

Discourse markers of enunciative responsibility in Portuguese stand-up comedy*

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ABSTRACT: This contribution explores the role of discourse markers in signaling enunciative responsibility (ER) (i.e. a mechanism that allows evaluating the degree of authorship displayed in texts) in a particular genre – Portuguese stand-up comedy. The research is situated within Text Linguistics; specifically, on Textual Analysis of Discourses (Adam 2008). The main interest lies within the scope of markers of ER, which attribute different points of view (PoV) to various parts of texts and include three categories: marker-mediators (“*de acordo com*” according to, “*segundo*” conforming to, etc.), markers of reformulation (“*isto é*” that is, “*em outras palavras*” in other words, etc.), and markers of conversational structure (“*bom*” well, “*você vê/tu vê*” you see, “*você sabe/tu sabes*” you know, etc.). Applying both quantitative and qualitative methods to a collected corpus, not only are the frequency and the distribution of different categories of markers of ER analyzed, but the equivalence of the degree of responsibility in all the three categories is questioned. The results of the analysis show an uneven distribution among the three categories of discourse markers of ER: while the markers of conversational structure are highly present in the oral data, marker-mediators are almost absent. The paper then looks at the category of ER in terms of qualitative analysis, and verifies that for marker-mediators the responsibility is not assumed by the comedian, while in the case of the markers of reformulation there is a partial assumption of responsibility. As for the markers of conversational structure, although all the three categories are included in the group called “markers of ER”, conversational structure is less perceivable and would benefit from a recategorization or another theory to account for it.

KEYWORDS: Textual Analysis of Discourses, discourse markers, enunciative responsibility, stand-up comedy.

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1. Introduction

The presence of the speaker in an utterance was observed by Benveniste (1970: p. 12-18; 2014: p. 142), when he stated that “enunciation is an individual act of appropriation of language, [it] introduces somebody who speaks via his/her speech”. However, it is only in the work of Culioli (1971) that the term “enunciative responsibility” (henceforth, ER) emerged. According to the author, “every act of enunciation presupposes enunciative responsibility, transmitted by the interlocutor by means of an utterance” (Culioli, 1971: p. 4031). In other words, ER came to be seen as an essential feature of each utterance.

Rabatel further developed the study of ER in his numerous scientific works (2006, 2007, 2012, 2016). He emphasized the idea that the speaker “takes charge” of each utterance s/he produces: “every utterance presupposes an instance that assumes enunciative responsibility”.¹ Rabatel (2016: 88) understood ER (or *linguistic* responsibility, as opposed to philosophical or legal responsibility, for instance) in “a broad span of ethics”, in that speakers are responsible for everything they say.

Finally, Adam (2008) makes two mentions of ER in his work. First, it is seen as one of the dimensions of the propositional act (Adam, 2008, p. 115-122). Second, it appears when the author refers to the markers of ER (Adam, 2008, p. 186-189). Several studies carried out in Brazil approached this phenomenon as a dimension of a propositional act (Fernandes, 2012; Nascimento et al. 2012; Santos et al. 2010).

To our knowledge, however, there has been no research focused on the proper categories of discourse markers² of ER. As such, the present study provides a new approach to the issue of ER in connection with discourse markers. It seeks to analyze discourse markers that express the (non) assumption of ER by a comedian in the oral corpus of a particular genre – Portuguese stand-up comedy. We are primarily interested in how ER is manifested through discourse markers in the genre of stand-up comedy. In

¹ For facility, I used Brazilian versions of several French authors. All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated. The Portuguese version here reads: “Todo enunciado pressupõe uma instância que assume a responsabilidade enunciativa”, (Rabatel 2016: 88).

² The class of linguistic items generally called “discourse markers” has been labeled in different ways. For instance, one may find “Discourse Connectives” (Blakemore, 2002); “Discourse Markers” (Schiffrin, 1987; Fraser, 1999, 2003, 2007); “Discourse Particles” (Fischer, 2000; Aijmer, 2002); and “Pragmatic Markers” (Fraser, 1996; Brinton, 1996).

this case, discourse markers constitute both the main objects of the textual analysis and the tools for its implementation.

The genre of Portuguese stand-up comedy provides an extremely rich and interesting ground for analyzing how ER is manifested in discourse. Needless to say, and thanks to the results of this investigation, it will be possible to take a significant step towards the global characterization of the genre of stand-up comedy, which so far has not been given proper attention.

This study contains mixed method research. Applying both quantitative and qualitative methods, we aim not only to analyze the frequency and the distribution of different categories of markers of ER in the corpus, but also to address the fundamental question of whether the degree of responsibility in all the analyzed categories of discourse markers is the same. Does a comedian assume responsibility for his/her discourse in a Portuguese stand-up performance by means of such linguistic units as discourse markers? To what extent do different categories of discourse markers manifest ER and its (non) assumption? These are the research questions we expect to answer in the present investigation.

