Homenagem
ACQUISITION AND CHANGE OF DISCOURSE MARKERS IN FIRST AND SECOND LANGUAGE

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RESUMO: O texto trata de pesquisa sobre aquisição de marcadores conversacionais no português adquirido como L2 pelos índios do Alto Xingu. Procedendo a uma comparação entre os resultados do processo aquisitivo dessas partículas entre falantes aprendizes do português e falantes nativos, evidencia-se que alguns marcadores emergem na mesma ordem e outros, em ordens diversas, em função de diferenças no processo maturacional linguístico-cognitivo e da competência comunicativa dos falantes.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: marcadores; aquisição; L1 e L2.

Introduction

We all know that pidgins have gaps of various morphemes and grammatical structures. We could regard them as lacking some language functions. However, is that also true when we are dealing with discourse functions? Discourse markers are mainly constituted of particles. Are they used in the pidgins? If so, in what order are they acquired? Those were the questions I first tried to answer based on Xingu Portuguese.

I then passed to a description of the use of markers among children, with the following questions: What are the phases of their acquisition? Which discourse-interactional functions are developed first?

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The next step was the comparison between first and second language, and the questions were: Are there parallels in both processes of acquisition? Are the phases of acquisition parallel to the steps already described for language change? Which theoretical approaches can explain the similarities that were found?

My work was based on the language of contact spoken in an Indian reservation in the Amazon region in Brazil that has pidginized features and whose history I will briefly sketch. I will then describe the use of discourse markers in that language variety, compare them with what happens with children from Rio de Janeiro, and explain the similarities based on the proposals of the theories of grammaticalization.

2. History of the pidginized variety of Brazilian Portuguese

The language of contact here referred as Xingu Portuguese is spoken in the main Indian reservation in Brazil – the Parque Nacional do Xingu. The reservation was created in 1961, when the first roads were about to be constructed in the Brazilian Amazon region, and some communities had to be relocated from their traditional lands. It is an area of 26,000 square kilometers along the Upper Xingu river (Xingu is a tributary of the Amazon river), in the state of Mato Grosso, on the southern fringes of the Amazon region. Indigenous people who speak nine languages, from four different families, had already been living in the area for centuries, and had been protected from outside contacts by natural geographical conditions. Kamayura and Aweti, from the Tupi family, the Waurá, Mehinako, and Yawalapiti from the Arawak family; Kalapalo, Kuikuro, and Matipu from the Carib family; and Trumai, an isolated family. With the road constructions, three other groups were relocated into the reservation after the sixties: the
Xingu Portuguese is an example of how an entire community has been going through a recent and rapid process of language contact with restructuring. There were people from nine languages learning a simplified version of Portuguese, there was tertiary hybridization, for they used Portuguese for intertribal communication and also to speak with each other. As a result, Xingu Portuguese presents various traits of pidginization, such as lack of articles and prepositions, lack of person, number and gender agreement, different syntax of tense and aspect, lack of copula, peculiar use of repetitions, to mention some of the most salient ones. The contact of the Indians with the Portuguese spoken in the Brazilian cities also occurred: Some Indians visited Rio or São Paulo, for medical treatment and one of our speakers has even served as informant in a linguistic course at the University of Brasilia. We cannot talk of Xingu Portuguese as creole, though, because it is not a native language for anyone. They still learn their first language in the villages, and only after 6 years of age start learning Portuguese as a second language. From then on, depending on their contact with the national society, what happens is a rapid process of depidginization and acquisition of full Portuguese.

At the time of the recordings, between 1976 and 1980, there were 976 individuals in the the Upper Xingu. Members of each village ranked the fluency as is described in Table 1 (Baruzzin & Magid, 1970). Almost half of the population (48.12%) was either monolingual in their ancestral languages (level 1), or could only understand, but could not speak Portuguese (level 2). At the next lowest levels of proficiency (levels 3 and 4), they spoke isolated words or very short reduced structures, for the purpose of trading. Those were not included in the sample. At level 5, speakers have grammatical structures of emerging morphosyntax complexi-
ty: practically no use of person agreement, few prepositions, more frequent transfer of substrate word order. At level 6, speakers exhibit a higher use of morphosyntactic complexity (higher use of person agreement, of prepositions, lower word order transfer from the substrate). From level 6 to level 7 there is a continuum: there is a higher use of the mentioned structures, and also more fluency in discourse. Their narratives and argumentations are more complex in the interviews. Those are the speakers who have had contact with the language of large Brazilian cities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fluency</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14 (1.64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42 (4.94%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>87 (10.24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>114 (13.42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>184 (21.64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>112 (13.18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>297 (34.94%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subtotal | 850
Not classified | 56   | 70   | 126
Total | 976

**Levels of fluency**

**Level 4**

Meu pai. Kamayurá.

