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Modelling evaluative meaning and stance in Functional Discourse Grammar: An interface-based account

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The study at hand investigates how evaluative meaning, which can be defined as the linguistic expression of attitudes, values, and judgments, can be systematically modeled within Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG). While FDG provides a discourse oriented, multi-level framework linking pragmatic, semantic, and morphosyntactic structure (Hengeveld & Mackenzie, 2008), it has not fully accounted for the representation of speaker stance across these levels. The study argues that evaluative meaning originates at the discourse pragmatic level and constrains subsequent semantic and morphosyntactic encoding. Drawing on examples primarily from Arabic argumentative discourse, the analysis demonstrates how evaluative elements, especially adjectives expressing positive and negative judgment, operate across levels and often exhibit a mismatch between their limited formal realization and their wide pragmatic scope. These findings support the need for explicit inter level mappings and a more refined treatment of evaluative operators at the Interpersonal Level. The paper concludes that incorporating evaluative meaning more systematically enhances FDG's capacity to explain the interaction between discourse, grammar, and social meaning, reinforcing its status as a theory of grammar grounded in discourse.

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Comparative: adjective types, dependency relations and the synthetic problem

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The most recent and extensive proposal for adjectival comparatives in FDG is Giomi (2022):

- (1) a. John is more intelligent than his brother.
 b. $(f_i^c: [(f_j: \text{intelligent } (f_j)): (q_i: (f_k^c: [(f_l: \text{more } (f_l)) (q_j: (f_m^c: [(f_n: (q_{ij}) (f_j)) (1x_i: \text{his brother}-(x_i))_U] (f_m^c)) (q_j))_{\text{Standard}}] (f_k^c)) (q_i)) (f_j)) (1x_i))_U] (f_i^c))$

While (1) solves many inconsistencies of previous proposals, some points of debate still remain. This paper argues that (i) the standard of the adjective governs the type of dependency relation between adjective and comparative; (ii) relative adjectives thus form predicate-argument relations with their comparative; (iii) an analysis of the synthetic comparative as lexical operator is problematic; and (iv) an analysis as operator is more adequate.

A modifier analysis of the comparative is problematic in the case of relative adjectives, as in (2), as modifiers should be omissible without leading to unlicensed entailments.

- (2) John is more intelligent than Tom. -> #John is intelligent.

Relative adjectives require a contextually provided standard of comparison (Kennedy & McNally 2005) thus forming predicate-argument relations with their comparative, as in (3). Accordingly, they do not allow for a deletion of it, as otherwise their standard changes.

- (3) a. more intelligent than B
 b. $(s_i: [(^{rtv}f_j: \text{intelligent } (f_j)) (q_i: (s_k: [(f_l: \text{more } (f_l)) (q_j: (s_m: [(s_n: [(^{rtv}f_j) (q_j))_{\text{Degree}}] (s_n)) (x_i: B (x_i))_U] (s_m)) (q_j))_{\text{Standard}}] (s_k)) (q_i))_{\text{Degree}}] (s_i))$

For the synthetic comparative affix *-er*, Giomi proposes an analysis as lexical operator, as in (4b) arguing that it shows both lexical (+modifiability) and grammatical properties (-focalizability, -word formation). This, however, runs counter the standard interpretation of lexical operators (+focalizability, -modifiability (Hengeveld 2017)), and the modifiability claim is debatable. A more adequate representation of the synthetic comparative is (4c) which (i) makes use of Giomi's proposed frame but (ii) considers the adjective type (relative) and (iii) represents the comparative suffix as an operator *comp*.

- (4) a. taller than B
 b. $(v_1: [...]) (v_1): (q_1: (f_1^c: [(-er q_1) (q_2)_{\text{Standard}}] (f_1^c)) (q_1)) (v_1))_{\{\phi\}}$
 c. $(q_i: (s_k: [(comp^{rtv}f_j: \text{tall } (f_j)) (q_j: (s_m: [s_n: [(^{rtv}f_j) (q_j))_{\text{Degree}}] (s_n)) (x_i: B (x_i))_U] (s_m)) (q_j))_{\text{Standard}}] (s_k)) (q_i))$

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Toward a description of adverbs in Caboverdean: An FDG account

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This paper offers an exploratory, corpus-based description and classification of adverbs in Caboverdean, a Portuguese-related creole, within the framework of Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG; see Hengeveld & Mackenzie 2008). While previous research on Caboverdean grammar has focused primarily on verbal and nominal categories, adverbs have received limited attention. Existing accounts provide only brief or unsystematic treatments (see, for instance, Baptista 2002; Swolkien 2015; Pratas 2021), leaving a gap that this study seeks to address.

The analysis draws mainly on the LUDViC corpus, a POS-tagged collection of semi-informal interviews representing different Caboverdean varieties (Pratas 2020). Building on recent studies on adverbial categories within FDG (e.g. Keizer 2018, 2020; Hengeveld 2023), the study develops a functional taxonomy of adverbs based on two parameters: scope (i.e. the grammatical layer they modify) and domain (i.e. the semantic or pragmatic function expressed). This yields an initial classification that maps corpus-attested adverbs onto FDG categories and illustrates them with representative examples.