2. From speaker's presence in discourse to the notion of ER and Point of View (PoV)

Some of the early ideas on the existence of the category of ER echo back to Benveniste's work on general linguistics (1970, 1971, 2014). Unlike Culioli (1971) and Rabatel (2006, 2007, 2012, 2016), however, he did not acknowledge ER as a linguistic phenomenon. For Benveniste, the main claim was that the speaker is present in the utterance s/he produces. As stated in his work on the formal apparatus of enunciation (Benveniste, 1970: p. 12-18, 2014: p. 141), "enunciation is the enactment of language through an individual act of use." In other words, it is the act of producing an utterance by the speaker. The speaker, given that s/he is familiar with the language system of a particular language, resorts to the abstract system of language and produces an utterance. The language, in its abstract form, serves as a necessary instrument for the speaker.

It is fair to ask why such an utterance is not a mere instance of *parole* (speech), as it would be in the language/speech binary dichotomy found in Saussure (1959[1906-1911], 2014). It is important to understand that

Benveniste is not interested in text as an object and ultimate instance of speech; he distinguishes enunciation as a third dimension precisely because he is interested in the proper act of producing, i.e. the way the speaker mobilizes the abstract language system on his/her behalf. Benveniste (2014: p. 143) defines enunciation in relation to language as a process of appropriation. In other words, the speaker appropriates the abstract language system, or the formal apparatus of the language, as he produces an utterance. Thus, “enunciation [as] an individual act of appropriation of language introduces somebody who speaks via his/her speech” (Benveniste, 2014: p. 142). Further, “the individual act by which one uses language first introduces the speaker as a parameter among the necessary conditions for the enunciation” (*Ibid.*).

Thus, in the Benvenistian sense, each act of enunciation is highlighted by the speaker’s presence, i.e. the speaker declares himself and assumes the language. The speaker’s presence is highlighted by a number of specific forms (Benveniste, 2014: p. 143-145), such as the emergence of indices of person (e.g. personal pronouns), other indices (e.g. demonstratives), tenses, certain syntactic functions, and certain modalities. The personal indices (I-you) occur within the utterance to denote the individual who produces the utterance (I) and to denote the addressee (you). Tenses are another linguistic category that highlights the relation between the speaker and the utterance, marking his/her own presence within the enunciation. As the author states, “[f]or a speaker speaking of himself, the fundamental tense is the ‘present’; everything accomplished for which he assumes responsibility by stating it in the first person of the perfect is cast without fail back into the past” (Benveniste 1970: 214). As can be clearly seen, the idea of the assumption of responsibility by the speaker originally developed from his/her presence in discourse.

Furthermore, certain syntactic functions, which Benveniste (2014: 144-145) defines as interrogation, intimation, and especially assertion, aim to communicate the presence of the speaker in the enunciation either by means of eliciting an answer via a linguistic process (interrogation), placing an order or an appeal via imperative mood, thus creating a need of immediate reaction from the addressee (intimation), or by means of stating something and communicating certitude (assertion).

Finally, various forms expressing modalities can highlight the speaker's presence in the utterance, such as "modes" (optative, subjunctive) of uttering the attitudes of the enunciator towards what it utters ("wish"), phraseology ("no doubt", "probably") indicating possibility, uncertainty, etc.

These are, as stated in Benveniste (2014: p. 143-145), the categories that indicate the presence of the speaker in an utterance.³ This significant theoretical premise contributed to the emergence of ER as a linguistic category in the work of Culioli (1971), who coined the term "enunciative responsibility" and who was, according to Rodrigues, Passeggi & Silva Neto (2010), one of the first linguists who dedicated his work to the study of ER. As stated in Culioli (1971: p. 4031), "every act of enunciation presupposes enunciative responsibility, transmitted by the interlocutor by means of an utterance."

Lourenço (2013: 34) also believed that Culioli was the first to spot the existence of some sort of relation between the concepts of enunciation and ER. He did not, however, believe that Culioli provided a definition of what ER actually was.

It is noteworthy to point out that, as Rodrigues, Passeggi & Silva Neto (2010: 153) highlight, there is no consensus regarding the notion of ER among the authors who study it. Indeed, there are various interpretations of what ER is, depending on the angle of the research, as well as the theoretical framework involved. This paper investigates the notion of ER as defined by Rabatel (2006, 2007, 2012, 2016), who elaborated this phenomenon, as well as the notion of "point of view" (PoV), within the pragmatic and enunciative perspective in his numerous works on this issue, and by Adam (2008), who considers these two notions interchangeable in the textual-discursive perspective.

