who is an engineer and Mrs. Vandir, who helped in the institution – is organized in such a way that the relationship with the whole is not so evident to the interlocutor.

This example seems to represent the imaginary we have of a long and somewhat confusing circumlocution, almost bordering a drift production, as some elements seem to be less evidently connected with the rest of them, even though these internally articulated elements contributed to Ana's ability to find the word she was looking for. The effect, however, for the interlocutor, is a slightly looser production compared to the other circumlocutions analyzed here.

The analysis of these productions enables us to look at the linguistic *strategies* that the subjects employ in the search of a word and to question some discourses that consider the speech production of ag(e)ing individuals as “disorganized” and “empty,” for example.

3.5. Retomando *mais um* fio da meada

After analyzing the circumlocution productions, based on the theoretical and methodological discussions presented in the previous chapters, it seems that the circumlocution processes evidence metalinguistic and epilinguistic processes which make it possible for the subjects to organize and reorganize their utterances in the search for words. Circumlocution, as suggested here, seems to help us qualify this search, giving more visibility to difficulties, possible motivations, and even stylistic choices – as Camara Jr. (2012 [1956]) suggested.

This proposition invites us to look at the phenomenon beyond the consideration that it is uniquely a sign of *deficit*; as a sign of “empty,” and “disorganized speech.” On

the contrary, what we observe with this analysis and reflection is that the circumlocution gives visibility to different linguistic-cognitive strategies that subjects employ to keep the dialogue going while searching for a word, verbalizing various difficulties and aligning themselves discursively in relation to the position of their interlocutors.

The restrictive look on circumlocution, which regards it as a "vague" expression, also reflects an essentializing view of language function, which disregards the subjects' *work* through and with it. The analysis and reflection presented here also helps us understand a certain pattern – although it is not the purpose of this dissertation to generalize about circumlocution production.

As we have seen, the production of circumlocution is not only present in the speech of people with aphasia (as in the case of the production of Paulo and Francisco). As already signaled by the works developed in the context of second language teaching and learning, and even in the descriptions of dictionaries – even though we may oppose their descriptive power – the circumlocution, as so many other linguistic phenomena, is *pervasive*. We find circumlocution in the productions of subjects without aphasia (Helena, Catarina and Zilda, for example) and in the production of a subject diagnosed with Alzheimer's at its onset (as is the case of Ana), although it is not possible to state which are the most substantial differences that characterize all the productions.

It seems to me, however, that the *time* of the production of a circumlocution is not necessarily a good factor for determining either a circumlocution occurrence or its "quality;" that is, whether the circumlocution should be associated with normality or indicative of linguistic-cognitive difficulties. Although longer productions, such as Ana's, may be more often associated with what we imagine a circumlocution is, Paulo and Francisco's circumlocution duration, which took around 10 seconds, may be more associated with characteristics of their conditions as aphasic, than directly linked to the circumlocution. It also strikes us that some aphasic productions are extremely fast – around 6 seconds (as one of Francisco's production – circumlocution 6) – if we consider for example that people without aphasia also produced circumlocutions that took around the same time (see circumlocution 5), which indicated that the duration is irrelevant to discriminate normal and pathological production.

Similarly, the *length* of the circumlocution does not seem to be a good defining element either. As we saw with Camara Jr, even "short" productions (for example, "the eternal city") could be considered circumlocution. What seems to characterize it is the *search* conditions; that is, it is the *speech will* (Bakhtin, 1986) that can determine the need

for the speech to be organized through the production of a circumlocution. In some contexts, this production would be more linked to a greater difficulty in finding certain words, while in others it would be linked to a subject's desire, for example, to include extra information.

The relationship between *duration*, *extension,* and *organization* of speech in the context of circumlocution production is, thus, something that can be further investigated in the future. However, it seems to me that the great organizational richness that is observable in the analysis of the circumlocutions is possible thanks to a *translinguistic* approach (in Bakhtin's sense) theoretical foundation, because it involves elements that, although outside the language, appear in the *utterances*.

The Bakhtinian architectonic seems, therefore, to be an interesting prism in the investigation of the possible linguistic-cognitive motivations of circumlocution production, and of linguistic functioning in the context of ag(e)ing studies. Looking at these productions, questioning our observation standpoints, seems to contribute to question the stereotypes often associated with the ag(e)ing processes, giving visibility to its great heterogeneity and the work of the subjects *with* and *in* language.

RETOMANDO OS FIOS DA MEADA: FROM A ONE-WAY ROAD TO OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Just as in a periscope what we see we see it in a mirror, which reflects another mirror, which reflects yet another mirror, when we become aware of something, a sensation, a feeling, etc., we cannot say that we feel the sensation directly or that we taste the sensation directly, but that we believe, assume, interpret that we are experiencing that sensation or nurturing that feeling. Going forward with the periscope analogy, we could say that in every situation in which we see something, what we believe to see is almost always not given to us directly, but through a continuum of hypotheses and inferences, deductive, automatic, and passive passages, and with some of the assumptions implied.
Susan Petrilli, 2013[188].

It's difficult. It's difficult. For an actress it's hard because... every day I am tempted; every day I am very tempted to pull my skin here a little bit… to make it a bit better. On the other hand, I think I've been acquiring other things too ... yeah ... I've been acquiring another kind of knowledge, a more benevolent look at myself ... and there's also one thing that gives me a lot of support. I think I need my face. My face needs to have these muscles, sometimes a loose skin…
Irene Ravache, 2019[189]

In the next pages I dedicate myself to present some final, albeit temporary, reflections. I return to the path taken to answer the questions of this study, highlighting

[188] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[189] Brazilian actress in an interview to Globo Channel. See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

the articulation of the concepts mobilized. Evidently, it is not my objective to resume all the discussions conducted throughout this dissertation, but to articulate some issues that I consider most relevant to the conclusion of the work, since they helped to pave the way for its development. I believe that resuming this path is fundamental to understand that any (possible) generalization resulting from this study is limited and should be considered, therefore, with attention and care.

As we have seen throughout this dissertation, one of the senses of ag(e)ing that seems to circulate most strongly in society is the one associated with *losses*: of health, muscle strength, comprehension, the ability to act in the world, knowledge. The ag(e)ing subjects are quite frequently represented, as the analysis of the commercials showed, from this *prism*: we find subjects who are unable to perceive their mistakes, who do not know specific terms – but are expected to do so –, who neither understand what people say to them (since they are very frequently portrayed as having hearing problems) nor how technology works, and who are always expected to adapt to the standards and values of the youth. The fact that the commercials frequently mobilize *these* stereotypical representations to establish value for their products is indicative of the senses that circulate in society, since such strategy is characteristic in advertisement industry (Carrascoza, 2007). The commercials that supported their narrative based on such characterizations, without having ag(e)ing individuals as their target audience, proved thus to be an interesting locus for observing the circulation of discourses *on* ag(e)ing and to understand that it is through such process that the very senses mobilized reinforce the stereotypical representations of ag(e)ing, based on the essentialization of characteristics of the process.

However, it is not recent the attempt to advance towards including the diversity that is constitutive of the process, although often times the challenge still seems to be *how* to account for that (see Hamilton, 2001; Gullette, 2004; Staudinger 2015). One of the possibilities to face this issue, I believe, is a theoretical-methodological shift: from a perspective of subject-object to research grounded in a relation *between subjects*, as it is typically the case in socio-historical approaches (see Freitas et al., 2015). This turn assumes that the subjects are more than *simply participants*, and that following a path of multiplicities means accounting for "the new and the complex" that is constitutive of human phenomena, as Signorini argues (1998, p. 103):

> From the search based on a logic of totality, repetition and permanence, specificity and the new are produced as a variation of the generic one, or as deviation, disturbance or error in the realization of that one; while the search based on a logic of multiplicities, ruptures, and movement produces a specific and provisional configuration, not exempt from reductions, but which seeks to have specificity; the new and the complex as constituent elements of the object – and as such – to be contemplated by the reflection[190].

Such theoretical and methodological movement attempts thus to account for the great and inherent heterogeneity in actual ag(e)ing experiences. As referred earlier in this dissertation, for example, while ag(e)ing individuals in the US suffer age discrimination in a form of reduced financial assistance, in Brazil ageism is materialized through financial scams. While in Japan[191] many ag(e)ing individuals are seeking prisons to feel less alone or because of financial problems, in Brazil, this population is impoverished by the lack of social assistance. It is therefore unreasonable to assume that the ag(e)ing process is the *same* everywhere because of a chronological age. What brings these examples closer are the discriminations these individuals suffer and what differentiates them – to a greater or lesser extent – are the ways in which these discriminations occur, as well as how these individuals (re)act to it[192].

Such discrimination practices cannot be dissociated from stereotypical representations in ag(e)ing, since they materialize in numerous of ways (Novaes-Pinto, 2008; Novaes-Pinto & Oliveira, 2016; Rozendo, 2016). The main effect of this kind of representation is, therefore, the essentialization of ag(e)ing. Treated as uniform, the ag(e)ing process becomes a homogeneous object for observation in which particularities and idiosyncrasies are demoted to the individual – as an exception, as something that cannot be accounted quantitatively. It is in this frame of absence of the subjects that categories created to account for phenomenon related to ag(e)ing are, in principle, *categories without subjects.*

In this context, it seems important to bring to this reflection the discussion conducted by Canguilhem (1991) – an important reference in the discursive approach of

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[190] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

[191] See footnote 98.

