Formation of complex compositional and idiomatic words in Brazilian Portuguese: an analysis in constructionist models of Generative Grammar

The aim of this work is to relate the theory of grammar to the explanation for the formation of complex compositional and idiomatic words, considering the limit for prefix idiomatizations. The theoretical frameworks are Distributed Morphology (Marantz, 1997) and Exoskeletal (Borer, 2013), in which syntactic computation goes to the interior of words. For this debate, we consider Marantz (2007), who proposes a limit to the idiomaticity for the prefix re-, and Medeiros (2016) who, extending the debate to the prefix -re and -des in Brazilian Portuguese, addressed the recursivity of these prefixes, as in *re-remeter* (to put > to send > to resend) and *des-desmarcar* (to book > to unbook > to un-unbook), but the same does not seem to occur with the word *comprometer* (to put > to promisse > to commit), which is idiomatized even after the insertion of a second layer of prefix. The hypothesis would be that the duplicity of re-/des- prefixes would be the limit, and not the addition of a second prefixal layer. In Exosesqueletal, Borer (2013) presents the hypothesis that the formation of complex words would have no limit to special meanings, considering cases of late idiomatization (as in reactionary). In this way, comparing theoretical predictions, we argue that idiomatizations can occur in late layers of derivation. But what would be the limits for each layer of grammatical functors? Thus, the methodology adopted was to compile, through native speakers, dictionaries and internet searches, complex words derived by prefixation in Brazilian Portuguese, to analyze these words, dividing them by degree of transparency in the syntax-semantic interface, in order to observe the limits for idiomatizations and, then, have the possibility of discussing some theoretical predictions. Preliminary results indicate that cases such as *desenrolar* (to roll > to unroll > to solve) and *recompensar* (to think > to compensate > to award) indicate that the limit for idiomaticity in complex words by prefixation may not be the same as that proposed for re-/des- prefixes. Furthermore, there is evidence that the Exoskeletal model presents a greater linguistic suitability for the Brazilian Portuguese data analyzed, reducing the incidence of structural changes arising from irregular semantics.

Keywords: Structure of complex words; Syntax-Semantic Interface in word formation; Limits for prefix idiomatizations; Constructionist models of Generative Grammar; Compositionality versus idiomaticity.

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