First and foremost, several dictionaries on Discourse Analysis, such as *Key Terms in Discourse Analysis* (Baker & Ellece, 2011) and *Dicionário de Análise do Discurso* (Maingueneau & Charaudeau, 2004), omit a definition of "enunciative responsibility". As Rabatel (2006: 7) explains, the fact that ER is absent in dictionaries on language sciences demonstrates that this notion has not received proper treatment in the last decades. Moreover,

³ Rabatel (2016: p. 75, 80), however, does not agree to this formulation of Benveniste. He uses examples to argue that a text can have traces of subjectivity and express a point of view even if it does not manifest any of these categories.

the existence of numerous theories on dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981; Goffman, 1981), intersubjective relations (Culioli, 1971), and enunciative heterogeneity (Authier-Revuz, 1998) have made the question of enunciative responsibility even more opaque (*Ibid.*).

Despite its absence in dictionaries, Rabatel argues that ER is nevertheless present in relation to the speaker who “takes charge” of the utterances he produces (2006: 8). He claims that there are several possible angles to look at the concept of responsibility. In general terms, “responsibility is based on a certain idea of the duty to be: in this sense, responsibility is close to the notions of praxis and commitment” (Rabatel (2006: 3).⁴ However, after looking at other alternatives for defining the concept of responsibility, the main conceptual “clash” is demonstrated by means of opposing the legal and ethical senses of responsibility. As the author suggests (Rabatel 2006: 7-8), in the legal sense of the notion of responsibility, the individual can be held responsible for his actions, or he might not be, unless he declares irresponsibility. In the ethical sense and from the standpoint of morality, the individual is responsible, from the beginning to the end, for every act; nothing escapes ethics (*Ibid.*). Now, looking at linguistic responsibility, it can either follow the path of the legal sense and thus be very limited, or responsibility can be used in a very broad sense of ethics. Both are possible: “to reduce the span of linguistic responsibility to the legal is to learn to avoid falling by its words under the law: this is a pure technique. To apprehend the responsibility under its broadest span is to say that the speakers are responsible for everything they say” (*Ibid.*).

As stated in Rabatel & Koren (2012: p. 16), responsibility results from conversational maxims, in particular, from the principle of sincerity: “what we assert, we are supposed to assume.”⁵ The same idea is expressed in Maingueneau (1998: p. 115): “to state an assertion, in particular, is to state it to be true and to guarantee its truth.”⁶ Thus, ER is defined as “assuming

⁴ “La responsabilité s’appuie sur une certaine idée du devoir être: en ce sens, la responsabilité se rapproche des notions de praxis et d’engagement...” (Rabatel 2006: 3).

⁵ “(...) ce qu’on affirme, on est censé l’assumer”, Rabatel & Koren (2012: p. 16).

⁶ “(...) énoncer une assertion, en particulier, c’est poser son énoncé comme vrai et se porter garant de cette vérité”, Maingueneau (1998: 115).

the propositional content of a speech as true” (Rabatel, 2016: p. 94) and a PoV defined as a propositional content in a wide sense⁷.

Rabatel makes an important distinction between ER and quasi-ER (*imputation*). In the case of ER, the speaker (E1 / L1)⁸ considers the propositional content (=the expressed PoV in the utterance) to be true. Thus, he assumes responsibility for the attributed PoV. However, when the speaker (E1 / L1) takes into consideration the propositional content (=PoV), but attributes ER to e2,⁹ it is difficult to talk about assumption of ER on behalf of the speaker. In this case, Rabatel refers to it as quasi-ER. To take into consideration a PoV means to integrate it into discourse without claiming its veracity¹⁰ (Rabatel, 2016: p. 93). In this way, the speaker (E1 / L1) can stay neutral towards the expressed PoV or he may distance himself from it.

For Adam (2008), the notions of PoV and ER are somewhat similar to the case of “pure” ER in Rabatel (2016), i.e. to express a PoV is to assume ER for what is said. In Adam’s view, ER is a linguistic notion that can be approached from the three dimensions of a propositional act: a) the construction of a discursive representation (Rd); b) the assumption of responsibility for this Rd or PoV; and c) the illocutionary force of speech acts, inseparable from the argumentative orientation of the utterance (Adam, 2008: p. 111). In addition to that, the notion of ER is inseparable from PoV – both are situated within the scope of polyphony and account for a polyphonic unfolding of the utterances¹¹, i.e. the speaker may distance himself from the PoV1 of the first enunciator (E1) and identify himself with the PoV2 of the second enunciator (E2).

In line with the theoretical assumptions held by Rabatel (2016) and Adam (2008) concerning the notions of ER and PoV, I consider ER an assumption of the propositional content of the utterance (or PoV) as true. At the same time, I define ER as a linguistic mechanism that allows evaluating the degree of the speaker’s involvement in texts by means of various linguistic forms

⁷ “...o PdV em sentido amplo dá conta de pontos de vista de todo tipo, em todos os contextos”, (Rabatel, 2016: p. 66).

⁸ E1 / L1 stand for “Enunciador 1 / Locutor 1”, according to Rabatel (2016).

⁹ e2 stands for “enunciador 2”, according to Rabatel (2016).

