

CONSTRUCTION ANNOTATION WORKSHOP 2020

What a bottom-up approach to construction annotation can reveal about a top-down approach to Constructicon building?

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FrameNet Brasil (FN-Br) has been building the Brazilian Portuguese Constructicon in parallel with its lexicon in an integrated unified fashion (Torrent et al. 2018). This is to say that, in FN-Br, both lexical units and constructions may evoke frames and establish relations among each other. Also, this means that constructions in the Constructicon can be related via inheritance and also constituency. This methodology has led to the development of a network of constructions that accounts not only for those phenomena beyond the scope of valence patterns of lexical units – as originally proposed by Fillmore et al. (2012) for the English Constructicon – but also for the so-called core-grammar of Brazilian Portuguese. The Brazilian Portuguese Constructicon, hence, features subnetworks for the major construction families defined by Kay and Fillmore (1999) – Head-Complement, X-Head, Modifier-Head – plus those for parts of speech, phrase types, clause connection strategies, interrogatives, negation and the like.

In a way, such a methodology for building the Constructicon can be identified as a top-down approach, since subtypes of constructions licensing words, phrases and sentences in corpora are added under some usually abstract supertype, which is never instantiated in corpora, but captures the “principles governing the composition and functions of those [actually occurring] constructions” (Fillmore, 1989:15) and structures the network of constructions. If, on the one hand, such an approach is more suitable for meeting the “constructions all the way up” commitment (Lyngfelt, 2018), it may make it more difficult to truly implement the “constructions all the way down” approach.

The shared construction annotation task to be reported on here sheds some light on the main issues arisen when bringing a top-down approach to Constructicon development together with a bottom-up approach to annotation. Specifically, we turn our attention to the problems of (i) interaction between constructions and (ii) zero-marked categories and the challenges they impose to the FN-Br model.

References

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