FOR A CHARACTERIZATION OF UNATTACHED TEXTUAL CONSTITUENTS AS PARENTHETICAL COMMENTS BASED ON A MODULAR DISCOURSE ORGANIZATION PERSPECTIVE

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▪ ABSTRACT: For Decat (2011), the unattachment of constituents corresponds to structures that occur freely, without being syntactically linked to a clause or any other textual portion. In this paper, we show that constituent unattachment can be studied in the framework of the Modular Approach to Discourse Analysis. More specifically, we extend to the study of unattached constituents Roulet's (2004) proposal for the treatment of parenthetic constituents. In this paper, we will study the phenomenon of unattachment in three stages. In the first, we will study the textual relationship that links an unattached constituent to information previously expressed in the text. In the second step, we will analyze the action relation that articulates the unattached constituent to the previously performed actions. Finally, the third stage studies unattached constituents from the point of view of the operational organization form. In this last stage, the results of the previous stages will be combined to understand the discursive motivations of the unattachment. In the different stages, the unattached constituents that we will analyze were extracted from media texts, such as reports and opinion articles.

▪ KEYWORDS: Unattached constituents. Parenthetic constituents. Modularity.

Introduction

More than a strictly synthetic phenomenon, the unattachment of textual constituents is a textual formulation resource motivated by pragmatic reasons. As Decat (2011) enlightens, unattached or floating textual constituents are considered nominal phrase (NPs), appositive relative clauses (explanatory adjective clauses) or adverbial clauses, that "occur freely, without being syntactically linked to any clause"[1] (DECAT, 2011, p. 74, our translation). In the excerpt (0), extracted from an opinion article, the underlined sequence is an example of an unattached appositive relative clause.

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1 Original: "*ocorrem livremente, sem estarem vinculados sintaticamente a nenhuma oração*" (DECAT, 2011, p. 74).

0.   Representative democracy failed in guaranteeing respect to the yearnings of plural and complex societies. It does not mean, however, that the solution is denying politics and its institutions. <u>That may not be perfect, but it is what we have at the moment.</u>[2] (SAKAMOTO, 2018, our emphasis, our translation).

As for the function of these unattached constituents, Decat (2011, p. 81-82, our translation) clarifies:

> The need to reinforce a point of view, to highlight, to emphasize a certain aspect, leads the text's producer to make use of argumentative sequences, linguistically materialized through the strategy of the "*unattachment*" of clauses or NPs.[3]

For that matter, the unattachment of textual constituents is a complex phenomenon, since its study entails not only informations of syntactic nature, but, above all, informations of semantic nature for the identification of the relation that connects the clause or the NP to informations previously conveyed in the text; and of pragmatic nature, for the understanding of the roles (argumentative, discursive, communicative) that these constituents exert. In the excerpt (0), the unattached relative appositive have an essential argumentative role, as far as it allows the author to call one's attention to their point of view (*what we have at the moment are politics and the institutions)*, since this point of view is doubly highlighted by the unattachment of the clause; and, in its core, by the contraposition of a point of view that can be attributed to third parties or even to the reader (*the politics and the institutions are not perfect),* and the one that seeks to defend (*but it is what we have at the moment).*

It is because the unattached constituents allow speakers to put information on the focus of the reader or listener's attention, as the excerpt (0) illustrates, Decat (2011, p. 132-133, our translation) conceptualizes "the unattachment as a mechanism/syntactic resource that serves to the focussing strategy, alongside to topicalization and cleft"[4]. For this matter, it is the search to focus one information or one of the elements of the ongoing argumentation, giving it relevance, that leads the producer of the text, bearing in mind their own communicative purposes and the way that it interacts with their reader or listener, to build an unattached clause, presenting it as independent. The role of the focussing function on the unattachment is clarified by the author in these terms:

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[2]   Original: "*A democracia representativa falhou em garantir o respeito aos anseios de sociedades plurais e complexas. Isso não significa, por outro lado, que a solução seja negar a política e suas instituições. Que podem não ser perfeitas, mas é o que temos neste momento.*" (SAKAMOTO, 2018).

[3]   Original: "*A necessidade de reforçar um ponto de vista, de dar realce, ênfase a um determinado aspecto, leva o produtor do texto a fazer uso de sequências argumentativas, materializadas linguisticamente através da estratégia do 'desgarramento' de orações ou de SNs.*" (DECAT, 2011, p. 81-82).

[4]   Original: "*o desgarramento como um mecanismo/recurso sintático que serve à estratégia de focalização, ao lado da topicalização e da clivagem*" (DECAT, 2011, p. 132-133).

> [...] on the exercise of the textual, oral or written production, the focussing function is what will determine the occurrence of a clause as an independent statement (...), and it will determine, also, the occurrence of the 'floating' NPs with the communicative objectives of reinforcing the argumentation, highlighting a certain element or a certain fact or situation.[5] (DECAT, 2011, p.133, our translation).

In this way, by analyzing the results of the studies about unattachment of textual constituents in the Portuguese language, conducted on the functionalist perspective (especially Decat (2011)), we can state that the understanding of this phenomenon can benefit from an approach that articulates information originated from different levels of the organization of the discourse.

According to this perspective, our purpose in this paper is to demonstrate how the unattachment of textual constituents can be studied in the light of an approach from Textual and Discourse Linguistics, the Modular Approach to Discourse Analysis. Developed by a team led by Eddy Roulet, the modular model constitutes a cognitive-interactionist approach for the study of the discursive complexity. For the modular approach, the discourse, understood as a situated verbal interaction, constitutes a very complex organization form, as it results from the combination of informations from three dimensions: linguistic, textual and situation (ROULET, 1999; ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001; FILLIETTAZ; ROULET, 2002).

Given this complexity, the model draws upon the modularity as a methodological hypothesis. Thus, from the methodological point of view, the study of the discursive complexity assumes two movements. The first one, the movement of decoupling, entails "decomposing the complex organization of the discourse in a limited number of systems (or modules) reduced to simple informations"[6] (ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001, p. 42, our translation). The modules considered by the modular model are the syntactic and the lexical (linguistic dimension), the hierarchical (textual dimension), the interactional and the referential (situation dimension).

The second movement, coupling, entails combining the modular informations on the organization forms that the discourse is formed by, or "describe in a way that is as precise as possible the way how these simple informations [modular] can be combined to handle the different organization form of the analyzed discourses"[7] (ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001, p. 42, our translation). There are two types of these

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5 Original: "[...] *no exercício da produção textual, oral ou escrita, a função focalizadora é que irá determinar a ocorrência de uma oração como um enunciado independente (...); e irá determinar, também, a ocorrência dos SNs 'soltos' com objetivos comunicativos de reforçar a argumentação, de realçar ou dar destaque a determinado elemento ou a determinado fato ou situação.*" (DECAT, 2011, p. 133).

6 Original: "*decompor a organização complexa do discurso em um número limitado de sistemas (ou módulos) reduzidos a informações simples*" (ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001, p. 42).

7 Original: "*descrever de maneira tão precisa quanto possível a forma como essas informações simples [modulares] podem ser combinadas para dar conta das diferentes formas de organização dos discursos analisados*" (ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001, p. 42).

organization forms: elementary and complex. The elementary (phono-prosodic or graphic, relational, operational, enunciative, informational, semantic, sequential) result from the combination of information extracted from the modules. The complex ones (periodic, topic, compositional, polyphonic, strategic) result from the combination of information extracted from the modules and from the elementary and/or complex organization forms[8].

