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## COMO CITAR

Ostermann, A. C., & Garcez, P. M. (2021). Conversation Analysis in Brazil and talk-in-interaction in Portuguese. *Calidoscópico*, 19(2), 143–151. <https://doi.org/10.4013/cld.2021.192.00>

## FLUXO DA SUBMISSÃO

Submissão: 28/07/2021  
Aprovação: 29/07/2021

## DISTRIBUÍDO SOB



# Conversation Analysis in Brazil and talk-in-interaction in Portuguese

## *Análise da Conversa no Brasil e fala-em-interação em português*

### Doing Conversation Analysis in Brazil, examining talk-in-interaction in Portuguese

It has been now almost 20 years since the first studies of social interaction embracing the ethnomethodological approach of Conversation Analysis (CA) were published by Brazilian scholars (Gago, 2003; Garcez, 2002; Ostermann, 2002) featuring Portuguese as a language of interaction. Whereas the field of Conversation Analysis has been rapidly expanding geographically, methodologically (e.g., to embrace quantitative studies), in its scope (e.g., to largely encompass an ethnomethodological multimodal perspective), and in its object (e.g., advancing to human-computer and human-animal interactions), research and ensuing publications on social interactions in Brazilian settings or in Portuguese are still comparatively scarce.<sup>[1]</sup>

This thematic issue of *Calidoscópico* emerges as a development of our joint effort at the 2017 International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA) World Congress symposium “Innovations and challenges in Conversation Analysis” (Ostermann, 2017), when the organizers of this thematic issue presented a brief synopsis of the devel-

opment of CA research in Brazil (Garcez & Ostermann, 2017). We then offered an overview of the tight spot Brazilian conversation analysts find themselves in as they grapple to attend to developments both in CA and in the fields of activity their research participants act in while also bootstrapping to set up an academic place for their work. In a more encompassing overview now going beyond the Brazilian scenario, this thematic issue ushers in a sample of studies that investigate social interactions from an ethnomethodological conversation analytic perspective in interactional settings in Brazil or featuring Portuguese as a language of interaction.

### Conversation Analysis in Brazil: managing the (many) challenges

Conversation Analysis has been practiced in Brazil mostly within Applied Linguistics. A markedly Applied Linguistics agenda has led to the assessment of problems and innovations made visible through the analysis of talk-in-interaction in various institutional settings, with contributions to teacher education, and the training of professionals in health services, business organizations, and legal professions. This has undoubtedly set CA practitioners such as ourselves in a double bind: working by and large in

[1] Conversation Analysis had been introduced earlier in Brazil, notably by Marcuschi (1986), though clearly in a more language philosophical and textual analytical framework than an ethnomethodological one. A considerable amount of relevant and influential research work ensued from that to describe features distinguishing oral and written text genres, initially as a foundation for the description of educated Brazilian Portuguese. The term researchers working within that framework employed to translate “conversation” was the formal word “conversaço”, often in reference to all speech-exchange systems, and that Brazilian research tradition came to be known as “Análise da Conversação.” What we refer to as (ethnomethodological) CA here – and the perspective that brings together this thematic issue) is known and is now established as “Análise da *Conversa*,” which employs the ordinary word in Portuguese in reference to conversation. Above all, the most important difference of the perspective taken here, i.e. *Análise da Conversa*, when compared to the earlier tradition is its ‘analytical mentality’, which is driven by the participants’ orientations.

academic landscapes within Applied Linguistics in which ethnomethodological CA was little known, these researchers must address issues that are relevant to practitioners in the fields of activity from where the interactional data derives while simultaneously creating and cultivating a discursive arena for their work. This needed (and still needs) to be done institutionally mostly within the disciplinary boundaries of linguistics, still largely focused on systemic language issues, and within a varied, eclectic Applied Linguistics field fraught with colonial crossings where overlapping and often conflicting Anglo-American, Anglo-European, and Franco-European intellectual strands and traditions converge but seldom meet. Within that academic setup, theoretical attention to *action* (rather than strictly form-meaning relations), privileging data (rather than theory) as the analytical starting point, and the use of naturally occurring data (rather than sociolinguistic interviews, for instance) was (and still is) unusual. Moreover, critical scholars have often been suspicious of Anglo-American empiricism, and many often refer to “conversation analysis” and “discourse analysis” interchangeably.