¹⁰ “O levar em conta, como seu termo indica, diz respeito aos PoV dos outros, que L1 / E1 integra em seu dizer, sem se pronunciar sobre a veracidade deles” (Rabatel, 2016: p. 93).

¹¹ “A responsabilidade enunciativa ou ponto de vista (PdV) permite dar conta do desdobramento polifônico: o locutor (L) se dissocia de um PoV1 (felicitação) de um enunciador E1, enquanto se associa ao PdV2 (reprovação) de um enunciador E2” (Adam, 2008: p. 110).

and constructions. In this paper, I am particularly interested in the linguistic category of discourse markers (or *connectors*, in Adam) and the way they signal ER in humorous discourse of the genre stand-up comedy.

3. Towards the Textual Analysis of Discourse (TAD)

Textual Analysis of Discourse (henceforth TAD), developed by Adam (2008), is described as “...a theory of co(n)textual production, which should necessarily be based on the analysis of concrete texts” (Adam 2008: 13).¹² This formulation provides a synthesized articulation between an elaboration of a theoretical framework, on the one hand, and its implementation on the analyses of concrete empirical texts, on the other. Based on the relations of separation and complementarity, Adam (2008) brings forward his new theory as an attempt to approach Text Linguistics (TL), thinking of a correlation between text and discourse. Text Linguistics (TL), according to this perspective, is seen a part of the larger domain of Discourse Analysis (DA).

ER is one of the principal notions of TAD and it rests on the idea that certain linguistic units (see the categories below) assume (or not) responsibility for what is stated in texts. In other words, it is a mechanism that allows evaluating the degree of authorship manifested in texts. For Adam (2008), ER is one of the three principal dimensions of propositional acts, together with discursive representation (Rd) and illocutionary force (see FIGURE 1).

It is important to stress that unlike Rabatel (2016), Adam (2008) makes no terminological difference between ER and PoV. In other words, for Adam these are entirely interchangeable terms.

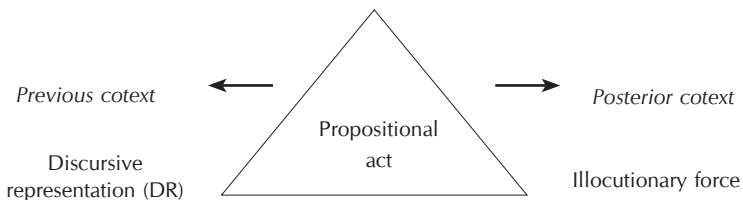


FIGURE 1: The three principal dimensions of a propositional act, as proposed by Adam (2008: 111)

¹² “...uma teoria da produção co(n)textual de sentido que deve, necessariamente, ser fundada na análise de textos concretos” (Adam 2008: 13).

ER implies having a PoV about a certain discourse object. Accordingly, as we analyze an utterance we can identify various types of PoV. The speaker can assume ER and, in this case, we have a range of linguistic resources that indicate the assumption at our disposal. In case the speaker wishes to distance himself from what is stated, he may delegate responsibility to another source of knowledge. PoV that are introduced by, for instance, “segundo” or “de acordo com” (Eng.: “according to”) mark a textual zone under dependence of a source of knowledge (epistemic mediation) (Adam 2008: 115). Besides, a PoV may be left anonymous (for instance, by means of verbs in the 3rd person, singular¹³). Alternatively, ER can rest on perceptive mediation, that is, it can be expressed by means of verbs like *to see, to hear, to feel*, etc.

According to Adam (2008: 117), the degree of ER is highlighted by a large number of linguistic forms, which he groups into 8 major categories, in this way expanding the original description proposed by Benveniste (1974: 79-88). These categories include:

- (1) Personal deixis: possessives (*my / your*) and demonstrative pronouns (*this*¹⁴);
- (2) Spatial and temporal deixis: adverbs (*yesterday, tomorrow, here, today*), nominal groups (*this morning, open this door*), prepositional groups (*in two minutes*), adjectives (*last week*), certain pronouns (he thinks of *me*), and certain determinants (*my arrival*¹⁵);
- (3) Tenses: correspond to various types of temporal localization regarding the speaker’s position and are subdivided into diversified plans of enunciation;
- (4) Modality:
 - 4.1. objective modality (*must, it is necessary that...*);
 - 4.2. inter-subjective modality (*imperatives, interrogatives, should, can/could*);
 - 4.3. subjective modality (*want, think, hope*);
 - 4.4. opinion verbs (*believe, know, ignore*);

¹³ This will greatly depend on the semantic value of the verb and on the linguistic context, since not all the verbs in the third-person, singular, will necessarily imply an attribution of an anonymous PoV.

¹⁴ According to Adam (2008: 117).

¹⁵ The objective of this paper is not to discuss the inclusion of personal and possessive pronouns in the category of spatial and temporal deixis as it appears in Adam’s classification.