To better specify our goals in this paper, we seek to extend Roulet's (2004) proposition for the handling of the parenthetical constituents[9] to the study of the unattached constituents. As for Decat (2011), the unattached constituents, in particular the appositive relatives, have a parenthetical nature, which is explained by the fact that, through an unattached constituent, the text producer suspends the ongoing action momentarily (to narrate, to describe, to explain, to argue, etc.), to "focus informations according to the argumentation"[10] (DECAT, 2011, p. 79, our translation). Bearing in mind that Roulet (2004) studies the parenthetical constituents discriminating and articulating the different dimensions of the discourse (linguistic, textual and situational), we consider that extending this study to the unattached constituents can help identify some levels of discourse organization involved in the phenomenon of unattachment, contributing, in this sense, to a precise description and explanation of this phenomenon.

According to the author, every parenthetical constituent is a textual portion used by the text producer to interrupt the ongoing action (for example, the narration of a story), and perform another action (evaluating a part of the story, making a request to a third party, solving a problem on the environment, etc.) For that reason, every parenthetical constituent is a linguistic resource in which the text producer performs an action that connects to the previous performed actions by a praxeological relation of interruption. In this sense, the parenthetical nature of these constituents come from the discontinuous (or parenthetical) action they materialize.

However, on the inside of the cluster of parenthetical constituents, there is a subcluster that articulates itself to the previous constituent through a textual relation, as well as of its comment, signalling a thematic continuity between the parenthetical constituent and its linguistic context. In this case, the complexity of the subcluster of parenthetical constituents lays on the fact that to the articulation of praxeological nature (interruption) is added to another articulation, but of textual nature. From the praxeological (or actional) point of view, they connect through a relation of interruption

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8   For a detailed presentation of the Modular Approach to Discourse Analysis, cf. Roulet, Filliettaz and Grobet (2001), and Marinho (2004).

9   In this paper, the term *constituent* is used to reference all and any portion of oral or written text. Thus, this portion can correspond to a minimal textual unit (the act), as to a move formed by various acts. For a discussion about the notion of constituents, as well as of the act as the minimal constituent from the modular analysis, cf. Roulet, Filliettaz and Grobet (2001). Thompson and Couper-Kuhlen (2005) discuss the notion of *clause* as a relevant unit for the study of the role of grammar in the development of dialogical and oral texts.

10   Original: "*focalizar informações em função da argumentação*" (DECAT, 2011, p. 79).

to the previous actions. From the textual point of view, they connect through a relation of comments to the previous constituents[11].

From this perspective, Roulet (2004) proposes the existence of two types of parenthetical constituents. The first one articulates itself to the previous constituent only through the praxeological relation of interruption. The second type, however, articulates itself to the previous constituent through two kinds of relations, praxeological (interruption) and textual (comment). They are illustrated by the two excerpts below. The parenthetical constituents are in italic[12].

1. so we arrived at the farm, we saw the orchard plenty with fruits and we realized that… *can you raise the recorder a bit? [the recorder is risen] yes,* so we realized that the fruits were still green.

2. people get bored in an academic conference, *which I don't understand,* and then hurry to do other stuff.[13]

For Roulet (2004), both constituents in italic are parenthetical, since both are portions of text used by the speaker to interrupt the ongoing action and perform a different situated and transitory action (solve a problem in the environment – excerpt (1) – or to express an opinion – excerpt (2)). But the second is different from the first one. In (2) the parenthetical constituent connects to the context by a textual relation, which does not happen in the first one. While in excerpt (1) only the praxeological relation of interruption connects the constituent in italic to the previous constituent, in (2) the constituent in italic connects to the previous through the relation of interruption and the relation of comment.

As shown, because unattached constituents are parenthetical, this paper extends to the unattached analysis of Roulet (2004) originally meant for the parentheticals. More specifically, our aim is to demonstrate that the unattached constituents are parenthetical constituents of the second type proposed by Roulet (2004). In other words, they are constituents that connect to the cotext through two types of interactive relations: praxeological (interruption) and textual (comment). With this extension, we seek elements that corroborate and specify the results obtained by Decat (2011), demonstrating that the motivation for the unattachment is the fact that the unattached

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[11] According to Roulet (2002), the term *interactive relations* designates different types of relations motivated independently in different levels of discourse organization. Thus, the term covers the semantic relations, defined on the form of semantic organization, the textual relations, defined in the hierarchical module and the relational form of organization; and the praxeological relations, defined in the referential module. According to the importance of textual and praxeological relations for the understanding of the unattached constituents, these relations will be presented in a more detailed manner in the next items.

[12] These excerpts are adaptations of texts analysed by Roulet (2004, p. 10-12).

[13] Original: "*1. então chegamos à fazenda, vimos o pomar repleto de frutas e percebemos que... pode levantar um pouco o gravador? [o gravador é levantado] isso, então percebemos que as frutas ainda estavam verdes. 2. é que as pessoas se aborrecem num colóquio universitário, o que eu não entendo, e então se apressam para fazer outras coisas.*" (ROULET, 2004).

constituent comprises, at the same time, a comment to the information previously expressed and an interruption (a parenthesis) to the ongoing action or, in a single term, acting as a parenthetical comment.

In this paper, we will follow an analysis's route that will study the phenomenon of the unattachment in three steps. In accordance with the modular methodology, each step will address the unattachment of constituents in the light of a module or discourse organization form. Firstly, we will study the unattached constituents from the point of view of the relational organization, in order to describe the textual relation that connects one unattached constituent to a previously addressed information on the text. In the second step, we will analyse the unattached constituents from the point of view of the referential module, to identify the praxeological relation that articulates the action that is performed with the unattached constituent to the actions previously performed. At last, the third step will study the unattached constituents from the point of view of the operational organization form. In this last step, the results from the previous stages (relational organization form and referential module) will be combined, so that we can understand the discursive motivations for the usage of the unattached constituents.

In all steps, the unattached constituents that we will analyse were extracted from texts taken from the printed media, such as magazine reports and opinion articles. The constituents here analysed are part of the *corpus* of unattached constituents that the linguist Maria Beatriz Nascimento Decat has been collecting since 1993, and that serves as a base for her studies on the theme (for a synthesis, cf. Decat (2011)). It is a dynamic *corpus*, often updated and, for that, of a non-limited size. The occurrences contained in it come from the usage of the language, insofar as they are found. Written language data (in greater numbers) from Brazilian and European Portuguese are part of this database, they are collected from newspapers, magazines, academic papers, advertisement, e-mails, amongst others. Oral language data is also part of the *corpus*, from various genres, such as interviews, spontaneous conversations, accounts. There have been, so far, approximately 1200 structures collected. As in this paper our goal is to demonstrate that the phenomenon of the unattachment of textual constituents can be studied in the light of the Modular Analysis Model, we shall not proceed to the quantitative handling of the *corpus*' occurrences, which might become the purpose of future papers, so we opted for the systematic and qualitative study of only a few of them.

Relational organization form: the unattached constituent as a comment

The relational organization form has the objective of studying the textual relations (argument, comment, reformulation, succession, topicalization, etc.) that establish themselves amongst the text's constituents (exchange, move, and act) and previously

stored informations in the discourse memory[14]. For that reason, this organization form results from the combination of informations from the hierarchical modules (for the study of the hierarchical relations of dependency, independency and interdependency amongst the constituents of the text), referential modules (for the study of the relations of meaning that are established amongst the text's constituents and the informations of the discourse memory), lexical, and syntactic modules (for the study of marks – connectors and syntactic structures – of the textual relations). In the definition of this organization form, it is of great importance the concept of negotiation process, defined in the hierarchical module.