The second part focuses on adverbs formed with the suffix *-ment(i)*, a productive derivational process adapted from Portuguese. Based on 284 corpus tokens, the analysis examines their frequency, syntactic position, co-occurrence with other modifiers, and discourse-pragmatic functions. The results indicate that, although *-ment(i)* adverbs may occur at virtually all layers of the Representational and Interpersonal Levels, they mainly apply to the layers of the Communicated Content, the Illocution, and the Discourse Act, and most often express the functional domains of Intensification and Speaker Evaluation.

Overall, the paper provides an account of the main categories constituting the adverb class in Caboverdean and evaluates the suitability of Functional Discourse Grammar for their functional classification. By proposing a corpus-based, functionally grounded taxonomy, it contributes both to the descriptive study of adverbs in Caboverdean and to empirical research within FDG.

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Large Language Models are linguistic encoders

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Over the past few years, Large Language Models (LLMs) have achieved remarkable success in generating coherent text and interacting effectively with users. Despite their social impact, their relevance for linguistic theory remains debated. This paper evaluates the compatibility of LLMs with established linguistic theories and examines whether they support any particular theoretical framework, with special reference to Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG; Hengeveld & Mackenzie 2008).

Two opposing views dominate the discussion on the theoretical value of LLMs. On the one hand, LLMs are said to merely simulate language use without replicating the cognitive processes underlying human language (Cuskley, Woods & Flaherty 2024). On the other hand, some researchers argue that their performance demonstrates that language can be acquired through statistical learning alone with no need to postulate biological or innate constraints (Piantadosi 2024). The latter possibility seems to naturally link LLMs to usage-based approaches to the study of language. However, this interpretation is problematic, since such approaches assume socio-pragmatic and cognitive capacities that LLMs lack (Müller 2025). In particular, LLMs show limited functional competence (Mahowald et al. 2024): they do not have communicative intentions, a theory of mind, or the ability to interpret context beyond linguistic input. It has been argued that meaning cannot be derived from form alone (Bender and Koller 2020), which means that even if LLM outputs appear appropriate, they are not grounded in genuine understanding.

From an FDG perspective, these limitations can be characterized more precisely. LLMs lack a Conceptual Component and the Formulation levels responsible for generating communicative intentions and for structuring messages. Instead, they operate exclusively at the level of encoding, drawing on a large database of linguistic forms and applying predictive algorithms. In this sense, LLMs function as linguistic encoders rather than full models of language. Consequently, this paper argues that LLMs constitute, at best, incomplete theories of language. However, their architecture is compatible with a simplified version of FDG, in which encoding operates independently of higher-level components. The fact that LLMs can successfully generate language using only this reduced architecture provides indirect support for the overall architecture proposed by FDG, while also highlighting the essential and distinctive role of Formulation and the non-grammatical components in human language use.

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Reconsidering rhetorical relations

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In this paper, we reconsider a number of assumptions made in Hengeveld & Mackenzie (2008), and most of the later FDG literature, concerning the organization of the higher layers of the Interpersonal Level (henceforth IL).

Our first proposal is that the Move, defined in Hengeveld & Mackenzie (2008: 50) as “an autonomous contribution to an ongoing interaction” does not in fact constitute the highest layer of the IL. The reason for this is that a Move, in turn consisting of more than one Discourse Act, can be explicitly marked for the relation in which it stands to another autonomous Move. An examples is the Move starting with *and then* in (1):

- (1) There’s a league of the hyperinflation countries that include Zimbabwe in the past. Iran is struggling now because of the pressure coming from the Trump administration and the sanctions. *And then* you have Sudan, which has had regime change there. (COCA, blog)

Given that two coordinated units must necessarily form a unit of higher rank together, this indicates that a new layer is needed for the IL, corresponding to a whole stretch of discourse. We propose to term this new layer *Discourse Segment*. Evidence for the grammatical relevance of the Segment is that languages may have dedicated means of indicating the beginning or end of a discourse, e.g. the Spanish expression *pues nada*, which marks the speaker’s wish to end the conversation.

A second issue is that FDG does not currently make provision for the possibility of Moves being embedded within other Moves. This, however, is precisely what seems to happen in examples such as (2), where the Exemplification marker *like* scopes over the two coordinated Discourse Acts that follow, relating both of them, as a whole, to the preceding Discourse Act:

- (2) A couple questions come to mind right off the bat *like*, “Why did the oxen stumble (#1) and why did God strike down Uzzah [...]?” (#2) (Internet)

Therefore, we propose that two Discourse Acts that fall within the scope of a single rhetorical function should be regarded as a Move, and that this unit may in turn be grammatically related to another discourse unit (another Move or a single Discourse Act) within a higher Move.

Finally, we address the fact that certain rhetorical functions can co-occur with a coordinator, as in the case of the function Addition in (1), marked by *then*. This phenomenon casts doubt on the assumption that all discourse units with a rhetorical function must be grammatically dependent on another unit. To account for this, we suggest to divide rhetorical functions into *host-oriented* and *frame-oriented* ones. The former mark a relation of dependency to a unit of like rank, and, as such, are not allowed

in coordination structures (e.g. one could not add a coordinator before the Exemplification marker *like* in (2)). By contrast, frame-oriented functions like Addition mark the relation between a Discourse Act or Move and the higher unit within which it is embedded: accordingly, units with such functions are not dependent ones but are equipollent to another unit within the same Move or Segment.

