

# CONSTRUCTION OF REFERENTIAL NETWORK IN TEXTS AND THEIR CONNECTIONS WITH THE PRODUCTION CONTEXT

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- **ABSTRACT:** From a functionalist perspective, this article discusses aspects of the construction of the referential network of texts in narrative sequences from a sample of Brazilian novels in three subsequent periods. The aim is to verify the relationship between the way the referential slots are fulfilled (especially regarding the central characters of the plot) and the various processes involved in the creation mode and maintenance of the textual referential network in different situations. It builds up as the basic concept that the phoric (pro)nominal elements (nominal or pronominal phrase) perform in different ways the two essential functions in the referential process (the identification and the description of the referents), and that the set of positions in the introduction and maintenance of these elements represents a different choice in the configuration of the piece. Confirming the most basic functionalist principles, the analysis performed destroys the notion that there is a model in the grammar of the language to the referential organization of the text, and ensures the notion that the differences found work to the co-enunciative plan of the speaker inserted in the context of production and in his cultural context (HALLIDAY, 2004).
- **KEYWORDS:** Functionalist principles. Textual reference. Context of production. Narrative sequences from novels.

## Introduction

This article discusses aspects of the construction of the referential network in textual organization from the analysis of the formal mode of introduction and maintenance of the discourse of objects in a sample of narrative sequences from Brazilian novels, a genre typically produced from narrative, obviously interspersing other several types of text, but, in general, putting them at the service of textual progression. It has been

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already considered that different textual sequences (basically, narrative, descriptive and argumentative) are solved in different constructions of the referential network in texts, and especially because in each of them the set between the identification and the description of the referents has to be solved in a different way, exactly the two functions that meet the (pro)nominal phrases, in the textual construction of meaning (NEVES, 2006, [2017]).

The material of the analysis is composed of excerpts (more specifically, the initial page, or part of it) of some works of genre novel in Brazil in three subsequent periods classified as Realism, Modernism and Contemporaneity. This study does not intend to offer proposals for direct relationship among the different forms of linguistic expression and the different literary movements. However, within the functionalist orientation of analysis adopted here (HALLIDAY, 1973, 1978, 1989, 2004; HALLIDAY; MCINTOSH; STREVEN, 1964; EGGINS, 2010; NEVES, 2010), it was sought to detect, considering the organization of the textual network, possible differences linked to a production context, term defined in these theoreticians' works as the situation context added to the culture context in their historical time. In any case, it is understood that, especially in literary works, particular aesthetic guidelines are inserted in different and successive contexts.

### **The referential network in texts**

The referential process studied here, from the textual type chosen for analysis, contemplates narrative sequences. In order not to multiply variables regarding the textual organization, only one type of textual sequence was chosen, the narrative, because, in the novels, this is the sequence that, in general, introduces the characters, and form the text structure, as already mentioned.

From a perspective of text linguistics, reference is seen as a construction and reconstruction of 'objects of discourse', which should be conceived as products — mainly cultural products — of cognitive and interactive activity of speaking subjects (APOTHÉLOZ; REICHER- BÉGUELIN, 1995, p 228); from a perspective of the functionalist theory of language, seen in the general consensus, but especially developed in Dik (1997, p.130), reference is considered the introduction and identification of referents in the processing of linguistic interaction and must be conceived as the establishment of communicative relations. In any case, according to Neves (2006, p.76), it is understood that, populating the scenes enabled in predications, the referents are introduced as objects of discourse and as such are kept, according to dependent strategies of textual formulation, working for discursiveness (seen in its configuration in "textual forms" according to Castilho (2010, p.133)).

It is from frames installed by the cooperative activity between speaker and hearer that objects being constructed in the/by the speech create the basis for the textual progression, "regulated by an intricate relationship among linguistic, cognitive

and sociocultural activities” (RONCARATI, 2010, p. 44). Thus, in the process of identification and interpretation of a referent, there is more than a simple recovery, searching necessarily for the recognition of belonging of this referent to ‘any world’ (MONDADA; DUBOIS, 2003), which represents, in this research, the configuration of characters in the world of that particular plot, socio-culturally installed.

In the service of creating the referential network are the phoric elements that meet the referential slots: noun phrases (composed of more than one manner), pronoun or zero. Populating the text structure these elements fulfill two essential functions: the identification of referents, and their description. The identification (when full) of the referent represents the establishment of a single person in the discursive universe created. The description, in turn, is the representation – to a greater or lesser degree – of traces of the referent representation in order to set it semantically and, then, to define its status in the plot of text representations inserted in the context (NEVES, [2017]).

According to this proposal (NEVES, [2017]), the role of identification, which is the basic element in the referential function and that all referential phrases can play, is set at four different levels: (i) the maximum degree of identification is provided by the noun phrases represented by a proper name, which establishes unequivocally (in context) an individual; (ii) the average degree of identification is provided by the nominal phrase represented by a common noun, which identifies the element in a relative form, by means of the description of the named class (and possible modifiers participate in this description), and possible remission provided by phoric determinants, such as the article, the demonstrative and possessive; (iii) the low level of identification is provided by a phrase represented by a personal pronoun of the third person, which only operates indirect identification by remission and is limited to reveal the grammatical person of the referent, and, at most, their gender; (iv) the zero degree of identification, i.e., no formal identification portion, is represented by the empty phoric slot, the ellipse, the zero, for this reason this referential process is not explored in this article. On the other hand, regarding the referential role of description, Neves ([2017]) proposes a reverse route to which the author equates to the reference role of identification: the maximum degree is in the noun phrase with a nucleus represented by a common noun (and with possible determinants and modifiers).