In this module, the interaction is conceived as a negotiation process through which the interlocutors negotiate the intentionality that is characteristic to the meeting, in accordance with their individual intentions (ROULET, 1992)[15]. As pointed out by Roulet (1988, 1999; ROULET *et al.*, 1985), this negotiation process exerts a strong impact over the structure of the entire verbal exchange. To be able to handle the way in which this impact occurs, the author proposed that the development of all interaction is submitted to two types of completions: the dialogical and the monological completions. The principle of the dialogical completion concerns the achievement of the double agreement. According to Roulet (ROULET *et al.*, 1985, p.15, our translation),

> Every negotiation has its origin in a problem that gives place to an *initiative* from the speaker, this initiative asks for a *reaction*, that can be favourable or unfavourable, from the interlocutor. If it is favourable, the speaker can end the negotiation, expressing, in turn, his *agreement*.[16]

For that matter, an interaction formed by a question (*what time is it?*), by an answer (*it's 7 o'clock*) and by an appreciation (*thank you!*) materializes a complete exchange formed by proposition (the question), a reaction (the answer) and the ratification (the appreciation). Through this exchange, the interlocutors reach the double agreement, agreeing with the closure of the negotiation process.

However, in order for the exchange to develop, the interlocutors must satisfy yet another principle, the monological completion. This principle concerns the need that the speaker, in elaborating a certain stage of the negotiation process – proposition, reaction or ratification – elaborates this stage in a sufficiently adequate and complete way, so that the interlocutor can develop the negotiation. It is the necessity to meet the

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[14] The discourse memory corresponds to the "cluster of knowledge consciously shared by the interlocutors". (BERRENDONNER, 1983, p. 230) and encompasses the extralinguistic events as well as the successively introduced information along a text.

[15] For example, in a bookstore, the shared intentionality by the bookseller and the client (sale-purchase of books transaction) is negotiated, along the interaction, according to the intentions of each party (while the bookseller wants to sell, the client wants to purchase books) (FILLIETTAZ, 2003, 2008).

[16] Original: "*toda negociação tem sua origem em um problema que dá lugar a uma iniciativa do locutor; essa iniciativa pede uma reação, que pode ser favorável ou desfavorável, do interlocutor. Se ela é favorável, o locutor pode encerrar a negociação, exprimindo, por sua vez, seu acordo.*" (ROULET *et al.*, 1985, p. 15).

restriction of monological completion that explains why the moves of each participant of such an effective exchange are rarely so simple, such as the example from the previous paragraph. The most common occurrence, as Roulet points out (1988, 1999; ROULET *et al.*, 1985; ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001), is that the moves are structurally very complex, and a question, for example, is formed by various acts, moves and even subordinate exchanges.

In this perspective of interaction as a negotiation, the textual relations defined in the form of relational organization correspond to maneuvers that the interlocutors perform with the aim to meet the principles of dialogical and monological completion. Thus, making a concession, commenting on parts of the text, imposing conditions, reformulating an information or sustaining a point of view with arguments – these are maneuvers that allow the interlocutors to try to produce a move sufficiently adequate for the ongoing negotiation (CUNHA, 2017a, 2017b).

Roulet proposes two types of textual relations: the illocutionary, which is linked to the principle of dialogical completion; and the interactive, which is linked to the principle of monological completion. The categories of illocutionary relations are: initiative (question, request and assertion) and reactive (answer and ratification)[17]. On the other hand, the interactive relations categories are: argument, counter-argument, reformulation, topicalization, time (succession), preparation, comment, clarification (ROULET, 2003, 2006; CUNHA, 2012)[18].

In this form of organization, the representation of the way in which the interlocutors establish the textual relations, aiming to meet the restrictions of monological and dialogical completion, is made through hierarchical-relational structures. With these structures, the hierarchies and the relations that the constituents of the text establish with previously stored information in discourse memory are described. As an example of the way how the form of relational organization of a text is represented, we shall return to the excerpt (2) presented in the Introduction[19].

2.   (1) people get bored in an academic conference, (2) *which I don't understand*, (3) and then hurry to do other stuff.[20]

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[17]   In the modular model, the illocutionary value (question, request, assertion, etc.) does not characterize the isolated act, such as in the theory of the speech acts (AUSTIN, 1962; SEARLE, 1995), but the relation that a move (formed by one or many acts, moves and exchanges) establishes with the informations expressed in the following move and the previous move (ROULET, 1980, 1999; ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001).

[18]   The illocutionary and interactive relations presented correspond to generic categories of textual relations. This way, each relation encompasses a cluster of specific relations. For example, the relation of *argument* is a generic category that encompasses the specific relations of *cause, exemplification, potential argument (condition), suplementar argument, etc*. The identification of these specific relations are made according to an inferential computation in which the informations of linguistic, textual, and situational nature of the text in analysis constitute premises for the acquisition of the final interpretation about which specific relation connects a text constituent to an information from the discourse memory (ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001; ROULET, 2003, 2006).

[19]   The numbering indicates the segmentation of the text into acts.

[20]   Original: "2. (1) *é que as pessoas se aborrecem num colóquio universitário, (2) o que eu não entendo, (3) e então se apressam para fazer outras coisas*."

With the first two acts, the interlocutor introduces arguments that explain why, in a conference, people hurry to do other stuff, which is the information expressed in the third act. For that reason, the acts (1-2) form a subordinate move that connects to act (3) by a relation of argument. In the move formed by (1-2), the speaker, through the act (2), comments on the information expressed in (1). For that reason, the act (2) is subordinate to (1) and connects to it through a relation of comment. The hierarchical-relational structure presented in Figure 1 represents that analysis[21].

Figure 1 – Hierarchical-relational structure of the excerpt (2)
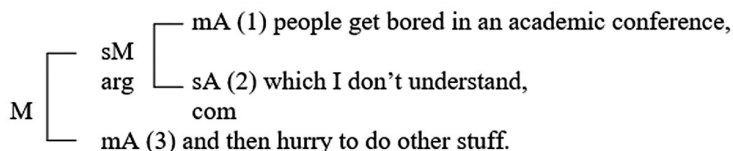
Source: Authors' elaboration.

As shown in the Introduction, our hypothesis is that the unattachment of a textual constituent is motivated by the fact that this constituent comprises, at the same time, a comment to something expressed previously and a linguistic resource with which the ongoing action is interrupted. In the modular model, the relation of interruption is studied in the referential module, which we will address in the next item. Moreover, the comment is defined as an interactive relation which aims to allow the text producer, through an hierarchically subordinate constituent, to perform an evaluation or bring a clarification about the information expressed on the previous constituent (CUNHA, 2016). It is what happens in this passage extracted from a magazine report about irregularities on the usage of public money[22].