- 4.5. opinion adverbs (*maybe, perhaps, certainly, undoubtedly*);
- 4.6. affective (*small*), evaluative (*gentle*) and axiological (*good / evil*) lexemes;
- (5) Different types of representation of speech (people or characters): direct speech, free direct speech, indirect speech, and free indirect speech.
- (6) Mediating instances:
 - 6.1. markers like *according to, conforming to*;
 - 6.2. verbs like *it seems like..., they state that...*;
 - 6.3. reformulations like *they say that..., some people say that... .*
- (7) Autonomic modality: when nonconformity takes place within discourse (*what do you call it, to put it better*)
- (8) Indications of thoughts or perceptions: perceptive focalization (*see, hear, feel, touch*) and cognitive focalization (represented knowledge or thought).

Thus, according to Adam (2008), these are the linguistic resources that textually highlight the degree of ER and PoV.

Now, returning to the very beginning, we have said that ER in the framework of TAD occurs in two moments: first, it is seen as one of the dimensions of the propositional act (Adam, 2008, p. 115-122); second, it appears when the author refers to the markers of ER (Adam, 2008, p. 186-189). It is now time to turn to the categories of discourse markers expressing ER.

4. Delimiting the scope of the research: discourse markers of ER

The notion of ER reappears when Adam refers to the markers of ER (Adam 2008: 186-189). Using the term “connector” as hyperonym, Adam distinguishes three subclasses of markers (argumentative connectors, textual organizers, and markers of ER) and endows them with a common function, namely, to segment or to link blocks of text (Adam 2008: 178). The discourse markers, or the “connectors” as Adam determines these linguistic units, lie within several textual levels. Thus, argumentative connectors depend on the level of texture (N4), the level of enunciation (N7), and on argumentative orientation (N8); textual organizers depend on the level of texture (N4);

and markers of ER depend on the level of enunciation (N7) (see FIGURE 2). Their main and fundamental function is to highlight a connection between two semantic units in order to create the following structure p CONEX q (Adam 2008: 180).

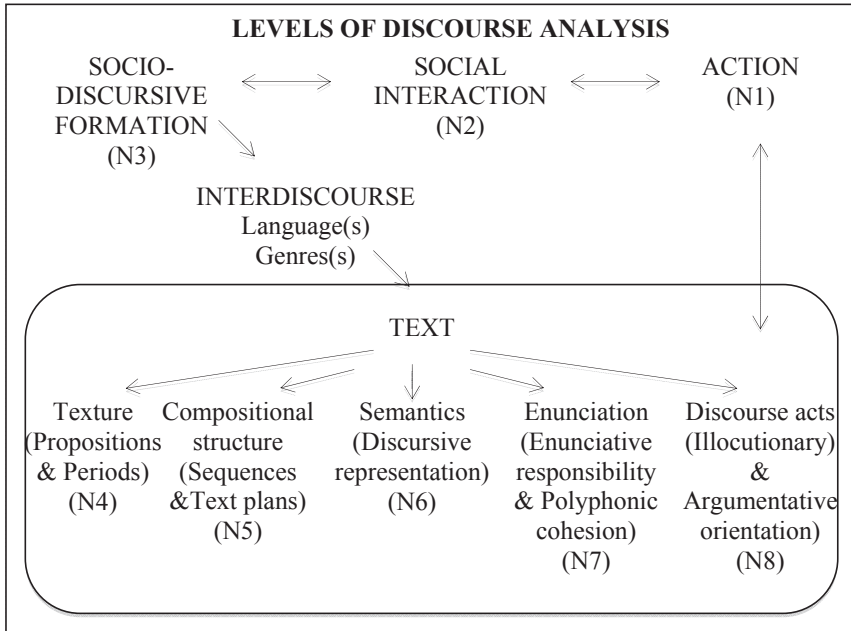


FIGURE 2: The levels of textual and discourse analyses, as proposed by Adam (2008: 61)

According to Adam, what makes these items unique is the fact that, but for the connecting function, they manifest ER (or PoV, according to Adam’s terminology) and/or argumentative orientation (which overlaps with the three principal dimensions of a propositional act).

If we take a closer look at the scope of the markers of ER, which attribute different PoV to various parts of texts, three categories emerge: marker-mediators (*“de acordo com” / “according to”, “segundo” / “conforming to”* etc.), markers of reformulation (*“isto é” / “that is”, “em outras palavras” / “in other words”* etc.), and markers of conversational structure (*“bom” / “well”, “você vê/tu vês” / “you see”, “você sabe/tu sabes” / “you know”* etc).

TABLE 1: Discourse markers of ER, as proposed by Adam (2008)¹⁶

Markers of ER (attribute a PoV to parts of text)	Markers-mediators (or markers of sources of knowledge)	according to, conforming to, in order to, from a secure source, in Brussels, in the Socialist Party, ...
	Markers of reformulation	that is, in other words, [N1] is/is called [N2], in one word, ...
	Markers of conversational structure and other phatics	well, so, you know, you see, eh, ...