### **Bases and characteristics of the proposal. The analysis of the construction of the referential network according to the form of fulfilling the nominal slots**

Let us assume, initially, as a form of conducting the analysis, the basic functionalist lesson according to which, in language use, the speaker has choices, and grammar organizes the options in some sets within which the speaker makes simultaneous selections (HALLIDAY, 1973, 2004). This indication is derived from the basis of which the author proposes his systemic-functional grammar, which is a systemic theory

of meaning as a choice, by which the language – like any other semiotic system – is interpreted as a block of option networks: this one, or that one, or the other, and so on. To this purpose, there are only two original indications (among dozens) by Halliday (2004), highlighted by the authors of this article:

The Process and the Medium together form the nucleus of an English clause; and this nucleus then determines the range of options that are available to the rest of the clause. (HALLIDAY, 2004, p.289, emphasis added).

These different options are available to speakers and writers when they construe their experience of the flow of events. (HALLIDAY, 2004, p.521, emphasis added).

The statement starts from the choices the speaker makes when he composes the statement for a specific purpose, and he produces meaning with them. This language setting as a network of options is an essential characteristic of the systemic-functional proposal, as illustrated by this excerpt (emphasized by the authors of this article), which is among many of the same content by Halliday (2004, p.9, highlighted by author):

This is not an arbitrary ‘rule’. It is what explains the fact that such an instance is selecting simultaneously in systems of every rank: Come! is an ‘imperative’ (as opposed to ‘indicative’) clause, a ‘positive’ (as opposed to ‘negative’) verbal group, a base (as opposed to derived) form of the verb (word).

Neves (2006) emphasizes, within this proposal, the organizational freedom of the speaker within the constructional restrictions, because the speaker automatically processes regular structures of the language, but makes the choices that lead to results of meaning and pragmatic effects.

In this sense, the present research, regarding the way of fulfilling the nominal slots for analysis of the construction of the referential network of the text starts from the especially particular qualitative verification of different grammatical filling schemes (noun phrase, pronoun or zero), seeking a semantic and pragmatic interpretation of the relationship between the fulfilling form of these slots and the several processes involved in the way of creating and maintaining the textual referential network: accessibility and identifiability; information flow and information distribution; coreference and establishment of the referential network. Obviously, some aspects of enunciation-enuncive set, established on the referential network, connect in a particular way to the difference among the types of textual sequence (considering that specifically narrative sequences are treated here).

The analyzed passages are part of the following novels<sup>1</sup>: in Realism, *A carne*, by Júlio Ribeiro (1888), *O cortiço* [published in English as *The Slum*], by Aluísio Azevedo (1890); in Modernism, *Alma*, by Oswald de Andrade (1978), *Amar, verbo intransitivo*, Mário de Andrade (2008); in Contemporaneity, *O filho eterno* [published in English as *The Eternal Son*], by Christopher Tezza (2007), and *Vozes do deserto* [published in English as *Voices of the Desert: A Novel*], by Nelida Piñon (2006)<sup>2</sup>.

Delimiting the referential slots in a more specific way for examination, it was determined as an analysis center the introduction of referents ‘characters’ from the beginning of each work (usually protagonists), based on the fact that, in the novel, in general, characters are the elements from which and around which the story takes place and the scenarios are set. Based on this first incursion, it was constituted, in one of the examined works, a sample in which the analysis extended to parts of the composition of the scenario (the referents were attached to the notion of location), to demonstrate the subordination that the introduction of these locative referents keeps with the central referents, the characters.

Taking into account the fact that the excerpts employed in the analysis in this research belong to novels from different eras (Realism, Modernism and Contemporaneity), the aim is to evaluate a possible connection between the forms of expression of the referents and the environment of the context of production, involved in the context of culture (HALLIDAY, 2004). As already pointed out, the research corpus was defined, in principle, as the beginning of each novel, for observing the form of introduction of each of the first objects of speech protagonizing scenes. For the evaluation, the time of the novel construction was considered, thus this work will be presented in the chronological order of production of the works examined.

### **The operationalization of the proposal. A sample of analysis of the referential network configuration in the texts**

According to the aforementioned, it is assumed as a central guideline of assessments that, connected to the form of introducing the characters, the way of its identification as well as the form of its characterization (NEVES, [2017]) are found, being both processes considered absolutely crucial in the plot, in the story line. It is about assessing the form of guiding the referential creation in each sample, which results fundamentally from the form of introducing the referent. In the adopted line, it is about the verification, the narratives, the different choices of authors related to the phrases of introduction of

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<sup>1</sup> For transparency regarding the time of production of the works, at this point, it is registered the use of the dates of their first edition. As for the list novels analyzed, the choice was random: among several novels of the period being consulted, the first ones narrated in the third person were selected.

<sup>2</sup> Labels that traditionally qualify certain literary periods were used here. The same corpus of analysis served Souza (2013), who, with more general purposes, also included the phoric elements used in the introduction and maintenance of characters.

referents: with greater initial weight in identifying the character, or more initial weight in his or her description (characterization) and the results coming from it.

Considering the chronological order of the production of the works, let us take Realism to start with. To introduce the issue, the opening sentence of the novel *A carne*, by Júlio Ribeiro, is taken, in which the first character is introduced by the noun phrase o doutor [doctor] **Lopes Matoso**. This phrase fits the maximum degree of identification (as proposed here), because it brings the complete identity of the character (the compound surname, **Lopes Matoso**, the ‘name’ by which he is called throughout the work) and also comes with a descriptive component (the information contained in the common name doutor, which brings to this already individualized character a characterization by a certain angle). A biographical data is added, which composes the predications made to this subject, being the introduction of the character already heavily provided with a characterization (the character is ‘not happy’)<sup>3</sup>:

O doutor Lopes Matoso<sup>4</sup> não foi precisamente o que se pode chamar de um homem feliz.

(Aos dezoito anos de sua vida, quando apenas tinha completado o seu curso e preparatórios, perdeu pai e mãe com poucos meses de intervalo.) (RIBEIRO, 1996, p.21).

[Doctor Lopes Matoso was not exactly what you might call a happy man.<sup>5</sup> (At eighteen, when he had just finished school and the preparatory course, he lost his father and mother with a few months apart)]. (RIBEIRO, 1996, p.21, translated by the authors).