3. (1) In 1998, (2) *mineiros* and *capixabas* were excited with the beginning of the construction of BR-342, (3) that would connect the north of *Espírito Santo* to *Minas Gerais*. (4) To pave the 106 kilometers of the highway, (5) three contracts were signed with two contractors. (6) On all three (7) the TCU [Federal Accounts Tribunal] found overpricing - always around 50% of the global value. (8) Furthermore, part of the services that the contractors claim to have executed were not fiscalized by the government. (9) At last, the value of the contracts increased without any technical justification. (10) One weirdness after another. (11) As the construction became a drain of public money, (12) the TCU asked for its shutdown. (13)

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[21] According to the proposition of Roulet (2004; ROULET; FILLETTAZ; GROBET, 2001), the hierarchical-relational structures present in this paper are made by exchanges (E), moves (M) and acts (A). These constituents can be main (m) or subordinate (s) in relation to each other. Amongst the constituents of the structures that will be presented, there are textual relations of argument (arg), counter argument (c-arg), comment (com), succession (suc), preparation (pre) and clarification (cla).

[22] The magazine report, from which this passage was extracted, is named "Underground detours", and it was published in the *Veja* magazine from 01/06/2010. This report is part of the *corpus* of the research mentioned in Cunha (2013).

Today, (14) there are only 33 paved kilometers. (15) 27 kilometers more are passable, (16) but still have not received a drop of asphalt. (17) On the remaining 46 kilometers, (18) the construction has not even been initiated[23].

Through the hierarchical-relational structure presented in Figure 2, it is possible to highlight the interactive relation of comment that, on excerpt (3), connects the unattached constituent (act 10) to information previously stored in the discourse memory.

Figure 2 – Hierarchical-relational structure of the excerpt (3).
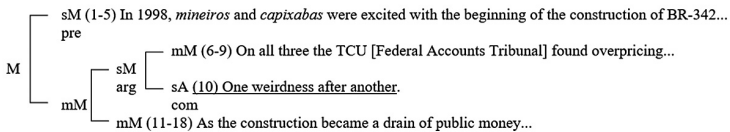
Source: Authors' elaboration.

As represented in the structure, the unattached NP *One weirdness after another* is a subordinate act that connects to information of the discourse memory originated in the move formed by the acts (6-9) through a relation of comment, a move in which the reporter presents the problems connected to the construction of the highway.

As shown by Decat (2011, p. 79-80, our translation), "the 'unattachment' of certain structures is a consequence of the necessity to highlight, to focus informations in accordance to the argumentation"[24], necessity which is explained by the search from the text producer for "convincing the reader about their point of view, about their stance on the theme that is being developed"[25]. For that reason, the author observes that one characteristic of the unattached constituents is to exert the role of evaluation.[26] The way

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[23]   Original: "(1) Em 1998, (2) mineiros e capixabas se animaram com o início da construção da BR-342, (3) que ligaria o norte do Espírito Santo a Minas Gerais. (4) Para pavimentar os 106 quilômetros da rodovia, (5) foram celebrados três contratos com duas empreiteiras. (6) Nos três (7) o TCU [Tribunal de Contas da União] encontrou sobrepreço – sempre na casa de 50% do valor global. (8) Além disso, parte dos serviços que as empreiteiras alegam ter executado não foi fiscalizada pelo governo. (9) Por fim, o valor dos contratos aumentou sem nenhuma justificativa técnica. (10) Uma estranheza atrás da outra. (11) Como a obra se tornou um sorvedouro de dinheiro público, (12) o TCU pediu sua paralisação. (13) Hoje, (14) há apenas 33 quilômetros asfaltados. (15) Outros 27 quilômetros são transitáveis, (16) mas ainda não receberam uma gota de asfalto. (17) Nos 46 quilômetros restantes, (18) a obra nem sequer foi iniciada."

[24]   Original: "*o 'desgarramento' de certas estruturas é uma decorrência da necessidade de destacar, de focalizar informações em função da argumentação*" (DECAT, 2011, p. 79-80)

[25]   Original: "*convencer o leitor sobre seu ponto de vista, sobre sua postura diante do tema que está desenvolvendo*" (DECAT, 2011, p. 79-80)

[26]   In her study of the parenthesis, Jubran (2006, p. 326-356) proposes a functional characterization of the parenthesis, considering it the "the focus which is affected predominantly by the facts of parenthesization" (p. 326). Thus, the parenthesis are distributed amongst the ones that focus i) the topical elaboration of the text, ii) the speaker, iii) the interlocutor and iv) the communicative act. Each of these parenthesis classes exercise different roles. For example, the parenthesis that can be classified as focalizers of the topical elaboration exercise the roles of exemplification, clarification, reservation, adjustment and correction (cf. synthesis board in Jubran (2006, p.327)). Even if this paper's intention is not to bring the studies about unattached structures closer to the study about the roles of the parenthesis,

we see it, it is what happens in the excerpt (3). In it, after presenting the irregularities linked to the construction of the highway, the reporter makes an evaluation of these irregularities on act (10), expressing their point of view about the issue and, for that reason, trying to convince the reader of that point of view. In this respect, the reporter connects the act (10) to the problems relative to the highway's construction, mentioned by them in (6-9), through a relation of comment. According to the function that the unattached constituents exercise, this evaluative nature is inherent to the phenomenon of the unattachment in general, independently of the syntactical nature of the unattached constituent, as is evidenced by the relative appositive clause present on the excerpt (0), presented on the Introduction and reproduced next.

0. (1) Representative democracy failed in guaranteeing respect to the yearnings of plural and complex societies. (2) It does not mean, however, that the solution is denying politics and its institutions. (3) That may not be perfect, (4) but it is what we have at the moment.[27]

In this excerpt, the author uses the unattached appositive relative (acts 3-4) to make a comment about the information "politics and its institutions", expressed in act (2). However, with this comment, the author, more than introducing factual information about Brazilian politics and institutions, evaluates this same information.

In the next item, we shall discuss the parenthetical and evaluative nature of the unattached constituents in the light of the referential module.

Referential module: the unattached constituent as a parenthetical actional unit

In the modular model, the purpose of the referential module is to describe the relations that the discourse maintains with the world or the context in which it is produced, as well as the relations that the discourse maintains with the world(s) it represents. According to Roulet (1996, p. 22, our translation), "these worlds can be analysed in mental representations of praxeological kind for the actions, and of conceptual kind for the beings and the objects"[28]. Thus, this module seeks to handle, on one hand, the verbal and non-verbal actions performed or designated by the interlocutors, and, on the other, the concepts that are activated in such actions.

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conducted by Jubran (2006), which is a topic that can constitute the objective of a future study, it is possible to suggest that the essentially evaluative nature of the unattached constituents allow them to exercise basically the roles of clarification and evaluation of the communicative act. There is, this way, an interesting research scope for the refining of our perception that the unattached constituents exercise a general role of evaluation.

[27] Original: "*0. (1) A democracia representativa falhou em garantir o respeito aos anseios de sociedades plurais e complexas. (2) Isso não significa, por outro lado, que a solução seja negar a política e suas instituições. (3) Que podem não ser perfeitas, (4) mas é o que temos neste momento.*"

[28] Original: "*esses mundos podem ser analisados em representações mentais de tipo praxiológico, para as ações, e de tipo conceitual, para os seres e as coisas*" (ROULET, 1996, p. 22).

Bearing this paper objectives' in mind, we shall address only the way how, in the referential module, the verbal and non verbal actions effectively performed in an interaction are studied. To carry out this study, the model presents the praxeological structure, an instrument of analysis with which the actional routes performed by the interlocutors are represented.