(Sobre a mãe dele):...nome dele é Tatá. Minha mãe nome dele Tatá.

(Sobre a filha dele): Então nós botamo nome dele Tatá, esse minha filha.

(Falando sobre um general que o levou a São Paulo): Eu num

**Level 5**


**Level 6**

(Sobre sua dificuldade em aprender Português):

K: Ah, difice sim.

E: É?


**Level 7**

E: E por que que você acha bom aprender a ler e escrever?

T: Por quê? Porque daqui uns...amanhã ou depois, isso aqui num pode, num vai podê acabar, ou não. Os civilizado tá chegando perto, né ? Os fazendeiro e pra nós sê escravo dos fazendeiro, os menino tem que aprender lê, escrevê pra...pra não passá pra traz os fazendeiro não rouba eles. Então por isso a gente pediu a escola pros menino aprendê. (K5)

We have the good fortune of having access to the earlier stages in the process, thanks to the work of Charlotte Emmerich.
She taped a large sample of people from 1976 to 1980, financed by CNPq (the National Council of Research in Brazil), and by CEPG (the Center for Graduate Research of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro), and she has recently donated it to a sociolinguistics research group of the Department of Linguistics at UFRJ, where various structures are being studied.

I now proceed to the subject of my analysis – the use of discourse markers.

3. Use of discourse markers in Xingu Portuguese

3.1 General Issues

While functional words such as prepositions and conjunctions are well known to be scarce in pidgins, the use of discourse markers needs to be checked. Discourse markers as such are not a subject matter in pidgin and creole studies (usually oriented towards phonology, morphology and syntax, rather than towards discourse organization).

I define as discourse markers the particles, lexical items, or expressions, usually conjunctions, adverbs of verbal expressions that I first treated as having a homonym in grammar, but which, in discourse, have been phonologically shortened and been emptied of their grammatical function. In previous studies on the Rio de Janeiro variety of Portuguese, we suggested four main functions for those markers: checking the interaction, organizing the parts of discourse (those which could be called the conjunctions of discourse), reformulating (a function related to discourse processing), and maintaining harmony between the interlocutors (functions of mitigation, related to politeness). For further definitions of discourse markers, see Schiffrin, 1986; Vincent, 1983;

I chose to examine the most common discourse markers in Xingu Portuguese, that ended up by representing those functions:

\textit{Né} (‘isn’t ist?’), as well as \textit{Sabe?} (‘you know’), \textit{Viu?} (‘you see’), and \textit{Entendeu?} (‘understand?’), which are used to check the attention of the interlocutor.

\textit{Aí} (‘then’), which is originally a deictic (‘there’), and is used as a sequencing conjunction.

\textit{Ah, Ih e Oh}, interjections- mainly used in turn takings, to show agreement, or a sudden recall.

\textit{Assim} (‘like’), a reformulator, used to specify an X’s ‘complement’, X being a Noun, an Adjective, an Adverb, or a Verb). In ‘caraiba’ Portuguese, it is less frequent in final position, although in Xingu, that seems to be the preferred position.

\textit{Agora} (‘now’), indicates adversatives in large chunks of discourse. In Xingu Portuguese, among the less fluent, it has a peculiar use.

\textit{Quer dizer} (I mean), that reformulates clauses or sentences, and

\textit{Bom} (‘well’) and \textit{Olha} (‘look’), frequently used as turn takers, with mitigating function.