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Layering within the Referential Subact in Functional Discourse Grammar

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Much more attention has been given in FDG to the issue of layering in the underlying representation of Discourse Acts than to layering in the underlying representation of Referential Subacts, an important exception being the work of Jan Rijkhoff (e.g. 2004, 2008, *forthc.*). In his latest proposals, Rijkhoff distinguishes between a class layer, a quality layer, a quantity layer, a locality layer, and a discourse-reference layer. One of the reasons that Rijkhoff's proposals have not found their way into standard descriptions of FDG, may be that his layers are defined in terms of the operators and modifiers that they can take, and do not receive an independent semantic characterization, carrying their own variable, as is the common strategy in FDG. In this paper I will develop a proposal that aims at achieving such a semantic characterization and that will allow us to partly account for the evidence for further layering within Referential Subacts adduced by Rijkhoff.

In refining the current underlying representation of Referential Subacts in FDG, I will take my lead here from a scenario sketched in Verkuyl (1984), in which an observer is located alongside a road with the task of counting the cars that pass by during a certain period of time. This task allows for various interpretations. First, the observer may count the types of cars that pass by. So, when three Mercedes 190E with different license plates pass by, they count as one. Secondly, the observer may count all the different individual cars that pass by. So, when a Mercedes 190E with license plate K-395-BC passes by three times, it counts as 1. And thirdly, when cars pass by more than once, the observer may count all occurrences of cars that pass by. So the Mercedes 190E with license plate K-395-BC just mentioned then counts three times. These three different interpretations of the task of counting cars correspond to three different semantic aspects of the car: its class, its individual existence, and its occurrence in deictic space and time.

The distinctions made by Verkuyl allow us to expand on the current FDG representation of Referential Subacts and add a layer to the underlying representation of noun phrases at RL. In (1) the (f) layer corresponds to the class, the (v) layer to the entity, and the new, outer layer, which I will provisionally call the referent layer (r), accounts for the occurrence of an entity:

- (1) Interpersonal Level: (R_1)
 Representational Level: $(r_1: (v_1: (f_1) (v_1)) (r_1))$

Note that the referent layer matches Rijkhoff's locality layer, which is deictic in nature and is the host of localizing operators and modifiers. The f-layer would then be the host of classifying modifiers and operators, and the v-layer of qualifying and quantifying modifiers and operators.

In my presentation I will show how this expanded representation helps to account for a wide range of facts: the difference between referential, generic, and number-neutral

noun phrases; cosubordination; complementation; and the order of operators and modifiers.

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Semi-insubordinate *que*-constructions: An FDG approach

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This research provides an extensive investigation into the formal and functional properties of semi-insubordinate "que" constructions (SIS) in Brazilian Portuguese (BP). The study is grounded in the theoretical framework of Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG), as developed by Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008), to address a use that remains virtually unexplored from this specific perspective.

The conceptual foundation of this study rests on the distinction between insubordination and semi-insubordination. Evans (2007) originally defined insubordination as the conventionalized use of formally subordinate clauses as independent main clauses. Building upon this, Van Linden and Van de Velde (2014) introduced the term semi-insubordination to describe specific constructions where the complementizer "que" is preceded by a single matrix element—typically an adverb, adjective, or noun—without the presence of a copula verb, such as:

- (1) *Evidentemente que* as tarifas de ônibus foram e não foram causa da sublevação que ocupa as ruas das principais cidades brasileiras. (Evidently that the bus tariffs were and weren't the causes) (Hirata-Vale, 2023)
- (2) *Bom que* no final há uma degustação, incluindo o vinho. (Good that in the end there is a wine tasting) (Hirata-Vale, 2023)
- (3) *Capaz que* eu vou dizer que meu sonho é ganhar um buquê de lírios e pimba. (Capable that I say that my dream is to win a bouquet of lilies). (Coimbra, 2022)

Coimbra (2022) has examined these constructions in BP using a Construction Grammar approach—viewing them as a schematic pattern combining fixed elements with flexible slots. Functional Discourse Grammar is uniquely suited for this analysis because its primary unit of analysis is the Discourse Act rather than the clause or sentence. This top-down perspective allows for a comprehensive accounting of the interaction between discourse-pragmatic motivations, interpersonal meanings, and morphosyntactic forms.

Semi-insubordinate constructions function as single Discourse Acts. Speakers use the SIS to encode evidential and modal meanings (including epistemic and deontic modality) as well as non-modal, evaluative meanings, providing a comment or reflecting upon the speech situation itself. The analysis predicts that these constructions are realized as semi-formulaic Lexical Expressions at the Morphosyntactic Level. By integrating these levels, the research aims to provide a holistic account of how semi-insubordination operates as a distinct and functionally autonomous phenomenon in Brazilian Portuguese.

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A Functional Discourse Grammar account of English pseudo-partitives

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Although syntactic analyses of pseudo-partitive constructions (PPCs) like *a number of people*, *a pound of apples* and *crates of beer* go back to the 1970s (e.g. Akmajian & Lehrer 1976; Jackendoff 1977; Selkirk 1977), linguists still struggle to account for the substantial variation these constructions exhibit in both meaning and form. Some authors have shown that this variation is related to the kind of N₁ (e.g. Vos 1999; Keizer 2007), while others suggest that the specific quantifying use of the PPC may play a role (in particular the extent to which the first noun still denotes an object; e.g. Taylor 2002: 360; Partee & Borschev 2012). In addition, it has been observed that, since we are dealing with a process of grammaticalization, PPCs display different semantic and syntactic properties depending on the degree to which they have grammaticalized (e.g. Langacker 2009: ch.3; Brems 2012; De Clerck & Brems 2016).

