A sociocognitive approach to the text in the implicit construction of the referent identified by the pronouns "he/him/it/they/them" in Armandinho comic strips

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Abstract

The work aims to analyze the construction of the referent identified by the pronouns "he/him/they/them", under the influence of its insertion into a network of socio-cognitive-discursive associations, intertwined with other referents, in comic strips featuring the character Armandinho, by Alexandre Beck. To do this, we adopt an interpretative and socio-cognitive stance, drawing on authors from the perspective of referentiality such as Koch (2003, 2018), Koch and Cunha-Lima (2011), and Custódio Filho (2011); we particularly rely on Matos (2018), Cavalcante (2020, 2022) for the conceptual approach to referential networks. The corpus revolves around the selection of Armandinho comic strips, distributed across various social media platforms, following the criterion of identifying the referent by the pronouns "he/him/it/they/them", without explicit anchors, in the texts. Given the relational criterion of networks, it was observed that the indirect co-construction of the referent named by the pronouns "he/him/it/they/them" is carried out through inferences aided by the intertwining of referents, especially from discursive memory, capable of

recovering contextual information and relations of intertextuality present in the facts of the political and social scenario, around which the implicit entities are inserted.

Keywords: referential networks; pronoun "he/him/it/they/them"; Armandinho comic strip.

A sociocognitive approach to the text in the implicit construction of the referent identified by the pronouns "he/him/it/they/them" in *Armandinho* comics strips[1]

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INTRODUCTION

The construction of referents involves different factors, from cognitive to pragmatic ones, since making inferences about the referent's identity requires socio-cognitive and interactive co-constructions between the discourse's interlocutors, especially when the referent is not clearly evident in the cotext. Hence, given its network intertwining with other referents, this work aims to analyze the manifestation of the referent identified by the pronouns "he/him/it/they/them" through associations at cognitive-discursive and pragmatic levels in comic strips featuring Alexandre Becker's character Armandinho.

To reflect on how the comic strip's referential network helps to build the implicit construction of the referent of the pronouns "he/him/it/they/them" in a sociocognitive-discursive perspective, we rely on Koch (2003, 2018), Koch and Cunha-Lima (2011), among others, to discuss text studies perspectives on sociocognition; we also rely on Custódio-Filho (2011), an author who portrays advances in the area of referentiation by including broader aspects in his scope of analysis, which makes it possible to analyze discourse objects created in network and under different textual formats, including multisemiotic texts. Thus, in Matos (2018), Cavalcante (2020, 2022), we approach referentiation through the notion of referential networks, from which a referent can be designed with others in several possible ways, including without there being an antecedent term that provides an explicit anchorage in the text. This is the case of Alexandre Beck's comic strips about the character Armandinho, which present certain referential strategies expressed by introductions and/or direct/indirect anaphoras through the pronouns "he/him/it/they/them" without any direct mentions about who the entity is.

In this study, we address some characteristics of referentiation and its advances; then, we explain referentiation through the notion of referential networks and their processes. After that, we analyzed *Armandinho*'s strips based on socio-cognitive contexts of implicitness, through which we appealed to discursive memory, especially in relation to the intertextuality relations present in the referential networks of such strips.

1 Referentiation and its sociocognitive aspects

The term referentiation was postulated by Mondada (1994), who added a suffix that denotes the idea of action or process into the name "reference" and who gave it a more dynamic and unpredictable character. Therefore, it is possible to understand that the referential expressions

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[1] Translated by: Maria Eduarda Sousa Santos.

attributed to an entity, person, process, event or object are constructions that transpire in discourse. It is from this perspective that, on an interpretativist standpoint, the author proposes that referents are conceived as objects intersubjectively constructed in discourse.

According to Mondada and Dubois (2003), referentiation is no longer the representation of mundane and objective reality, as required by a referentialist notion; but it is first and foremost, as stated by Mondada and Dubois (2003, p. 20), "a relationship between text and the non-linguistic part of the practice in which it is produced and interpreted". It is important to highlight that the non-linguistic aspect to which the authors refer to include vast factors for the construction of textual meanings, which include traces of social, cultural, pragmatic and cognitive contexts.

In this sense, in a socio-cognitive approach, Koch and Cunha-Lima (2011) classify referentiation as a dynamic process as well as a collaborative activity between interlocutors, that is, as an interactively co-constructed negotiation. In this perspective, it is argued that the meaning of the text is not calculated or understandable in a set of isolated discourse objects, but rather as historically and socially situated and (re)modeled under our intercognitive action on the world.