Examples:

(1) Eu vinha pra ficá um ano, eu fiquei um ano \textit{né}, \textit{aí} meu pai veio me buscá, eu voltei pra aldeia, fiquei uns seis meses lá. \textit{Aí} queria vim pra cá de novo, \textit{aí} vim. \textit{Aí} fiquei até agora.
‘Then came here to stay for one year, I stayed for one year, you see? Then my father came to fetch me, I went back to the village, stayed more or less six months there. Then I wanted to come back here again, then I came, then I stayed (here) until now.’

(2) I: Sei. Mas é muito difícil quando começa assim aprender?
I: I know. But is it very difficult when one starts like learning?’
K: Ah, difice sim.
‘Ah, difficult, yes.’
I: É?
‘Really?’
K: Ah, a gente num sabia logo né. Agora, por exemplo, o Olando falava assim.

nê: ‘Vai busca esse... ele falava então,” ropa decama, travessero”.
‘Ah, we didn’t know at once, you see? Now, for example, Orlando said like that, you see: “Go bring that...” he then said: “linen, pillow”.

(3) Fazia fut.., feze futebol lá, agora, idade do meu pai.
‘They made (played) foot- they played football there, now, age of my father...’

(4) Kamayurá tem muito agora muito tempo Olando chegô lá só Kamayurá.
‘Kamayurá there are many now long time Olando arrived there only Kamayurá there’

(5) Você sabe tapooca né. Tocano ele (.) cantano assim, home vai assim cantano. Depois vai em cima da costa, pegano assim, assim, né.

(6) Lá não tem ninguém, só FAB mesmo. Lá não tem assim civil nenhum lá.
‘There is no one there, only FAB in fact. There is like no civilian there.’

(7) Mora ali, cinco dia foi lá visitá Olando. ‘tão tá visitanto assim só ele assim.”
'(-) live there, five days (-) went there to visit Orlando. (-) [Are] is visiting like only him like.'

(I live over there, but I came here to visit Orlando. I'm only like visiting Orlando)

[8] Essa é uma história assim... qué dizê, pessoal já morava lá, pra lá da estrada né.

Estrada quando cortô, pessoal, Txucarramãe, morava lá pra baixo.

'This is a story like... I mean, people already lived there, beyond the road. you see. When road crossed [the Park], people (the) Txukarramae used to live down there.'


'I mean, the park went as far as the waterfall, you see. And, and at that time Orlando wanted to move everybody to... closer to Dia-warum, you see.'

[10] I: A mulhé também?

'The woman also?'

A: Bom, a mulhé tamém pode ficá junto, mas a mulhé pode sai. Como ela quisê.

'Well, (the) woman may also stay, but (the) woman may leave. As she wishes'.

[11] I: E a estrada?

'What about the road?'

A: Olha, esse é muito problema memo. Essa aí que é muito importante pra nozi. Estrada que tá passando no Txukarramãe, que dizê, já passô, né? isso aí atrapalhô bastante memo. Isso atrapalho muito memo.

'Look, this is much of a problem. That's what is very important for us. (-) Street is passing through the Txukarramae (village), I mean, it has already passed, you see? It disturbed us a lot. That really disturbed us a lot.'
3.2 Methodology

I examined interviews with 17 speakers from the Emmerich sample, who were examined as to the types of discourse markers, discourse genre, and as to the social parameters:

**Language:** Kamayurá, Aweti (Tupi), Yawalapiti (Arawak), Trumai (isolated), and Txukarramae (Jê) (classified as to place of residency and seniority).

**Level of fluency:** Levels 4, 5, 6 and 7, according to previous definition.

**Place of residency:** Their traditional villages (Kamayurá, Yawalapiti) or the government outpost at the reservation.

**Age:** Young (those who had recently left seclusion/married without children), or Seniors grandparents, village chiefs, chiefs of the house).

**Frequency of contact with Portuguese:** High (those who had spent from 3 to 6 months in large cities, mainly Brasília, Rio or São Paulo. Low (those who never left the villages or the outpost).