The aim of this paper is to combine the findings of these previous approaches into a coherent FDG analysis. To this end, data from a number of English corpora (BYU-BNC, COCA, NOW) will be used to gain more insight into the semantic and syntactic behaviour of PPCs with four kinds of head nouns (quantifier, measure, container and configuration). On the basis of criteria such as semantic selection, subject-verb agreement, pre-modification and the possibility of recursion, it will be argued that in order to account for the variation in the properties of English PPCs, we need to distinguish four categories of use, representing different stages in their development: from transitional stages (between partitive and pseudo-partitive) to true PPCs, and ultimately to highly grammaticalized elements like *loads-of* and *ton(ne)s-of*. Finally, each category will be provided with an FDG analysis capturing their specific semantic and morphosyntactic properties.

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The (non)acceptance of English evidential adverbs in deranked complement clauses

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This paper tests the FDG prediction that evidential adverbs of a higher layer are not acceptable in complement clauses (CCs) of a lower layer. Indeed, in Kemp (2023), based on a corpus search of recent UK newspaper articles, there were very few instances of higher evidential adverbs in lower deranked complement clauses. When found, they were in quotes or reported speech. The question arose as to whether evidential adverbs in lower deranked CCs are generally accepted.

The most frequent evidential adverbs occur at the three highest FDG layers of the Representational Level while deranked CC occur in the lower layers of the Representational Level. The focus here is therefore on the lowest layers of the Representational layers with CCs of the *to*-infinitive type, *-ing* forms, and bare infinitive type.

Functional theories of the notions underlying the relation of the matrix predicate and deranked or reduced complement clauses will be discussed with reference to Givón (1990), Cristofaro (2003), Noonan (2007) and Hengeveld (forthc.).

The survey, which was presented to native speakers to test acceptance, involves constructed sentences with CCs of the lower FDG layers of the Representational Level. Evidential adverbs of various layers were inserted into the CCs, such as:

- (1) The car started to seemingly roll backwards.

Deranked CC distractors with non-evidential adverbs were accepted while some deranked CCs with evidential adverbs were rejected by some participants but not by others.

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Ghost pronouns: A Functional Discourse Grammar account of pronominal ellipsis in English adversative clauses

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This paper investigates English sentences where the pronominal subject in a *but*-clause is omitted. Compare the four variants of the sentence in (1):

- (1) a. She_i likes running but she_i would never admit it.
 b. She_i likes running but Ø_i would never admit it.
 c. She_i would never admit it, but she_i likes running.
 d. *She_i would never admit it, but Ø_i likes running.

Why this type of pronominal ellipsis in some of such sentences grammatical and in some it is not has so far been not been studied. The aim of this paper is to explore the conditions that govern this phenomenon: one or two Discourse Acts, as in (1a–b) and (1c–d), respectively, and the presence or absence of cataphoric reference to (an element of) the *but*-clause, as in (1c–d) and (1a–b), respectively. Regarding the number of Discourse Acts, this paper applies the concept of dependency relations between Discourse Acts (as per Hengeveld & Mackenzie 2008: 54–55). Cataphora, on the other hand, has been traditionally conflated with pronominalization, in that it is closely tied to pronominalization in many definitions found in transformational approaches. However, cataphora has been previously argued to only be possible in subordination, not coordination (Ross 1969: 189).

The determining factor in the phenomenon turned out to be cataphora. It is argued as follows. In e.g. (1d), there is not yet a referent for the ellipted pronoun that would be available from the context, and the resolution of the cataphora does not happen until the speaker has finished uttering the second Discourse Act. The result is a much greater cognitive load for (1d) than e.g. (1c), where overt anaphora helps guiding the addressee in their search for a suitable referent. Therefore, I propose that it is this exceeding cognitive load that prevents the acceptability of pronominal ellipsis such as above. This reasoning is in line with many psycholinguistic studies, which claim that cataphora is associated with more processing load than its sister anaphora (e.g. Fedele & Kaiser 2014).

This paper presents an important implication for FDG's strict top-down organization. Bottom-up processes have so far been argued to be only possible within the Fund (Hengeveld & Mackenzie 2021: 25). However, in e.g. (1d) the Representational Level needs to be consulted first, to see if coindexation with an unfulfilled variable takes place, before deciding whether a Referential Subact evoking the ellipted pronoun must be performed.

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The unique selling points of FDG

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This paper argues that Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG; Hengeveld & Mackenzie 2008) is particularly well suited to moving beyond the creation of descriptive inventories towards genuine explanation by explicitly linking its architecture to cognitive processes of verbalizing experience in communication. In doing so, FDG can strengthen its position in functional linguistics and grammatical theory and contribute to broader interdisciplinary research on language as a central human capacity.