In the studies of the language, the actions are traditionally addressed with the input of the speech acts theory which shows that saying is doing, although it still remains essentially connected to the verbal language (AUSTIN, 1962; SEARLE, 1995). However, the complexity of our interactions result, in large part, from the fact that in them we perform not only verbal actions (ask, invite, order), but also non-verbal actions (grab and give objects, point to elements of the environment, redirect the course of actions). For that reason, the development of an interaction often implies a complex range of sequentially and hierarchically organized behaviors (FILLIETTAZ, 1997, 2000, 2004). To describe the sequential and hierarchical nature of behaviors, the praxeological structure represents the actional units that take part in its construction, as well as the relations through which the units connect in different levels of the structure.

The actional units that take part in the construction of the praxeological structure are, in decreasing order: the *encounter*, the *transaction*, the *episode*, the *phase* and the *minimal action*.

The *encounter* constitutes the maximal praxeological unit and is formed by the totality of actions performed in an interaction. One example of encounter can be a complete electoral debate or the range of behaviors connected to the purchase-sale transaction of a book in a bookstore (FILLIETTAZ, 1997, 2000).

The *transaction*, unit that is part of the encounter, is formed by the behaviors connected to a central focus or "transactional object"[29] (FILLIETTAZ, 2000). In an electoral debate, the transaction is the range of behaviors connected to the discussion of each theme (education, health, labor, urban mobility). In a bookshop, it is the range of behaviors connected, for example, to the purchase of a book.

The *episode* and the *phase* are intermediate units that handle the hierarchical structuration of the conducts that form the transaction. In other words, they are the sequence of constitutive actions of a transaction. In a debate, it is the range of the actions involved in the elaboration of the questions, answers, replies and re-replies/rebuttal of each candidate. In a bookstore, however, it is the procedure of a book request, for example, in which the client begins the purchase transaction.

The *minimal action* constitutes the smallest praxeological unit and it is "guided cognitively by an objective or an intention and potentially identifiable as such by a co-agent"[30] (ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001, p. 121, our translation). In an electoral debate, it is the greeting, the critics, the promises, the consultations to printed

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[29]   Original: "*objeto transacional*" (FILLIETTAZ, 2000).

[30]   Original: "*guiada cognitivamente por um objetivo ou uma intenção e potencialmente identificável como tal por um co-agente*" (ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001, p. 121).

material, etc. In a bookstore, it is the payment, the appreciation, the farewell, taking of a book from the shelf, the delivery of the change, etc.

These praxeological units connect in different levels of the structure through three relation categories: *stage, reorientation* and *interruption*. The *stage* indicates that a certain objective is being executed. The *reorientation* indicates that an objective was unsuccessfully executed, taking the interlocutors to a local or global reorientation of the interaction. The relation of *interruption* indicates the transitory or definitive abandonment of an objective (ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001).

As shown in the Introduction, Roulet (2004), dealing with the parenthetical constituents, defines them as constituents with which the text producer interrupts the ongoing action to perform a localized and transitory action. In other words, what gives these constituents their parenthetical nature is the fact that they are resources used to materialize (textualize) a discontinuous actional unit or that interrupt the ongoing action. Thus, from the praxeological point of view, a constituent is considered parenthetical if it corresponds to an actional unit that connects to the previous unit by a relation of interruption.

A similar definition of the parenthesis is proposed by Berrendonner (2008). For the author, the parenthesis constitute "interleaved sequences in medium position in a textual configuration of the type $[A_1 [PI] A_2]$"[31] (BERRENDONNER, 2008, p. 7), in which A1 is an unfinished communicative unit ("enunciation of an incomplete *clause,* or interrupted periodic structure"[32]), A_2 is an unit that follows up on the construction initiated in A_1 and PI (parenthetical insertion) is "an interleaved exogenous sequence"[33]. According to the author, the interleaved and exogenous nature of the PI manifests either in its syntactic autonomy of unit that is not integrable to the structure $[A_1...A_2]$, or on the fact that it promotes the interruption of the text while still in construction process (A_1), implying, in oral texts, specially well-described phenomena by the researchers of Conversation Analysis (SCHEGLOFF, 2007), such as backtracking, anacolutes, prosodic restart or even the abandonment of the construction initiated in A_1.

The insertion of a parenthetical element in a structure $[A_1...A_2]$ happens in the excerpt (1), presented in the Introduction and reproduced next, in which the parenthetical constituent – *can you raise the recorder a bit? [the recorder is risen] yes* – corresponds to a part of an episode in which the interviewer performs the action of narrating the *trip to a farm's orchard.*[34]

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[31] Original: "*sequências intercaladas em posição mediana em uma configuração textual do tipo* $[A_1 [IP] A_2]$" (BERRENDONNER, 2008, p. 7).

[32] Original: "*enunciação de uma clause incompleta, ou estrutura periódica interrompida*".
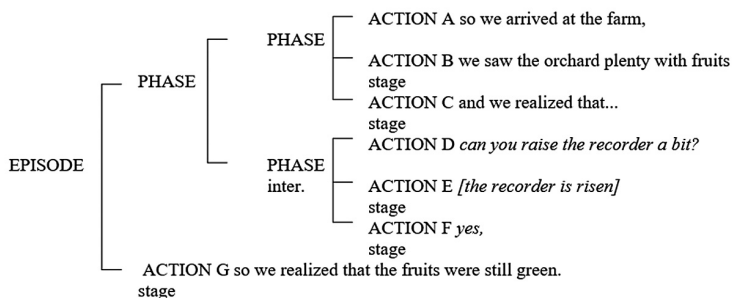
[33] Original: "*uma sequência intercalar exógena*".

[34] The letters indicate the segmentation of the text in minimal actions.

1. (A) so we arrived at the farm, (B) we saw the orchard plenty with fruits (C) and we realized that… (D) *can you raise the recorder a bit? (E) [the recorder is risen] (F) yes, (G)* so we realized that the fruits were still green.[35]

We represent the way how the actions are articulated in the episode through the praxeological structure present in Figure 3:

Figure 3 – Praxeological structure of excerpt (1).

ACTION A so we arrived at the farm,

ACTION B we saw the orchard plenty with fruits
stage
ACTION C and we realized that...
stage
ACTION D *can you raise the recorder a bit?*

ACTION E *[the recorder is risen]*
stage
ACTION F *yes,*
stage
ACTION G so we realized that the fruits were still green.
stage

PHASE
PHASE
PHASE inter.
EPISODE

Source: Authors' elaboration.

The three minimal actions D *(request)*, E *(the fulfillment of the request)* and F *(the ratification of the request)* constitute a phase with which the interlocutors *solve one problem for the interview*. This phase connects to the previous by the relation of interruption, because, through it, the interviewee suspends action C, in which they had begun to *narrate the complication of the story*, an action that will be resumed after the end of the parenthesis, in action G. According to this interpretation, the phase formed by actions (D-F) promotes a momentary and not definitive interruption of the phase that was being performed, because, when the problem that motivated the interruption (the position of the recorder) was solved, one of the interlocutors, the interviewee, continues the action of narration.