[192] This issue raises interesting questions regarding the trajectories of ag(e)ing individuals in dealing with discrimination. For example, which strategies they used to deal and overcome of circumstances as such; how they organize themselves in their communities to fight against discrimination; and what effects such situations had on their lives and subjectivity should be further investigated in future work.

Neurolinguistics studies – about the relationship between the *normal* and the *pathological*. For the author, these two notions should not be regarded as extreme oppositions, since the disease would actually be a *disturbance of a balance*. Novaes-Pinto (1999), resuming the author's work to debate aphasia semiology, states that:

> If we stick to the terms "excess" and "lack," which give rise to the deviations that pathological facts have in relation to the normal state, the distinction between "normal and physiological," on the one hand, and "abnormal and pathological," on the other hand, would be a simple quantitative one; a principle that would be valid for organic as well as mental phenomena. However, […] the cause may vary continuously and quantitatively and cause qualitatively different effects. For Broussais, the concepts of "excess" or "lack" are established in relation to a measure considered valid and desirable – and thus in relation to a norm – linked to the concepts of increase and decrease. The author emphasizes that "it hangs on this attempt for a positive definition," an ideal of perfection (Novaes-Pinto, 1999, p. 46)[193].

For Canguilhem (1991), who grounds part of his reflection on Bernard (1876), the concept that would be most interesting to deal with the relation between normal and the pathological is that of *alteration*, since "every disease has a corresponding normal function of which it is only the disturbed, exaggerated, diminished expression, or annulled" (Bernard, 1876 *apud* Canguilhem, p. 45; *emphasis* added). For the author, the relationship between normal and pathological is therefore *qualitative* in nature. In Bernard's (1876) words:

> Health and disease are not two essentially different modes as the ancient physicians believed and some practitioners still believe. They should not be made into distinct principles, entities which fight over the living organism and make it the theater of their contest. These are obsolete medical ideas. In reality, between these two modes of being, there are only differences of degree: exaggeration, disproportion, discordance of normal phenomena constitute the diseased state. There is no case where disease would have produced new conditions, a complete change of scene, some new and special products (Bernard, 1876, p. 391 *apud* Canguilhem, 1991, p. 71).

[193] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

To better understand Canguilhem's argument, the author offers a very interesting example: the alteration in the number of leukocytes (the white blood cells) can occur in two distinct contexts – after meals and during inflammatory processes. However, in only one of these contexts, the phenomenon would be related to pathology: "During digestion the number of white blood cells increases. The same is true at the onset of infection. Consequently this phenomenon is sometimes physiological, sometimes pathological, depending on what causes it" (Canguilhem, 1991, p. 107). If we bring this comparison to the phenomena related to ag(e)ing, we will see, for example, that not every alteration that occurs in this process should be viewed from a pathological prism, as I tried to highlight throughout this dissertation. However, what we observe in most studies and approaches is that *each alteration observed* – always referred as a *symptom* –leads to the creation of *a new clinical category.* This is the case with the circumlocution, which is often associated with "empty, disorganized speech;" as a symptom of an underlying linguistic-cognitive problem, as I have argued in the last chapter.

This process of creating categories that are not necessarily contributing to explain a phenomenon – part of what Bakhtin (1986) regarded as the *abstract objectivism* that leads to "science fiction" –, founded on the extreme opposition between disease and health, feeds the pathologization of phenomena that would be typical of the normal state, as well as contributing to perpetuating stereotypes. Adding to that the fact that value is associated with production in this neoliberal capitalism context, ag(e)ing, as several scholars have pointed out (Beauvoir, 1970; Bosi, 1994; Debert, 1997, 1999), is once again devalued.

On the other hand, when we include the subjects in the reflection; that is, when we assume that linguistic-cognitive work presupposes the work of subjects with and in language (see Franchi, 1977), a range of possibilities for analysis of phenomenon associated with ag(e)ing emerges. That is what seems to me to be a possible way of thinking about ag(e)ing beyond losses – which I do not try to deny, I emphasize – but which should not be regarded as the most determining feature of the ag(e)ing process.

Here, such claim seems to gain even more relevance if we consider, as I have tried to show throughout this work, the numerous processes by which ag(e)ing subjects are being silenced: their voices no longer have authority to know, their lives even though they have lived and show a wide range of possibilities for acting in the world (remember, for example, the life stories of Irmela, Helena and Diva), are resumed to their *fragilities,*

to the association with a chronological mark and elements associated with losses, depriving them of value.

Despite the limitations of this research, I would like to restate the relevance of following thus a path that turns to the subjects in an attempt not to create investigations of problems that do not correspond to the reality (see Souza Santos, 2018) or research that "to save the model, disregards the subjects[194]." The importance, therefore, in bringing to the studies of ag(e)ing the voices of real subjects who are *living* this process is grounded in the relevance of the *other*, for my constitution as a subject-researcher and for the development of the research itself.

In this sense, it seems important to me to stress the theoretical relevance of the Bakhtinian studies. By focusing on the dialogical relationship with the *other*, the Bakhtinian architectonic allows us to investigate aspects that might not be possible to be seen otherwise, offering a lens to the understanding of the interwoven relationship of exchanges of senses.

Aiming to understand this process, I have especially mobilized the notions of *ideological sign* and *utterance*. Consider, for example, as Voloshinov (1973) points out, that one of the properties of the word – like any ideological sign – is its ability to be the "primary medium of the individual consciousness;" that is, it is this duality of the living word within a concrete utterance that makes it possible to connect the inner and outer world, as one of the epigraphs of this dissertation shows us: "the organism and the outside world meet here in the sign" (Voloshinov, 1973, p. 26). What Voloshinov argues is that the meanings of signs are not solely in the word or out of it, but in the encounter of subjects. The metaphor that the author uses in the quote below is representative of the importance of such encounters between subjects for meaning-making:

[194] Novaes-Pinto in one of our discussions.

> Only active understanding can grasp theme – a generative process can be grasped only with the aid of another generative process. To understand another person's utterance means to orient oneself with respect to it, to find the proper place for it in the corresponding context. For each word of the utterance that we are in process of understanding, we, as it were, lay down a set of our own answering words. (…) *Any true understanding is dialogic in nature*. Understanding is to utterance as one line of a dialogue is to the next. Understanding strives to match the speaker's word with a counter word. (…) Therefore, there is no reason for saying that meaning belongs to a word as such. In essence, meaning belongs to a word in its position between speakers; that is, meaning is realized only in the process of active, responsive understanding. Meaning does not reside in the word or in the soul of the speaker or in the soul of the listener. Meaning is the *effect of interaction between speaker and listener produced via the material of a particular sound complex*. It is like an electric spark that occurs only when two different terminals are hooked together (Voloshinov, 1973, pp. 102-103; author's *emphasis*).

One of the effects, therefore, of the actualization of predominantly *limiting* senses in ag(e)ing is negatively imprinting (possibly determining at some degree) our ag(e)ing experiences. Ag(e)ing thus becomes determined by such lenses.

If we change the lenses, or if we enlarge the mirrors, we may have access to other possibilities – other refractions and reflections of the signs; other meanings. And this can only be done by meeting other stories (trajectories of resistance, resilience, power and activism among ag(e)ing individuals) and possibilities of existence that question investigations and policies based on an ideal subject – let me recall the example of the Chilean pension reform[195] that, while regarded (theoretically) as one of the best models of financial assistance, has taken thousands of ag(e)ing individuals to despair and death. That is what Gefaell (2015, pp. 25-26) refers to as the "necropolitics" of neoliberal capitalism:

[195] See footnote 98.

> Neoliberal capitalism only wants profitable bodies. Those who cannot or do not want to be entrepreneurs or consume are excluded. Although, in reality, most are in a precarious situation because it is the system itself that excludes them. The chronically ill, the disabled, the elderly with miserable pensions, the unemployed or with poorly paid jobs, the homeless, the hungry children, young people without a future, mentally ill people without support network, and immigrants from Third World countries are the product of the inequalities created by neoliberalism. But they are labeled as guilty of their situation, as irresponsible and suspects. (…) **They are excluded and kept on the verge of death. That is how the necropolitics of neoliberalism works.** The shelters are open, and the number of beds is increased when the temperature reaches zero degrees. When the homeless are about to freeze, the city councils activate the "Cold Operation." There are dependents who are granted aid when they have already passed away, or there is so scarce aid that they force families to choose between eating or having electricity (**emphasis** added)[196].

Another example for the need to consider real-life subjects, daily experiences and possibilities of confrontation is the development of an epidemic that kills around 5 thousand ag(e)ing individuals in Brazil every year. According to journalistic investigations:

[196] See appendix for the version in Spanish.

> if fewer and fewer children die from malnutrition, largely thanks to successful public policies implemented over the past 15 years, more and more elderly people perish, not eating enough nutrients. To put it another way: there is a silent malnutrition epidemic killing thousands of seniors a year – an average of 13 cases a day. And we speak, it is good to repeat, of vastly underestimated numbers. The causes for malnutrition among the elderly range from abandonment by the family to their economic exploitation – usually by people close to them. "It is not uncommon for older people to be abandoned by families unable to support them," said Kiko Afonso, executive director of Citizenship Action against Hunger, Misery and Life, the NGO founded by the sociologist and human rights activist Herbert de Souza. "The largest identified cause of malnutrition among the elderly we follow is financial abuse. Many have more than half of their retirement committed to payroll loans made to relatives. The priority for the remaining money is medicine," explained Terezinha Tortelli, a nun who coordinates the Pastoral of the Elderly, an NGO linked to the Catholic Church[197].