Still, soon enough talk-in-interaction research groups were set up for doing CA in Portuguese at various academic centers in Brazil (PUC-Rio, UEM, UFJF, UFRGS, UFSC, Unisinos, Unifesp, USP) and more recently in Portugal as well. Given the institutional affiliation of most of these research groups within departments and graduate programs in Applied Linguistics, the bulk of conversation analytic efforts were channeled to the analysis of talk-in-interaction in institutional settings, and the analysis of ordinary conversation remains mostly informal as a preliminary step to analyses of institutional talk (but see Loder, Gonzalez, & Garcez, 2002/2004; Garcez & Loder, 2004; Gago; Oliveira, 2007; Garcez & Stein, 2015; Loder, Garcez, & Kanitz, 2021)<sup>[2]</sup>.

The creation and cultivation of a discursive arena for CA research itself required a number of tasks. Some of these have to do with addressing the difficulty that interested students may have with academic literature in English, and largely with transcripts of interactions in English requiring familiarity not only with the notation but also with colloquialisms and non-standard spellings. As this may pose insurmountable obstacles, a great deal of effort was therefore made to produce translations of seminal conversation analytic literature and illustrative analyses of Brazilian Portuguese data sets. Significant milestones in this endeavor were the publications of translations of foundational CA work, such as of Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (2004[1974])<sup>[3]</sup>, as well as article- and book-length introductions to CA in which key concepts were illustrated with Brazilian Portuguese data (Loder & Jung, 2009a, 2009b; Frank & Ostermann, 2016; Silva, Andrade, & Osterman, 2009; Watson & Gastaldo,

2015). This in turn required complex decisions to be made to establish a basic conversation analytic research lexicon in Portuguese, often in consultation among groups of CA scholars, leading to initial terminological sedimentation. To some degree, this initial introduction and translation work also drove the adoption of variable conventions to transcribe talk in a language that is rife with variation and served by a script that is removed from all spoken varieties (Gago, 2004; Loder & Jung, 2009a; Silva, Andrade, & Ostermann, 2009). As a result, we now have available in Portuguese a growing foundation of seminal conversation analytic literature and illustrative analyses of Portuguese language talk-in-interactional data sets.<sup>[4]</sup>

A more recent landmark was the launching of the first edition of an academic conference congregating this budding group of scholars doing CA in Brazil and on talk-in-interaction in Portuguese. In a joint effort between UFRGS and Unisinos, in 2017, over 70 participants from more than 20 Brazilian and Portuguese research institutions met in Southern Brazil for the first EnACE (*Encontro Nacional de Análise da Conversa Etnometodológica*, National Ethnomethodological Conversation Analysis Meeting). A second edition took place at PUC-Rio in 2019, and a third one should happen online in October 2021, organized by colleagues from UFES.

A different challenge faced by CA practitioners in Brazil has been in the generation of data. This is mostly due to the resistance to (or suspicion of) videorecording interactions, in particular, in health and legal settings, much due to the lack of familiarity with research involving the recording of naturalistic data and fear of lawsuits. Nevertheless, with the growing number of studies in the area, and ensuing expansion of the knowledge about conversation analytic methods, the precision in the description of social action – and of society at large – and the practical insights CA studies can provide to professional practice, this situation has been changing in the past few years – as it becomes evident with the range of studies in this special issue looking at on video-recorded interactions.

## Conversation Analysis in Brazil: Gains of coping with the challenges

The fact that most of the work in CA in Brazil has taken place within an Applied Linguistics agenda also has its affordances, which we believe is reflected in this thematic issue. Given that Brazilian Applied Linguistics has coalesced as an enterprise to “create intelligibilities about social life” (Moita-Lopes, 2006, p. 86), with an increasingly focus on social justice, and a growing reliance on ethnographic methods

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[2] CA studies in Brazil have also contributed to the study of talk-in-interaction in Brazilian Sign Language - Libras (e.g., Leite & McCleary, 2013; McCleary & Leite, 2013; McCleary, Viotti, & Leite, 2010).