In this context, authors such as Marcuschi (2002, p. 31) discuss how complex this process of communicating and being understood is, since not everything is explicit in the communicative act. Therefore, according to the author, "referentiation is a creative activity and not a simple act of designation". Thus, this creativity in choosing the referent and, we would also say, the way in which it associates with others in the network requires an active reader who relates not only what is in the co-text (theme, language style, among others) but also what is found at the inferential level, as well as at the pragmatic and discursive level (with regard to the context, not only situational, but also the "socio-historical-cultural environment" (Koch, 2018,) as well as the interactional context, since the context is constructed in the interaction of the interlocutors themselves.

According to Cavalcante (2022), referentiation is the most fruitful approach in Text Linguistics because it relates to other analytical criteria of the text. In this sense, the referents emerge through the text - be it spoken, written, imagetic, auditory, among others - in an interactive and staged manner through a communicative circuit where the social actors construct their sayings and how they should report to one another taking into account social aspects, such as beliefs and ideologies as well as social and media facts shared through a discursive memory.

Accordingly, textual processing, as well as referencing, is above all a cognitive process that is directly linked to the types of memory. As a consequence, discursive memory is something essential that social subjects use when interacting with certain texts loaded with a high level of implicitness, such as comic strips. This happens because this is a type of memory that corresponds to the set of representations that people make of themselves and others, of themes, of shared sociocultural knowledge and of the argumentative negotiations that take place in interactions, calculated by perceptions which arise from spoken and unspoken (implicit) statements as well as from the contextual factors that surround the meanings. According to Cavalcante, Custódio Filho and Brito (2014, p. 153): "The successive stages of this representation in discursive memory are largely due to the negotiation mediated by referential processes". As we will see in our analysis, the implicit and intentional reconstruction of certain referents is possible through the use of discursive memory because the interlocutor is able to understand them through a series of representations that can be evoked. This occurs, among other things, through the integration of referents in network for the construction of meanings.

With that said, it should be noted that dealing with referentiation means dealing with textual processing, which for Koch (2003) is a strategic process because interpretative steps are carried out. Textual processing, as Koch and Cunha-Lima (2011) state, requires knowledge of textual characteristics and of users' characteristics, that is, their objectives and their knowledge of the

world, including episodic and encyclopedic ones. In this sense, shared knowledge is essential since it is from it that interlocutors will determine what type of information may be explicit or implicit in the text, as well as which textual genre is suitable for a given communicative situation and what the speakers' stance is in the interaction, depending on the context. Therefore, according to the author, "understanding texts always depends on a large amount of shared knowledge" (Koch; Cunha-Lima, 2011, p. 292).

It is worth highlighting that the mobilization of this shared knowledge activated by discursive memory occurs through inferences, in other words, to infer something it is necessary to resort to some mental process. Therefore, according to Koch and Cunha-Lima (2011, p. 39) inferences are "cognitive strategies through which the listener or reader, starting from the information conveyed by the text and taking into account the context (in a broad sense), constructs new mental representations".

It is in this theoretical scenario that different perspectives in referentiation studies are framed, as suggested by Custódio Filho (2011).

2 Referentiation and its construction in networks

Based on these assumptions, Custódio Filho (2011) describes in his thesis two perspectives present in referentiation studies and the noticeable advances in the area. It is worth noting that, according to the author, the two ways of analyzing referentiation are not antagonistic but actually complementary to each other. Hence, what is different between them is their focus of analysis, precisely the greater focus on non-linguistic elements in the construction of the reference.

The first perspective present in referentiation studies aims to explain how the referential construction occurs while maintaining a certain referent in the textual context. It considers the notion of *chain* to discuss forms and/or discursive functions in references made to the same unity during textual progression. In fact, there is a more traditionalist tendency to consider only the co-referentiality relations in the formation of links between referents, whose expressions are considered from the perspective of referential cohesion and manifested by repetitions and nominal substitutions, or even by ellipses, according to Koch's proposal (1999) that was based on the work of Halliday and Hasan (1976). This highlights that there is a concern to analyze the correspondence between referential expressions and their antecedents (anaphoras) or subsequent ones (cataphoras). Also, there is a need for this referential construction to be confirmed by nominal expressions that designate the referent at some point in the text.

On the other hand, the second perspective present in referentiation studies intends to answer the following question: "How are the various elements that construct the textual configuration [...] used to construct referents?" (Custódio Filho, 2011, p. 139).

It is possible to highlight that, in this theoretical perspective, the referential construction is broader and can be elaborated in different ways, but it is not limited to what is explicitly said in the text's structure. Such factors are points to be highlighted in this work through the network elements.