My hypothesis was that the speakers would not use discourse markers, because I already knew, from other works, that they did not use conjunctions, prepositions, verbal morphemes of time and person agreement, number agreement, among other things.
Table 2 – Sample of the speakers of Xingu Portuguese

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inf.</th>
<th>Local/ Lg.</th>
<th>Freq. Contact</th>
<th>Level of fluency</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1Ar</td>
<td>Posto Trumai</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3Meg</td>
<td>Outpost Txukarr.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4Kok</td>
<td>Outpost Aweti</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2Ary</td>
<td>Outpost Trumai</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K1Suk</td>
<td>Outpost Kamay.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K3Kot</td>
<td>Village Kamay.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K5Tat</td>
<td>Village Kamay.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y1Kan</td>
<td>Village Yawal.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y2Sap</td>
<td>Vilalge Yawal.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y3Ari</td>
<td>Village Yawal.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y4Pir</td>
<td>Vilalge Yawal.</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y5Kuy</td>
<td>Vilalge Yawal.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1Kat</td>
<td>Vilalge Kamay.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>young</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2Taw</td>
<td>Vilalge Kamay.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3Map</td>
<td>Vilalge Yawal.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5Awa</td>
<td>Village Kamay.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>senior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6Tar</td>
<td>Village Kamay.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>senior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the analysis of how the above factors were correlated to the use of discourse markers, I used the VARBRUL Program (Sankoff, 1988; Pintzuk, 1988). I first used frequencies, and then separated five markers for the analysis of their relative weight.

### 3.3 Results of Xingu Portuguese use of discourse markers

Let us begin by the results of frequency of contact (Table 3): (neuter value=.25):
You may notice that the use of the marker *Né* showed little difference in both groups. Both *Ah* (and its variants *Ih, Oh*), and *Aí* showed higher indices among the speakers with less contact.

The other items were more used by the speakers with high contact with the outsiders.

On Table 4, you may see the results for levels of fluency of the speaker (neuter. 25):

Level 5 was against our expectation that there would be also a gradual increasing of the same items of Table 3, according
to the increase of fluency of the speaker. The indices for levels 6 and 7 were similar and those two were merged on the Table.

However, if we consider a gradation from level 4 to level 7 (passing over level 5), the indices behave according to our expectation, with the exception of the marker Aí, which decreases in level 6/7. Once more, we see that Agora ('now'), the mitigators Bom ('well') and Olha ('look') and the sentence reformulator Quer dizer ('I mean') are only used by the most fluent group.

Let us not turn to the results for age, as in Table 5 (neuter.

Table 5 – Markers by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marker</th>
<th>Young rel. w.</th>
<th>Senior rel. w.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Né</td>
<td>1205/2020 = 60%</td>
<td>565/1585 = 36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aí</td>
<td>550/2020 = 27%</td>
<td>812/1585 = 51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ah</td>
<td>113/2020 = 6%</td>
<td>146/1585 = 9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assim</td>
<td>152/2020 = 8%</td>
<td>62/1585 = 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agora</td>
<td>38/2198 = 2%</td>
<td>9/1596 = 1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bom/Olha</td>
<td>65/2198 = 3%</td>
<td>1/1596 = 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quer dizer</td>
<td>75/2198 = 3%</td>
<td>1/1596 = 0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both groups employ Né – the marker of interaction in approximately similar rates. Aí (the sequencing marker) was more frequent among the older ones. Assim ('like') was more frequent among the young speakers. The different result here was that interjections were more frequent among the young group. At the bottom of the table you may see again that Agora ('now'), Bom/Olha ('well, look'), and Quer dizer ('I mean').

Finally, the more difficult items seem to be bom, olha, and quer dizer, which are rarely used by the less fluent. The different use of native speakers and second language learners in respect
to markers is responsible for an impression that something is lacking, even when the lexical items are correct. Lack of mitigators may result in an impression of rudeness.

Notice that for Xingu Portuguese, the senior speakers should be seen as the ones with less proficiency, for they are the more conservative ones, with less contact with outsiders. The young speakers, on the other hand, are the ones who suffer the influence of the surrounding dominant society.

Substrate language and place of residency were examined, but were not selected by the program.