The definition of parenthesis as the interruptive insertion of an actional unit in a broader actional unit has consonance with the definition of parenthesis proposed by Jubran (2006). Even though it is based in a theoretical basis different from ours, and it seeks to handle the insertion of topical units, a problem that, in the modular model, is studied in the way of topical organization; the author also understands that, in the process of inserting a parenthesis (parenthesization), the speaker promotes the transitory suspension/interruption of the ongoing topic to insert a subtopic in a specific way. In their definition of parenthesis,

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35 Original: "*1. (A) então chegamos à fazenda, (B) vimos o pomar repleto de frutas (C) e percebemos que... (D) pode levantar um pouco o gravador? (E) [o gravador é levantado] (F) isso, (G) então percebemos que as frutas ainda estavam verdes.*"

The inserted element provokes a brief suspension of the topic in which it fits, in a way that the split of this topic does not happen in textual parts that are clearly separable, because its interruption is momentary and the resumption is immediate. We would have, then, topic A (transitory suspension of topic A) continuity of topic A[36] (JUBRAN, 2006, p. 302-303, our translation).

In the praxeological level of the discourse organization, it is understood that the same phenomenon happens when an unattached constituent is employed. In this level, the action of introducing an unattached constituent in a certain part of the text corresponds to the action of interrupting an ongoing action to perform another action in a temporary and localized manner. It is this interruptive nature of the unattached constituents that, in the modular perspective adopted in this paper, allows us to understand them as parenthetical.

At the same time, it is this same interruptive nature of the constituents that explains why the unattachment, as shown by Decat (2011), is one of the syntactic resources through which it is possible to perform the focusing strategy. After all, it is necessary to interrupt the action that is being performed, so that a certain action is better put on the focus of attention of the reader or listener, highlighting it. Not by chance, Berrendonner (2008), in his definition of the parenthesis shown above, remarks that the parenthetical insertion corresponds to a unit characterized by the syntactic autonomy. The unattached statements are not only syntactically autonomous, but also prosodically in the oral text (pause preceding the statement and intonational outline of beginning and end of an unit (DECAT, 2011, p. 128)) and graphically autonomous in the written text (statement preceded by a period and initiated by a capital letter) (DECAT, 2011, p. 115).
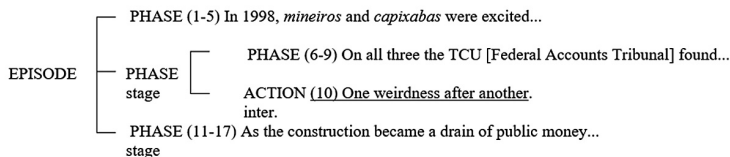
The parenthetical or interruptive nature of the unattached constituents is evidenced in excerpt (3), analyzed in the previous item. In it, the reporter begins by reporting that the construction of BR-342 that would connect northern *Espírito Santo* to *Minas Gerais*, motivated the signing of three contracts with two contractors (1-5)[37]. Giving sequence to this narrative, they introduce the complication of the story by informing that three irregularities were identified by TCU in the construction: overpricing, lack of government fiscalization. and increase in the price of the contracts (6-9). At this point of the text, the reporter suspends the narration to express, in act (10), his opinion (evaluation) about these same occurrences (*one weirdness after another)*. After this action is performed, the reporter resumes the narration, informing how TCU acted on the

[36] Original: "*o elemento inserido provoca uma breve suspensão do tópico no qual se encaixa, de modo que não ocorre a cisão desse tópico em porções textuais nitidamente separáveis, porque a sua interrupção é momentânea e a retomada é imediata. Teríamos, então: tópico A (suspensão momentânea do tópico A) continuidade do tópico A* (JUBRAN, 2006, p. 302-303)."

[37] The numbering present in excerpt (3) refers to the textual acts, defined in the hierarchical module. But, to make the reading of the praxeological structure (Figure 4) easier, we will utilize the same numbering to reference the minimal actions (referential module) that the excerpt is composed of.

face of the problems and the state of the highway at the moment of the writing/publishing of the report (11-17). This praxeological analysis can be represented through Figure 4:

Figure 4 – Praxiological structure of the excerpt (3).

EPISODE
— PHASE (1-5) In 1998, *mineiros* and *capixabas* were excited...
— PHASE stage
    PHASE (6-9) On all three the TCU [Federal Accounts Tribunal] found...
    ACTION (10) One weirdness after another. inter.
— PHASE (11-17) As the construction became a drain of public money... stage

Source: Authors' elaboration.

As evidenced by this structure, the parenthetical nature of the unattached NP *one weirdness after another* comes from the fact that, by producing it, the reporter promotes an interruption or a suspension of the ongoing narration. With the unattached NP, they suspend the narration to, by opening a parenthesis, reveal to the reader the weird or suspicious character of these irregularities. With the evaluation done, the author can resume the action of narrating, expressing the measures taken by TCU – acts 11-12 – and the situation of the highway at the moment of the writing/publishing of the magazine report – acts 13-17.

In the next item, we will describe, through the combination of hierarchical-relational and praxeological structure, the joint role of these different levels of discourse organization in the occurrence of unattached constituents.

## Form of operational organization: the unattached constituent as a parenthetical comment

In the modular model, the operational organization form has the objective of describing a specific domain of the complexity of the discursive productions, the articulation between the action and the verbal language. Depending on the characteristic of the context that we are in, we can perform the same actions as, for example, greeting, through different semiotic means. Thus, we can greet using an act of speech (*Are you ok?*), hand wave, a smile accompanied by a nod or an *emoji*. In this way, from the multiple actions we need to perform when we interact, one is the choice of how to *semiotisize* our actions, according to the restrictions imposed by the context (FILLIETTAZ, 2004, 2011). Therefore, one of the causes of the complexity of our interactions is the profound complementarity between the actions and the semiotic resources (verbal, signs, images, etc.).

In an approach that handles the complexity of the discourse organization, as the modular approach, the study of this complementarity is done through operational organization, that results from the articulation of two levels of discourse organization:

the hierarchical-relational structure and the praxeological structure. Separately studied in the previous items, these structures, when combined, allow us to "specify the nature of the relations that the actional processes maintain with the complex semiotic ways that mediate them"[38] (ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001, p. 210, our translation). For that matter, the combination of these structures is one of the ways through which the modular module studies multimodality (or pluricanality) intrinsic to the discursive productions (ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001).

To show the way in which the different actions and semiotic resources are combined in the same discursive production, we perform the analysis of the operational organization form of excerpt (1), which praxeological structure was described in the previous item. Figure 5 constitutes the result from the analysis of the operational organization form of the excerpt. In it we see, on the left, the praxeological structure and on the right, the hierarchical-relational structure.[39]

Figure 5 – Operating structure of the excerpt (1).
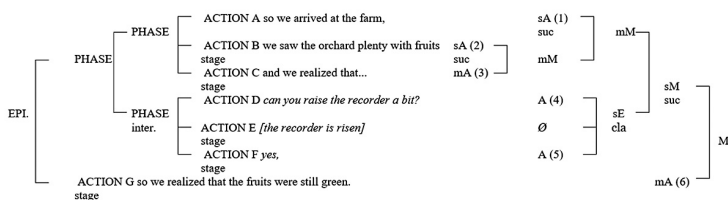
Source: Authors' elaboration.

With the operational structure, we verify that, in this excerpt, the interlocutors perform the actions not only through verbal language, but also through gestures. Thus, while the interviewee uses only verbal language, the interviewer, which is responsible for the action, performs in this part only a non-verbal action (action E: *raise the recorder*). Understanding that the question asked in act (4) by the interviewee is an indirect request, the interviewer reacts or "responds", performing the action of raising the recorder. This way, this structure allows a description of the synchrony between verbal and non-verbal actions that characterizes a sizable part of the effective interactions.