Building on Croft's (2007) idea that grammatical explanation must be grounded in how speakers verbalize experience, the paper focuses on the set of processes by which nonverbal information is transformed into words. In FDG, these processes originate in the Conceptual Component (ConcComp), which delivers prelinguistic input to the Grammatical Component (GramComp). While FDG's grammatical levels have been worked out in detail, the ConcComp remains relatively underspecified but is arguably associated with a division between a conceptual and an affective–interactional subcomponent feeding, respectively, the GramComp's Representational and Interpersonal Levels (cf. Butler 2008).

The ConcComp is non-propositional and prelinguistic; propositional content is located at the Representational Level of the GramComp. The ConcComp is closely tied to speakers' intentions and strategies, which drive grammatical formulation and encoding. Although it remains a black box, its interaction with the well articulated categories of the GramComp allows us to infer how undifferentiated experience is structured for communicative purposes.

FDG's first distinctive feature is the Discourse Act as its basic unit, aligning with evidence that communication involves chunking experience into manageable units. Second, Communicated Content is decomposed into Subacts, reflecting the subdivision of an experiential chunk into subchunks, typically with a single focal Subact. Third, syntactic functions are given a psychological interpretation in FDG, deriving from the speaker's construal of experience via a Subact selected as a vantage-point. Fourth, FDG assumes – in line with Kiefer & Pulvermüller (2012) – that the structuring of experience in the ConcComp precedes and is independent of lexical selection, which takes place only when the GramComp is activated.

Finally, interpreting these and other features as 'selling points', the paper suggests that FDG's explanatory potential increases if its model of grammar is (re)conceived as mediating between interacting minds rather than modelling only individual processing, integrating recent work on joint attention, joint activity, and co-constructed meaning.

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The intonation of clause combining: the case of *so* (*that*) purpose and result clauses

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The English subordinators *so* and *so that* mark both purpose (1) and result (2), making this distinction theoretically relevant. Previous studies propose several diagnostic criteria. Purpose clauses typically denote the main clause agent's intended outcome, refer to events not yet realized (often marked by modality) and allow fronting, clefting, and negation. Result clauses, by contrast, express unintended consequences of the main clause event, describe realized events, and generally resist fronting, clefting, and negation (e.g. Quirk et al. 1985: 1107–1108; Kortmann 1997: 86).

- (1) *He promptly ordered loudspeakers mounted in certain sections of the ball park **so that** fans could go there...*(purpose)¹
- (2) *He touched his cheek in confusion, **so that** dabs of wet clay rubbed off...*(result)

Previous work analyzes purpose clauses as a separate Communicated Content (C₂) embedded in the Comment Layer (Cm₁) of a higher Communicated Content frame (C₁) at the Interpersonal Level (Ten Wolde 2025). Result clauses, however, may involve several possible configurations. They may form two Communicated Contents in a non-hierarchical relation within a higher Communicated Content frame, or two Discourse Acts in a subsidiary or equipollent relation (Ten Wolde 2025). These structural differences are expected to yield distinct prosodic patterns with respect to the degree of pitch reset after the matrix clause (cf. Couper-Kuhlen 1996). Thus, it can be assumed that purpose clauses are integrated into the prosodic unit of the host clause, while result clauses show different degrees of pitch reset (no, partial, full) depending on the degree of embedding on the IL. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to test the predictions that the FDG architecture makes concerning the prosodic reflex of the different structural configurations by investigating the prosody of purpose and result adverbial clauses in naturally produced corpus data. In doing so, the paper also revisits the notion of phonological recursion (cf. Ladd 2008) and whether (and if yes, how) it can be incorporated into the FDG formalism.

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¹ All examples are from the Corpus of Historical American English (COHA) unless specified otherwise.

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The question of questions: Rethinking interrogatives in FDG

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Interrogatives have received little attention in FDG. Existing work is largely limited to a brief distinction between C(ontent)-Interrogative and P(olar)-Interrogative illocutions in language such as English (Hengeveld, Keizer & Giomi in prep.), along with two further studies on C-Interrogatives: a typological investigation of what they elicit (Mackenzie 2009) and an analysis of their focus structure in Hittite (Goedegebuure 2009). Current treatments, however, provide only a partial account of the diversity of interrogatives and leave several issues unresolved.

First, C-interrogatives appear to be assumed to target only referential expressions raising the question of how to account for cases that elicit attributive expressions (1) (see, however, Mackenzie 2009).

(1) A: *How was the movie?* B: The movie was {**amazing/boring/etc.**}.

Second, previous FDG analyses of P-interrogatives focus exclusively on positive questions (PosQs). In English, however, polar questions may also be negative, occurring as High Negative Questions (HiNegQs) and Low Negative Questions (LoNegQs), which realize negation at the auxiliary/dummy (2a) or at a lower position (2b), respectively. Although there is no consensus on the factors governing the choice between the three polar questions, the literature commonly attributes the variation to differences in speaker or evidential biases (e.g. Romero 2024).

(2) a. Didn't John read Emma?
 b. Did John **not** read Emma?

Third, alternative questions (3) have so far not received an adequate representation in FDG.

(3) A: Do you want to watch a comedy or a romance?

More broadly, corpus-based research on the meaning and use of interrogatives remains limited, and the contribution of prosody to the encoding and interpretation of interrogatives in (British) English has received little empirical attention (see, however, Hedberg & Sosa 2002 on American English). Against this background, this paper addresses the following questions:

- How can FDG account for the range of interrogatives (i.e. C-INTER eliciting attributive or referential expressions, positive and negative P-INTER, AQs)?
- What role does prosody play in their encoding and interpretation?
- What is the representational meaning of interrogatives?