Interesting information can be drawn from the comparison of Indians and non Indians (a sample of 9 speakers of Rio de Janeiro was used for comparison). The results showed that, although the Non Indians have a larger inventory of discourse markers at their disposal, some of the items, such as *Né* 'you see' and *Assim* are even more frequent among the Indians than among the speakers of Rio de Janeiro (Table 6) (neuter. 20):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>marker</th>
<th>Indians</th>
<th>rel.w.</th>
<th>Adult Non-Indians</th>
<th>rel.w.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Né</td>
<td>1289/2377=54%</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>1058/1956=54%</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aí</td>
<td>783/2377=33%</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>527/1956=27%</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ah</td>
<td>96/2377=4%</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>142/1956=7%</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assim</td>
<td>167/2377=5%</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>96/1956=5%</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agora</td>
<td>42/2377=2%</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>133/1956=7%</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bom,Olha</td>
<td>66/2439=3%</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>119/2054=6%</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quer dizer</td>
<td>76/2439=3%</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>87/2054=4%</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
That reinforces the interpretation that the discourse functions are present in their language from quite early, as soon as they leave the phase of very short sentences and start using longer discourse, with narratives, descriptions, and argumentations.

3.4 Interpretation of results for Xingu portuguese

I can therefore attest that discourse-interative functions are indeed present in this pidginized variety since very early stages, as soon as the speakers develop from the very first phases of isolated words and start using longer discourse.

We take the direction from less fluent to more fluent, from low contact to high contact, from old to young, from village to the outpost to reflect the process of acquisition of a second language. It would be reasonable to expect that the more they became proficient, the more they would employ each of the items. After all, they all have some discoursive function, and the speakers are in the process of acquiring discourse proficiency as they learn Portuguese.

However, it was interesting to verify that there was a systematic decrease in the use of Aí, and sometimes of the interjections, as speakers become more fluent. It seems that each function is gradually represented by more sophisticated strategies: Interjections have expressive function, as well as interactive-polite function, to indicate agreement in turn taking. They are the first to be acquired, because they tend to be similar among languages, and as such, are more easily disposable to speakers.

The other function that is present since the first stages is the indication of sequencing, one of the easiest steps in the organization of discourse. The marker Aí is the most frequent one since those early stages, and it decreases as the speakers be-
come more proficient, when he or she will use other cohesive strategies.

Everybody uses the interactional marker *Né*, whose function is to make sure that the interlocutor is following what is being said. That explains its very frequent use (see the column of frequencies).

The other markers, acquired later, represent the sophistication of usage of an ample inventory of items for the similar functions: *Agora* and *Quer dizer* articulate higher unities, *Bom/Olha* are mitigators of a more complex type than the interjections. Notice that the items *Assim* and *Agora* that occur in level 4 speakers are qualitatively different than the same items used by more fluent speakers.

Notice also the high frequency of the reformulator/specifier *Assim* (surprising for me, at first). That use is understandable, though, if we think that for less fluent speakers it may be necessary to be constantly modifying and reformulating what is being said. Previous studies of *Assim* had shown that this item is also used to process more complex information (Silva & Assafin, 1994).

The speakers first specialize in the use of one item for a certain function, and only later they gradually increase their inventory of forms for similar function:

*Assim* is acquired before *Quer dizer* because the first specifies shorter phrases, while the latter refers to larger portions of the text. In this process of acquisition, *Assim* goes from an adverbial or deictic function, much more concrete, to a more abstract function of reformulator/specifier.

Interjections would be the first polite items to be acquired, later diversified with the usage of Bom/Olha.

Notice that *Aí* and *Agora* are originally locative and temporal deictics, which undergo a metaphorical extension of their functions.
Let us now turn to Table 5, with the correlation for age groups. Comparisons in apparent time are so dear to the variationists. In this case, the difference between senior speakers and young speakers do not indicate language change, but, instead, it shows the process of depidginization in the direction of standard Portuguese.

The senior speakers, in spite of having being exposed to Portuguese for a long time, fossilized their language on the stage where they learned it, from a simplified model. The younger speakers are in the process of depidginization, gradually increase their use of the more complex features, in a perfect continuum that correlates with their frequency of contact with Portuguese outside the reservation.

4. Use of discourse markers by children

The next step was to examine the acquisition of discourse markers in L1, to compare it with the phenomena we have seen for L2.

This time, the questions were: What are their stages of development and what functions are acquired earlier?

Examples of discourse markers in non Indian Brazilian children are illustrated below:

(11) Por que você mexeu naquele negócio ali, né?