The other Realism novel selected for analysis, *O cortiço* [The Slum], by Aluísio Azevedo, also brings the first character introduced by his own name (**João Romão**), thus in maximum degree of identification.

**João Romão** foi, dos treze aos vinte e cinco anos, empregado de um vendeiro que enriqueceu entre as quatro paredes de uma suja e obscura taverna nos refolhos do bairro do Botafogo. (AZEVEDO, 1988, p.13).

[Between the ages of thirteen and twenty-five, **João Romão** worked for the proprietor of a dingy and squalid but profitable tavern and general store in the back streets of Botafogo. (AZEVEDO, 2000, p.13).]

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<sup>3</sup> When registering the referential phrases in the analyzed excerpts, it was conventionalized to represent names in bold, phrases nucleated by a common name are underlined, and personal pronouns in bold and italic.

<sup>4</sup> Reference by name will be marked with bold, reference by nominal phrase nucleated by common noun will be underlined, reference by personal pronoun will be marked with bold and italic and reference by zero will be indicated by the symbol ∅, when this indication is pertinent.

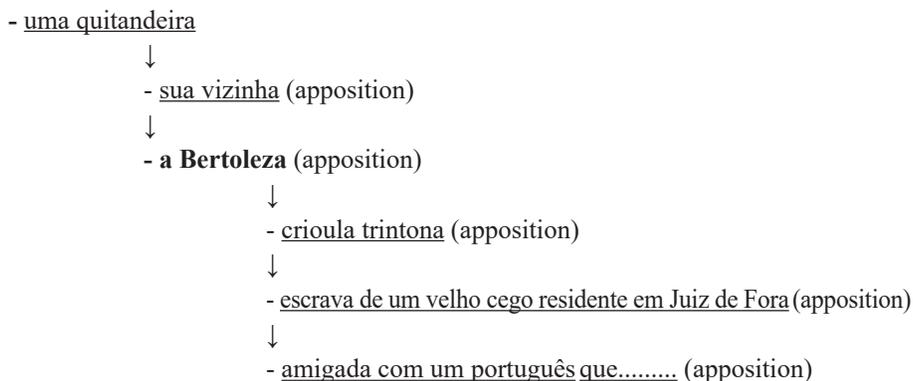
<sup>5</sup> For the quotes, the dates are from the issues consulted.

Then, the second character is introduced, who comes in direct connection with João Romão (recovered by the pronoun *lhe*), since it is presented as the provider of João Romão's meals. Again the character settles with the maximum degree of identification, since she is presented by a nucleated noun phrase by its own name: **a Bertoleza**.

Dormia sobre o balcão da própria venda, em cima de uma esteira, fazendo travesseiro de um saco de estopa cheio de palha. A comida arranjava-*lhe*, mediante quatrocentos réis por dia, uma quitandeira sua vizinha, a Bertoleza, crioula trintona, escrava de um velho cego residente em Juiz de Fora amigada com um português que tinha uma carroça de mão e fazia fretes na cidade. (AZEVEDO, 1988, p. 13).

[He slept on a straw mat on the counter, using a burlap sack stuffed with straw for his pillow. His meals were prepared, for 400 réis a day, by **Bertoleza**, a black slave some thirty years old. Bertoleza sold food at a stand in front of her shack and belonged to an old, blind master who resided in Juiz de Fora. She lived with a Portuguese who owned a handcart, with which he made his living downtown. (AZEVEDO, 2000, p.13).]

This name appears (in nominal apposition) after the character has already been introduced by a noun phrase nucleated by a common noun (uma quitandeira), which also receives (as apposition) more three descriptive (characterizing) specifications, as outlined below:



That is, in a scheme of visible search description of characters, this long sequence of nominal phrase (relating to a completely identified character) brings characterizations obtained referentially by common names (highly descriptive elements), and increasingly specified, built recursively with entry of new nominal phrase on the right (with common nouns, thus new descriptions), as it is seen in this unfolding scheme:

(- a Bertoleza)

- ↓  
- escrava (apposition)  
↓  
- de um velho cego residente em Juiz de Fora  
↓  
- amigada (apposition)  
↓  
- com um português que tinha uma carroça de mão e fazia fretes na cidade  
↓  
- que tinha uma carroça de mão  
- e fazia fretes na cidade

Explanation: individualization is completely searched, either through an unequivocal identification installed, or through the description of a character which has already been characterized to some extent before the plot is developed.

In order to avoid analyzing only two examples from works strongly regarded as belonging to Realism, the first paragraph of the novel *Quincas Borba*, by Machado de Assis, from the same period (1889), is shown below and consensually considered as having the same aesthetics, although having an evidently contained style:

**Rubião** fitava a enseada, — eram oito horas da manhã. Quem *o* visse, com os polegares metidos no cordão do chambre, à janela de uma grande casa de Botafogo, cuidaria que *ele* admirava aquele pedaço de água quieta; mas, em verdade, vos digo que pensava em outra coisa. Cotejava o passado com o presente. Que era, há um ano? Professor. Que é agora? Capitalista. Olha para si, para as chinelas (umas chinelas de Túnis, que *lhe* deu recente amigo, **Cristiano Palha**), para a casa, para o jardim, para a enseada, para os morros e para o céu; e tudo, desde as chinelas até o céu, tudo entra na mesma sensação de propriedade. (ASSIS, 2012, p.47).

[**Rubião** was staring at the cove — it was eight o'clock in the morning. Anyone who'd seen *him* with his thumbs stuck in the belt of his dressing gown at the window of a mansion in Botafogo would have thought *he* was admiring that stretch of calm water, but in reality I can tell you he was thinking about something else. He was comparing the past to the present. What was he a year ago? A teacher. What is he now? A capitalist. He looks at himself, at his slippers (slippers from Tunis that his new friend **Cristiano Palha** had given *him*), at the house, at the garden, at the cove, at the hills, and at the sky, and everything, from slippers to sky, everything gives off the same feeling of property. (ASSIS, 1999, p. 47).]