With this structure, we verify that the phase through which the speaker interrupts the action that was being performed *(to narrate)* to solve a specific problem (*to fix the height of the recorder)* (phase formed by acts D-F) is materialized in the exchange formed by acts (4-5), that is subordinate to the move that expresses the initial events in the story, and formed by acts (1-3). We understand that this exchange connects to the main move (1-3) through a relation of clarification, since, through it, the interlocutors jointly

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[38]   Original: "*especificar a natureza das relações que os processos acionais mantêm com as formas semióticas complexas que os mediatizam*" (ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001, p. 210).

[39]   This structure presents partial similarities with the operational structures proposed by Roulet (2004, p. 11).

solve a problem that, to the speaker, could compromise the clarity (the monological completion) of its move[40].

According to Roulet (2004), the operational structure constitutes a very effective instrument of analysis to describe not only the role of non-verbal constituents, such as the action E (*raise the recorder*), but also the role of parenthetical constituents, that, according to him, have resisted a strictly linguistic and textual analysis. As shown in Figure 5, the constituent in italic (actions D-F) is not part of the narration, since it constitutes, from the relational point of view (structure to the right), a subordinate exchange with the task of solving a problem for the clarity of the narration and, from the referential point of view (structure to the left), a phase that interrupts the ongoing action momentarily. Thus, what gives this constituent its parenthetical nature is, at the same time, its subordinate textual constituent nature and its discontinuous actional unit nature.

Since the unattached constituents, according to Decat (2011), have a parenthetical nature, we understand that the operational structure also constitutes an instrument of analysis adequate to the description and explanation of the specificities of these constituents and their use. To highlight the role of the operational structure in the understanding of unattached constituents, we propose the following operational structure of excerpt (3), which presents the narration of the irregularities in the construction of BR-342. In the previous items, we analysed the hierarchical-relational (Fig. 2) and praxeological (Fig. 4) structures of this fragment separately. The operational structure present in Figure 6 results from the combination of these two structures.

Figure 6 – Operating structure of the excerpt (3).
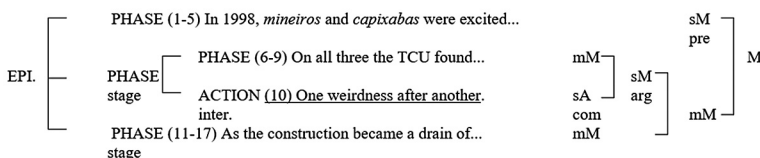
Source: Authors' elaboration.

Through this structure, we observe that the reporter, to express his opinion about the irregularities, interrupts the narration, using the unattached NP, act (10). Moreover, the parenthetical nature of this unattached constituent is explained by the fact that it constitutes an actional unit that interrupts an ongoing action. It is likely that, if from the praxeological point of view the unattached constituent did not interrupt the ongoing

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[40] In this matter, our interpretation differs from Roulet's (2004). As we informed in the Introduction, for the author, this exchange would not establish any relation of textual nature with the previous move. The only relation that would characterize the constituent in italic would be the praxeological relation of interruption.

action, the unattachment would not occur. It is what happens, for example, in act (3) from the same excerpt:

4.   (1) In 1998, (2) *mineiros* and *capixabas* were excited with the beginning of the construction of BR-342, (3) that would connect northern *Espírito Santo* to *Minas Gerais*. (...)[41]

From the textual point of view, act (3) connects to (2) through a relation of comment. However, from the praxeological point of view, the action that the reporter performs through act (3) does not interrupt the action initiated with act (2). Informing that BR-342 would connect northern *Espírito Santo* to *Minas Gerais* (act 3) constitutes a stage for the reporter to perform the action to inform that *mineiros* and *capixabas* were excited with the beginning of the construction of this highway (act 2) and not an interruption of this action of informing. Differently from the way they use act (2), the reporter, with act (10), suspends the ongoing action (to narrate) to perform another action (evaluate). The final point that separates act (10) from the co-text to the left can be understood as a graphical mark of this interruption performed in the praxeological level.

In this perspective, the role of emphasizing or highlighting informations that different authors associate to the parenthetical constituents (FORGET, 2000; ROULET, 2004; JUBRAN, 2006) and that Decat (2011) associates to the unattached constituents seems to be explained by the fact that, in the praxeological structure, these constituents interrupt the ongoing action, bringing the reader or listener to dwell on the interruptive action. For this reason, as pointed out by Forget (2000) for the parenthetical insertions, there is no contradiction in stating that an unattached parenthetical constituent is characterized by, at the same time, for being subordinate and for highlighting or emphasizing an information. As evidenced by the operational structure, the unattached constituent, in the textual level, connects to the co-text by a relation of comment, being, for that reason, subordinate; in the praxeological level, this same constituent connects through a relation of interruption to the previously performed actions, making it so that the information expressed in it gains evidence.

To make the elements of the different levels of discourse implied in the occurrence of unattached constituents more evident, we shall analyse another excerpt. In this passage of an opinion article (DIMENSTEIN, 2011), the move formed by acts (9-11) constitutes an unattached relative appositive.[42]

5.   (01) It is a crime

(02) The disclosure of the list of colleges that did not approve a single student in the OAB is only the most scandalous side of a scandal: (03) young people spent years paying for

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41   Original: "*4. (1) Em 1998, (2) mineiros e capixabas se animaram com o início da construção da BR-342, (3) que ligaria o norte do Espírito Santo a Minas Gerais. (...)*"

42   The complete text, by Gilberto Dimenstein, was analysed from the relational point of view in Cunha (2012a).

tuition (04) (generally coming from poorer families) (05) and, in the end, have to throw the diploma away. (06) It should be a crime against consumer's rights.

(07) The biggest scandal is that most will not pass, (08) around 90%. (09) What reveals a general educational drama, (10) since elementary school, (11) being aggravated in college. (12) It is people who cannot even read a text properly. (13) Most colleges are obligated to teach Portuguese classes.

(14) The scandal could be even bigger (15) if all professions demanded an exam similar to the OAB. (16) The few that exist - medicine, for example - are a tragedy already. (...)[43]

The operational structure of this excerpt can be represented through Figure 7:

Figure 7 – Operational structure of the excerpt (5).
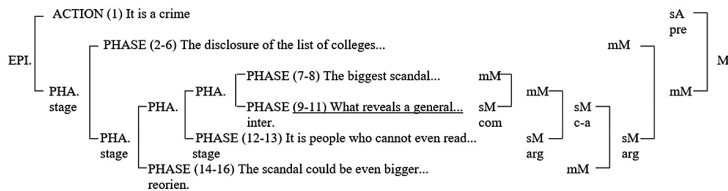
Source: Authors' elaboration.

In the textual level (hierarchical-relational structure to the right), the constituent formed by the acts (9-11) is a subordinate move that connects to the move (7-8) through a relation of comment. The reason for that is by using the unattached constituent, the author makes a comment about the education of the students mentioned in move (7-8) (for the author, the cause of the result of the OAB exam is the existence of a general educational problem – "drama"). In the actional level (praxeological structure to the left), the same unattached constituent is the semiotic mean chosen by the author to perform a phase (*expressing their opinion about the education of the students)* that connects to the previous phase *(denounce the elevated rate of rejection)* through a relation of interruption, since, in approaching the problem of the student's education (9-11), the author suspends the action of denouncing the unsatisfactory of these students in the OAB exam (7-8), action resumed by the author from act (12).