This politics of dehumanization, founded on the objectification of bodies, can be questioned in the persistence of the subjects' stories; in a counter-narrative that shows possible organizations of these subjects, despite the various forms of discrimination and violence to which so many are subjected. As argues Geraldi (2016, p. 134): "It is necessary to point to social unbalances to explore the new possibilities of giving ourselves other regulations, in which the paradox of individual freedom is completely the responsibility of coexistence. Experiencing new ways without requiring them to be ready before they are taken is to accept every action as an ethical deed.[198]"

This reflection shows us the interdependence relationship between the micro and the macro structures, although this interrelation is not deterministic; that is, even though we cannot establish direct relations between meanings circulating in the macro and a counterpart in the micro, it is possible to understand how the repetition of certain stories and senses associated with ag(e)ing mark the possibilities of talking about this phenomenon, for example, and even how it is experienced – as Hockey & James (1993)

[197] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese. Excerpt retrieved from: https://theintercept.com/2018/05/25/5-mil-idosos-morrem-de-fome/?fbclid=IwAR0FFKmHYoEmYqIyX--ApJY7sefP3lNyMQcTYLNpMQW7UeFFPUeTaBF_WUs

[198] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

also suggest. As I bring in the introduction of this dissertation, Staudinger (2015) argues: "even though "invisible," [inside perspectives – societal stereotypes, for example] are very powerful and exert effects on biological, social, and psychological ages alike and are affected by them" (Staudinger, 2015, p. 167).

It seems imperative, therefore, to move forward in the studies on ag(e)ing to bring the "world of life" closer to the "world to culture" so that we can find ways to change great inequalities. Miotello (2011), grounded in Bakhtin, discusses how important it is to consider that our speech is not simply a "set of spoken sentences," but *active responses* that demand ethical positions. According to the author:

> We are saying this discursively and in our speech we are not speaking words, Bakhtin will say; **we are saying good things or bad things, truths, lies, things that animate, things that discourage, things that drive me forward, things that pull me backwards ... we pronounce life**. These are things that make us think or not, which we agree or disagree with; It's not words, it's life, it's positioning, it's a way of looking at the world. From my place, unique, singular, I tell you how I see things. Therefore, if I value things, when I look at the world, my way of looking, my utterance, that word I use, I don't put out just one word; I put out a sign loaded with ideology, the way I see the world, my ideas, my points of view, my signatures (...) What is circulating among us, **this language that it is circulating, it is an activity, it is an event, it is a discourse that is demanding from me, and from each of us, ethical positions** (Miotello, 2011, p. 41-42; **emphasis** added)[199].

Such ethical positioning should also consider, as Ponzio (2010) argues, the right to *infunctionality*. Although the author does not discuss such issue regarding ag(e)ing in society, I believe his reflection is interesting because it reminds us that "the infunctional is the human," a right that ag(e)ing individuals seem to lose in the eyes of a society so hardened by norms and standards of behavior, health, and normality. According to the author:

> The right to infunctionality is the right to stand by itself as non-relative otherness. *The infunctional is the human*.

[199] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

> And yet the "rights of man" do not include the right to infunctionality. This deviates from the humanism of identity. And it is the foundation of all the rights of otherness. The *right to life*, as long as it is not firmly linked with the *right to infunctionality*, remains within the vision of man as a means, reduced to capital that needs to be valued "for his entire active life," as expressed by the European Commission's program documents; that is, capable of being productive of the reproduction of this system of production. Man is not a resource, because he is not a means; he has no instrumental value: *it is an end*. Assigning it to the instrumental function of enhancing "global competitiveness" in the world market is itself demeaning, but becomes even more so when it becomes – as is the case today at school and university – the goal of education and of formation; that is, the purpose of the word that teaches, the purpose of the word that listens, the purpose of the word that reads, interprets, translates, the meaning of the qualification of the word. Today's world of work, exchange, and consumption is characterized by *communication-production.* The so-called "globalization" is also the worldwide permeability of communication that has become, at this stage of capitalism's production system, a fundamental component of all three phases of the production cycle – production, exchange, consumption. In today's world of communication-production, where development efficiency, competitiveness (even the *extrema ratio* of war) are core values, the right to infunctionality takes on a subversive character (Ponzio, 2010, pp. 142-143)[200].

It is from this right to infunctionality that Irene Ravache speaks in one of the epigraphs of this reflection. A right to live without constantly conforming to beauty standards, for example; a right that recognizes the non-operational as constitutive of the normal. Although in some contexts failures and disturbances may be evidence of change – which this dissertation, again, does not seek to deny – in others they are signs of creativity and resilience; signs of the relationship that the subject is establishing with the world.

I hope that this reflection, from this point of observation that I bring as a linguist – from my *excess of seeing* (as defined by Bakhtin, 1986) – may represent then a possibility of seeing aspects of the relationship between language and ag(e)ing from the prism of possibilities instead of the prism of deficits. Also, I hope that this dissertation –

[200] See appendix A for the version in Portuguese.

a temporary answering utterance in a chain of utterances – may contribute to continuing the conversation about language and ag(e)ing.

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APPENDIX A

Page 12

"Depois que eu escrevi a trilogia, o Léo também ficou chocadíssimo. Ele acha que eu fiz com que meu prestígio terminasse. Eu sempre gosto de lembrar que prestígio vem da palavra latina *praestigia*, *praestigiae*, que quer dizer ilusão. Eu disse a ele: "Mete o pau. Escreve um artigo falando que é horrível. Isso é melhor que o silêncio completo." E isso é geral, porque quando lancei o Rútilo nada, que foi o premiado e não tem nada a ver com a série dita pornô, houve um boicote geral em São Paulo. Apenas no Rio saiu uma crítica linga. Acho que é porque estou ficando velha. Mas me considero uma velha muito interessante. E continuo brilhante. Não estou mais com meus 10 milhões de neurônios – eu bebo bastante e já devo ter perdido 1 milhão. Mas ainda tenho 9 milhões" (Hilda Hilst em entrevista à revista Interview, em 1994).

Foreword

Page 13

"Não é à toa que entendo os que buscam caminho. Como busquei arduamente o meu! E como hoje busco com sofreguidão e aspereza o meu melhor modo de ser, o meu atalho, já que não ouso mais falar em caminho. Eu que tinha querido. O caminho, com letra maiúscula, hoje me agarro ferozmente à procura de um modo de andar, de um passo certo. Mas o atalho com sombras refrescantes e reflexo de luz entre as árvores, o atalho onde eu seja finalmente eu, isso não encontrei. Mas sei de uma coisa; meu caminho não sou eu, é o outro, são os outros. Quando eu puder sentir plenamente o outro, estarei salva e pensarei: eis o meu porto de chegada". (Clarice Lispector, 1992).

Introduction

Page 18

"Se o CLG é o discurso fundador da Linguística é também ele que possibilita que outros fazeres sobre a linguagem se estabeleçam, por mais distintos que sejam. São esses movimentos de retomada, de avaliação, de refutação, de ultrapassagem que fazem evoluir uma disciplina científica e permitem abrigar, em seu campo, a multiplicidade das teorias que surgem. Evoluir, no caso da Linguística, como mostra esse percurso, não significa apagar ou substituir uma teoria por outra, nem simplesmente acumular teorias ou saberes

sobre o objeto, mas sim retomar e refundar, assimilativa ou refutativamente, o momento fundador. *O fato de o CLG tornar-se desnecessário parece assim ser prova de seu sucesso em fundar a ciência da linguagem*" (Giacomelli & Sobral, 2016, p. 78).

Page 19

"o envelhecimento compreende os processos de transformação do organismo que ocorrem após a maturação sexual e que implicam a diminuição gradual da probabilidade de sobrevivência" (Neri, 2001 *apud* Prado & Sayd, 2006, p. 493).

Page 19

"Trata-se de perguntar se a idéia de papéis sequenciados, extremamente divididos por idades, captaria a realidade social de uma sociedade que atinge o nível de desenvolvimento tecnológico da sociedade contemporânea" (Debert, 1997, p. 04).

Page 20

"Trata-se de uma história marcada por acirradas disputas corporativas, que incluíram, inclusive, a criação, por duas vezes, da *Associação Nacional de Gerontologia*. (...) Quando um psicólogo-gerontólogo, por exemplo, atua no campo do envelhecimento, a quem de fato corresponde o processo de intervenção – à psicologia ou à gerontologia? [...] Existem de fato uma teoria e uma metodologia próprias da gerontologia?" (Prado & Sayd, 2006, p. 493-494).

Pages 20-21

"Não existe saber da ordem do 'multi' ou 'inter', o saber sempre foi trans, atravessamento, aliança da intuição com a vida. Nem uma pura ontologia, muito menos uma epistemologia, mas uma epistemontologia, visto que o saber não opera por dualidades, mas por composição: não existe isolamento no saber, mas apenas relações de relações [...]. Pois evidencia-se que todo saber é transaber, um suposto saber nunca se isola, pois é prática da sabedoria relacionar". Job (2013 *apud* Fabrizio, 2017, p. 600).

CHAPTER 1
CONVERSA A DOIS: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THIS STUDY

Page 24

“São tantas as interfaces que estão se construindo, que esse fenômeno parece se recusar a ser capturado no seu todo. O envelhecimento parece escorrer pelos vãos dos dedos, como algo muito complexo e muito maior do que o possam conceber a geriatria e a gerontologia” (Prado & Sayd, 2016, p. 495).