(12) Ah! Daí veste a roupa de bruxa...

(13) E: Por quê? Ah, porque ele fica chorando.

(14) O Pedrinho ficou fazendo assim personagem de estórias. E a Narizinho também.

(15) Ficamos brincando assim, aí a gente falamos, no outro dia o Seu Mário foi,

a gente falamos que ia fazer uma pesquisa.
4.1 Methodology for the study of children

I examined interview with 12 children, from 4 to 10 years of age, whom I took as still being in a phase of acquisition of discourse in their native language. I also examined 8 children from the Macedo sample (from 4 to 6), and 4 from the “Censo” sample (from 5 to 10).

I also examined, as a complement to my analysis, data of the longitudinal development of 2 children in their very beginning phases of acquisition (one from 2y 3m to 2y 8m; other from 1y to 2y 6m).

4.2 Results of children

Table 8 below illustrates the results for children (neuter. 20):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>marker</th>
<th>4-6 y. old</th>
<th>rel.w.</th>
<th>8-10 y. old</th>
<th>rel.w.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aí</td>
<td>49/88=56%</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>575/823=70%</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Né</td>
<td>8/88=9%</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>114/823=14%</td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ah</td>
<td>27/88=31%</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>58/823=7%</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assim</td>
<td>3/88=3%</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>60/823=7%</td>
<td>.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agora</td>
<td>1/88=1%</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>16/823=2%</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bom/Olha</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7/830=1%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quer dizer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Previous studies of markers in Portuguese had shown that \textit{Aí} was more frequent among children than among adults. I had also attested that children use less turn takers than adults (Silva & Macedo, 1992; 1996; Macedo, 1994).

Accordingly, the present results show that young children (from 4 to 6) employ little discourse markers in general (the frequencies are low in Table 8). However, gradation remains the same as what we have seen for second language. The youngest group has a higher indices for \textit{Aí} than for the other items. All the other items seem to grow with age.

The interpretation of those results follow what has already been commented for second language: Interjections and the sequencing marker represent the less complex representatives for a less complex function that is, therefore, acquired earlier. The discourse markers later acquired, the adverbial use of \textit{Agora}, the mitigators \textit{Bom/Olha}, were not used at all among the 4-6 y.of age group. The other reformulator \textit{Quer dizer}, did not occur at all in any of the subjects of our sample, but we know it will be incorporated in the adolescent inventory of discourse markers.

We all know that the ideal for acquisition studies is to be based on longitudinal observations. I will now refer to my complementary sample to argue about how those items emerge.

I collected all the instances of \textit{Ah}, \textit{Ô}, \textit{Ó}, \textit{Aí}, \textit{Né}, \textit{Viu} in two toddlers.

Both used interjections \textit{Ah} e \textit{Ô}, the latter being used for calling (\textit{Ô mãe}, \textit{ô Bebei}). The item \textit{Ó} arises first with a deictic function of showing, accompanied by pointing gestures, and is by far the most used of our particles.

I observed cases of \textit{Viu} (‘y’see’) since 2 y 3 m., even before the child’s using of \textit{Né}, only after 2 y. 5 m.. By then, \textit{Né} surpasses \textit{Viu}, although it always occur in a fixed expression, to confirm the mother’s support \textit{Né, mãe}? (isn’t it mum’?).
The form *Aí* is only used as a deictic of place. (There were also two instances of *Sabia?*, which, however, seemed to be isolated cases)

It is important to bring those complementary data to discussion, to evidence, first, that the interactional function of asking for agreement arises very early. Second, to show that the items such as *Ó e Aí* emerge first to indicate place, and only later will fluctuate as adverbs and discourse markers.

### 4.3 Comparison between L1 and L2

By comparing L1 with L2, our question was: Are there parallels between the two processes? If so, what would explain those similarities? Would the steps of acquisition be parallel to the predicted steps for change?

As we have seen, the results pointed amazing similarities in both groups. The differences might be commented were the low number of discourse markers in children, and a lower use of interactive *Né* in children than in the Indians.

The existence of parallels between first and second language gained interest in the seventies, and the work of Dulay & Burt, 1978 was seminal in the area. At the time, this kind of result was seen as evidence of universals of acquisition. Today, it is known that Dulay & Burt exaggerated in their expectations of universal down to such details. Even though, one cannot deny that there are similarities in both processes (see Bailey, N., Madden & Krashen, 1978).