According to the author, the construction of the discursive entities can occur through multimodality, that is, through the interaction of different semioses as part of the text's materiality. For the author, the different semioses are just as important as the role of the referential constructors. One of the aspects emphasized by the author is that it is not a question of investigating multimodality as a complementary resource to verbal materiality because everything is part of the cotext (elements of the textual surface). Therefore, the overlap of verbal and non-verbal elements

contributes to the referential construction and progression and promotes textual coherence in accordance with the communicative purposes and textual genres. This is the case of the comic strip genre, which is essentially constructed by multimodal elements (Ramos, 2022) and is currently shared in various digital environments, such as Facebook, Instagram, among others.

Another important point highlighted by Custódio Filho (2011) is that referentiation does not only focus on co-referential elements (which are linked to the same referent) nor only on referential structural elements, but focuses on other senses and on contextual elements that go beyond the context. Therefore, the referent is often not materialized in the context, but only implicitly suggested to the reader. The latter, in turn, must mobilize co(n)textual clues and socio-cognitively co-construct the implicit referent, doing that through their discursive memory about socially known facts and episodes, as we have seen.

Thus, we highlight the notion of referential networks developed by Matos (2018), a view that inserts itself on the second perspective of differentiation studies. This notion is much more than a cohesive correlation and is defined as the intertwining of meanings in the construction of referents, which are interconnected either by co-text or by context in a way that it provides a more functional vision, aiming at adjusting the referent's modes of composition to the different types of texts and argumentative purposes.

In this context, it is no longer possible to analyze the construction of individual referents in links closed in themselves, as in cohesive chains. For this reason, it is clear that the notion of referential networks surpasses the latter view since it emphasizes a broader view of relations between referents. This includes the non-coreferential ones in which a referent has a certain level of indirect continuity due to the relationship with others, thus being able to add meanings to them as the text progresses.

Matos (2018) points out certain features of referential networks that we are interested in mentioning. In the cotext, she considers not only the lexical units that emphasize the linear progression of a referent in the text, but also other possible clues that can (re)construct it in various multilinear directions within the text. Therefore, in several circumstances, there may not be an explicit naming of entities on the textual surface. However, due to various and contingent relations between them in the text, it is possible to make inferences about the entity hidden between the lines.

For these reasons, we want to highlight the networks' functionality due to their ability to adapt to textual genres and to create coherence of what is said, depending on the text producer's communicative purpose. Network referents do not only manifest themselves in lexical-semantic relationships but, above all, in socio-cognitive-discursive associations.

Based on this, it is possible to observe that the referential construction and the interlocutor's inference are not categorical correspondences between an antecedent and an anaphora, for instance, because this specific relation is not the only one that shapes the construction of a referent. In relation to referents constructed in vague ways or without explicit antecedents, we understand that it is possible to activate other referents in network, which can construct them inferentially with the help of socially shared knowledge and through discursive memory. Furthermore, it is necessary to emphasize the transformation (recategorization) of these discursive objects during the textual progression because, according to Cavalcante and Brito (2016, p.129), the processes of referencing referents are conditioned to the naturally recategorizing character that has a double objective of "maintaining the referents in the text's composition and, at the same time, make them progress".

In the next session, we will describe referential processes based on the notion of referential networks proposed by Matos (2018).

3 Referential processes in network

The discussion regarding referential processes in this section is important because, as shown in the analysis, the markers "he, him, they, them" can either anchor other referents or can be anchored by other entities in the strip's textual progression. On that premise, we now discuss the strategic processes of *referential introduction, anaphora* and *deixis,* which are presented by Cavalcante (2022, p. 288) and based on Cavalcante, Custódio-Filho and Brito (2014).

   a. According to Cavalcante, Custódio-filho e Brito (2014, p. 54), the *referential introduction* occurs "when a referent or object of discourse 'debuts' in the text in some way", or when the referential expressions manifest themselves in the textual context without a preceding "hook". Let's observe the example below:

Example 1 – marijuana.[2]

Source: our authorship [3]

In this case, from a cotext (linguistic context) point of view and as pointed out by Cavalcante (2022), the discursive object "marijuana" is understood as a referential introduction. Hence, it is possible to understand that the verbal referent "marijuana" debuts in the text without previous anchors, thus being acknowledged through the imagetic element "drawing of a green plant at the top of the first comic". However, other readers may imply that the discursive object "marijuana" is introduced by the verbal expression "marijuana". In the following comics of the cartoon, which refer to and add meanings to "marijuana", we observe another referential process called anaphora.