When the plot is established, the characters, introduced by name, are already identified: **Rubião** and **Cristiano Palha**, being the last registered (in bracketing) with name and last name. Both Machado's characters are also described by the common noun amigo, that is used for both due to reciprocity (friends of each other). And Rubião, the protagonist, is especially described with the two predicative received after his introduction in the text (expressed by nominal phrases nucleated by common nouns: teacher and capitalist). That is, there is a very characterizing description (even historically), as shown in the scheme below:

- **Rubião**

↓

- era professor

↓

- tornou-se capitalista

It is worth noting that these two indications (professor and capitalista) are highlighted by Machado's form of construction: each of them comes in response to a formal question: 'What was he a year ago?' 'What is he now?'

Following these thinking, samples of authors of Modernism, without intending to affirm that there are clear excerpts to be sought, considering the form of expression, absolutely determined by different aesthetics. However, even though this rigid determination has not been sought centrally, it is possible to verify in the works of this new period of Brazilian literary history that, although – obviously – there are also characters that are well identified and/or characterized by proper name and nominal syntagma with use of common noun (respectively), there are ways of introducing less canonical characters, which did not occur in Realism novels (at least not in the randomly selected sample here analyzed), and also less canonical, if considering the narrative sequences in general.

First, an excerpt of *Alma*, by Oswald de Andrade, with the introduction of (three) actants also operated by nominal phrases nucleated by common noun (o velho and o cãozinho) or by proper name (**Alma**), but with much lower degree of specification:

O velho e o cãozinho foram andando na sombra enjoada da tarde. Tinham passeado muito. [...] **Alma** havia regressado naquele instante. (ANDRADE, O., 1978, p.5).

[The old man and the dog were walking under the nauseated afternoon shade. They had taken a long walk. [...] **Alma** had returned at that moment. (ANDRADE, O., 1978, p.5, translated by the authors).]

A lower specification (lower level of characterization) also occurs in the second paragraph, when the other central character is introduced through the use of a personal

pronoun – *ele contara* – element that does not identify nor describes the referent, except for the [male] gender feature. And only in the third paragraph the character is identified by a proper name (**Mauro**):

Pensava: por que será que quando uma porta me machuca, me faz sofrer; quando bato a cabeça numa janela, choro de dor; e ele pode me cortar a navalha, não dói: é delicioso!

Mas lembrou-se da Odete, que estivera com **Mauro** no teatro, *ele* contara. E ficou dizendo sufocadamente no quarto:

— Canalha! Bandido! Miserável! Miserável! (ANDRADE, O., 1978, p.5).

[He thought: why is it that when a door hurts me, it makes me suffer; when I hit my head on a window, I cry in pain; and he can cut me with the razor, it does not hurt: it's delicious!

But he remembered Odete, who had been with **Mauro** at the theater, *he* had told. And he said suffocatingly in the bedroom:

- Scoundrel! Knave! Miserable! Miserable! (ANDRADE, O., 1978, p.5, translated by the authors.)]

In this case, therefore, the scheme is absolutely the opposite of what has been established to this point, regarding the use of identifiability and definition of the referent in the creation of the referential network: in the introduction of the character it is not even an identification (a proper name) nor a description (a phrase having a common noun as its nucleus). Now the identification (without providing any characterization) comes after a simple reference for a grammatical word, a pronoun, a mere phoric textual element, built in cataphora:

- *ele*

↑

- **Mauro**

↑

Even more representative cases (because consisting of multiple non-canonical references) occur in *Amar, verbo intransitivo*, by Mário de Andrade, another modernist text:

A porta do quarto se abriu e *eles* saíram no corredor. Calçando as luvas **Sousa Costa** largou por despedida:

— Está frio.

*Ela* muito correta e simples:

— Estes fins de inverno são perigosos em São Paulo.

Lembrando mais uma coisa reteve a mão de adeus que o outro lhe estendia.

— E, senhor... sua esposa? Está avisada?

— Não! A senhorita compreende... Ela é mãe. Esta nossa educação brasileira... Além do mais com três meninas em casa!...

— Peça-lhe que avise sua esposa, senhor. Não posso compreender tantos mistérios. Se é para o bem do rapaz.

— Mas senhorita...

— Desculpe insistir. É preciso avisá-la. Não me agradaria ser tomada por aventureira sou séria. [...]

Falava com a voz mais natural desse mundo mesmo com certo orgulho que **Sousa Costa** percebeu sem compreender. Olhou pra *ela* admirado e, jurando não falar nada à mulher, prometeu.

**Elza** viu *ele* abrir a porta da pensão. Pâam... Entrou de novo no quatinho ainda agitado pela presença do estranho (ANDRADE, M., 2008, p. 19).

[The bedroom door opened and *they* went out in the hallway. Putting the gloves on, **Sousa Costa** said:

— It is cold.

**She**, very correct and simple:

— This end of winter is dangerous in São Paulo.

Recalling something else, she held the goodbye hand that he held out to her.

— And, sir ... your wife? Has she been informed?

— No! You understand... She is the mother. Our Brazilian education... Besides, having three girls at home! ...

— I ask you to let your wife know, sir. I can't understand so many mysteries. If it's for the good of the young man.

— But...

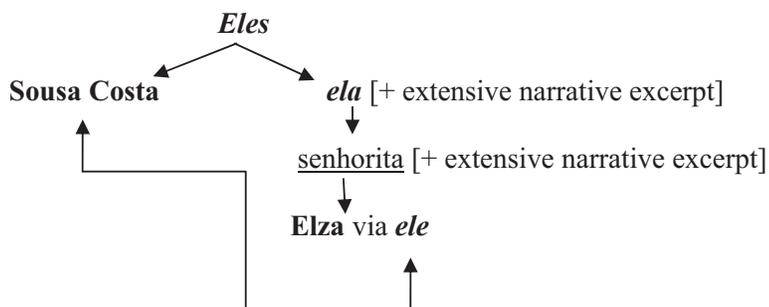
— Sorry for insisting. We must warn her. I would not like to be taken by an adventurous woman, I am serious. [...]