Page 25

“Um apagamento da vida, produz um apagamento do meu jeito de ser, do meu agir cotidiano, do meu singular” (Miotello, 2011, p. 38).

Page 27

“A maior riqueza do homem/é sua incompletude./Nesse ponto sou abastado./Palavras que me aceitam como sou – eu não aceito./Não aguento ser apenas um sujeito que abre portas,/que puxa válvulas, que olha o relógio,/que compra pão às 6 da tarde,/que vai lá fora, que aponta lápis,/que vê a uva etc. etc./Perdoai./Mas eu preciso ser Outros./Eu penso renovar o homem usando borboletas” (Manoel de Barros, 2009).

Page 28

“O ser humano vai construindo sua concepção de mundo e de si próprio, se (re)criando enquanto sujeito humano” (Freitas et al, 2015, p. 51).

Page 28

“Extrair são indicações dos lugares privilegiados pelo pensamento bakhtiniano e lidar com estas indicações segundo os interesses de nossos próprios estudos” (Geraldi, 2015, p. 134).

Page 29

“relações de sentido que se estabelecem entre enunciados, tendo como referência o todo da interação verbal e não apenas o evento da interação face a face. Assim, quaisquer enunciados, se postos lado a lado no plano do sentido, “acabam por estabelecer uma relação dialógica”. Mesmo enunciados separados um do outro no tempo e no espaço e

que nada sabem um do outro, se confrontados no plano do sentido, revelarão relações dialógicas. E isso em qualquer ponto do vasto universo da criação ideológica, do intercâmbio sociocultural. As relações dialógicas – diz Bakhtin no mesmo manuscrito (p.124) – não podem ser reduzidas a relações de ordem lógica, linguística (no sentido estrito do termo), psicológica, mecânica ou natural. São relações de sentido de um tipo especial que se estabelecem entre enunciados ou mesmo no interior de enunciados" (Faraco, 2009, pp. 65-66).

Page 29

"Esse lugar onde estou, o lugar onde cada um de nós está, é um lugar único, irreproduzível, irrepetível, de onde apenas eu vejo o mundo, de onde apenas eu vejo os outros; neste lugar eu necessito pensar. Essa palavra necessitar é importante. Eu tenho um necessitamento, uma necessitação de pensar. Porque deste lugar onde eu estou, ninguém mais vai poder fazer isso por mim. (...) Estou num lugar onde só eu posso pensar aquilo que penso. (…) Eu não tenho álibi para não pensar. Eu não tenho álibi para não responder. Eu não tenho álibi para não tomar posição. (…) As coisas todas existem porque eticamente eu atribuo o meu ponto de vista a elas, o meu olhar, as minhas ideias, o modo como eu vejo o mundo, como eu penso as coisas" (Miotello, 2011, p. 26).

Pages 31-32

"Enquanto a obra artística conhece um acabamento, um fim (não uma definição, porque estando acabada, a obra se abre às inúmeras "leituras" que lhe dão vida), nós não conhecemos completude: tivemos com acabamentos provisórios que o outro nos dá porque ele é que dispõe de um excedente de visão capaz de produzir, de seu lugar exotópico, um todo completo que nos atribui, mas que não nos fecha, não nos completa. No mundo da vida, há uma incompletude e uma inconclusibilidade: sempre há um futuro possível, sempre será possível calcular horizontes de possibilidades dentre as quais, no tempo presente, escolhemos uma delas a que chegamos pelo passado que produziu os possíveis, mas que somente uma memória do futuro pode justificar a escolha feita" (Geraldi, 2018, p. 15).

Page 33

"Certamente a linguagem se utiliza como instrumento de comunicação, certamente comunicamos por ela, aos outros, nossas experiências, estabelecemos por ela, com os outros, laços "contratuais" por que interagimos e nos compreendemos, influenciamos os outros com nossas opções relativas ao modo peculiar de ver e sentir o mundo, com decisões consequentes sobre o modo de atuar nele. Mas, se queremos imaginar esse comportamento como uma "ação" livre e ativa e criadora suscetível de pelo menos renovar-se ultrapassando as convenções e as heranças, processo em crise de quem e agente e não mero receptáculo de cultura, temos então que apreendê-la nessa relação instável de interioridade e exterioridade, de diálogo e solilóquio: antes de ser para a comunicação, a linguagem é para a elaboração; e antes de ser mensagem, a linguagem é construção do pensamento; e antes de ser veículo de sentimos, ideias, emoções, aspirações, a linguagem é um processo criador em que organizamos e informamos as nossas experiências" (Franchi, 2011 [1977], p. 55).

Pages 34-35

"Não há nada de imanente na linguagem, salvo sua força criadora e constitutiva, embora certos "cortes" metodológicos e restrições possam mostrar um quadro estável e constituído. Não há nada universal, salvo o processo – a forma, a estrutura dessa atividade. A linguagem, pois, não é um dado ou resultado; mas um trabalho que "dá forma" ao conteúdo variável de nossas experiências, trabalho de construção, de retificação do "vivido", que ao mesmo tempo constitui o sistema simbólico mediante o qual se opera sobre a realidade e constitui a realidade como um sistema de referências em que aquele se torna significativo" (Franchi, 2011 [1977], p. 64).

Page 46

"[ela] *não está obrigatoriamente ligada a motivos biológicos* (...), não é forçosamente determinada por impressões evidentes, recebidas do meio, ou por vestígios da experiência individual imediata (...) [e], por fim, o último traço [diz respeito ao fato de que] a grande maioria dos conhecimentos e habilidades do homem se forma por meio da *assimilação da experiência de toda a humanidade*, acumulada no processo da história social e transmissível no processo de aprendizagem" (Luria, 1991, pp. 72-73; grifos do autor).

Page 48

“A grande maioria de conhecimentos, habilidades e procedimentos do comportamento de que dispõe o homem não são o resultado da sua experiência própria, mas adquiridos pela assimilação da experiência histórico-social de gerações. Este traço diferencia radicalmente a atividade consciente do homem do comportamento do animal” (Luria, 1991, p. 73).

Page 50

“A capacidade de adaptação do sistema nervoso, especialmente a dos neurônios, às mudanças nas condições do ambiente que ocorrem no dia-a-dia da vida dos indivíduos, chama-se neuroplasticidade, ou simplesmente plasticidade, um conceito amplo que se estende desde a resposta a lesões traumáticas destrutivas até as sutis alterações resultantes dos processos de aprendizagem e memória. **Toda vez que alguma forma de energia proveniente do ambiente de algum modo incide sobre o sistema nervoso, deixa nele alguma marca, isto é, modifica-o de alguma maneira**” (Lent, 2001, p. 135; **grifo** nosso).

Page 53

“A avaliação discursiva tem sempre algo de inesperado, que surge no próprio acontecimento discursivo e que escapa ao controle dos interlocutores” (Coudry, 2018, p. 328).

Page 54

“A retomada do acontecimento discursivo a *posteriori* requer do investigador um árduo trabalho de *garimpagem* dos registros em áudio e vídeo, bem como no diário de pesquisa, visando a transcrição de dados de linguagem e anotações das condições de sua produção (...). Exige, assim, uma atitude *contemplativa* do investigador: descentrar-se do momento da interlocução para nela achar uma boa explicação. Para tanto, o dado precisa ter *visibilidade* na complexidade de seu acontecimento” (Coudry, 2018, p. 329; *grifo* do autor).

Page 55

1. Me fale um pouco sobre o(a) senhor(a). O que o(a) senhor(a) gosta de fazer? Com o que o(a) senhor(a) trabalhou. Onde estudou/trabalhou?;
2. O que significa "envelhecer" para o(a) senhor(a)?;
3. O(a) senhor(a) acompanha noticiários? O que gosta de assistir ou de ler?;
4. O que o(a) senhor(a) acha da juventude de hoje em comparação com a sua? Alguma coisa mudou, melhorou e/ou piorou?;
5. Como é a sua relação com as pessoas com quem convive? Com quem o(a) senhor(a) tem mais oportunidade para conversar? Sobre o que gosta de falar?;
6. Quais as dificuldades que o(a) senhor(a) acha que tem? Alguma coisa melhorou ou piorou com o envelhecimento?

Page 64

"hipoatenuação periférica no lobo frontal e insular esquerdo sugestiva de isquemia recente e/ou edema vasogênico; presença de hemorragia subcortical frontotêmporo-parietal esquerda sem efeito expansivo significativo" (Fugiwara, 2013, p. 33).

Page 64

"sequelas subagudas de AVC em território da artéria cerebral média, comprometendo desde a região frontal até a ínsula, lobos parietal, temporal e occipital esquerdos" (Fugiwara, 2013, p. 32).

Page 72

"Supondo que a relação com a singularidade seja da natureza do processo constitutivo dos sujeitos, com a precariedade da temporalidade que implica o específico do momento, a instabilidade dos sujeitos - e da história - não é um problema a ser descartado, mas, em vez disso, é inspiração para recompreender a vida, assumindo a irreversibilidade de seus processos. Como temos distintas histórias de relações com os outros – que por sua posição exotópica têm 'excedentes de visão' que buscamos em nossos processos de constituição e em nosso desejo de completude – vamos construindo nossas consciências com diferentes palavras que internalizamos e que funcionam como contra palavras na construção dos sentidos do que vivemos, vemos, ouvimos, lemos. São estas histórias que nos fazem únicos e irrepetíveis. Unicidade concreta, unidade incerta, pois se

compreendemos com palavras que antes de serem nossas, foram e são também dos outros, nunca teremos certeza se estamos falando ou se algo fala por nós" (Geraldi, 2010, p. 88).