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[2] Translation of the context in example 1: the text is a post that deals with the different uses of marijuana. The first five comics illustrate its various benefits, stating that **(1) "Marijuana can be used"; (2) "to make medicines and cosmetics"; (3) "clothes, footwear"; (4) "in construction"; (5) "for recreational purposes: beer? I prefer *marijuana cigarette*"** In the last table, however, the author criticizes the stigmatized view of the herb by mentioning that **(6) "but it is used as a reason for repression in the outskirts of the cities"**.

[3] Based on: @desenhosdonando e @brasil_247

b. Anaphoras, according to Cavalcante (2022), have the function of continuity of referencing directly or indirectly. According to the authors, when a referent continues in the text, its transformation (recategorization) in the text progression is inevitable, under various modes of continuity.

b.1 Direct or co-referential anaphora, according to Cavalcante (2022, p. 291), "retakes the same referent, which has already been introduced in the text", as can be seen in the example below:

Example 2 – It[4]

Source: our authorship[5]

In example 2, Armandinho is seen in dialogue with his father, in which the image element "pigeon" from the second comic and the marker "it" *(ele)* from the third comic are direct anaphoras, as they take up, in a co-referential way, the referent "it" *(ele)*, briefly introduced in the co-text, in the first comic. In this case, despite the marker "it" *(ele)* introducing the discursive object in a verbally vague way – a fact to which we draw attention in this article – the referent "it" *(ele)* has a continuity that tends to explain its identity anaphorically. There are also certain elements, such as "it landed on your head" *(pousou na sua cabeça)*, "it pooped in your hair" *(fez cocô no seu cabelo)*, which, although we highlight them as text portions, and not exactly as specific anaphoric expressions, helping to construct the entity "pigeon". This is, in fact, approved by the image, which functions as a direct anaphora of the pigeon, in accordance with the progression of the comics, even though the attribute "a sign of luck" *(um sinal de sorte)* is disconfirmed, as a result of the pigeon's action of "pooping" in the hair of the character, father of the boy Armandinho, thus carrying out his recategorization by disconfirmation. This phenomenon occurs when certain features of the referent

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[4] Translation of the context in example 2: the first frame initially shows the main character Armandinho talking to his father when a pigeon lands on his father's head. The boy says in amazement: "**Wow! It landed on your head!"** In the second frame, the father's positive response trying to reassure him: "**I think it's a sign of good luck!"** However, Armandinho retorts, in the last frame, he returns to the negative action with the line: "**It pooped in your hair!"**

[5] Based on: https://www.instagram.com/p/Cd9PO1MrZSy/?igsh=Y3h0Z3phZXJmbmd3

are constructed in a way contrary to what was previously presented in the text (Cavalcante, 2022, 2023; Matos, 2018).

It can be seen, therefore, that verbal and image anaphoras are forms of resuming the referent, while other non-referential and non-anaphoric units, such as verbs, can function as clues to this resumption, which proves Matos' assertion (2018) that it is common for the recategorization of the referent do not occur in isolation, but in a confluence of factors and elements contributing to this process.

On the other hand, we will see that examples like (2), with the use of "he" (ele), differ from the texts in our sample, due to the fact that they do not have certain markers or semiotic elements with explicit access to the referent.

    b.2 Indirect or non-coreferential anaphora, in accordance with Cavalcante (2022, p. 293) does not return to the same referent, as it "introduces another referent indirectly associated with another or others already introduced in the text". These associations, according to the authors, can be through clues of different natures, such as semantic or contextual links, or through knowledge shared in memory.

In example 1, it appears that verbal referents such as "medicines", "cosmetics", "clothes", "footwear", "civil construction", "recreational purposes", "beer", "smoke" and reprimand in the "peripheries of the cities", and their respective image representations, are articulated as indirect anaphora. In other words, new discursive objects are introduced, indirectly related to the anchor referent "marijuana". When we consider the effect of meaning from the introduction of these referents throughout the text, we observe indirect recategorizations due to additions to the referent "marijuana". It is understood that, based on the intertwining of network references, marijuana has several positive functions, according to the cartoon author's perspective; but in the last comic, this view is disconfirmed for argumentative reasons, or rather, people who use marijuana in the peripheral areas of the cities acquire the stereotype of "marginals", "non-socializable people", who are targets of police repression, as emphasized by the image elements "probable police officer with a baton hitting a person" and the onomatopoeic element "pow" (pou). Once again, the referential node "marijuana" instantiates the introduction of a new referent according to associations already established in the context, that is, under the associative inference of "marijuana" with "individuals on the margins of society".