[3] More recently, Paulo Cortes Gago has continued to lead teams of colleagues producing translations of foundational EMCA work into Portuguese (see Garfinkel, 2017; Garfinkel & Sacks, 2012; Sacks, 2007, 2011).

[4] As a result of an interest in cross-linguistic endeavors and international partnerships, more recently, there have also been some investment in studying Brazilian Portuguese from an Interactional Linguistics perspective (see, for instance, Enfield et al. 2018; Ostermann & Harjunpää, 2021; Harjunpää & Ostermann, in press).

and documentation of situated interactional events, CA has been welcomed as a potentially relevant approach, especially in the analysis of institutional talk-in-interaction. In fact, the development of CA in Brazil has moved in the direction of the goals set by the recently launched EMCA4RJ group (Ethnomethodology and Conversation Analysis for Racial Justice)<sup>[5]</sup>, in particular, concerning its 'de-centering' aim. Thus, while our academic situatedness (i.e., within Applied Linguistics) has largely induced our research focus to institutional talk, thus drastically lessening the investigation of 'basic CA', it has also afforded us to look at what we needed most, or, at least more urgently: educational, health, and legal settings – in particular, of the public sector, which, in a country drastically marked by social inequalities, serves the majority of the population, not coincidentally, the less privileged.

With the growing reliance on ethnographic methods and documentation of situated interactional events in Brazilian Applied Linguistics, CA work has offered guidelines for dealing with interactional data sets within language ethnographic research, especially in educational settings (Garcez, Bulla, & Loder, 2014; Garcez & Schulz, 2015). In an initial thrust, a considerable amount of work went into describing the nature of classroom interaction (Andrioli & Ostermann, 2020; Conceição & Garcez, 2005; Dalla Vecchia, Jung, & Petermann, 2019; Garcez, 2006, 2012; Garcez & Melo, 2007; Garcez & Salimen, 2011; Garcez & Lopes, 2017; Semechechem & Jung, 2017), examining issues of classroom language instruction (Baumvol & Garcez, 2017; Jung, 2009; Peterman & Jung, 2017), language proficiency assessment (Abeledo, Fortes, Garcez, & Schlatter, 2014), and the construction of knowledge in and out of classrooms comparatively (De Souza; Malabarba; Guimarães, 2020; Frank & Kanitz, 2014; Garcez, Frank, & Kanitz, 2012a, 2012b; Kanitz & Garcez, 2020; Schnack & Ostermann, 2010). As argued by Bulla and Schulz (2018), such efforts have come to relevantly inform teacher education.

Apart from these core themes in Applied Linguistics, CA research in Brazil and on talk-in-interaction in Portuguese has expanded to cover Applied Linguistics research in contexts beyond language education and educational settings, most prominently, in health and legal settings. The work on health interactions focused mostly on the interplay between governmental policies and their implementation in actual doctor-patient interactions (Ostermann & Meneghel, 2012), communication of diagnostic news (Ostermann & Frezza, 2017; Ostermann, Frezza, Rosa, & Zen, 2017), check-up consultations and prognostic discussions around chronic diseases (De Souza & Ostermann, 2016), recommendations (Andrade, 2017; Ostermann, 2021, in press b), autism (Cruz, 2018; Cruz & Cots, 2021), and speech therapy (Oliveira & Dias, 2018). Another group of studies has looked at, in particular, how issues typically understood as 'macro' (e.g., gender and sexuality; literacy; authority) emerge and are dealt with in interactions (Alberti, Kruger, Almeida, & Stenzel, 2021; Frezza, Ostermann, & De Souza,

2017; Ostermann, 2017; Ostermann, in press a; Ostermann & Perobelli, 2019; Ostermann & Perobelli, 2019, 2020; Ostermann, Frezza, & Perobelli, 2021; Sell & Ostermann, 2012).