She spoke with the most natural voice in this world and even with some pride that **Sousa Costa** realized without understanding. He looked at *her* with admiration, and swearing not to say anything to his wife, he promised.

**Elza** saw *him* opening the door of the pension. Paam... He entered the little room again, still agitated by the presence of the strange. (ANDRADE, M., 2008, p.19, translated by the authors.)]

In this case, the referential introduction of the first character occurs by personal pronoun, the pronoun *eles*, now a plural. This pronoun brings only the information

that there is more than one character acting in the scene and that at least one of them is male. As it occurs with **Alma** (in the novel *Alma*), in this case, one of the characters included in the plural pronoun (the male) is soon identified in the maximum degree (with the compound surname: **Sousa Costa**). The other character included in the pronoun *eles*, however, is inserted in the text in a non-canonical way: she is referred to by an element that does not characterize (and that identifies only a little), the personal pronoun *ela* (again a pronoun of third person), which occurs twice, and that only at the end of the excerpt is taken by a proper name (**Elza**), which already establishes the suspense that will involve this character throughout the novel. The only characterization of this female character (for common noun) is in a form of treatment occurring in the dialogue: senhorita. This is the illustrative scheme of the network created:



In fact, it is only on the next page, when the arrival of Elza to Sousa Costa’s family home on a ‘Tuesday’ is narrated, that a characterization appears. That’s when the couple’s daughter says to her mother: “A governanta está aí! mamãe! a governanta está aí!”

Moving forward to the Contemporaneity, it is observed that this little identifying and almost null form of introducing a referent (i.e., the reference by a simple grammatical element, a ‘pronoun’) is taken even further ahead. The two works of this period (randomly) highlighted as corpus of analysis present a form of introducing (and also adopted in maintenance) the central characters in which there is no insistence in an initial and unequivocal, complete and ready identification, or in detailed characterization to support the plot. That is what can be observed regarding texts from the Realism period.

This is the beginning of *O filho eterno* [The Eternal Son], by Cristóvão Tezza:

– Acho que é hoje – *ela* disse. – Agora – completou, com a voz mais forte, tocando *-lhe* o braço, porque *ele* é um homem distraído.  
 Sim, distraído, quem sabe? Alguém provisório, talvez; alguém que, aos 28 anos, ainda não começou a viver. A rigor, exceto por um leque de ansiedades felizes, *ele* não tem nada, e não é ainda exatamente nada. E

essa magreza semovente de uma alegria agressiva, às vezes ofensiva, viu-se diante da mulher grávida quase como se só agora entendesse a extensão do fato: um filho. Um dia ele chega, **ele** riu, expansivo. Vamos lá! A mulher que, em todos os sentidos, **o** sustentava já havia quatro anos, agora era sustentada por **ele** enquanto aguardavam o elevador, à meia-noite. **Ela** está pálida. As contrações. A bolsa **ela** disse – algo assim. **Ele** não pensava em nada – em matéria de novidade, amanhã **ele** seria tão novo quanto o filho. Era preciso brincar, entretanto. Antes de sair lembrou-se de uma garrafinha caubói de uísque, que colocou no outro bolso; no primeiro estavam os cigarros. (TEZZA, 2010, p.9).

[‘I think it’s today,’ **she** said. ‘Now,’ she added, her voice stronger, touching his arm because **he** was absent-minded.

Yes, he was absent-minded, possibly. Someone makeshift, perhaps; someone who, at the age of twenty-eight, still hadn’t begun to live. Strictly speaking, except for an array of happy anxieties, **he** didn’t have anything, nor was he anything yet, exactly. And this walking, talking bag bones, full of aggressive, oft-times offensive cheer, saw himself before his pregnant wife almost as if he had only now understood the full extent of the fact: a baby.

‘So today’s the day,’ **he** said, laughing expansively. ‘Let’s go!’

His wife, who had supported **him** in every sense for the last four years, was now supported by **him** while waiting for the lift, at midnight. **She** was pallid. Contractions. My water, **she** said, or something to that effect. **He** didn’t think a thing – as far as newness went, tomorrow **he’d** be as new as his baby. In the meantime, he needed some make-believe. Before living, he’d remembered to slip a little cowboy-style flask of whisky into his other pocket. In the first were his cigarettes. (TEZZA, 2013, p. 9).]

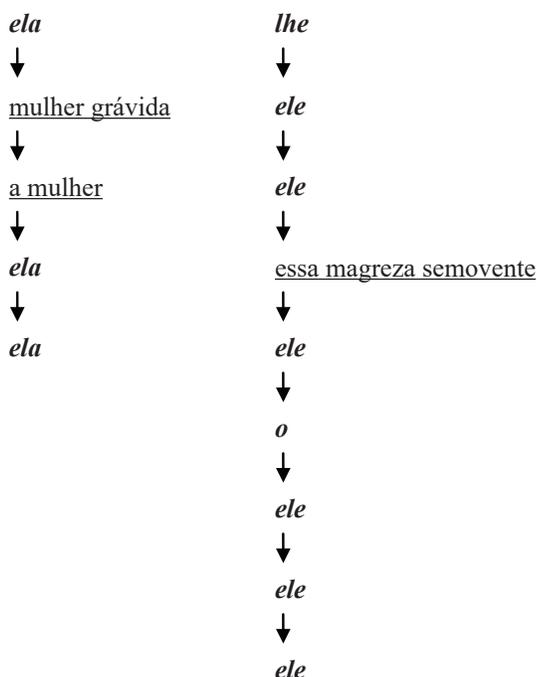
Then, the two characters (a man and a woman) enter, separately, in the text, introduced by personal pronouns, and one of them, the male character – even more significantly – enters through a pronoun, maximally not identificator and maximally not descriptor: **he**. Only ahead does the reference by the pronoun subject form – **he** – offer, at least, the gender of the character.

