

**DIVERSIDADE SEXUAL E INTEGRAÇÃO LINGUÍSTICA: FACILITANDO O CONTATO INICIAL DE MIGRANTES COM OS TRANSGÊNEROS BRASILEIROS**

***DIVERSIDAD SEXUAL E INTEGRACIÓN DEL IDIOMA: FACILITAR EL CONTACTO INICIAL DE LOS MIGRANTES CON LAS TRANSGENERÍAS BRASILEÑAS***

***SEXUAL DIVERSITY AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATION: FACILITATING INITIAL CONTACT OF MIGRANTS WITH BRAZILIAN TRANSGENERIES***

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**RESUMO:** Este artigo aborda o tema de diversidade de gênero na perspectiva da integração linguística no contexto de migração e sua relevância se dá devido a marginalização dos transgêneros causadas também pelo indevido tratamento. Portanto, o artigo tem como objetivo principal averiguar como tem sido tratados os transgêneros no Brasil, através de textos acadêmicos, jornalísticos e cartilhas instrutivas, para que, quando cabível, sejam feitas as devidas sugestões de como devem ser tratados, contudo, sem desconsiderar toda a bagagem de conhecimentos acerca do tema pelos migrantes.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Transgênero(s). Transexualismo. Gênero e linguagem. Linguística de corpus.

**RESUMEN:** *Este artículo aborda el tema de la diversidad de género en la perspectiva de la integración lingüística en el contexto de la migración y su relevancia se debe a la marginación de las personas transgénero también causada por un tratamiento indebido. Por lo tanto, el objetivo principal de este artículo es investigar cómo se ha tratado a las personas transgénero en Brasil a través de textos académicos, textos periodísticos y folletos de instrucción, de modo que, cuando sea apropiado, se hagan sugerencias apropiadas sobre cómo deben ser tratados, sin dejar de lado todo conocimiento del tema por parte de los migrantes.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Transgénero (s). Transexualismo. Género y lenguaje. Lingüística del cuerpo.*

**ABSTRACT:** *This article approaches the theme of gender diversity in the perspective of linguistic integration in the context of migration and its relevance is due to the marginalization of transgender people also caused by undue treatment. Therefore, the main objective of this article is to investigate how transgenders have been treated in Brazil through academic texts, journalistic texts and instructional booklets, so that, when appropriate, appropriate suggestions are made as to how they should be treated, however, without disregarding all knowledge of the subject by migrants.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Transgender(s). Transsexualism. Gender and language. Corpus Linguistics.*

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## Introduction

Transsexualism is still considered a pathology by the World Health Organization (WHO), a sexual identity disorder classified by the ICD-10 F64, although it was recently suggested for the next version to remove transsexuality from the list of mental illnesses. According to a report by the international NGO Transgender Europe (BALZER; HUTTA, 2012), Brazil is the country where the most murders of transvestites and transsexuals occur worldwide. Between October 2016 and September 2017, 171 murders of transgender and gender-diverse people were reported in Brazil, corresponding to 41% of these deaths in the world, making it the country that kills the most trans population in absolute numbers in the universe achieved by monitoring. This is clear proof that this group is severely segregated in our society, in addition to the fact that their most basic rights are constantly denied them - such as studying, working, being recognized and treated according to their gender identity, having documents that reflect who you are, or even go to the bathroom without feeling discriminated against.

Lately, the transgender community has positioned itself and expressed itself more vehemently on some socio-political agendas, such as, for example, the pressure for the approval and sanction of Decree 8.727 / 16, which deals with the rights of transgender people to use a name Social. In addition, on March 30, the International Day of Trans Visibility is celebrated, when this community is organized to make a great manifestation for awareness of society.

Even so, the initiatives taken so far have not been sufficient to offer a significant improvement with regard to the recognition and proper treatment of members of this community in our country: now they are marginalized, now they are absolutely invisible to the eyes of society and the State. When transgender people socialize with cisgender people<sup>2</sup>, whether in public agencies or in their own personal circles, the lack of preparation is evident - they often have no information on how to refer to or address a transgender, when they do not choose to ignore these conventions.