In legal and police settings, CA studies in Brazil have focused on court hearings (Del Corona, 2009; Andrade & Ostermann, 2017), police interrogation (Andrade & Ostermann, 2007; Guimarães, 2007; Konrad & Ostermann, 2020), mediation (Gago, 2017), emergency calls (Del Corona, 2015; Del Corona & Ostermann, 2012), morality in police interactions (Almeida & Oliveira, 2016; Oliveira & Ron-Rén, 2017).

As a result, we believe CA practitioners in Brazil and on talk-in-interaction in Portuguese have also contributed to making other disciplines more knowledgeable of what Applied Linguistics *is* and *does*, and the insights studies done within that perspective might offer, in particular, to certain professions, and contributed to the development of Applied Linguistics itself in Brazil.

## This special issue

In this special issue, we enthusiastically welcome studies of CA in Portuguese being carried out in a diverse set of countries: Finland, Switzerland, Portugal, and Brazil. In many ways, the manuscripts that comprise this special issue closely represent the reality of studies of CA in Portuguese, in particular, for largely focusing on institutional interactions: health (Andrade, Frezza, & Ostermann, and Cruz & Tamanaha), social work (Monteiro and Lisboa & Ron-Ren), police (Dinucci, Oliveira, & Gago), and shop encounters (Mondada). Moreover, following the trend described in the earlier sections, the major angle of the studies' attention is to look at the 'micro' locus of social interaction to discuss larger issues, such as social justice (Velasco, Oliveira, & Gago and Lisboa & Ron-Ren), inclusion (Harjunpää and Lisboa & Ron-Ren), agency, literacy, and access (Frezza & Ostermann and Monteiro). The increasingly multimodal approach to the study of social interaction in Portuguese is also salient as it becomes more widely used and in a larger range of settings beyond educational settings (Andrade, Cruz, & Tamanaha, Frezza & Ostermann, Harjunpää, Monteiro, Velasco, Oliveira, & Gago), which may be influenced by the work of Lorenza Mondada, also a contributor to this Special Issue. Of interest too and, at least in the Brazilian CA scenario, is the welcome advance of CA studies that investigate institutional interactions happening 'on the streets' of Brazil (Velasco, Oliveira, & Gago and Lisboa & Ron-Ren).

We do believe the collection of papers in this Special Issue on Conversation Analysis in Brazil and talk-in-interaction in Portuguese both reflect the developments over the past couple of decades we recounted above and offer a representative view of the current scholarship in CA in Brazil and of our academic exchange with European colleagues also working on the analysis of talk-in-interaction in Portuguese.

In *Language brokering and differentiated opportunities for participation*, Katariina Harjunpää examines instances of bilin-

[5] For more on the EMCA4RJ aims, see <http://emca4rj.conversationanalysis.org/> and <https://rolsi.net/2021/06/02/guest-blog-em-ca-for-racial-justice/>.



gual Finnish-Portuguese interactions in which one participant switches to the other language to translate or summarize the talk for another co-present interactant who is less proficient in either language. In addition to bringing together what would otherwise be seen as a far-flung pair of languages (and research communities), this study shows how non-vocal displays of dis/engagement, especially gaze direction, are picked up by brokering participants to re-engage the non-understanding participant or to account for previously excluding talk.

Minéia Frezza and Ana Cristina Ostermann take us to a moderate and high-risk pregnancy ward at a Brazilian public hospital to investigate video-recorded interactions during fetal ultrasound scans in *'He moved then?': The management of worry-indicative information requests in moderate and high-risk fetal ultrasounds*. Informed by a multimodal conversation analytical framework, the study investigates the participants' ethnomethods in obtaining and providing information in a multiactivity event which demands, above all, focused image attention for medical scrutiny. Despite previous studies claiming otherwise, the study reveals that in the context of pregnancy risk, where 'normality' is continuously at stake, pregnant women are highly agentive and skillful in finding opportunities to raise their concerns and to mobilize the physicians performing the exam to respond to them. Meanwhile, the physicians respond while attending to the multitasking and contingencies inherent to the context of fetal ultrasounds and which have implications for the provision of information. In this, the study also offers us a prime example of minute interactional analysis also in the service of an Applied Linguistics agenda.