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[43]　Original: "*5. (01) É um crime (02) A divulgação da lista das faculdades que não aprovaram nenhum aluno no exame da OAB é apenas o lado ainda mais escandaloso de um escândalo: (03) jovens passam anos pagando mensalidades (04) (em geral vindos de famílias mais pobres) (05) e, no final, têm de jogar o diploma fora. (06) Deveria ser um crime contra o direito do consumidor. (07) O escândalo maior é que a maioria não passa, (08) cerca de 90% dos candidatos. (09) O que revela um drama educacional geral, (10) desde o ensino básico, (11) agravando-se na faculdade. (12) É gente que sequer sabe ler um texto direito. (13) Muitas faculdades são obrigadas a dar aulas de português. (14) O escândalo poderia ser ainda maior (15) se todas as profissões exigissem semelhante exame ao do OAB. (16) Os poucos que existem - medicina, por exemplo - já são uma tragédia. (...)*"

Just as in excerpt (3), previously analysed, what motivates the unattachment of the relative appositive formed by acts (9-11) in the article "*It is a crime!*" seems to be the fact that the author, in their search for calling the reader's attention to the evaluation expressed in this unattached constituent, makes this constituent become, at the same time, a comment and an interruption or, in a single term, a parenthetical comment.

The way we see it, the operational structure allows us to highlight this ambivalent nature of the unattached constituents, which makes it a strongly complex and argumentative strategy of textual formulation. As it occurs to the other parenthetical constituents that are characterized by the double relation of comment and interruption (FORGET, 2000; ROULET, 2004), the speaker, employing an unattached constituent, may present this constituent, at the same time, as expendable, for materializing as a simple comment (it is an effect of the textual structure); and as essential, for interrupting the actional route, calling the interlocutor's attention to the informations expressed in it (it is an effect of the praxeological structure).

The double commentative/evaluative and interruptive/parenthetical nature of the unattached constituents find supplementary evidence in written texts in which the parenthetical constituent occurs between parenthesis, as in excerpt (6), in which the unattached statement is an adverbial concessive.

6. The written form decontextualizes the joke, deprives it from a big chunk of its emotional strength, from the privilege, and the protection of the closed group. Only when we imagine ourselves in the original circumstances and remember our common humanity, can we appreciate most of these old jokes. (Even though I went through the experience of trying to demonstrate the frailness of one of these old jokes, telling it to a group, which resulted in a general laughter). The lone reader can imagine themselves in the group, but can also put themselves as the stranger, in which case the joke can offend when, originally, there was no such intention.[44] (BREWER, 2000, our translation).

In this excerpt, the parenthesis signals in an even more evident way the interruption of an ongoing action *(in doing a theoretical exposition about the joke)* to perform another *(to express a personal experience/evaluation).* The author presents the other action, materialized as the concessive adverbial, at the same time, as accessory (they make a personal comment inserted in a broader exposition) and essential (they highlight/focus on the information through the combined use of the period preceding the clause, the capital letter that initiates it, the parenthesis and the change from the 1st person of the plural – "we can appreciate" – to the 1st person of the singular – "I went through", involving themselves in the text (BRONCKART, 2007)).

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[44]   Original: "*6. A forma escrita descontextualiza a piada, priva-a de boa parte de sua força emocional, do privilégio e da proteção do grupo fechado. Apenas quando nos imaginamos nas circunstâncias originais e nos lembramos de nossa humanidade comum, é que podemos apreciar a maioria dessas antigas piadas. (Muito embora eu tenha passado pela experiência de tentar demonstrar fragilidade de uma dessas piadas velhas, contando-a a um grupo, o que resultou em gargalhada geral.) O leitor solitário pode imaginar-se no grupo, mas também pode colocar-se como o estranho, caso em que a piada pode ofender quando, originalmente, não havia essa intenção.*" (BREWER, 2000).

Final considerations

With the study of the unattached constituents, our goal was to evidentiate the complex nature of this phenomenon. More than a syntactic phenomenon, the unttachment of text constituents is a procedure of textual formulation that involves the relational and praxeological levels of the discourse. To evidence the complexity of the phenomenon, this paper extended to the unattached constituents the analysis made by Roulet (2004) about the parenthetical constituents, which was based on instruments of the Model of Modular Analysis of the Discourse. For the author, a parenthetical constituent is always characterized, in the praxeological level, by a relation of interruption and may or may not be characterized; and in the textual level, by a relation of comment.

Extending this proposal to the unattached constituents, we brought evidence, through the combination of structures specific to different organizational levels of discourse (the hierarchical-relational and praxeological structures), that they are employed with the double role of commenting something and interrupt an ongoing action. Therefore, the complexity of the unattached constituents is in the fact that they connect to information previously stored in the discourse memory by two categories of relations: a one textual (comment) and a praxeological one (interruption).

It is this double role of the unattached constituents that gives them the ambivalent nature pointed out in the ending of the previous item. When using an unattached constituents (NPs, relative, appositives or adverbial clauses), the speaker presents the information expressed in this constituent as accessory or subsidiary, because, in the hierarchical-relational structure, the constituent corresponds to an act or subordinate move that connects to an information of the text through a relation of comment. At the same time, with this same constituent, the speaker presents the information expressed in it as essential and indispensable. That is because, in the praxeological structure, the introduction of this information brings to the interruption of the actional route, which forces the interlocutor to focus their attention on this information.

In this perspective, an important motivation for the occurrence of unattached constituents is the possibility that these constituents offer to the text producer, as argumentative strategy, to focus a relevant information (praxeological structure), without putting it explicitly as an object of discussion (hierarchical-relational structure). It is this possibility that seems to explain the productivity of the unattached constituents, as attested by Decat (2011), in genres marked by controversy and the clash of ideas, as opinion articles, editorials and interviews.

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CUNHA, G.; DECAT, M. Por uma caracterização dos constituintes textuais desgarrados como comentários parentéticos à luz de uma perspectiva modular da organização do discurso. **Alfa**, São Paulo, v. 65, 2021.

■ *RESUMO: Neste trabalho, nosso intuito é evidenciar que o desgarramento de constituintes, visto por Decat (2011) como estruturas que ocorrem livremente, sem estarem vinculadas sintaticamente a nenhuma oração ou nenhuma outra porção textual, pode ser estudado à luz de uma abordagem da Linguística do Texto e do Discurso, o Modelo de Análise Modular do Discurso. Mais especificamente, estendemos ao estudo dos constituintes desgarrados a proposta de Roulet (2004) para o tratamento dos constituintes parentéticos. Neste trabalho, seguiremos um percurso de análise que estudará o fenômeno do desgarramento em três etapas. Na primeira, estudaremos a relação textual que liga um constituinte desgarrado a uma informação previamente abordada no texto. Na segunda etapa, analisaremos a relação praxiológica que articula a ação que se realiza com o constituinte desgarrado às ações previamente realizadas. Por fim, a terceira etapa estuda os constituintes desgarrados do ponto de vista da forma de organização operacional. Nessa última etapa, os resultados das etapas anteriores serão combinados com o fim de compreendermos as motivações discursivas para o emprego dos constituintes desgarrados. Nas diferentes etapas, os constituintes desgarrados que analisaremos foram extraídos de textos da mídia, como reportagens e artigos de opinião.*

■ *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Constituintes desgarrados. Constituintes parentéticos. Modularidade.*

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