In addition to the problems arising from taboos, machismo, prejudiced religious beliefs, or even the lack of civility of some, there are many cases in which misinformation seems to be the main factor preventing a better integration of this group in society. And a first step towards this integration is, in our view, an **instructive** action of a linguistic nature, which starts with a study on the most appropriate terminologies and ways of treatment for transgender people. With

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<sup>2</sup> Cisgender is a term used to refer to people who identify with the gender that was designated at birth. For example: a cisgender woman is a person who was assigned the female gender at birth and identifies with it.

this, we aim to raise awareness of the Brazilian population in general and, in the specific case of this research, of refugees and other migrants from the DF region (such as, for example, foreign students at the University of Brasília).

The focus on this population is for two reasons: first, because they are also a group of people who, especially in the case of refugees, already come from a situation of marginalization and/or threat to their human rights, which makes them vulnerable and hinders their social and cultural integration - even more so when these migrants are transgender or from the LGBTQIA+ community (Lesbians<sup>3</sup>, Gays<sup>4</sup>, Bisexuals<sup>5</sup>, Transgenders<sup>6</sup>, Transvestites<sup>7</sup>, Queer<sup>8</sup>, Intersex<sup>9</sup>, Asexual<sup>10</sup>). On the other hand, it is possible that some migrants come from cultures that are even more repressive and prejudiced than the Brazilian one, in which information about transsexuality is even more scarce. Whatever the case, the very fact that the majority is not a native speaker of Portuguese imposes a linguistic and cultural barrier that we hope we can contribute to overcome with our research.

In this sense, our work falls within the scope of the MOBILANG Project - Migrations and Borders in the Federal District, coordinated by professors Sabine Gorovitz and Susana Martínez, from the University of Brasília, whose main objective is the social integration of the immigrant population hosted by the Federal District by offering linguistic support to refugees as a way of guaranteeing their human rights. This social integration is carried out in connection with different institutions (CONARE - National Committee for Refugees, DPU - Public Defender's Office, Federal Police, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, health units, penitentiaries, detention centers, UNHCR - High Commission of the Nations for Refugees, IMDH - Institute for Migration and Human Rights, etc.).

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<sup>3</sup> Women who are attracted to people of the same sex, that is, women, which is not related to their gender identity. Person who is affective-sexually attracted to people of the same gender as the person with whom she identifies.

<sup>4</sup> Men who are attracted to people of the same sex, that is, men, which is not related to their gender identity. Person who is affective-sexually attracted to people of the same gender as the person with whom he identifies.

<sup>5</sup> Person who is emotionally-sexually attracted to people of any gender.

<sup>6</sup> "Umbrella" concept that covers the diverse group of people who do not identify themselves, to different degrees, with expected behaviors and/or roles of the genre that was determined when they were born.

<sup>7</sup> In this perspective, it is understood that people who experience female gender roles are transvestites, but do not recognize themselves as men or women, but as members of a third gender or a non-gender.

<sup>8</sup> It is a gender theory that states that individuals' sexual orientation, sexual and gender identity are the result of a social construct and that, therefore, there are no essential or biologically inscribed sexual roles in human nature.

<sup>9</sup> Person whose body varies from the culturally established male or female pattern, with regard to chromosome configurations, location of genitals (testicles that have not descended, penis too small or clitoris too large, end of the urethra displaced from the tip of the penis, vagina absent), coexistence of testicular tissues and ovaries. Intersexuality refers to a wide range of variations of the bodies considered to be male and female, which encompasses, according to the medical denomination, true hermaphrodites and pseudohermaphrodites.

<sup>10</sup> Person who does not feel sexual attraction to people of any gender.

Our plan was, after doing a bibliographic review on transsexualism, considering it from the perspective of Gender Studies and Sociolinguistics, to use Corpus Linguistics to compile a corpus of texts and authentic informative materials, produced in Portuguese, on the main themes of trans culture in Brazil. This corpus served as the basis for an initial survey of the terminologies, definitions and expressions of treatment most used and preferred by the trans community. The data will serve as a starting point for the organization of promotional material, to be distributed in printed and/or electronic media to all agencies involved in welcoming refugees and other migrants in the Federal District and region.

In what follows, we present the basic theoretical notions that underlie our research project to, next, describe the methodology used in the collection, preparation and analysis of the research corpus. Finally, we present and discuss the results obtained, making some considerations about the difficulties encountered and the next steps we hope to take to continue the research.