For Adam (2008, p.187), PoV is often marked not just by the connectors like “*de acordo com*” / “*according to*” and “*segundo*” / “*conforming to*”, but also by metonymic indicators like *in the Socialist Party, in Brussels, etc.*, along with marker-mediators of sources of knowledge. The category of markers of reformulation is quite important since it signals modification of the PoV, in case it is a non-paraphrastic reformulation¹⁷ (Adam, 2008: p. 187). The third category of markers of conversational structure plays an extremely important role in oral texts, for “it punctuates them” (Adam 2008, p. 188).

5. The *corpus* under investigation: Portuguese *stand-up comedy*

In terms of discourse analysis and the diversity of discourse practices, ER as a category of TAD has already been analyzed in terms of journalistic (Marques 2013), juridical (Soares & Rodrigues 2016), and scientific discourse (Duarte & Pinto 2005). However, to my knowledge, there has been no investigation carried out in the domain of humoristic discourse, especially regarding stand-up comedy. In fact, investigation of Portuguese stand-up comedy is generally missing, turning it into a more appealing and challenging ground for the study.

Although I do not here attempt to look at the genre of stand-up comedy from the perspective of genre studies, it is necessary to approach the selected type of comic interaction while taking into consideration its key properties and essential features, which include timing, paralanguage, and audience. These elements make the genre noteworthy and unique.

¹⁶ The present table is taken from Coutinho (2008: p. 199).

¹⁷ According to Lopes (2014: p. 34), reformulation can be paraphrastic (when the exact equivalence between the discursive segments is observed), and non-paraphrastic (which implies a change of enunciative perspective).

Stand-up comedy usually implies a comedic performance by a single comedian telling jokes on a stage in order to produce the audience's laughter. More precisely definition, it is "an encounter between a single, standing performer behaving comically and/or saying funny things directly to an audience, unsupported by very much in the way of costume, prop, setting, or dramatic vehicle" (Mintz1985: 71). Although stand-up comedy may seem to be a relatively new genre, Mintz (1985) argues that it is one of the oldest forms of humoristic expression and that it has a long history and plays an essential social role in the society. Tracing the history of the comic genre in Portugal, one can see that the role of stand-up comedy has been downplayed (compared to other genres of comic expression like film comedy or humoristic literature). While the genre of stand-up emerged in Brazil in the 1960s, it was only in 2004, when the program "*Levanta-te e Ri*" was presented on the popular network SIC, that the Portuguese were introduced to the so-called "one man show". Even though the program is not officially transmitted anymore, new comedians come onto the scene and gain the audience's interest.

The textual analysis of DMs in the present study was carried out on a 41,651-word oral corpus collected from the Portuguese stand-up show *Graças a Deus*¹⁸ – the first stand-up club in Portugal to host performances in Lisbon and transmit them on local TV channel (*Canal Q*). The analyzed programs were filmed between 2014-2015 – a period that corresponds to the time when all the samples had been collected. The total duration of the recordings is 3 hours 34 minutes and all samples were recorded and transcribed following specially elaborated transcription conventions (based on Discourse Transcription, Dubois, 1991, 2004; C-ORAL-ROM Project and CHAT Transcription Format, MacWhinney, 2000).

6. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of discourse markers that signal ER

Completion of the quantitative analysis verified a definitely uneven distribution among the three categories of discourse markers of ER (see TABLE 2).

¹⁸ At present, the stand-up comedy club *Graças a Deus* (*Thank God*) is closed. The club functioned for a short period between 2014 – 2016 and produced one full TV season of stand-up shows. Nowadays, some of the comedians perform at *Teatro Villaret* in Lisbon.

TABLE 2: Frequency and distribution of discourse markers of ER in Portuguese stand-up comedy

Discourse markers of ER (Adam, 2008)	Categories of DMs	DMs	Nº of occurrences	% of occurrences
	Marker-mediators (or markers of sources of knowledge)	segundo (<i>according to</i>)	1	1,11
	Subtotal		1	1,10
	Markers of reformulation	quer dizer (<i>I mean</i>)	16	17,58
		ou seja (<i>that is</i>)	3	3,30
	Subtotal		19	20,88
	Markers of conversational structure	bem (<i>well</i>)	11	12,09
		bom (<i>well</i>)	6	6,59
		então (<i>so</i>)	44	48,35
		sabes/sabe/sabem (<i>youknow</i>)	10	10,99
Subtotal		71	78,02	
Total		91	100	

The category of marker-mediators (or markers of sources of knowledge) represents the lowest percentage of occurrences (1.27%). Only one example was found in all data collected:

(1) a. COM: Deus / Deus foi um homem muito ocupado ele fez tudo não é? / **segundo** mitologia / Deus / Os deuses criaram tudo / Mas há uma coisa que Deus não criou que foi o tempo // O tempo é coisa nossa / O tempo fomos nós que criámos / já pensaram nisso? /

b. COM: God / God was a very busy man he created everything didn't he? / **according to** mythology / God / The gods created everything / But there was one thing that God didn't create which was time // Time is our thing / We were the ones who created time / have you thought about it? /

The discourse markers “segundo” (“according to”) is an external mark that signals the beginning of a PoV. It “indicates the opening of another

enunciative space in the discourse of the speaker,"¹⁹ (Rabatel, 2016: p. 109). The use of this marker indicates the existence of epistemic mediation that inserts a PoV under dependence of mythology. Thus, in the example above, the comedian does not assume ER. Rather, it is delegated to another source of knowledge, namely, mythology.