CHAPTER 2
STEREOTYPES AND REPRESENTATIONS: DISCOURSES ON AG(E)ING

Page 73

"As pessoas falam para serem 'ouvidas', às vezes para serem respeitadas e também para exercer uma influência no ambiente em que realizam os atos linguísticos. O poder da palavra é o poder de mobilizar a autoridade acumulada pelo falante e concentrá-la num ato linguístico" (Maurizio Gnerre, 1988).

Page 75

"padrões de mudança comportamental associados ao avanço da idade, distinguindo aqueles que são típicos da velhice daqueles que são compartilhados por outras idades" (Neri, 2013, p. 17).

Page 76

"As teorias clássicas de estágio e os dados derivados de pesquisas longitudinais e de corte transversal afiliadas ao paradigma de ciclo de vida em biologia e em psicologia pavimentaram o caminho que conduziu à elaboração das novas visões sobre o desenvolvimento e o envelhecimento. As grandes teorias psicológicas sobre o desenvolvimento que dominaram a cena na primeira metade do século XX e as tentativas de estabelecimento de grandes teorias sociológicas sobre o envelhecimento que predominaram entre meados dos anos de 1950 e meados dos anos de 1970 cederam espaço a microteorias sobre aspectos particulares do comportamento e do desenvolvimento social, afetivo e cognitivo. Um número importante e crescente de estudos longitudinais no campo do envelhecimento tem olhado para os ganhos e as perdas do envelhecimento por meio das lentes dessas microteorias. Por meio delas e de métodos e técnicas apropriadas, vem confirmando empiricamente os pressupostos dos dois paradigmas. Nesse contexto, têm sido gerados novos conceitos úteis à discriminação da natureza específica das mudanças comportamentais que ocorrem no envelhecimento e à compreensão da continuidade e da descontinuidade dos temas do desenvolvimento ao longo dos anos mais tardios da vida." (Neri, 2013, p. 40-41).

Page 77

“Busca por superação de estereótipos e da negação de determinismos biológicos, físicos, psicológicos e sociais. (...) Não levam necessariamente a uma atitude mais tolerante com os velhos, mas sim, e antes de tudo, a um compromisso com um tipo determinado de envelhecimento positivo. (...) Um conjunto de discursos amplamente divulgados pela mídia se empenha em desestabilizar expectativas e imagens tradicionalmente associadas ao avanço da idade, (...) divulgando uma série de receitas como técnicas de manutenção corporal, comidas saudáveis, ginásticas, medicamentos, bailes, e outras formas de lazer que procuram mostrar como os que não se sentem velhos devem se comportar, apesar da idade” (Debert, 1999b, p. 72).

Page 77

“**Os dramas se transformam em responsabilidades dos indivíduos que negligenciaram seus corpos e foram incapazes de se envolver em atividades motivadoras**. (...) O argumento central é que a avaliação do caráter das transformações no curso da vida – do caráter ilusório ou realista das promessas libertárias sugeridas – só ganha sentido se a atenção se voltar para o modo como a partir delas a solidariedade entre gerações é redefinida e para as hierarquias sociais que essas transformações põem em ação” (Debert, 1999b, p. 72; **grifo** meu).

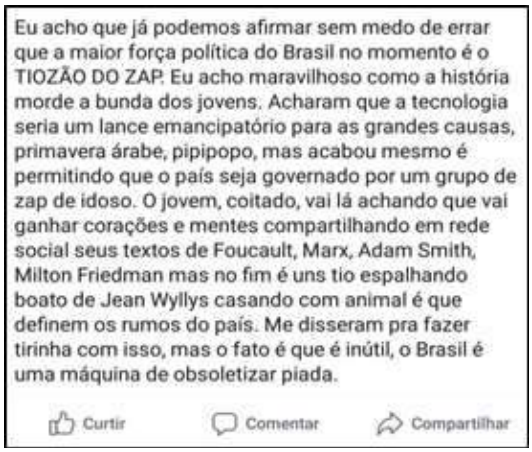
Page 78

“A aposentadoria precoce muitas vezes é o fator que desencadeia alterações bruscas nesses círculos sociais. Uma minoria da população tem na aposentadoria uma chance de melhorar a qualidade de vida. Os idosos pertencentes às classes sociais mais elevadas conseguem enfrentar a velhice geralmente sem muitas preocupações econômicas, têm a oportunidade de viajar sem pressa para realizar antigos sonhos, alimentar-se bem, comprar os remédios geralmente caros indicados pelos médicos etc. Nestes casos, o termo recentemente criado "melhor idade" para substituir "terceira idade" parece ser adequado. Numa situação como a do Brasil, entretanto, não é absolutamente o que ocorre em larga escala. A aposentadoria passa a ser um motivo para mais preocupações, com a progressiva diminuição da renda e aumento de gastos com saúde” (Novaes-Pinto, 2008, p. 17).

Page 79

"Se alguém lhe perguntasse o que entende pela expressão "conversa de velhos", certamente você faria observações do tipo: **é uma conversa comprida, sem fim, arrastada, pausada, cheia de histórias, lembranças do passado e por aí afora**. Se por um lado isto conteria algumas verdades, por outro, revelaria uma atitude preconceituosa e estigmatizadora. Comprovação clara de que a linguagem é mais do que um simples instrumento de comunicação; é também um componente decisivo na formação de preconceitos sociais" (Marcuschi, 1991, p. 9; **grifo** meu).

Page 79



Page 80

"A exaltação da juventude inscreve-se, justamente, no registro da exaltação da produção e do consumo, no império vigente da homogeneização e do descartável. Trata-se, na atualidade, de uma construção fundada nos poderes da produção, reprodução, acumulação de riquezas e de consumo, sob o primado da juventude (...). [Portanto], a uma só vez, [nossa cultura] coroa duas senhoras: juventude e longevidade. Corpo infantil almejando a juventude que almeja a longevidade; fantasia de perenizar o corpo jovem no avanço dos anos de vida; desejo de viver muito, horror de ficar velho! (...) **É preciso responder ao apelo do social, traduzido num verdadeiro marketing da juventude.** Fazem-se necessários, aí, esforços e ajustes, compreensões ilegítimas do tempo, tentativas de reversão do impossível, tudo a postos para atender às expectativas do suposto interlocutor. Pensemos, então, na tendência que nos assola "a oferecer à audiência uma impressão idealizada, uma versão 'aprimorada' do corpo, próxima à dos jovens, mais ao gosto de um padrão identificatório valorizado, da sociedade atual" (Py, 1999, p. 50; **grifo** meu).

Pages 80-81

“Em busca de padrões de comportamento de maior prestígio (...), torna [essa classe social] ainda mais insegura, preocupada em autocorrigir-se, temerosa de cometer erros que infrinjam quaisquer modelos aceitos pelos mais jovens” (Preti, 1991, p. 23).

Page 82

> **Larissa**: legal... e aí… é… então... a senhora tem uma história muito bonita... dona Helena.
> **Helena**: a:: eu não acho bonita...
> **Larissa**: a::: é uma história de vitórias
> **Helena**: mas não é mentira que contei ou inventei
> **Larissa**: eu acredito... é uma história bonita porque é uma história de batalha né... de vitória... é... muita dificuldade...
> **Helena**: batalha muito... e... como dizem quando eu trabalhava diarista... vai trabalhar diarista...a gente… uma trata bem... a outra... não tá nem aí né... então... e a gente falava... eu pensava assim... essa me trata mal hoje... a de amanhã vai me tratar bem... a hora que eu arranjar outro... eu deixo essa daqui na mão e pego a outra... é assim que funciona... porque a gente não pode falar... a:: tá ruim eu já não venho mais... tem que primeiro arrumar outra... na hora que arrumava outra... aí eu telefonava pra mulher e falava que não tava muito boa... que eu ia.... aí eu ia fazer o teste na outra né... a outra era como eu queria... aí eu dispensava... eu nunca fiquei sem ganhar... tem que jogar com a carta certa né...

Page 83

“a) ser alvo de ‘piadas’ em decorrência da idade; b) ser ignorado, ou não ser levado a sério em decorrência da idade; c) ser ofendido em decorrência da idade; d) ser chamado de velho(a); e) ser rejeitado em decorrência da idade; f) ser tratado com menos dignidade em decorrência da idade; g) médico, ou profissional de saúde fazer relação entre doença

e idade avançada; h) pessoas que já sugeriram não compreender o idoso em decorrência da idade; i) pessoas que falam alto aos ouvidos em decorrência da idade; h) pessoas que já sugeriram serem velhos demais para determinadas atividades" (Rozendo, 2016, p. 84).

Page 84

"Devido à condição de pobreza e baixa escolaridade, os participantes [devem ter] passado por situações de discriminação e exclusão mais agudas ao longo da vida, que aquelas que possam ser relacionadas à idade avançada. Assim, a Terceira Idade pode significar uma fase de acesso a direitos, produtos e serviços compreendidos como ganhos em qualidade de vida, que se sobrepõem a qualquer percepção sobre discriminação, ou exclusão. A baixa frequência de respostas que confirmavam situações de Ageísmo, em pesquisas realizadas por outros estudiosos, foi considerada como um mecanismo de defesa em que os idosos não admitiram passar por episódios de discriminação. (Couto, 2009). (...) Conforme Kite e Wagner (2004), as pessoas são motivadas a ver o grupo ao qual pertencem como sendo melhor que os demais, e assim, mantêm uma autoimagem positiva" (Rozendo, 2016, p. 86).