My expectation was that there would be more differences than similarities. After all, my sample had adult Indigenous speakers learning Portuguese, versus children. As we know, discourse markers have discoursive functions, which are acquired later by
children. I expected the adults to be more obviously prepared than children in various aspects, such as in the questions of politeness, which require the speaker's perception of the effect one might have upon the interlocutor, and, by such, trying not to embarrass him or her. All that requires social maturity (Brown & Levinson, 1978; 1987), a task that also requires reversibility.

Nevertheless, there were much more similarities than differences in the gradation of acquisition of discourse markers in both groups.

The similarities in the first phases in L1 and L2 could be explained, as has already been mentioned, by the continuum from easier (interjections, representation of sequencing relations by a spatial deictic Ai) to more difficult functions and ways of expressing them (use of more sophisticated forms for attenuation and reformulation).

The differences could be explained by the different phases of maturity of the two groups.

Both Indians and children use Assim (to reformulate/specify phrase parts) and the adversative connection Agora in a more fluent or mature stage. However, adult Indian speakers seem to be mature enough to restructure discourse. That would be a reason why they use more Assim than the young children.

Summarizing, my results are interesting because they verify empirically that there is a gradual increasing of the use of discourse strategies of cohesion and interaction, attached or explained by age, on the one side, and by proficiency in the language on the other.

At this point, I should return to the question of parallels between acquisition and change.

The recent approach of grammaticalization seems to be able to explain and generalize some of the facts that we have seen for discourse markers. This is what I will try to explain from now on.
5. Grammaticalization and the process of acquisition of discourse markers

5.1 Some basic notions of grammaticalization

The term “grammaticalization” has been used to explain how grammatical forms emerge, how they are used and how they may shape language. Grammaticalization was at first viewed as part of diachronic linguistics, but is a very relevant notion also to explain synchronic grammar, especially in the cases of fluctuating patterns of forms. Its concept is intimately tied to the concept of metaphor – metaphor would be one of the main means by which one form fluctuates from one function into another. Old means may be explored for new functions due to metaphorical expansion.

As part of the explanations based on metaphor, it is predicted that the forms change from more concrete to more abstract, from lexicon to grammar. Therefore, to go from an adverb to a reformulator would be to go from more concrete to more abstract, and maybe from lexicon to ‘grammar’ if we take its new function inside the sentence. Likewise, to change from paratactic or less integrated type of connection to a hypotactic or more integrated one would be explained by the same principle. The complete cycle would end up in phonologically reduced forms, that may reach zero (Heine, Claudi & Hünnemeyer, 1991; Hopper & Traugott, 1993; Bybee, Perkins e Pagliuca, 1994). Another prediction of the theory of grammaticalization is that, for a considerable period, the new and the old form will co-exist, for we are dealing with gradual processes, that has its roots in prototypes – the cognitive theory proposed by Rosch, 1973 and others. Intuitively, we feel that when the same item fluctuates in various functions, that would be a sign of this kind of process; it would be a candidate case for grammaticalization.
Many authors defend unidirectionality as a requirement for grammaticalization—only those phenomena which would go from discourse to grammar should be admitted under the proposed definition. Others, however, admit both directions, as long as the other parts of the definition apply (Traugott, 1995). In any case, I think that all the authors that refer either to degrammaticalization, or to discursivization, are facing the same kind of theoretical explanation, of cognitive-functional base, and this is the kind of process I insert my discourse markers in (Traugott, 1995; Vincent, Votre & Laforest, 1993).

5.2 Treatment of discourse markers as cases of grammaticalization

I return, now to what I had underlined in the beginning. The results we have observed on the similar steps of acquisition of discourse markers in L1 and L2 allow me to highlight two aspects connected to some view of grammaticalization. One in the sense of predicting that the forms change from pragmatics to grammar, from discourse to syntax. When we consider clause combining in larger chunks of the text, there are indications that the forms go from discours to grammar (those forms that end up by functioning as conjunctions, for instance).