The category of markers of reformulation turned out to be more present in the analyzed corpus (18.99% of total occurrences). Reformulation is "a metadiscursive operation by which the speaker re-elaborates a statement motivated by the intention to make his discourse more intelligible, reducing possible risks of incomprehension on the part of the interlocutor"²⁰ (Lopes, 2014: p. 34-35). The markers "quer dizer" ("I mean") and "that is" ("ou seja") constitute this category. "Quer dizer" ("I mean") constituted 15.19% of total occurrences. The marker "quer dizer" ("I mean") is a crystallized expression, consisting of two verbal forms: the verb "querer" ("to want") in the third-person singular of the present tense, followed by the infinitive of the verb "dizer" ("to say") that merged and began to function as a fixed combination (Lopes, 2014: p. 36).

The data analysis has shown that there are various functions the marker "quer dizer" ("I mean") performs in the analyzed genre. First of all, "quer dizer" ("I mean") is the marker of auto-reformulation. There are 13 occurrences of auto-reformulation in the corpus, i.e., instances where the speaker reformulates the previous statement in order to explain or clarify what he said earlier. This extremely frequent occurrence of modification of PoV (or, non-paraphrastic reformulation) indicates that the degree of the assumed responsibility is quite high. Consider the following examples:

(2) a. COM: Falando em gordas / a minha mãe / ah //

AUD: hhhh

COM: Não é gorda / **quer dizer** / a minha mãe não seria gorda / <a minha mãe não seria gorda> se ela medisse dois metros e dez / mas como ela não mede 2 metros e dez / ela mede 1 metro e 32 portanto //

AUD: hh

¹⁹ "Os marcadores de escopo, tais como "conforme / segundo / de acordo com" (...) indicam a abertura de um outro espaço enunciativo no discurso do locutor" (Rabatel, 2016: p. 109).

²⁰ "...a reformulação é uma operação meta discursiva pela qual o falante reelabora um enunciado movido pela intenção de tornar mais inteligível o seu discurso, reduzindo eventuais riscos de incompreensão por parte do interlocutor" (Lopes, 2014: p. 34-35).

b. COM: Speaking about fat people / My mother / ah //

AUD: hhhh

COM: She isn't fat / **I mean** / my mother wouldn't be fat / <my mother wouldn't be fat>
if her height was 2m10cm / but since her height isn't 2m10cm / her height is 1m32 so //

AUD: hh

(3) a. COM: Esta é uma música e é com ela que vou acabar e agradeço a toda a gente
por terem vindo / **quer dizer** / não é que vocês tenham pago alguma merda / Mas muito
obrigado por terem saído de casa /

b. COM: This is a song and it's with this song that I'm going to finish and I thank every-
body for coming / **I mean** / it's not that you paid any shit / But thank you very much for
coming out tonight /

There are cases, however, where the DM “*quer dizer*” (“*I mean*”) does not serve as a marker of modification of PoV, but merely fulfills the textual function of a filler (Lopes, 2014: 36), i.e., it serves as a marker of construction of oral discourse in the process of speech (see the example below). Filler, in other words, is “a discursive pause that signals the process of the on-line formulation of the discourse itself, which reflects the non-planning of what is intended to be communicated”²¹ (Lopes, 2014: p. 40). The following example provides an illustration of this case:

(4) a. COM: Mas eu também costumo ver muita gente a entrar no cinema com comida
/ eu não estou a falar de pipocas / coca cola isso é normal / já vi pessoal a entrar com
sandes hambúrgueres fatias de pizza / qualquer dia / **quer dizer** / está um gajo a ver um
filme / no cinema a meio / dá-lhe fome / pega no telemóvel / estou sim / olhe eu queria
encomendar rodízio de carne /

AUD: hhh

COM: Aqui para o cinema do Globo / sala 4 fila J 12 /

AUD: hh

b. COM: But I also see many people enter the cinema with food / I'm not talking about
popcorn / coke this is normal / I've already seen people enter with sandwiches humber-
gers slices of pizza / one day / **I mean** / a guy is watching a film / in the cinema in the
middle of the room / feels hungry / grabs his phone / hello / I'd like to order all-you-
-can-eat barbecue /

AUD: hhh

COM: Here to the cinema Globo / room 4 / line J 12 /

AUD: hh

²¹ “...uma pausa discursiva preenchida, sinalizando o processo da formulação on-line do próprio discurso, que reflète a não planificação prévia do que se pretende comunicar” (Lopes, 2014: p. 40).