Page 85

"Para essa concepção de classe à margem da sociedade, inútil, muito tem colaborado também a visão que a mídia, em especial a televisão, tem divulgado a propósito do idoso, considerando imprestável, motivo de irrisão pelos seus desacertos nas tarefas sociais" (Preti, 1991, pp. 22-23).

Page 86

"Nossos enunciados emergem - como respostas ativas que são no diálogo social - da multidão das vozes interiorizadas. Eles são, assim, compósitos de vozes. Desse ponto de vista, nossos enunciados são sempre discurso citado, embora nem sempre percebidos como tal, já que são tantas as vozes incorporadas que muitas delas são ativas em nós sem que percebamos sua alteridade (dizemos, então, figurativamente que são palavras que perderam as aspas). Outras, contudo, estão na nossa memória discursiva como palavras de outrem e como tais são bivocalizadas em nossos enunciados (isto é, nossos enunciados expressam a um só tempo a palavra do outro e a perspectiva com que a tomamos): elas são citadas direta ou indiretamente, são ironizadas, parodiadas, estilizadas, hibridizadas" (Faraco, 1998, p. 168).

Page 88

"O termo estereótipo – etimologicamente formado pelas palavras *estereo* (que significa sólido ou rígido) e – *tipo* (que remete à impressão, imagem, forma) – significa, numa primeira acepção, "uma impressão sólida". (…) No entanto, a partir de 1920, a palavra ganha outro valor. Passa a ser concebida no espaço semântico da representação e da crença coletivas. Evocando esquemas culturais preexistentes, por meio dos quais as pessoas compreendem a realidade, o estereótipo converte-se no centro de interesse das ciências sociais, área na qual a noção se situa, primeiramente, em termos epistemológicos. (…) Nesse sentido, o estereótipo passou a ser considerado, num sentido mais estável, como social, construído e imaginário. Nas palavras de Amossy e Herschberg-Pierrot (2001), **trata-se de uma imagem coletiva, simplificada e cristalizada de algo** (pessoa, grupo, assunto), que resulta – a partir de um processo que recorta ou categoriza o real – de expectativas, hábitos de julgamento ou generalizações recorrentes na sociedade. Essa maneira de conceber o estereótipo, acrescida das reflexões sobre sua função social e veiculação nos discursos, cria em torno do termo uma ambivalência constitutiva, que o leva a ser interpretado, na contemporaneidade, em duas vertentes: uma positiva, que o vincula à ideia de coesão e identidade social; e outra negativa, que o relaciona ao erro e ao preconceito" (Carmelino & Possenti, 2015, p. 418; **grifo** meu).

Page 89

"O estereótipo não consiste apenas em uma simplificação negativa nas piadas; ele permite (e por que não dizer, promove) o não dito, e, assim, exige uma interpretação que leve em conta questões históricas e culturais ou, em outros termos, certa memória. É interessante, por exemplo, verificar as modalidades e as possíveis explicações para o fato de que os discursos retomam e eventualmente retrabalham "pré-discursos" (Paveau, 2013), ou seja, que suposições, ideológicas ou culturais, subjazem e recuperam esquemas culturais mais ou menos sólidos" (Carmelino & Possenti, 2015, p. 420).

Page 92

"Eu gosto do Limpol porque tem meu neto no reclame. Meu neto disse que Limpol é biodegradável. Isso é muito bom. Seja lá o que isso signifique."

Page 93

"hmmm... bom? O quê? ah..ah! bom...bondinho... não? bom?"

Page 96

“Por que tanta tecnologia num lubrificante? Pro seu caminho ser assim. (...) Vai, vovó... vamos vovó, vamos. (...) Seja qual for o motor do seu carro, com Lubrax você fica mais tranquilo... aí é só curtir o caminho.”

Page 97

“Sabe que eu não gosto de tecnologia? Ela é complicada. Por isso, eu amo o app do Itaú. Ele dá dicas do aplicativo no primeiro acesso. Aí fica fácil. Experimenta. *Se você não manja de tecnologia*, nem se preocupe. Baixa aí que você vai ver. Não? Então vê o próximo vídeo” (*grifo* meu).

Page 98

“Eu adoro o app do Itaú porque ele é facinho, sabia? Igual *esse tal de* Facebook. Foi meu neto quem me ensinou. Ah se ele tivesse me ensinado a mexer nesse controle remoto (joga o controle para trás). Bom, seja digitau. Eu sou. Baixe o app também ou veja outro vídeo” (*grifo* meu).

Page 99

“É, as pessoas acham que só porque sou mais experiente*, eu não entendo de tecnologia*. Mas eu sei que o app do Itaú, funciona na maioria dos smartphones, *até no meu*. É, o velhinho aqui manja. *Se eu estou por dentro*, você deveria estar. Baixa aí, ou espera o próximo” (*grifo* meu).

Page 100

Neta: Oi, vô, precisa de ajuda?
Avô (dirigindo-se para a câmera): As pessoas acham que a gente não entende de tecnologia, né? Eu sou digitau. Só vou no banco pelo celular, pago conta no app, faço transferência, até posto foto com hashtag
Avó: É [ˈræʃiˌtægi]
Avô: Ah?
Avó: É [ˈræʃiˌtægi]

Avô: Sei, jogo da velha, claro (voltando-se novamente para a câmera e erguendo as sombrancelhas)
Avó: Velha? A vovozinha! Narrador: Tá todo mundo usando o aplicativo do Itaú. Seja digitaú. Baixe o app.

Page 104

Pedro (85): envelhecer? boa pergunta... eu acho que envelhecer é uma necessidade física... que dá ao espírito maturidade mental... compreende? por que maturidade mental? 5 anos atrás, 10 eu não teria no meu cérebro a acumulação de experiência de vida que eu tenho hoje... tudo aqui [aponta para a cabeça]... nosso cérebro é um computador... você procura o que costumava pensar, fazer, gostava quando você tinha 10 anos e compara agora quando você tem 85... entende?

Ana (93): Envelhecer? Eu era velha quando eu era nova porque eu tive por muito tempo depressão... eu queria morrer... (...) eu curei minha depressão com caridade... (...) foi maravilhoso então envelhecer... agora... agora eu sou feliz...

Catarina (72): bem, para mim... é fantástico.... porque nós aprendemos tanto... vimos tanto... e isso nos enriquece... sabe?

Isabel (83): Ó o que eu acho, bem, é que não é muito bom, não. A gente depende muito… que nem agora… eu tô aqui, né. Preciso depender de tudo. Elas são boazinha, tudo, mas se eu estivesse mais forte era melhor, né?

Paulo: Eu nem sei o que que é isso aí... fiquei velho... sem saber o que que é
Larissa: a: é? quando o senhor percebeu...
Paulo: já era...
Larissa: o senhor se sente velho? o que que é se sentir velho?
Paulo: olha… depoi/depoi/depodepois que eu tive o AVC fiquei desanimado, entendeu? Não tenho vontade pra nada (...) a perna aqui não funciona direito não (bate na perna direita)
Larissa: e antes do Avc? O senhor se sentia velho?
Paulo: Não… não porque trabalhava como se fosse novo, entendeu? O AVC atrapalhou tudo…
Helena: Pra mim… eu acho que foi bom… porque eu tenho tudo o que eu quero… ninguém tá contra mim, né? Porque é ruim quando a gente depende dos outro… né? Eu acho assim… não precisa me olhar que eu vou falar… (olhando para o neto que acompanhava a entrevista) porque quando a gente depende dos filhos pra tudo… talvez é meio difícil… porque daí às vezes os filhos não podem dar o que a mãe quer e vira aquele arranca-rabo de família né… mas graças a Deus… os meu não… nunca nunca aconteceu… né… espero que nunca aconteça…

Page 106

"(...) um relacionamento com o outro não é constituído sem a sua participação, sem a sua presença, sem que ambos deixem essa relação modificada" Geraldi (2008, p. 155).

Page 106

"É nessa relação, portanto, que Bakhtin/Volóchinov defende que as menores, mais ínfimas e mais efêmeras mudanças sociais repercutem imediatamente na língua; **os sujeitos inter-agentes inscrevem nas palavras, nos acentos apreciativos, nas entonações, na escala dos índices de valores, nos comportamentos ético-sociais, as mudanças sociais**. As palavras, nesse sentido, funcionam como agente e memória social, pois uma mesma palavra figura em contextos diversamente orientados" (Miotello, 2005, p. 172; **grifo** meu).

Page 108

"É um dom democrático que estes tempos, estritamente falando, se oferecem – no social – de forma desigual, discriminatória e cruel. E isso nos toca a todos, seres humanos e sociais, em nossos corpos envelhecidos" (Py & Schafstein, 2001, p. 128).

CHAPTER 3
STEREOTYPES AND REPRESENTATIONS: DISCOURSES IN AG(E)ING

Page 109

"O rio que fazia uma volta atrás da nossa casa era a imagem de um vidro mole... Passou um homem e disse: Essa volta que o rio faz... se chama enseada... Não era mais a imagem de uma cobra de vidro que fazia uma volta atrás da casa. Era uma enseada. Acho que o nome empobreceu a imagem" (Manoel de Barros, 2001).