### **Theoretical foundation**

In view of the need to promote a more adequate understanding of the diversity of gender identity and its due treatment, suggesting the appropriate treatment for these people so that the marginalization of this group is not perpetuated, therefore, three theoretical-methodological foundations were used in the research.

Firstly, we base our research on the study of gender, which is the area of human sciences that studies Gender Relations, the definitions of gender considering their respective diversities and articulation of social notions of gender, practices and bodily and sexual expressions. This research also permeates the understanding that there are new gender identities that cross the male-female binarism represented by the conceptual framework of gender in Brazil (KULICK, 2008). What was fundamental to understand gender relations in Brazil and more specifically, transvestites and their relationship with Brazilian society.

Another theoretical approach we used was Sociolinguistics, which is the area of linguistics that carries out its study from the perspective of variation and change within the language, that is, of linguistic phenomena. Therefore, in this research, the collection has texts, resulting in a total of words analyzed from the perspective of Sociolinguistics (CALVET, 2002) and, therefore, it is not restricted to the structural aspects of the language: it is understood that the diversity of items lexical to the community is a consequence precisely of the production of

variants. Thus, Sociolinguistics served us to analyze the lexical items if they, for example, vary or not.

In addition, we are based on the Corpus Linguistics proposed by Berber Sardinha (2004) and on Terminology associated with the Corpus Linguistics of Teixeira (2008) which is an area of linguistics that deals with data analysis of texts through their collection. In this way, corpus linguistics was indispensable for this research that served us to collect referring and directed texts for trans people and to analyze how this group has been treated, especially to see what has been used, in fact, when referring to these people in direct relation to what they say should be used. In addition, the area can be applied in an interdisciplinary way, that is, without changing the theoretical orientation of other subjects if necessary.

## **Methodology**

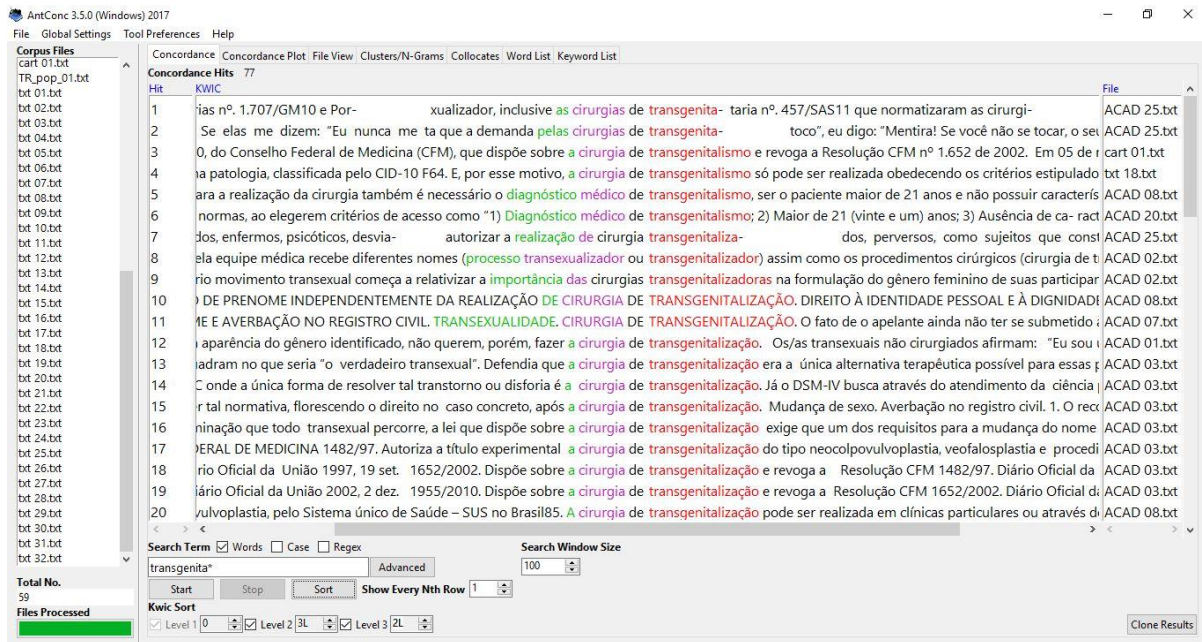
In order to know if Brazilian transgender people have in fact been treated properly, it was necessary to collect journalistic texts and information materials on the trans thematic in Brazil, so we opted for Berber Sardinha's approach (2004) for the compilation of the corpus and the terminology directed by corpus (TEIXEIRA, 2008).