These inferences are reconstructed based on discursive memory, based on contextual information, since, in the Brazilian political scenario, the regularization of possession of marijuana for personal consumption has already been discussed in the STF (Supreme Federal Court), an issue that has become controversial.

    b.3. The encapsulating anaphora has, according to Cavalcante (2022), a function that can be fulfilled by an expression with traces of direct anaphora, but, at the same time, indirect anaphora. Direct because this function recovers segments of the co-text, or its entire textual extension, assigning it a label, or carrying out a synthesis, either retrospectively (previous textual segment) or prospectively (later textual segment). At the same time, it is indirect because it builds such segments to the status of referent, modifying their meanings. Let's look at the example:

Example 3 - consequence[6]

Source: our authorship[7].

In example 3, the expressions "revenge" (vingança) and "that" (isso), with the predicate of "consequence", summarize what Armandinho's mother had just said: "Floods, droughts, storms... if we don't take care of nature, it will become revenge" (Enchentes, estiagens, tempestades...se não cuidarmos da natureza, ela se vinga). We emphasize that the encapsulating expression not only promotes this process of synthesis itself, but also argumentatively re-guides the entire portion of text, to the extent that it recategorizes it, disconfirming its meaning of "revenge" and negotiating the meaning of "that" (isso) as a " consequence", according to Armandinho's speech. It remains to be noted that such labels are connected in a network to the other referents and to the retrospective textual portion, articulating this effect of meaning.

c. Deixis, according to Cavalcante (2022, p. 299), occurs "when the object of discourse is introduced or resumed in the text, necessarily presupposing an enunciative context viewed by the "origo", that is, by the speaker. Therefore, deictics create a link between the co-text and the enunciative situation, through the creation of a deictic field.

Based on Martins (2019), we can say that deixis is a hybrid process, as it situates the speaker/enunciator and highlights the discursive objects. This function is added to either the functions of referential introduction or anaphora, through varied spatio-temporal relationships, having the speaker/enunciator himself as an interpretative basis. It is necessary to take into account that the deictic function is not only given by the deictic expressions themselves (I, you) but it is also necessary to observe all the contextual clues, expressed under different semiotic systems. When we place our analyzes in the techno-discursive context, various linguistic and technological strategies can activate this deictic effect and captivate interlocutors to the enunciative scene, according to Martins (2021). Let's look at the following example:

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[6] Translation of the context in example 3: initially, the first frame presents the main character Armandinho talking to his mother, when she comments: "**Floods, droughts, storms… If we don't take care of nature, it will take revenge!**" However, in the second frame, the boy opposes his mother's opinion saying: "**Not revenge, mother… That's a consequence!**" In the last painting, Armandinho ends by reinforcing his argument by comparing nature with the actions of human beings with the phrase: "**Nature is not evil like some humans…**"

[7] Based on: https://www.instagram.com/p/C08C4tnMuuK/?igsh=Y2Zub3JwcXJkaGlr

In the case of this post above, for example, the textual producer is established in the first person "I", and, as a point of enunciative origin, the second personal "you" is used, interconnected with the expression "Hey, you there messing with your cell phone" to comprehend that "you", as if the textual producer were speaking face-to-face with his interlocutor. This becomes an argumentative strategy, in which the use of the deictic is fundamental to involve the interlocutor in the enunciative scene and, then, convince him to carry out the techno-language action of typing the number 333, and so choose trying the luck of making money immediately.

In view of the propositions listed in this section, we highlight below which methodological steps we emphasize for the analysis of the implicit construction of the referent identified by the pronouns "he/him/it/they/them" (ele/eles).

4 Methodology

This research falls within the theoretical scope of Text Linguistics and follows a qualitative, interpretive and descriptive approach to data. As for the procedures, the research is defined as documentary, whose sample universe is made up of analyzes of the comic strip genre of the character "Armandinho", in the profile of the author Alexandre Beck, which can be found on several social networks, including Facebook and Instagram. We emphasize that the themes portrayed in the strips, in question, are related to subjects recovered in discursive memory, of a political and social nature in the Brazilian context.

Our choice criteria derives from the selection of strips that present the pronoun "he/they" without mention of antecedents or explicit anchors, as we observed that it is a recurrence in Beck's

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[8] Translation of the context in example 4: the text is a post apparently offering a three-digit number to bet, which reads: **"333 - Hey, you're playing on your cell phone, the Universe will send you some money in the next few days. Enter 333 to boost."**

[9] Based on: @lotofacil14pontos2022.

writing, when taking a position on different themes through the aforementioned pronoun, as one of the possible marks of management implicit in the elaboration of the referent. In view of this, we chose verbal and image referents as analytical categories, which, when related to the pronoun "he/they", could contribute to accessing the construction of the implicit referent, which we relate to encyclopedic knowledge, which includes the social facts conveyed by the social media.