Page 112

"Entendida em função da fala como um todo, envolvendo o desempenho dos sujeitos nas dimensões semântica, sintática, morfêmica e prosódica da fala, já que a fluência é um fenômeno que pertence à fala e, ao mesmo tempo, à língua" (Novaes-Pinto, 2012b, p. 122).

Page 113

"fala aumentada e mudanças súbitas e repentinas de tópico (...), o que demonstra falta de coerência no discurso" (Brandão, 2006, p.143).

Page 114

"Na pesquisa que desenvolvemos sobre a linguagem de idosos, realizamos 25 gravações, a maioria das quais em torno de 15 a 30 minutos de duração, com falantes que vão de 80 a 101 anos de idade. **Nesta obra [Preti, 1991], no entanto, a teoria está documentada, na 76 maioria dos casos, com apenas uma das gravações**. Trata-se do diálogo no. 396-D2 que também pertence ao Projeto de estudo da norma linguística urbana culta de São Paulo (Projeto NURC/SP), com 75 minutos de duração, o qual, além de bem mais longo, se revelou qualitativamente superior aos demais inquéritos. (...) No capítulo V, a propósito do problema da sobrevivência na memória de palavras de um discurso realizado há muitas décadas antes, valemo-nos também de outros dois diálogos" (Marcuschi, 1991, p. 17 *apud* Preti, 1991; **grifo** meu).

Page 115

"o que se percebe é que quando o papel social do idoso se altera com a perda do status social em um determinado momento de sua vida, características de sua linguagem passam a ser também recusadas ou tidas até como sintomas de uma patologia" (Novaes-Pinto, 2008, p. 19).

Page 129

Dicionário Português Priberiam

1. Figura de estilo que consiste em dizer por várias palavras aquilo que pode ser dito por uma;
2. Rodeio de palavras;

Dicionário Houaiss

1. Uso excessivo de palavras para emitir um enunciado que não chega a ser claramente expresso; rodeio, circunlocução, circuito de palavras;
2. Sequência de palavras ou locuções usada em lugar de um termo específico; perífrase, circunlocução;
3. P. ext. evasiva, subterfúgio verbal;

Dicionário Aulete

1. Emprego de frases ou palavras análogas em vez da própria; circunlocução: “Serviu-se de suavez circunlóquios para atenuar a aspereza da comunicação”. (Alberto Pimentel, Lobo da Madragoa, c.10, p. 134, ed. 1904);
2. Uso de muitas ou excessivas palavras para exprimir algo de modo indireto, ou por alusões ou referências vagas; fala ou escrita em que se rodeia um assunto, sem ir diretamente ao ponto;
3. P. ext. Palavras ou frases que se diz de modo evasivo, ou como subterfúgio;
4. Ling. Conjunto de palavras, ou expressão, que se usa para fazer referência a algo de modo alusivo ou figurado, sem usar um termo específico;

Page 130

“Periphrasis: vocabulary concept presented through a syntactic expression. A perífrase pode ser – a) morfológica, ou – b) lexical, conforme consiste – a) numa locução gramatical, b) numa locução que transmite a mesma significação externa que uma palavra da língua. Tem-se assim – a) a forma gramatical perifrástica, em que um vocábulo auxiliar (v.) toma a si a expressão das noções gramaticais, ou significação interna, deixando a significação externa par se expressar pelo outro vocábulo, dito PRINCIPAL (v., por exemplo, conjugações perifrásticas); b) a per[ifrase lexical, ou **CIRCUNLÓQUIO, que substitui uma palavra por duas ou mais palavras.** Usa-se a perífrase lexical por três principais motivos: 1) por eufemismo (v.) (ex.: *um amigo do alheio*); 2) por intuito de definição (ex.: *linhas que nunca se encontram*); 3) pelo desejo de aludir a uma circunstância que a palavra própria pode não evocar (ex.: *a Cidade Eterna*). Há, portanto, sempre uma intenção estilística (v.), e no terceiro caso põe-se em relevo o que é considerado especialmente expressivo e digno de atenção, decorrente até de uma metáfora; ex.: a soberana / dos sinistros impérios do além-túmulo (Varela, Obras, II, p. 41). Na literatura clássica, era um recurso usual a perífrase para personagens da mitologia; ex.: O claro inventor da Medicina (Lusíadas, III, 1)” (Camara Jr., 2002, p. 191).

RETOMANDO OS FIOS DA MEADA: FROM A ONE-WAY ROAD TO OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Page 152

“Da mesma forma que em um periscópio aquilo que vemos o vemos em um espelho, no qual se reflete um outro espelho, no qual se reflete um outro espelho, ao tomar consciência de algo, uma sensação, um sentimento, etc., não podemos dizer que sentimos diretamente a sensação ou que provamos diretamente o sentimento, mas sim que acreditamos, presumimos, interpretamos que estamos experimentando aquela sensação ou nutrindo aquele tal sentimento. Indo adiante com a analogia do periscópio, poderíamos dizer que em todas as situações na qual vemos algo, aquilo que acreditamos ver quase sempre não nos é dado diretamente, mas por meio de um contínuo de hipóteses e inferências, de passagens dedutivas, automáticas e com algumas das premissas subentendidas” (Petrilli, 2013, p. 276).

Page 152

“É difícil. É difícil. Pra uma atriz é difícil porque... todos os dias eu sou tentada; mas todos os dias eu sou muito tentada a dar uma puxadinha aqui... a dar uma melhoradinha. Por outro lado, eu acho que fui adquirindo outras coisas também... é... fui adquirindo um outro tipo de conhecimento, um olhar mais benevolente ao meu próprio respeito... e tem uma coisa também que me dá um suporte muito grande. Eu acho que eu preciso da minha cara, a minha cara precisa ter esses músculos, às vezes uma flacidez” (Irene Ravache, 2019).

Page 154

“Da busca calcada numa lógica da totalidade, da repetição e da permanência, produz-se a especificidade e o novo como variação do um genérico, ou como desvio, perturbação ou erro na realização desse um; enquanto que da busca calcada numa lógica das multiplicidades, das rupturas e do movimento, produz-se uma configuração específica e provisória, não isenta de reduções, mas que procura ter a especificidade, o novo e o complexo como elementos constituintes do objeto e, como tal, a serem contemplados pela reflexão” (Signorini, 1998, p. 103).

Page 155

“Se nos prendermos aos termos "excesso" e "falta", que dão origem aos desvios que os fatos patológicos têm, em relação ao estado normal, temos que a distinção entre "normal e fisiológico", por um lado, e "anormal e patológico", por outro, seria uma simples distinção quantitativa, princípio que seria válido para os fenômenos orgânicos e também mentais. Entretanto, [...] a causa pode variar quantitativamente e de modo contínuo e provocar efeitos qualitativamente diferentes. Para BROUSSAIS, os conceitos de "excesso" ou "falta" são estabelecidos em relação a uma medida considerada válida e desejável – e, portanto, em relação a uma norma - ligados aos conceitos de aumento e diminuição. O autor enfatiza que "paira sobre essa tentativa de definição positiva", um ideal de perfeição” (Novaes-Pinto, 1999, p. 46).

Page 159

“El capitalismo neoliberal solo desea cuerpos rentables. Los que no pueden o no quieren ser emprendedores ni consumir son excluidos. Aunque, en realidad, la mayoría está en una situación precaria porque es el sistema mismo el que los excluye. Los enfermos crónicos, los discapacitados, los ancianos con pensiones míseras, los parados o con trabajos mal pagados, los sin techo, los niños hambrientos, los jóvenes sin futuro, los enfermos mentales sin red de apoyo y los inmigrantes de países del Tercer Mundo son el producto de las desigualdades que crea el neoliberalismo. Pero se les etiqueta como culpables de su situación, como irresponsables y sospechosos. Se les excluye y se les mantiene al borde de la muerte. Así funciona la necropolítica del neoliberalismo. Se abren los albergues y se aumenta el número de camas cuando la temperatura ambiental llega a los cero grados. Cuando los sin techo están a punto de congelarse, los ayuntamientos activan la «Operación FríO». Hay personas dependientes a quienes se les otorga ayudas cuando ya han fallecido, o bien son ayudas tan escasas que obligan a las familias a escoger entre comer o tener electricidad” (Gefaell, 2015, pp. 25-26).

Page 160

“se cada vez menos crianças morrem por desnutrição, em grande parte graças a políticas públicas bem sucedidas implementadas sobretudo nos últimos 15 anos, é cada vez maior o número de idosos que perecem por não ingerir nutrientes em quantidade suficiente. Dito de outra forma: há uma silenciosa epidemia de desnutrição matando milhares de idosos por ano – uma média de 13 casos por dia. E falamos, é bom repetir, de números

enormemente subestimados. As causas para a desnutrição entre idosos vão do abandono pela família à exploração econômica deles – normalmente, por pessoas próximas. “Não é incomum que idosos sejam abandonados por famílias sem condições de sustentá-los”, disse Kiko Afonso, diretor-executivo da Ação da Cidadania contra a Fome, a Miséria e pela Vida, a ong fundada pelo sociólogo e ativista de direitos humanos Herbert de Souza, o Betinho. “A maior causa identificada de desnutrição entre os idosos que acompanhamos é o abuso financeiro. Muitos têm mais da metade da aposentadoria comprometida com empréstimos consignados, feitos para parentes. A prioridade para o dinheiro que sobra são os remédios”, explicou Terezinha Tortelli, uma freira que coordena a Pastoral da Pessoa Idosa, ong vinculada à igreja católica”
(Retrived from: https://theintercept.com/2018/05/25/5-mil-idosos-morrem-de-fome/?fbclid=IwAR0FFKmHYoEmYqIyX--ApJY7sefP3lNyMQcTYLNpMQW7UeFFPUeTaBF_WUs).