Drawing on ICE-GB corpus data, the paper develops an FDG account of these interrogative types, showing how prosody shapes their encoding and interpretation and clarifying their status across all four levels of the grammar.

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The marking of causation adjuncts follows the Aristotelian categories of cause

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This research investigates the marking of causation adjuncts across a variety of languages to determine the principles guiding the mapping of meaning onto form. The primary principles guiding the marking of causation adjuncts are identified in two atomic semantic features, namely [±logical antecedent] ([±λ]) and [±psychological drive] ([±ψ]), following the decompositional methodology previously articulated in Tieman (2009) and Smit (2010). This means that some adjuncts may encode situations logically preceding ([+λ]) or following ([−λ]) their effect, and, at the same time, encode situations that engender events whose force is non-volitional ([−ψ]) or indeed psychologically rooted ([+ψ]). Therefore, several feature combinations may be yielded, as in the case of Japanese question adverbs in (1) to (3).

- (1) *Naze chikyo ni seibutsu ga sum-eru yō ni nat-ta no ka?*
 why earth LOC living NOM inhabit-POT so that become-PST RQ
 “Why has it become possible for living things to inhabit earth?” → [+λ, −ψ]
 (Kaiser et al., 2013)
- (2) *Dōshite, motto haya-ku oshie-te kure-na-katta-n?*
 why more quick-ADV teach-CVB give-NEG.PST-Q
 “For what reason didn’t you teach me more quickly?” → [+λ, +ψ]
 (Kaiser et al., 2013)
- (3) *Nan no tame ni Nihon ni ki-mashi-ta ka?*
 what GEN sake for Japan LOC come-POL-PST Q
 “With what purpose did you come to Japan?” → [−λ, +ψ]
 (Kaiser et al., 2013)

In addition, some languages may display extra freedoms or restrictions as to what type of situation can be encoded by certain causation adjuncts. For instance, French *pour* (“because of”) does not allow for material properties to be followed, and Bahasa Indonesian *biar* (“so that”), which would normally be followed by a clause, may also simply take an adjective if it encodes a property rather than an event. I propose to explain these differences by means of the semantic features [±property] and [±material].

Crucially, cases of marker syncretism in the adjuncts of causation follow the intersections and the adjacent values of the of the proposed semantic features. For example, English *because of* may encode both [+λ, −ψ] and [+λ, +ψ] and Russian *za* may encode both [−λ, +ψ] and [+λ, +ψ].

Interestingly, the data shows that the proposed semantic features correspond quite neatly to the categories of cause originally elaborated by Aristotle (4th c. BC), with the exception that, in this study, they show to be relevant more for the cognition of language than for metaphysics.

Finally, evidence for the causation categories yielded by the feature combinations is connected to typological and syntactic evidence suggesting that all categories are represented in the world's languages, pointing to the need of demoting the semantic layer Reason to a function, whereas a new layer, g for Genesis, encoding all possible causation categories (including causes and purposes) is proposed to accommodate the data.

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The grammaticalization of concessive connectives in Peninsular Spanish according to Functional Discourse Grammar

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This study presents a diachronic analysis of the connectives *aunque*, *a pesar de (que)*, and *por mucho (que)* in order to investigate a possible grammaticalization trajectory from more concrete to more abstract uses. To this end, we adopt the Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG) model (Hengeveld & Mackenzie, 2008) as our theoretical framework, as well as the work of Hengeveld (2017), who defines grammaticalization as a combination of two types of change: contentive and formal changes. Contentive changes are understood as scope expansion across levels and/or layers of FDG, while formal changes are related to the distributional behavior of grammaticalized elements, following clines that reflect declining lexicality.

The data were extracted from CORDE (*Corpus Diacrónico del Español*). A total of 479 occurrences of *aunque*, 368 of *a pesar de (que)*, and 300 of *por mucho (que)* were analyzed. The results indicate that the connectives are at different stages of grammaticalization: in the case of *aunque*, its use in the Discourse Act layer already appears in the Old Spanish and intensifies in later stages, while its use as a Move marker emerges in the Middle Spanish. Although it emerged later, *a pesar de (que)* also undergoes content changes, marking the Rhetorical Function Concession from the Middle Spanish onward, with its use as a *push* marker in the Move layer emerging only in the Modern Spanish. *Por mucho (que)* likewise expands its scope and marks relations between Discourse Acts from the Middle Spanish, but no instances of its use as a Move marker were identified.

Despite being at different stages of change, all connectives follow the same grammaticalization path, shifting from semantic to pragmatic uses. In FDG terms, this trajectory corresponds to a unidirectional contentive change across levels and layers, moving from lower to higher ones. These changes are accompanied by increasing morphosyntactic abstraction, as the connectives evolve from markers of semantic function to markers of rhetorical function and, in some cases, to *push* markers that introduce new topics into the discourse. Therefore, after acquiring concessive value, the connectives studied initially function in more local contexts, relating elements within the same utterance; then develop rhetorical use, which reflect the speaker–hearer relationship; and may ultimately reach a discursive use, aimed at organizing information across the interaction.