There are no less than three personal pronouns in the first paragraph of the novel, introducing the two characters. In the first line, the protagonist enters by the expression of the personal pronoun **ela**, phoric choice that allows the reader (as it happened to the character **Elza**, in *Amar, verbo intransitivo*) only to identify that it is a female entity, and a character (it is known that she is human, not due to any descriptive reference, but only because she practices human actions). She is recovered twice by the same pronoun (**ela**) and once by ellipse, phoric fulfilling types which also confer no characterization.

A defined description is obtained when, at the end of the following paragraph, the character is recovered by the nominal phrase a mulher grávida: ‘viu-se diante da mulher grávida.’ Only this brief description of the woman is provided so far.

Regarding the other protagonist (introduced, also in the first paragraph, by the pronoun *lhe*, as already indicated), only later, in the second mention of the pronoun (*ele*), the reader can identify, at least, that it is a male character because the first reference was made by the pronoun *lhe*, unspecific as to the genre, ‘completou, com a voz mais forte, tocando-*lhe* o braço, porque *ele* é um homem distraído.’ The first reference that, being operated by the nominal phrase, brings therefore some description – **essa magreza semovente** –, only appears in the next paragraph, and calls attention to the preceding sentence because the nominal expression encapsulates part of the information related to the character, already provided in that predication (FRANCIS, 2003; KOCH; ELIAS, 2012). That is, no urgency in setting characteristically the character was observed, differently from what was verified as common in blocks of text from previous periods analyzed in this article.

This is the singular referential scheme of the sequence:



It can also be verified what happens in the introduction of another entity, which is quoted (it is not a character), entering by the relationship with the male protagonist: um filho, recovered by *ele* and o filho. The scheme is similar, with a general characterization:

[...] E essa magreza semovente de uma alegria agressiva, às vezes ofensiva, viu-se diante da mulher grávida quase como se só agora entendesse a extensão do fato: um filho. Um dia *ele* chega, ele riu, expansivo. (TEZZA, 2010, p. 9).

[...] Ele não pensava em nada – em matéria de novidade, amanhã ele seria tão novo quanto o filho. (TEZZA, 2010, p. 9).

[...] And this walking, talking bag bones, full of aggressive, oft-times offensive cheer, saw himself before his pregnant wife almost as if he had only now understood the full extent of the fact: a baby.

‘So today’s the day,’ he said, laughing expansively.

[...] He didn’t think a thing – as far as newness went, tomorrow *he*’d be as new as his baby. (TEZZA, 2013, p. 9).]

Now considering the second novel of Contemporaneity chosen for this article, *Vozes do deserto* [Voices of the Desert], by Nelida Piñon (2006), is in a different progress regarding the referential construction of the characters, but it can be said that the author prescinds from formal text identifications (for example, last names) as well as characterizations that bring high specifications. Again, the initial paragraphs of the work in question will be analyzed:

**Scherezade** não teme a morte. Ø Não acredita que o poder do mundo representado pelo Califa, a quem o pai serve, decreta por meio de sua morte o extermínio da sua imaginação.

Ø Tenta convencer o pai de ser a única capaz de interromper a seqüência das mortes dadas às donzelas do reino. Ø Não suporta ver o triunfo do mal que se estampa no rosto do **Califa**. Ø Quer opor-se à desdita que atinge os lares de Bagdá e arredores, oferecendo-se ao soberano em sedicioso holocausto.

O pai reage ao ouvir sua proposta. Ø Suplica que Ø desista, sem alterar a decisão da filha. Ø Volta a insistir, desta vez, golpeando a pureza da língua árabe, Ø pede emprestadas as imprecações, as palavras espúrias, bastardas, escatológicas, que os beduínos usavam indistintamente em meio à ira e aos folguedos. Sem envergonhar-se, Ø lança mão de todos os recursos para convencê-la. Afinal a filha *lhe* devia, além da vida, o luxo, a nobreza, a educação refinada. Ø Pusera-*lhe* à disposição mestres em medicina, filosofia, história, arte e religião, que despertaram a atenção de **Scherezade** para aspectos sagrados e profanos do cotidiano que jamais Ø teria aprendido, não fora a ingerência do pai. (PIÑON, 2006, p.7-8).

[**Scherezade** does not fear death. ∅<sup>6</sup> [She] doesn't believe that the power of the world represented by the Caliph, whom her father serves, determines, through his death, the death of her imagination. ∅ [She] tries to convince her father she is the only one able to stop the sequence of deaths imposed to the maidens of the kingdom. ∅ [She] can't stand seeing the triumph of evil on the **Caliph's** face. ∅ [She] wants to oppose the misfortune in the homes of Baghdad and surrounding areas, offering herself to the sovereign in seditious holocaust. Her father reacts when he hears her proposal. ∅ [He] begs ∅ [her daughter] to give up without changing his daughter's decision. ∅ [He] insists again, this time striking the purity of the Arabic language, ∅ borrowing imprecations, spurious, bastard, scatological words the Bedouins used interchangeably amid anger and mirth. With no shame, ∅ [he] makes use of all resources to convince **her**. Because his daughter owes **him**, beyond life, luxury, nobility, refined education. ∅ [He] put at **her** disposal masters in medicine, philosophy, history, art and religion, which attracted **Scheherazade's** attention to sacred and profane aspects of daily life that ∅ [she] would never have learned, without her father's interference. (PIÑON, 2006, p. 7-8, translated by the authors)].

The points to which attention is drawn in this case are: (i) parsimony in the use of the noun modifiers in the few noun phrases that are inserted to reference the three characters (**Scherezade**, o/seu pai and Califa, term marked with the capital letter as a proper name, but which actually is the name of a person, considering his position); (ii) obtaining information on the characters by the actions and the processes that take part (verbal predications), not by their characteristics or attributes (using active modifiers in the nominal syntagma) indicated referentially; (iii) consequently, the creation of the relationship among the characters with the use of personal and possessive pronouns (in addition to the articles, which work as possessive pronouns), exclusively phoric elements, devoid of any semantic indication other than the establishment of 'relationships': o (seu) pai, sua morte, o (seu) soberano, sua proposta, a (sua) filha (repeatedly); (iv) finally, the functionality of the reference by 'zero' in the textual construction (issue not discussed in this text).