From this, our analysis procedure had as a first step to configure the referential network of the strips, observing how the anchor points of the referents in the text can promote relationships with the implicit referent, through semiotic *materialities*. As a second step, we verify how these relationships can imply the implicit construction of the discursive entity "he", rescued from previous knowledge, in the Armandinho comic strip.

The constitution of the referential networks of the strips under study takes into account as many verbal elements as the relevant image elements in their relation with the marked "he/s". Therefore, we describe the nodes that make up the network using the following acronyms: E.R.V. for verbal referential elements, E.R.I. for image referential elements and E.R.E.M. for implicitly evoked referential elements. The E.R.V. are the elements that are made explicit by verbal semiosis, while the E.R.I. are expressed through image forms also in context. The E.R.E.M. they are not revealed directly on the textual surface, nor by referential mentions, nor by visual means, as they are mental evocations caused by the context. In turn, the arrows go towards the element in which the nodes are anchored in the textual progression, according to our analysis of the characters' speech context, under the sophisticated enunciation of anchoring relations.

5 Analysis of the construction of the referent "he/him/it/they/them" in Armandinho's comic strips

As can be seen in the following strip, the text producer, Alexandre Beck, uses a narration in a dialogical sequence between the characters (Armandinho when speaking on the phone with his interlocutor) with the aim of making the reader seek to observe his point of departure view regarding someone or in relation to some people. So, let's see:

Example 5 - antibodies [10]

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[10] Translation of the context in example 5: the strip presents three scenes in which the main character Armandinho is talking on the phone with his interlocutor. In the first, he ponders **"(They) didn't let (him) in, rightly so!"** In the second frame, the boy reports that **"He freaked out… he said he has antibodies!"** At the end of the strip, the character ironically argues with the observation: **"What he has are bodies… 600 thousand!"**

According to Cavalcante (2022, p. 232), when discussing Adam's dialogue sequence (2019), in strips like that, they realize that this is a "polymanaged form (of dialogue)" verifiable in actions between characters, and a monomanaged enunciation, in which it takes place between the main speaker/narrator and the reader to whom it is addressed.

Therefore, according to the authors, there is a polymanaged enunciation of characters within a monomanaged enunciation. With this, it is possible to imply that the characters would know or identify the referent whom they designate as "he", as there is a kind of simulation of a (previous) context of speech, to which readers would not have access in its entirety.

Therefore, when we analyze the monomanaged aspect, it is understood that there is a simulated enunciative cut in the strip, in which the referent identified by "he" is not fully identifiable in the reading, which is because the author Alexandre Beck "invites" his reader to recover the referents present in discursive memory.

There are, therefore, two referents indirectly identified by "they" (elliptical in the verbal form "[they] left") and "he", so that the construction of the first (they) is in close discursive relationship with the second referent (he). Although there are two referents expressed by third-person pronouns, it is important to clarify that the pronoun we analyze below is "he", suggested as the figure of "Bolsonaro".

Let's look at the scheme of explicit and implicit connections between the verbal, imagery (the most relevant in the context) and implicit referents, associated with the referent "he" in the strip under analysis:

Scheme 1 - reference network 1
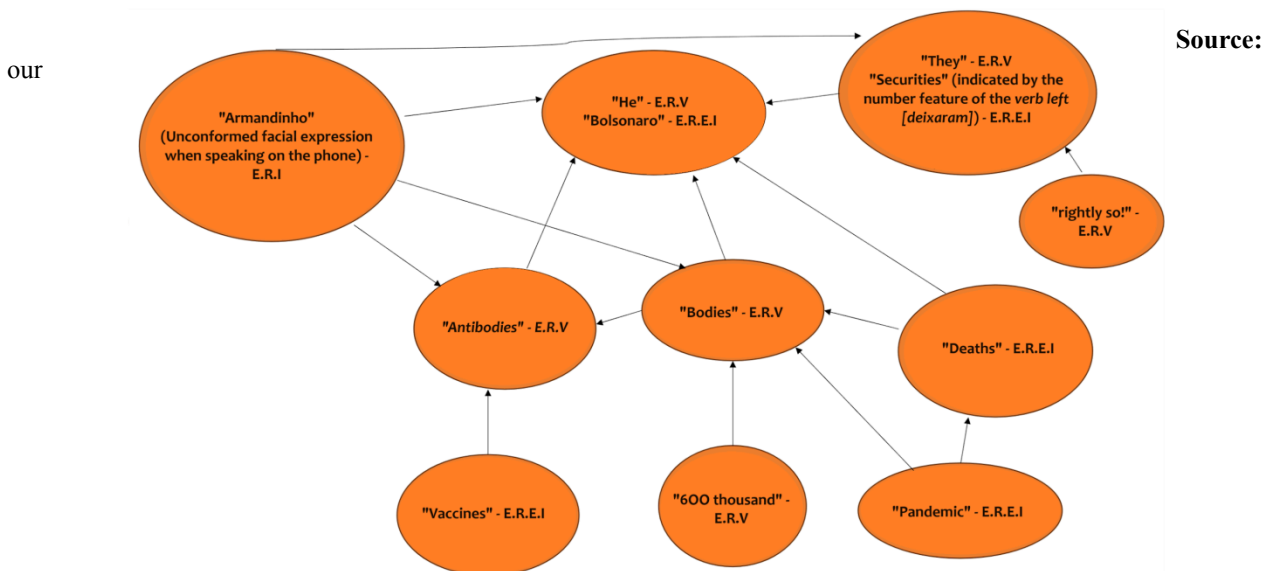
In this context created by the author, we understand that Armandinho is the character who leads the dialogue, by introducing and maintaining the referents, presenting them in the textual universe. Thus, it is understood that the implicit referent "they" (security guards) of the first comic

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[11] Based on: https://pt-br.facebook.com/tirasarmandinho/

is presented as a process of referential introduction indicated by the verb "deixaram", which, in turn, maintains connections with "him", given that it is precisely the "they" (the security guards) who prevent the other referent "him" from entering somewhere. Such action is argumentatively guided by Armandinho as a correct attitude, confirmed through the referential expression "all reason". Only based on the factual knowledge conveyed in the media, it is clear that a veiled reference is made to the stadium security guards, who are therefore responsible for barring Bolsonaro (former president of Brazil) from entering a soccer stadium to watch the game between Santos and Grêmio, for not having proven that they were vaccinated against Covid-19 during the pandemic.

The result of the anchoring relationships represented above suggests that the implicit referent "he" is the most prominent (salient) element of the strip, belonging to the discursive topic of the narrative. This relationship of prominence is visible through referential networks, that is, other nodes, whether verbal or imagery (see Scheme 1), add information about the referent, allowing it to remain active in the memory of the interlocutors, that is, it is the "he" who said he would have "antibodies", but it is "him" who is also blamed for the number of "bodies" ("600 thousand") and it is also "him" who motivates Armandinho's anger, for example. Therefore, it is observed that the implicit referent "he" (Bolsonaro) is a referential introduction, which inaugurates relationships with other nodes.

At this juncture, the relationality of the implicit referent "he", our focus of investigation, is inferred from discursive memory, through information about the pandemic period triggered by the Covid-19 virus, verifiable with the mobilization of implicit nodes "antibodies," bodies", "600 thousand", simultaneously evoking more references at an intertextual level, but not mentioned, such as "pandemic", "vaccine", "deaths". This is explained because this was a time when there was much discussion about vaccination, the only tool that could be effective in producing antibodies against the virus. Therefore, other contextual information is activated in relation to other texts, depending on the reader's knowledge, such as the fear of part of the population in getting vaccinated, as they argued that the vaccine could cause side symptoms, according to fake news disseminated en masse , at the time. Non-vaccination was controversially pointed out as something encouraged by President Bolsonaro himself, causing such a networked associative relationship in the text. Therefore, it is observed that, in the strip, the interactive co-construction of the accessibility of "he" by the reader glimpses other texts (intertextuality), that is, the shared knowledge about such facts.

Let's look at the second comic strip, which highlights, through the dialogue sequence between Armandinho and his father, the subject regarding the so-called "hostile architecture":

Example 6 - hostile architecture[12]

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[12] Translation of the context in example 6: The strip presents the boy's sensory experience on a park bench that he visits with his father. The conversation begins, in the first comic, around the architecture of the bench that the boy discovers: **"You can sit on it… but you can't lie down!"** In the second, he goes on to ask his father: **"Didn't they think of that?"** to which his father responds: **"They thought, son!"** He finishes off his father with the observation: **"It's a hostile architecture..."**

Source: our authorship.[13].