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Explaining the value of non-prototypical *ningún* in Spanish negative constructions within Functional Discourse Grammar

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This study examines a non-prototypical use of *ningún* in Spanish that diverges from its traditional description as a quantifier. Unlike its canonical function, it lacks quantificational meaning and instead displays interpersonal values with morphosyntactic consequences.

The analysis is conducted within the framework of FDG (Hengeveld & Mackenzie, 2008), considering the interaction between the Interpersonal, Representational and Morphosyntactic Levels, as well as operators such as evidentiality and mirativity. Special attention is paid to the influence of contextual and conceptual factors, in line with Connolly's (2014) proposal.

- (1) La luna no está ningún rosada nada
 DEF.F moon NEG be.PRS REP.FOC pink EMPH
 ‘The moon is not pink at all, as previously claimed.’

The phenomenon is illustrated in cases such as (1), where the interpretation of *ningún* as a quantifier is implausible. Instead, its use is linked to discourse-available information, suggesting an evidential value. The data show that non-prototypical *ningún* functions as an interpersonal operator whose interpretation depends on contextual and conceptual factors.

The results indicate that this form encodes different interpersonal meanings: (i) quotative evidential, referring to shared or previously mentioned information; (ii) reportative evidential, indicating information obtained from third parties; and (iii) mirative of counter-expectation, expressing the non-fulfilment of expectations. In addition, *ningún* functions as a focus marker, highlighting the element of the Clause to be corrected (Dik, 1997).

At the Representational Level, it lacks explicit semantic content, reinforcing its status as an interpersonal operator. At the Morphosyntactic Level, *ningún* is analysed as a Grammatical Word (Gw) that affects constituent order, preceding the focused element within the Clause.

These findings show how interpersonal meanings interact with morphosyntax and pragmatics, supporting the explanatory power of FDG for non-prototypical phenomena. The study highlights the relevance of contextual and conceptual factors in the construction of linguistic structures in general, and, in this case, as a key dimension in the interpretation of this non-prototypical expression in Spanish negative constructions.

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Morphology in Functional Discourse Grammar: A (book?) proposal

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This paper puts forth a proposal for an integrated view of linguistic morphology in FDG. The overview is perhaps somewhat unorthodox for a conference contribution in that it is outlined and presented with the aim of (assessing the potential of and) writing a book proposal in mind.

Although there is no specific place for a dedicated morphological component in the top-down levels-and-layers architecture of FDG (Hengeveld & Mackenzie 2008), morphological phenomena can be captured through different divisions of labor across the model's Interpersonal, Representational, Morphosyntactic and Phonological Levels, and they may be additionally influenced by factors stemming from the Conceptual, Output and Contextual Components. Based on various previous morphological investigations cast in FDG (spanning a period from Hengeveld 2004 to Schwaiger forthc.) and expanding on comparative theoretical work begun by the present author in two talks to the FDG community, this paper highlights the most important aspects of a state-of-the-art presentation of the place and role of morphology in the theory. This is done with a longer-term endeavor in mind, namely (assessing the feasibility of) submitting a book proposal to the forthcoming focused series *Elements in Morphology* as part of the overarching *Cambridge Elements* series published by Cambridge University Press. In this regard, the planned proposal has a precedent of sorts in ten Hacken (2019), a presentation of word formation in the Parallel Architecture published in the *SpringerBriefs in Linguistics* series. The parallels not only concern general practical aspects like monograph conciseness but also specifics of content in treating issues of word formation within a more comprehensive theory of language that does not provide for a dedicated component of morphology.

Next to giving an overview of the general architecture and workings of FDG (also in relation to most recent developments proposed in the model's update by Hengeveld et al. in prep.) and how they relate to morphological phenomena in language, at least the following points should be addressed: 1) compounding (e.g. details like the number and status of Ascriptive Subacts in different compounds); 2) inflection and derivation (e.g. lexical vs. syntactic derivation and the general status of the inflection-derivation divide in the model), 3) lexicon (e.g. morphological processes in the [unmarked?] grammar proper vs. the [marked?] Fund); 4) non-concatenative morphology (e.g. its theoretical status compared to concatenative morphology in FDG and its frequent interactions with the Phonological Level). Apart from presenting a general outline for an integrated view of morphology in FDG along lines just sketched here, points of controversy or ones still lacking a solution will be in the foreground. The knowledge and support of the FDG community in this regard will not only be highly appreciated but crucially needed.

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Nominal TAME markers in Functional Discourse Grammar

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The categories of Tense, Aspect, Modality, and Evidentiality (TAME) are traditionally associated with the verbal domain, which has often led to the theoretical assumption that their scope is inherently clausal or propositional. However, cross-linguistic evidence reveals that these categories can also be encoded within the nominal domain, specifically targeting nouns rather than the entire predication (Nordlinger & Sadler, 2004). This phenomenon remains under-described in general linguistic theory and typological surveys, so this research addresses this gap by investigating the behavior of nominal TAME markers in a sample of 15 indigenous languages spoken in Brazil, based on six specific criteria: i) the types of TAME distinctions encoded; ii) the presence of semantic restrictions; iii) the semantic scope within FDG; iv) the types of lexemes involved; v) the co-occurrence of multiple TAME markers; and vi) the interaction between nominal and propositional TAME.