1) In spite of the fact that pidgins lack a whole series of grammatical rules, such as person agreement, number agreement, gender agreement, lack of tense and aspect morphemes, lack of prepositions, different word order) the discourse/pragmatic functions were always present since the earliest phases of the least fluent speakers. In special, the interactional function with Né, looking for agreement or for feedback.

Pidgins are studied with the main interest of discovering how a language is born. The fact that the particles we have exam-
ined were present from the very beginning is an indication of the precedence of those discourse pragmatic functions, at least before many other syntactic functions appear.

2) As to the use of discourse markers by children, the parallels between L1 and L2 allowed us to say the same as above. Besides, the additional longitudinal data of children before 3 years of age showed the precocious use of request for feedback, before a whole series of grammatical rules.

Those two facts would be evidence of language acquisition (of L1 and L2) in favor of the functionalist approach of the how cycle might work.

Let us now argue why discourse markers can be treated as grammaticalizations also in the stricto sensu approach.

The discourse markers are, as we have seen, items or expressions that fluctuate. They fulfill practically all the requirements for grammaticalization to occur, except the question of unidirectionality. An item like Né, for instance, derived from “não é”, would be a case of “degrammaticalization” or “discursivization” for the change would be from grammar to discourse. Anyhow, the forms Né, Ó, Sabe?, Quer dizer, Bom, and Olha were already grammaticalized or discursivizes when they were acquired by our Indians or our children. The most crucial thing for our argument was to see the acquisition trajectory of the items Aí, Agora e Assim, which mirror what has been said, from the historical point of view, about how the forms grammaticalize. (cf., Vincent, Votre & Laforêt, 1993; Martelotta, 1994; Martelotta, Nascimento & Costa, 1996; Martelotta, Votre & Cezario, 1996).

Let us examine first the case of Assim and Agora:

The acquisition of the marker Assim as reformulator/specifier inside the sentence occurs gradually, in L1 as well as in L2, going from full lexicon to a more abstract use of reformulator. In the first phases, the what occurs is practically only the adverb “assim”, in the stage I’m calling as “lexical”.

282
The same happens with *Agora*, used first as a time deictic, and gradually as a marker of contrast, in a process of metaphorical extension as predicted by the mentioned authors.

As for the item *Aí*, the longitudinal data showed how evidently this form arises first as deixis. However, very rapidly, the child will be using it as a conjunction, much more often than as deixis. That extension itself evidences the predictions of grammaticalization, reinforced in this case by the different frequencies of the adverbial and the deictic use, as in the tables below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Aí place</th>
<th>Ai seq.</th>
<th>Xingu</th>
<th>Aí place</th>
<th>Ai seq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>young</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>senior</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>total</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>1319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
without any marking. The next step is they indicate cause and sequence relations with the deictic item Aí. As they grow in proficiency, they start acquiring new connectors and the cohesive relation becomes more and more hypotactic (or integrated) (cf. Paiva, 1996; 1997; Braga, 1997).

**Final remarks**

We saw that discourse markers may very well be treated in the perspective of acquisition- how those forms arise and by what processes they grammaticalize. It was possible to point out similarities between first and second language acquisition, as well as between language acquisition and language change, both processes explainable by the same metaphorical cognitive processes predicted by the interesting proposals of grammaticalization theory.

Notice that all my arguments were based on observations of social factors: age, type of contact, child maturation - and I was able to get to interesting linguistic conclusions, such as how the acquisition processes of L1 and L2 are similar and mirror change processes.

The results on L2 may also be seen as processes of depidginization and may offer a contribution to the studies on pidgins and creoles.

By examining discourse markers, I was able to corroborate recent results on the steps of acquisition of clause combining strategies, made by my colleagues in our Research Project in Rio de Janeiro.
ABSTRACT: This study analyzes the acquisition of discourse markers in the Portuguese spoken as L2 by the Indians from Alto Xingu. The comparison between the acquisition process of these particles in that language variety and the language of children who learn Portuguese as L1 shows a difference in the acquisition pace of some markers due to differences in the linguistic-cognitive maturational process and communicative competence.

KEYWORDS: markers; acquisition; L1 and L1.

References


MACEDO, Alzira Verthein Tavares de. *Acquisition and change of discourse markers...*