As the argumentative orientation of the strip shows, Armandinho and his father disapprove urban architecture called "hostile architecture". This conception is reinforced by the choice of verbal expressions ("you can sit"; "but lie down, no"; (did not they) "think" about that?), such as Armandinho's facial expression of nonconformity (in the second comic), manifested when he tries to lie down on the park bench, but is unsuccessful due to a divider in the middle. We therefore suggest the following schematic representation of the explicit and implicit relationships between verbal, imagetic and implicit referents, with the node "they", in the textual progression:

Scheme 1 - reference network 2
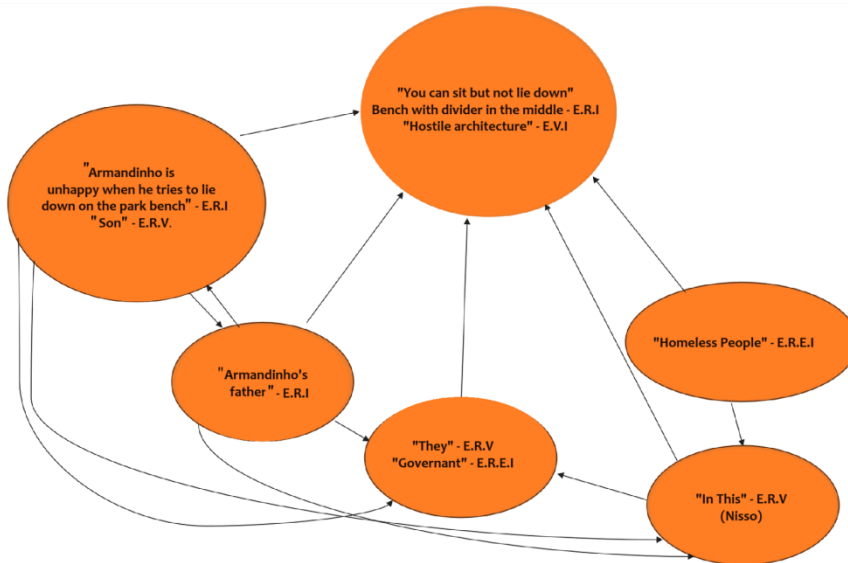
Source: our authorship.

In summary of the anchoring relationships, it is observed that the referent "park bench" is the most prominent discursive object, as it is noted that it attracts the other referents in the network above. In these connections, it is important to clarify that the implicit referent "they" behaves like an indirect anaphora in the strip, therefore, it does not have a direct antecedent in the co-text, but only a referent ("bank") that indirectly and implicitly weaves its anchorage. This is explainable when observing the recategorizations of the referent "bank", mainly through the referent "hostile

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[13] Based on: @tirinhadearmandinho.

architecture", making it possible to infer that there is an agent that manages the construction of park benches and, generally, those who do this are the municipal, state or federal governments, therefore, the referent "they".

The relationality between the implicit referent "they" and the other nodes of the networks triggers (or can trigger) in readers, the knowledge that many people (mainly homeless people) can use park benches to sleep. Therefore, it implies the demand for another implicit construction, that of "homeless people". However, in addition to this referent, it would also be possible to list others activated intertextually, as a result of the recategorization of "hostile architecture". This is the case of the bill, known as Priest *Júlio Lancelotti* law, in reference to his social work. The religious man's action of breaking, with sledgehammers, such "hostile architectures" on viaducts in *São Paulo* city is located in the discursive memory, motivating other people to do the same in other cities.

It is also worth highlighting the influence of being part of the virtual community, "Armandinho strips", in our view, the readers who follow Alexandre Beck's posts on his social networks, holding shared knowledge about the facts and motivations they make the author publishes (generally, Beck takes a position when the subject has repercussions nationally or internationally). Therefore, the fact of reaching an audience of readers who follow the news also often determines the identifiability of the referent through the use of the pronoun "he/him/it/they/them".

FINAL COMMENTS

In general, it was observed that network anchoring relationships inferentially trace the interactive co-construction of the referent identified as "he/him/it/they/them" in the comic strips. This highlights how the relational notion of networks is an effective theoretical construct for explanation in the (re)elaboration of referents, especially implicit ones. In other words, what can be obtained inferentially from the relationships between referents, based on discursive memory, can recover the socio-cognitive environment and build an argumentative perspective regarding the object of discourse to which the characters in Armandinho's comic strip refer in the social world. Furthermore, it is often observed that the construction of implicit referents may require recourse to other texts (intertextuality), in order to infer the referent identified by the pronouns "he/him/it/they/them", as suggested in Armandinho's comic strips.

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