One may ask, then, how the forward plot of the narrative is built. What can be seen are predicates (in the present tense) leading to abstraction of attributes and characterizations. For example, there are characterizations both for Scherezade and for her father, only captured in predications in which characters are involved, not descriptively expressed in nominal portions of the statements: 'Scherezade não teme a morte.'; '∅ Tenta convencer o pai [...]'; '∅ Não suporta ver o triunfo do mal [...]'; '∅ Quer opor-se à desdita [...]'; 'O pai reage ao ouvir sua proposta. ∅ Suplica que

<sup>6</sup> Specifically in this text, the unexpressed subject (zero subject) is marked with ∅.

desista, sem alterar a decisão da filha.’; ‘Volta a insistir [...]. Therefore, it is a narrative configuration minimally supported by particularizations of nominal nature, i.e., minimally obtained by reference expedients.

### An incursion into the referential configuration scenario

The same excerpt, from the novel *Amar, verbo intransitivo*, analyzed to verify the degree of identification and characterization of the characters, is now taken as sample to verify the introduction and maintenance of textual referents, if not only characters are considered, but also other references that compose the referential network of the text. It is the construction of the scenario for these characters to act, and, more specifically, in the beginning of the novel, the performance of the protagonists:

A porta do quarto se abriu e *eles* saíram no corredor. Calçando as luvas **Sousa Costa** largou por despedida:

— Está frio.

**Ela** muito correta e simples:

— Estes fins de inverno são perigosos em São Paulo.

Lembrando mais uma coisa reteve a mão de adeus que o outro lhe estendia.

— E, senhor... sua esposa? Está avisada?

— Não! A senhorita compreende... Ela é mãe. Esta nossa educação brasileira... Além do mais com três meninas em casa!...

— Peço-lhe que avise sua esposa, senhor. Não posso compreender tantos mistérios. Se é para o bem do rapaz.

— Mas senhorita...

— Desculpe insistir. É preciso avisá-la. Não me agradaria ser tomada por aventureira, sou séria. E tenho 35 anos, senhor. Certamente não irei se sua esposa não souber o que vou fazer lá. Tenho a profissão que uma fraqueza me permitiu exercer, nada mais nada menos. É uma profissão. Falava com a voz mais natural desse mundo mesmo com certo orgulho que **Sousa Costa** percebeu sem compreender. Olhou pra *ela* admirado e, jurando não falar nada à mulher, prometeu.

**Elza** viu *ele* abrir a porta da pensão. Pâam... Entrou de novo no quartinho ainda agitado pela presença do estranho. **Lhe** deu, um olhar de confiança. Tudo foi sossegando pouco a pouco. (ANDRADE, M., 2008, p.19).

[The bedroom door opened and *they* went out in the hallway. Putting the gloves on, **Sousa Costa** said:

— It is cold.

**She**, very correct and simple:

— This end of winter is dangerous in São Paulo.  
 Recalling something else, she held the goodbye hand that he held out to her.

— And, sir ... your wife? Has she been informed?

— No! You understand... She is the mother. Our Brazilian education... Besides, having three girls at home! ...

— I ask you to let your wife know, sir. I can't understand so many mysteries. If it's for the good of the young man.

— But...

— Sorry for insisting. We must warn her. I would not like to be taken by an adventurous woman, I am serious. [...]

She spoke with the most natural voice in this world and even with some pride that **Sousa Costa** realized without understanding. He looked at **her** with admiration, and swearing not to say anything to his wife, he promised.

**Elza** saw **him** opening the door of the pension. Paam... He entered the little room again, still agitated by the presence of the strange. (ANDRADE, M., 2008, p.19, translated by the authors)].

The first referential phrase of the novel (before the characters enter) is ‘a porta do quarto se abriu’, which makes a locative identification, composing the place where the scene occurs with no details. Not only the nucleus of this phrase (porta) but also the prepositional phrase which specifies this nucleus (do quarto) are determined by the definite article, which builds sufficient identification (due to mutual remission) of space. There is not a second specification locating this room at some specific point in a space already located in relation to a phrase toponimically defined. It is an identification that occurs at the suggestion of internal relations of the text itself, taken into account its genre (novel) and its textual type (narrative): it is simply of that door of that room that the reader identifies as the scene (the first scene) in which the novel develops.

A significant statement to be made in this examination is that this is not the canonical introduction of referent(s) (especially regarding the scenario construction) in a narrative, as it is understood in general. In the case of a noun phrase determined by the definite article, reference almost automatically suggested to narratives, is the one which enters to perform the remission (anaphora) to referents brought into existence in the text (for example, by nominal phrases with indefinite article). This process is almost automatic in common narratives – spontaneous conversation –, reflecting the most basic properties that govern the flow of information (not marked): it's about an undefined configuration (for example, a door, i.e., a sample of the class ‘door’) that will coin the particular, and therefore identificatory reference by remission (for example, the door = this/that particular door, or: *it*). This is the most common progress of construction of the objects of discourse (including characters) in narratives (from the most spontaneous, which are those of spoken language), because it can be understood as natural – and very

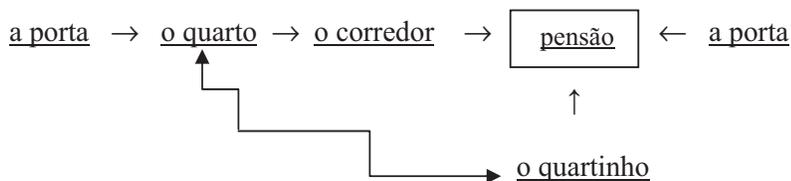
efficient, in a co-enunciative form – the process by which a content base is already provided and that favors interpretations before offering a phrase that brings a pure and simple phoric signaling, including the pronominal phrase. And this assertion that it is a ‘natural’ process is essential, as seen in this indication (among many others of the same content), by Halliday (2004, p.89):

The way this structure is realized is essentially ‘natural (non-arbitrary), in two respects: (i) the New is marked by prominence; (ii) the Given typically precedes the New. We will look at these two features in turn.