These criteria confirm a strong typological tendency to mark only Nominal Tense; however, the study also identifies languages that exclusively mark Nominal Aspect or use cumulative morphemes to encode multiple categories simultaneously. Secondly, the research demonstrates that the semantic scope of these markers can be accurately mapped onto FDG layers. In Nambikwara, for instance, markers of inference and past tense can co-occur on a noun like "manioc root" (1), indicating that the speaker infers the past existence of that specific object. This suggests that nouns in these languages can function as highly complex semantic structures (2), mirroring the complexity typically reserved for verbs.

- (3) Nambikwara (Lowe 1999:282)
wa³lin³-su³-nũ¹-ti²
 mandioca-CL. BONE.LIKE-INFER.DEF.UNMARKED⁴
 ‘the manioc root that must have been at some time past, as inferred by me (but not by you)’

- (4) RL: (x_i: (**infer** p_i: (**past** ep_i: (e_i: [(f_i: wa³lin³(f_i)) (e_i)) (ep_i)) (p_i)) (x_i))

This hierarchical approach is also relevant to explain cases where past tense operators in possessive construction have different scopes: when the possessive bond itself is in the past (an 'ex-possession') or when the object's existence is in the past (an 'ex-house') regardless of when the possessive relationship occurred.

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⁴ UNMARKED contrasts with “recently”, according to the author.

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An FDG analysis of frustrativity and its scope relations in Amerindian languages

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This paper provides a typologically oriented analysis of frustrativity in a genetically and geographically diverse sample of South American indigenous languages, within the framework of Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG). The frustrativity category, as exemplified in (1) and (2), is generally defined as the encoding of a mismatch between an expected, intended or desired outcome and the actual result (Campbell 2012; Aikhenvald 2012; Overall 2017), but its grammatical status and interactions with other categories remain insufficiently explored.

Desano (Miller 1999: 83)

(1) *bākā-ge eha-ri-bí*

city-LOC arrive-FRUST-NON3.PST

'I arrived in the city (but I was unable to accomplish what I went there to do).'

In (1), the suffix *-ri* marks a realized State-of-Affairs while indicating that an expected outcome fails to materialize, thus signaling unsuccessful goal achievement. Within the FDG model (Hengeveld & Mackenzie 2008), the paper argues that frustrativity is best analyzed as a multi-layered category whose different frustratives follow from scope relations across levels of representation. Based on the data, at least eight types are identified: aspectual, unfulfilled-result, intentional, temporal, epistemic, inferential, reportative, and evaluative frustrativity.

At the State-of-Affairs layer, frustrativity tends to be associated with values such as non-realization, failure of outcome, unsuccessfulness, and non-fulfillment. At the Propositional Content layer, frustrativity interacts closely with irrealis modality, inference, conditionality, and counterfactuality, contributing to non-factual interpretations of events. Other insights arise from the interaction between frustrativity and evidentiality, in which frustrative markers may be scoped by evidential operators (Aikhenvald 2004), thereby altering their interpretation.

Following Giomi's (2023) distinction between semantic and pragmatic frustrativity, the data show that uses often treated as merely evaluative by Overall (2017) are in fact distributed across distinct layers and levels of the grammar. In this sense, FDG effectively captures the internal organization of frustrativity and its overlap with related functional domains.

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The *ba*-construction in Mandarin: An FDG account

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This paper discusses the *ba*-construction in Mandarin from the perspective of Functional Discourse Grammar, as in (1).

- (1) Tā bǎ píngguǒ chī le.
 He.NOM BA apple.ACC eat.PST.3SG ASP
 ‘He ate the apple.’

The most salient characteristic of the *ba*-construction is that it topicalizes the object by moving it before the verb. Previous studies also argue that the *ba*-construction is idiosyncratic in several ways. First, it is inherently resultative, which normally requires aspectual sentence-final particles (SFPs, such as *le* or *zhe*) (Tang 2025). Second, despite permitting only active (instead of stative or sensitive) verbs, the subject of *ba*-construction is often not an Agent but a Causer or even a Principal, who/which does not perform the action but takes its responsibility or bears its consequences; therefore, it is possible, and often desirable, to assign an inanimate subject (Zhang 2019). Third, most objects in the *ba*-construction are definite. Finally, the responsibility meaning of the *ba*-construction is referred to as “subjective disposal” (Shen 2002: 388), i.e., the resultative action is *assumed* by the Speaker based on contextual knowledge. This indicates that it is a modal expression.

In this paper, I analyze the function word *ba* as a fused particle that synthesizes both the pragmatic feature of being both identifiable and topicalized, and the semantic function of being doxatically resultative (following Hengeveld & Mackenzie 2008; Keizer 2015), as (2) shows.

- (2) a. IL: (M₁: (A₁: [(F: DECL) (P₁)_S (P₂)_A (C₁: [(T₁) (R₁)_{TOP} (+id R₂)_{FOC}])]))
 b. RL: (dox p₁: (ep₁: (e₁: [(f₁: chi_V) (x₁: (f₂: ta_{PRON})_A (X₂: (f₂: pingguo_N)_U]_{Res})))
 c. ML: (Le₁: (Cl₁: [(NP₁: (Nw₁: ta)_{Subj} (Gw₁: ba) (Np₂: (Nw₂: pingguo)_{Obj} (Vp₁: (Vw₁: chi) (Gw₂: le))]))

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