The first step was to collect texts that are about trans people and targeted to this specific audience. The texts were all extracted exclusively through the internet. It is considerable to say that three types of texts were chosen to have a very broad view of how they refer to this audience. Therefore, journalistic texts, blog texts and booklets were chosen.

After the collection, it was necessary to transform all the files in txt format, in UTF-8 format and, above all, put their respective header with their labels for identification. It is necessary to clean the file by removing characters that cannot be read by the AntConc program.

After the collection and with the aid of the AntConc program, an automatic vertical reading was carried out, that is, locating the patterns of speaking in order to present the recurrence of lexical items referring to the Brazilian trans population. In addition, it was possible to statistically explore the occurrence of certain words through Rank, that is, for example: the observation of how many times the word “trans” in the collected corpus occurs. And see the combinatorial words used to refer to certain objects and/or things.

**Figure 1 - Automatic vertical reading**



Source: Devised by the author.

For the analysis after the collection, we opted for the perspective of Sociolinguistics in Calvet (2002): for example, the phenomenon of word diversity refers to the transgender community, whether part of the group in question or not. Instructional materials, such as those that make up the repertoire of the textual genre primer, formed the theoretical basis of the LGBTQIA+ themes and the contexts of immigration and refuge: some linguistic alternatives are shown among the most suitable in the Brazilian present to refer to the community trans, as well as the reality of the foreigner in Brazil is presented from the content.

From this understanding, the role of the transgender person is evidenced specifically as an active subject in the process of constructing the meaning of variants that can become sometimes prestigious, sometimes stigmatized.

## Data analysis

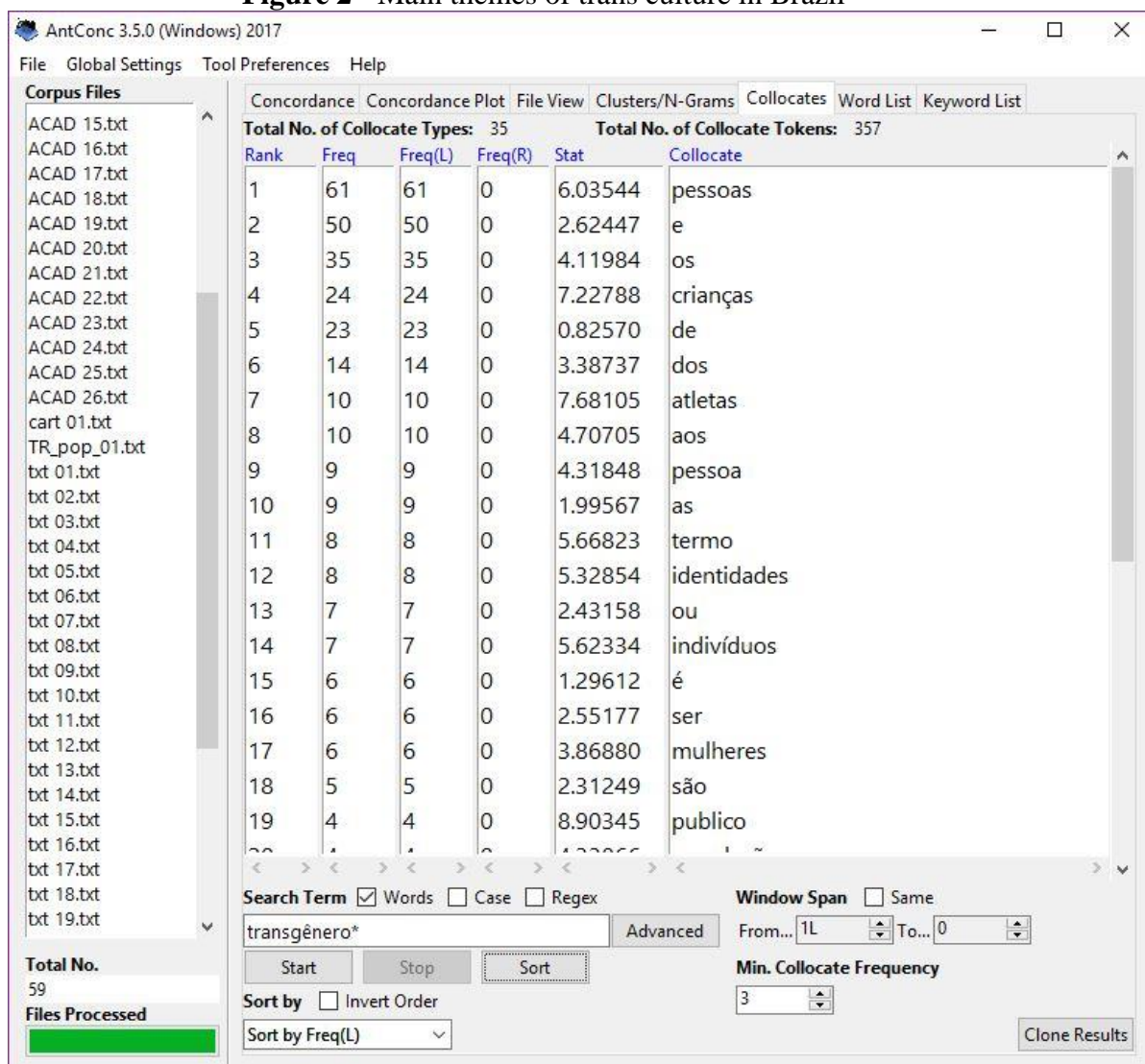
The idea was to produce informative material, to be distributed to all refugees and other migrants from the Federal District and region, containing sociolinguistic and cultural information about transsexualism, but due to the complexity and time it would not be possible to make this large survey properly.