This does not mean that the introduction form found in this text here examined has any inconvenience or impropriety in its opposition to the canonical form: on the contrary, due to the fact that this form of expression represents a ‘marked’ form (GIVÓN, 1995; LACY, 2006) of discursive scene constitution (FILLMORE, 1968, 1977; MAINGUENEAU; POSSENTI; SILVA, 2012), there are open special effects that will have weight on the – fictional – construction of the plot being developed.

This first predication (‘a porta do quarto se abriu’), therefore, creates a defined spatial organization, and the predication that follows (‘e eles saíram no corredor’) also brings a new locative textual referent (o corredor), identifiable by contiguity to the space already established. A dynamic spatial organization is set, in which the characters referred to by the personal pronoun *eles*, naturally endophoric, because it is a third person case, move from one space to another. At this point, the progress of the narrative is supported, because predications are used in prototypical verbal tenses on the first narrative level, the *foreground* opposed to *background* (HOPPER, 1979), the ‘narrated world,’ opposed to the ‘commented world’ (WEINRICH, 1968), the ‘speech’ opposed to the ‘history’ (BENVENISTE, 1970).

In the last paragraph, the act of opening the door is taken (‘Elza viu ele abrir a porta da pensão’) by viewer of the act (a referent fully identified: **Elza**), and, again, a reference indicating space is introduced in the predicative formation: a pensão. The space of the narrative is further specified, with location points brought in a configuration that goes from the specific to the general (in centripetal movement), as shown by this referential organization scheme already configured in Souza (2013):



When the room is co-referenced (in new formulation: o quartinho [the small room]), the reader, besides identifying the referent anaphorically, can configure the idea that the

room of the pension is not spacious. Therefore, the direct descriptions always prescind from further characterizations and present a great difference of the general which is found in the texts initially analyzed in this article, belonging to the Realism period.

### **The final interpretation of the proposal**

Finally, interpreting this analysis exercise, as also seen in Souza (2013), it can be said that to identify the elements that compose the referential network in the text does not mean only to capture a logical organization for the construction of meaning, but also to note the use of grammar in the creation of the referential network, and especially to document the flexibility of grammar rules, generally imposed as unchangeable.

Also as seen in Souza (2013), the analysis of the fulfillment of referential slots in the examined sequences destroy some naive notions, for example, that the introduction of referents has a model in the grammar of a language, or that the description and/or the identification of a character has a determined place to appear in the text, or even to that choice in that sense does not bring any special configuration to the narrative. Moreover, the analysis ensures the notion that the possible differences existing in the use of the referential processing work for the co-enunciative plan of the producer's speech, inserted in his production context.

Following this line, it is interesting to appreciate the differences in the sequence of production contexts (for example, represented by what is usually considered as literary movements). These differences certainly present conceptions of several discursive production, given the different conditionings of co-enunciative engaging in each time, in each environment, in each moment and in each period of aesthetic standardizations. Certainly, the motivations of a particular socio-cultural and aesthetic experience govern the convenience of establishing high specified and identified characters, while the ones with other degrees are solved with strong presence marks of the character before he receives an unequivocal identification or descriptive characterization that goes further. Moreover, the characterization will not necessarily occur only by the referential process if this option serves the discursive purpose of the text producer.

From the perspective of the reference process view, this fact was a very important finding, revealing, in a documented form (although in only one sample, however, valid, because randomly composed), regarding the inaugural establishment of the referential network in novels, a change of fulfilling choices linked to the historical plan of production. The analysis allowed to observe, especially, a historic renovation of referential strategies for the introduction of the central characters in novels, seen as a result of different socio-cultural contexts, with their variety of aesthetic standards.

After all, the perspective of a grammar that organizes the options in some sets within which the speaker makes simultaneous selections (HALLIDAY, 2004) only confirms the most basic functionalist principles: 'competition of motivations' in the use of language, and 'organizational freedom of the speakers' to make the choices

that lead, besides the production of meaning, to the acquisition of effects (NEVES, 2006), because the excellence of the language comes from them, be it by the efficient functionality or by the aesthetic suggestion.

NEVES, M.; SOUSA, L. A montagem da rede referencial no texto e suas ligações com o contexto de produção. *Alfa*, São Paulo, v.60, n.3, p.563-585, 2016.

- *RESUMO: A partir de uma orientação funcionalista de análise, este artigo discute aspectos da montagem da cadeia referencial do texto, em sequências narrativas de uma amostra de obras brasileiras do gênero romance, em três épocas subsequentes. O objetivo é verificar a relação que existe entre o modo de preenchimento das casas referenciais (especialmente quanto às personagens centrais da trama) e os diversos processos intervenientes no modo de criação e manutenção da rede referencial textual, nas diferentes situações. Assenta-se como noção básica que os elementos (pro)nominais fóricos (sintagma nominal ou pronome) cumprem diferentemente as duas funções essenciais na referenciação (a de identificação e a de descrição dos referentes), e que o jogo das posições na introdução e na manutenção desses elementos representa diferente escolha na configuração da peça. Confirmando os mais básicos princípios funcionalistas, a análise efetuada destrói a noção de que existe uma fórmula pronta na gramática da língua para a organização referencial do texto, e garante a noção de que as diferenças verificadas estão a serviço do plano coenunciativo do produtor do discurso, inserido no seu contexto de produção e no seu contexto de cultura (HALLIDAY, 2004).*
- *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Princípios funcionalistas. Referenciação textual. Contexto de produção. Sequências narrativas em romance.*

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