In also engaging with a multimodal conversation analytical perspective, Daniela Negraes Pinheiro Andrade examines facial expression trajectories in interactions between health professionals and cardiac patients in a Brazilian hospital. *An interactional multimodal analysis of facial expressions in diagnostic communication sequences* shows how and when the patients' facial expressions change while they orient to diagnosis communication sequences as progressing or, otherwise, closing, and how they display epistemic change alterations when informed of their condition. Andrade's work thus provides students of interaction with further evidence of the crucial importance of nonverbal conduct in communicative action, and health professionals with the opportunity to reflect on how their nonverbal conduct enters into patient care.

Also within the context of healthcare and equally attentive to the affordances of nonverbal conduct in interaction, Fernanda Miranda Cruz and Ana Carina Tamanaha multimodally scrutinize interactions between nonverbal children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and a speech therapist, during which an alternative and augmentative communication system based on cards is introduced. In *From silence to embodied actions in interactions of nonverbal children with Autism Spectrum Disorder*, fine analyses of the temporality and embodied actions accomplished in silence point to how the implementation of the designedly alternative communication system is embedded in a contingently and situatedly complex interactional and multimodal organization of talk-in-interaction.

*Presenting documents to clients in Social Work encounters*, by David Monteiro, meticulously examines the accessibility of information in social institutions by focusing on how social workers in Portugal present and describe documents to clients, ensuring their ability to make sense of relevant information. In conducting a multimodal analysis of how that work is accomplished, the paper advances the study of material objects in interaction, especially textual objects, while also highlighting the need for joint sense-making of texts in bureaucratic societies.

Amanda Dinucci Almeida Bühler Velasco, Maria do Carmo Leite de Oliveira, and Paulo Cortes Gago take us to the streets of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in *The use of rear-naked choke in a police approach: a multimodal study in talk-in-interaction*. In an investigation of video recordings of the police's use of the immobilization technique popularly known as rear-naked choke, their multimodal analysis describes the decision-making process of using force as an interpretative and interactionally co-constructed process and reveals the police's anticipation of embodied coercion. Velasco, Oliveira and Gago thus offer us a poignant portrait of police brutality in Brazil, and trainers of police personnel a useful roadmap to inform better police training in the future.

Also drawing from data generated on the streets of Rio de Janeiro, *The importance of checking for mutual understanding in future meeting arrangement sequences in social assistance to homeless people*, by Carla Mirelle de Oliveira Matos Lisboa and Rony Ron-REN, unprecedentedly investigates interactions between NGO volunteers and people experiencing homelessness and social vulnerability. Their analyses show how arrangements are made as they trace how different ways of securing understanding between NGO volunteers and homeless people generate diverse outcomes in terms of success with securing understanding. In this sharp portrait of life in Brazil, interactional analysis is reportedly informative to agents working to improve service to struggling populational segments.

Finally, to close this special issue, we welcome Lorenza Mondada's *Te:mos o serra cura::do, temos o ni:sa, temos o serpa do:p: Suggesting products to buy, shaping materiality and multisensoriality in shop encounters*, which investigates the interplay of grammar, talk and embodiment, materiality, and multisensoriality in cheese shops interactions in Portugal. In analyzing the cheese merchants' offers of products to customers in their fullest senses, the paper furnishes exemplary analyses of talk in its visual, haptic, olfactory, and gustatory material ecology, and for our understanding of processes of socialization in food culture. Mondada's paper makes an important and timely contribution to the literature of *Multimodal Interactional Linguistics and Conversation Analysis* in European Portuguese for focusing on the practices for the introduction and presentation of new referents in interaction that is attentive to its socio-institutional setting.

More than to showcase efforts to practice and develop CA in Brazil and in Portuguese, we believe this Special Issue offers a number of contributions to the various fields of concern in the data sets analyzed in each of the papers. It is our expectation that this should be an invitation to a bright future in the analysis of talk-in-interaction in Brazil and on Portuguese as a language of interaction.

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