To do so, using the theoretical-methodological approach of Corpus Linguistics (BERBER SARDINHA, 2004) and basic principles of Sociolinguistics (CALVET, 2002), we

compiled a corpus on the main themes of trans culture in Brazil, which served as the basis for a survey as we report below.

The collected corpus has 182,444 occurrence-words (tokens) and 18,308 form-words (types). The first word of content is “gender”, in position 20, in decreasing order of recurrence, with 1,169 occurrences in the corpus, followed by “people” (30<sup>th</sup>, 668 oc.), “Transsexuals” (31<sup>st</sup>, 574), “sex ”(32<sup>nd</sup>, 564) and “ trans ”(35<sup>th</sup>, 502 oc.).

**Figure 2 - Main themes of trans culture in Brazil**

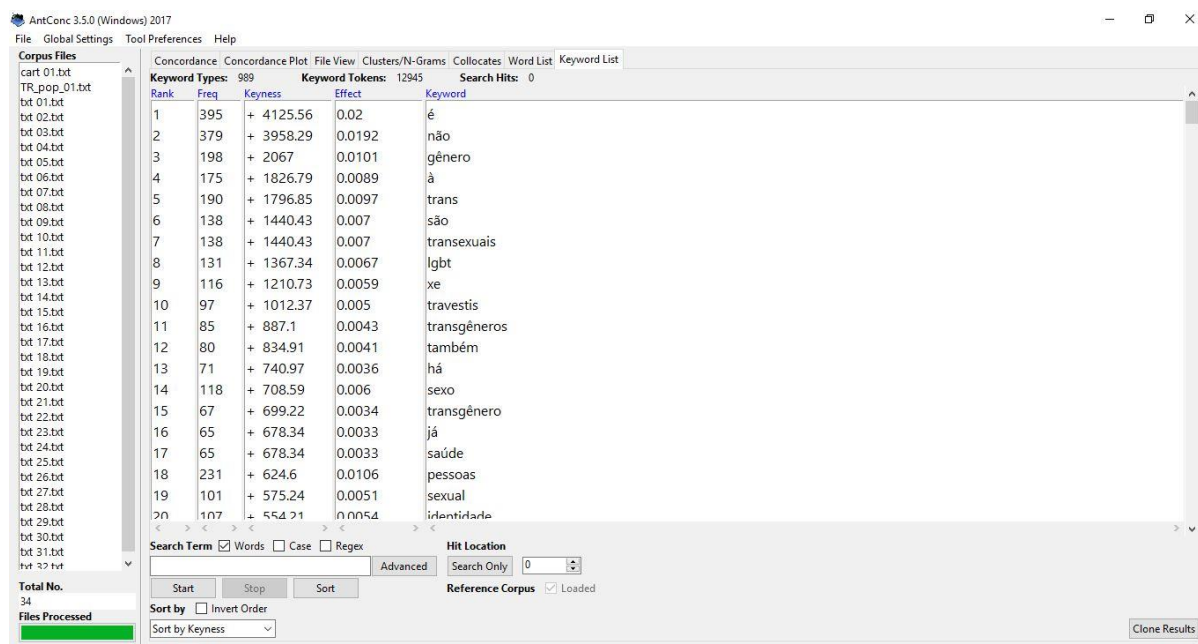


Source: Devised by the author.

Due to the difficulty of analyzing each segment of the transgender group, we made a cut here to deepen our analysis focusing on the prefix / word “trans (-)”, which occurs 2,896 times in the corpus. Among the most productive forms, we identified the binomial “transvestites and transsexuals” (116 oc.); “Trans person(s)” (128 oc.); “Transsexual” (296 oc.);

“Transsexuality(s)” (144 oc.); “Transsexualism” (75 oc.) And “transgenero(s)”<sup>11</sup> (456 oc.). We were struck by the occurrence of “transgênera(s)” (36 oc.), Which co-occurs with “person(s)” 21 times. The masculine form, with “transgênero” functioning as an invariable adjective, “transgênero person(s)”, occurred 70 times in the corpus. The binomial "transvestites and trans" was much less productive than the form containing "transsexuals", occurring only 6 times.

**Figure 2 - Deepening the analysis**



Source: Devised by the author.

Still due to the difficulty of analyzing each segment of the transgender group and its specificities, it was necessary to make three cuts in this research, namely: transgender man, transgender woman and transvestites. The pronoun of treatment was observed for each of these terms, so it is possible to verify the following occurrences:

For transgender men, the term ‘man’ appears 112 and “men” 96 times and always related to the “o”<sup>12</sup> article. Therefore, to refer to transgender men it is recommended to refer to him with the pronoun “o”, therefore the transgender or transsexual man.

For transgender women, the term “woman” appears 164 times and “women” appears 180, always treated with the article “a”. Therefore, to refer to transgender women it is suggestive to refer to her with the pronoun “a” so, the transgender or transsexual woman.

<sup>11</sup> Transgender in Portuguese is written different based on the feminine or masculine form, so for this word, as shown in the section.

<sup>12</sup> “o” is the masculine form of “the”, as “a” is the feminine form.



For transvestites, 369 words appear, mostly treated with the article “a” and only a few refer to transvestites in the masculine article “o”. Therefore, the appropriate article to use when referring to a transvestite is “a”, so it is recommended to say: “a” transvestite.