Page 160

“É necessário apontar para os não-equilíbrios sociais para explorar as novas possibilidades de nos darmos regulamentações outras, em que o paradoxo da liberdade individual se completamente pela responsabilidade da coexistência. Experimentar novos caminhos, sem exigir que já estejam prontos antes de serem percorridos é aceitar toda ação como uma aposta ética” (Geraldi, 2006, p. 134).

Page 161

“Nós vamos dizendo isso discursivamente e em nosso discurso não estamos proferindo palavras, vai dizer Bakhtin; estamos dizendo coisas boas ou coisas ruins, verdades, mentiras, coisas que animam, coisas que desanimam, coisas que me levam para frente, coisas que me puxam para trás (...) nós pronunciamos a vida. São coisas que nos fazem pensar ou não, com as quais a gente concorda ou não; não são palavras, é vida, é posicionamento, é jeito de olhar o mundo. Do meu lugar, único, singular, eu digo pra vocês como eu vejo as coisas. Logo, se eu atribuo valor às coisas, quando eu olho para o mundo, meu jeito de olhar, a minha enunciação, aquela palavra que eu uso, eu não ponho para fora apenas uma palavra; eu ponho para fora um signo carregado de ideologia, do meu jeito de ver o mundo, com as minhas ideias, com os meus pontos de vista, com as minhas assinaturas (...) Isso que está circulando entre a gente, essa linguagem que está

circulando, ela é uma atividade, ela é um acontecimento, ela é um discurso que está exigindo de mim, e de cada um de nós, posições éticas" (Miotello, 2011, p. 41-42).

Page 162

"O direito à infuncionalidade é o direito a valer por si, como alteridade não relativa. *O infuncional é o humano*. E, no entanto os "direitos do homem" não contemplam o direito à infuncionalidade. Isso se devia do humanismo da identidade. E é fundamento de todos os direitos da alteridade. *O direito à vida*, enquanto não estiver ligado firmemente com o direto à infuncionalidade, permanece dentro de uma visão do homem como meio, reduzido a capital que precisa ser valorizado "por toda a sua vida ativa", como expressam os documentos programáticos da Comissão Europeia, ou seja, capaz de ser produtivo da reprodução desse sistema de produção. O homem não é um recurso, porque não é um meio; não tem um valor instrumental: *é um fim*. Atribuir-lhe a função instrumental de incremento da "competitividade global" sobre o mercado mundial é já, por si mesmo, aviltante, mas se torna ainda mais quando isso se converte, como acontece hoje na escola e na universidade, no objetivo da instrução e da formação, ou seja, a finalidade da palavra que ensina, a finalidade da palavra que escuta, a finalidade da palavra que lê, que interpreta, que traduz, o sentido da qualificação da palavra. O mundo do trabalho de hoje, da troca e do consumo, é caracterizado pela *comunicação-produção.* A chamada "globalização, é também permeabilidade a nível mundial da comunicação que se tornou, nesta fase do sistema de produção do capitalismo, componente fundamental de todas as três fases – produção, troca, consumo – do ciclo produtivo. No mundo de hoje, da comunicação-produção, no qual desenvolvimento eficiência, competitividade (até a *extrema ratio* da guerra) são valores fundamentais, o direito à infuncionalidade assume um caráter subversivo" (Ponzio, 2010, pp. 142-143).

APPENDIX B

	Marca	Ano	Descrição
1	Havaianas[201]	2009	The grandmother complains that her granddaughter went to the restaurant wearing flip-flops. The granddaughter explains that they are not slippers, but Havaianas sandals. The grandmother suggests that her granddaughter should meet a man just like the actor who has just entered the restaurant. The granddaughter explains that she has no interest because she finds it very difficult to be married to a famous man, to which her grandmother responds by explaining that she did not suggest marriage, but sex.
2	Havaianas[202]	2009	Explanation of the withdrawal of the commercial (1) from the television - due to charges of sexual appeal. The commercial was kept on the internet.
3	Bombril[203]	2011	Explains why the viewer would prefer Limpol, a biodegradable cleaner.
4	Bombril[204]	2011	Narrator presents the commercial saying it's for "old ladies." The woman listens to the presentation but confuses "BomBril" with "cable car."
5	Bohemia[205]	2013	A group of senior brewers talk to a younger brewer who opened the factory for visits. The young man says that the next step is to put "some hot women in our commercial," because the advertising of the other beers is "younger than ours." One of the brewers replies: "Great. Those who like advertising watch others and those who like beer drink ours."
6	Volkswagen[206]	2013	A couple talks about their 50-year anniversary. He comments that in those years he had never betrayed her. When he asks the wife if she did the same, she takes him into a brand new car in their living room. As she gets into the car, she asks him, "What did you want to know?" To which he replies, "Is this a new dashboard?" The narrator concludes the commercial by saying that "inside the new Fox, the topic is the new Fox."

[201] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxgTJMZo8Kg Last access: June, 2019.

[202] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eRajwoZmc1U Last access: June, 2019.

[203] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-6TOELc6_Q Last access: June, 2019.

[204] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEjR_zn04P4 Last access: June, 2019.

[205] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sg0ZK15D1JU Last access: June, 2019.

[206] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYzV6kgibk Last access: June, 2019.

7	NET[207]	2014	A family decides how and who should explain to the grandfather that they will change their internet provider.
8	OLX[208]	2015	The grandfather takes pictures of a bicycle to sell through OLX app. With the money, he wants to travel with his wife.
9	OLX[209]	2015	The granddaughter of a couple needs a new guitarist for her band. Her grandmother buys a guitar through OLX app for her husband to play in the band.
10	OLX[210]	2015	The series "Radical Grandpa" has as its main character a man who organizes a party at his house for his grandson's friends with the money he made from sales through OLX. He jumps from the roof of the house to the pool while all the party participants cheer on the stunts.
11	Volkswagen[211]	2016	Two older brothers have not spoken for more than 10 years. With the help of one of their children, through the new phone technology built into the car's dashboard, the driving son calls his uncle without his father noticing and commenting on their relationship. They forgive each other.
12	Itaú[212]	2016	The granddaughter asks her grandfather if he needs help, to which he says no and explains that "people think we don't understand technology, don't we? I am digitaú."
13	Itaú[213]	2016	Two ag(e)ing women book tea with their friends through their mobile apps, as a challenge created by Itaú bank (the last challenge is to make a bank transfer through the bank's application).
14	Itaú[214]	2016	Digitau series commercial about slang. In the commercial, two woman learn from a famous blogger, some of the most common slangs used today.
15	Itaú[215]	2016	Last Digitau campaign commercial. One of the grandmothers from previous commercials writes an e-mail to her grandchildren thanking them for their help so she could enter the "digital world" and talking about the relationship between time and life.
16	Natura[216]	2016	The cosmetics brand launches a campaign called "#too old for it" in which it shows women doing things that other people wouldn't associate with their ages: the first is a 73-

[207] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kfmHXoPHiNM Last access: June, 2019.

[208] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nc70gWEBoF4 Last access: June, 2019.

[209] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iN_mu7wyjHg Last access: June, 2019.

[210] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HB7nza7wh2w Last access: June, 2019.

[211] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAyFDXWtl18 Last access: June, 2019.

[212] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdthBSDwojo Last access: June, 2019.

[213] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Ycxc8jXlBI&t=82s Last access: June, 2019.

[214] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXeP4IiWIUs Last access: June, 2019.

[215] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XQ8IEWO250E Last access: June, 2019.

[216] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrXBMh6o2ts&t=12s Last access: June, 2019.

			year-old tattooed woman who likes heavy metal; the second, a 64-year-old woman who has gone back to school and now works in gastronomy; the third, a 53-year-old woman who after 31 years of marriage to a man, found herself in love with a woman; the fourth, a 40-year-old woman who becomes pregnant on her own without a partner; the fifth, a 37-year-old woman who left her dancing career; the sixth, a 27-year-old woman who is a virgin by choice; and the last one, an 11-year-old girl who plays dolls. The commercial features descriptions of the fact that women spend their lives being judged for their age and ends with the narrator saying, "Chronos believes old, just prejudice."
17	Lubrax[217]	2017	Inside a car, leaving a gas station, the grandson of one of the ag(e)ing women asks her to start doing the beatbox along with him.
18	Nissan[218]	2017	In the commercial, seniors who had to stop driving because of their age are interviewed and taken to the Interlagos (SP) racetrack so that they can say goodbye driving the brand's car.
19	Brastemp[219]	2017	A famous duo of actors who have always made the brand's commercials talk about the new models, making references to internet slangs.

[217] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EovFaKeV4rQ Last access: June, 2019.

[218] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3iZWsQC2tFU Last access: June, 2019.

[219] Available through: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eND-7XFbeD0&t=13s Last access: June, 2019.

APPENDIX C[220]

KEY TO TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

...3...	Number of seconds of longer pauses
...	A pause in speech that is less than one second
[laugh]	Description of nonspeech sounds
O:::kay	Indicates prolonged sound or syllable
HEY	Raised intonation
T	Indication of the time a process started and finished
[	Beginning of a circumlocution
]	End of a circumlocution

[220] The conventions were adapted from Hengst (2001; 2003) and the NUCR Project.