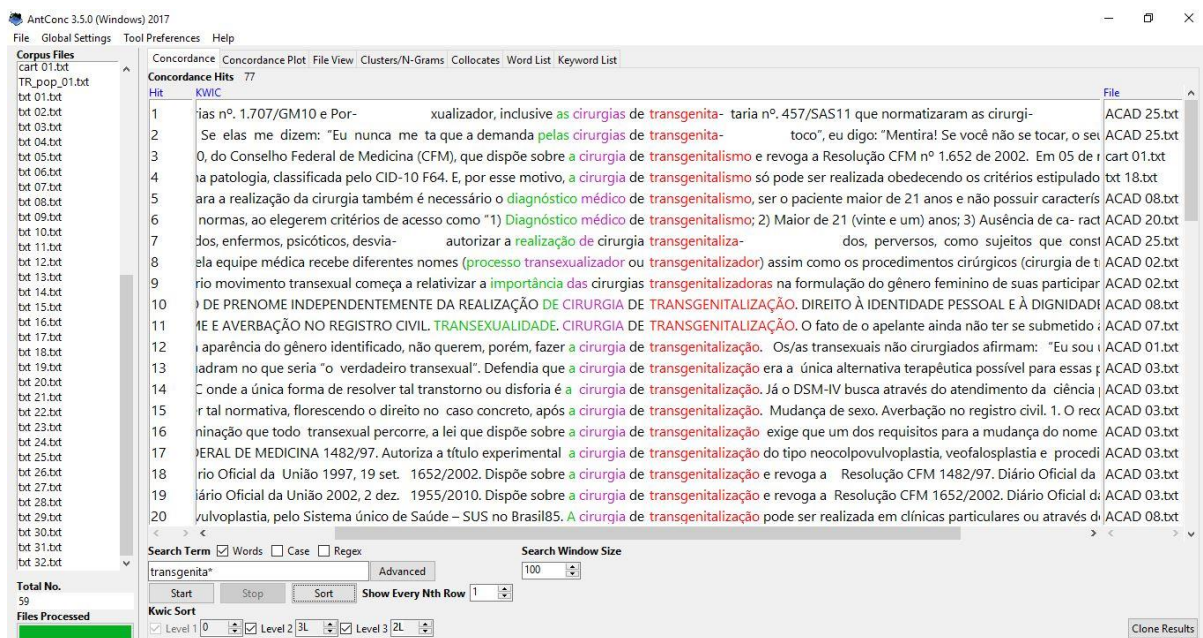
In addition, it is considerable to point out that if there is any doubt about how to treat a trans person, it is advisable to ask them how they prefer to be treated.

## Final considerations

Due to the marginalization suffered by transgenders, it was necessary to carry out research to suggest the appropriate treatment for these people. For that, a bibliographic review on transsexualism was made, a bibliographic review of Gender Studies directly related to transgender and, moreover, of Sociolinguistics, the Corpus Linguistics was mainly based on the function of compiling a corpus of academic texts, journalistic and informational materials.

Subsequently, the texts were collected, passing them to the txt format and, with the aid of the AntConc program, to make a vertical reading of the terms chosen for analysis. Based on this vertical reading, it was possible to verify the treatment pronouns that have been used to refer to these people. Like for example:

Figure 4 - Vertical reading



Source: Devised by the author.

It is expected that, with this research, another great step has been taken towards the recognition of the Brazilian transgender community by refugees and other migrants, offering

the competent host agencies more information on the subject, so that they produce materials that promote respect and good coexistence of these migrants with the local transgender community. On the other hand, it is also expected to have made a small contribution to the reception of transgender refugees, self-declared or not, providing them with the necessary linguistic and cultural tools to integrate with the local transgender community and to be able to communicate efficiently and satisfactorily with peers and other members of society. After all, the refugee's linguistic integration, and even the full exercise of their human rights, also involve communication.

Through this research it was possible to analyze texts aimed at trans people or not and to understand the way in which this public has been treated. Thus, language is a great way to make this identification with the help of Corpus Linguistics.

On the one hand, it is possible to perceive, according to the collection of texts and, mainly, the rank, that there is a preference, in general, to refer to transgender people with the term "people" to refer to the identity of gender of the individual. It was also verified the treatment that has been given to transgender people and that has been minimally respected, except for the wrong terms, mainly, in journalistic articles.

In addition, it was interesting to note that there are more and more texts dealing specifically with the theme of the non-binary trans population<sup>13</sup> which also needs to be included more sharply in issues of the trans community. With regard to the pronoun suitable for this group, it is considerable to point out that each individual's relativity was found.

On the other hand, there were recurrences that indicate that a very specific discussion on the appropriate language for the refugee public is necessary in relation to how to treat LGBTQIA+ people by those who produce the specific and instructive materials.

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<sup>13</sup> Umbrella term that embodies several different identities within itself for gender identities that are not exclusively male or female, therefore being outside the gender binary.

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## How to quote this article

SOUZA, João Roberto dos Reis de. Diversidade sexual e integração linguística: facilitando o contato inicial de migrantes com os transgêneros brasileiros. **Rev. Sem Aspas**, Araraquara, v.8, n.2, p. 167-179, jul./dez., 2019. e-ISSN: 2358-4238. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29373/sas.v8i2.13147>

**Submitted:** 22/11/2019

**Required revisions:** 05/12/2019

**Approved:** 08/12/2019

**Published:** 30/12/2019