The marker “*quer dizer*” (“*I mean*”) can perform the function of attenuator, for instance:

(5) a. COM: A Susana como eu estava a dizer ela trabalha num sítio muito prestigiado de Portimão que se chama Royal Teeser // que não é um talho <não é um talho> / É uma casa de [beep] //

AUD: hh

COM: E / não é / e / **quer dizer** / Fica mal a dizer que é uma casa / elas despem-se e as pessoas pagam /

b. Susana as I was saying works in a very privileged place in Portimão that is called Royal Teeser // which isn't the butcher's shop <it isn't the butcher's shop> / It's a house of [beep] //

AUD: hh

COM: And / isn't it / and / **I mean** / It's bad to say it's a house / They undress and people pay them /

In this example, “*quer dizer*” (“*I mean*”) seems to function as attenuator or mitigator of the negative evaluation that the speaker expresses – a function identified by Lopes (2014: p. 38).

The marker “*ou seja*” (“*that is*”) is formed by the conjunction “*ou*”, which signals an alternative, and is followed by the verb “*ser*” (“*to be*”) in the third-person of the present tense in the conjunctive mood. As stated in Lopes (2014: p. 40), typically, it expresses possibilities that can be considered. It is completely grammaticalized and functions as a single lexical entry (*Ibid.*). In the corpus, its most traditional function of reformulation appears as in the following example:

(6) a. COM: Olhem então eu vou-me apresentar / eu sou Gustavo Vieira / e venho da Amora não é / fica na margem sul / que é conhecida <conhecida> como uma terra de KKK / **ou seja** / Kizomba / Kuduro e carros roubados //

AUD: hhhh

b. COM: Look I'm going to introduce myself / I'm Gustavo Vieira / and I come from Amora right / it's on the south bank / it's known <known> as the land of KKK / **that is** / Kizomba / Kuduro and stolen cars //

AUD: hhhh

The category of markers of conversational structure occupied the highest percentage of frequency in stand-up performance (79.75% of occurrences), which suggests a highly interactional and communicative nature of the genre

that can be considered as an essential feature of its characterization. The distribution of the discourse markers in this category is as follows: “*bem*” (“*well*”) represents 12.66% of occurrences, whereas “*bom*”, which is another Portuguese functional equivalent of the English discourse marker “*well*”, represents 7.59%. “*Então*” (“*so*”) and “*você sabe/tu sabes*” (“*you know*”) represent 48.10% and 11.39% respectively.

As stated in Lopes (2004: 18), the Portuguese marker “*bem*” (“*well*”), when used as a discourse marker, fulfills the following functions: (i) it provides discordance / non-acceptance in relation to what was said or implied in the previous intervention; (ii) marks the beginning of a speech turn, thus playing an essential role in conversational turn-taking; or (iii) marks the change of topic, and in this case it acts at the level of the thematic-informational structure of the text.

As the analysis of the corpus has shown, some of these functions can be found in Portuguese stand-up comedy, namely, when “*bem*” (“*well*”) marks the change of topic. For instance:

(7) a. COM: É mesmo isto que vou fazer para um milhão de euros // **Bem** / Eu tenho muitas saudades do tempo em que andava na escola primária sabem / Gostava muito daqueles tempo da inocência / da juventude / dos jogos que a gente fazia /

b. COM: That’s exactly what I’m going to do for one million euros // **Well** / I really miss the times when I used to go to primary school / I really liked those innocent times / the childhood / the games we used to play /

In this example, “*bem*” (“*well*”) marks a change of topic within the intervention of the same speaker.

“*Bem*” (“*well*”) also initiates discourse, i.e. it marks the beginning of the speech turn, thus playing an essential role in conversational turn-taking (Lopes 2004, p.18).

(8) a. COM: **Bem** eu sou o humorista / o humorista // Já perceberam / Já perceberam que os outros são comediantes / Ah / eu sou o humorista portanto basicamente / eu já faço poucas vezes este tipo de espetáculos / neste momento o meu / ah / o meu trabalho é mais o trabalho de comissão /

b. COM: **Well** I’m the humorist / the humorist // You have already understood / You have already understood that the others are comedians / Ah / I’m the humorist so basically / I rarely do this type of show / at present my / ah / my job is more commission work /

The discourse marker “*bom*” (“*well*”) has a very similar behavior in the analyzed samples, i.e., it fulfills the function of initiating the discourse:

(9) a. COM: Ah / [beep] / **Bom** / Graças a Deus gosto / eu gosto do nome / <eu gosto do nome> / Graças e Deus / que é tipo para tentar chamar o público normalmente a ver o stand-up /

b. COM: Ah / [beep] / **Well** / Graças a Deus I like it / I like the name / <I like the name> / Graças a Deus / it’s like trying to call the attention of the audience to see stand-up /

(10) a. COM: **Bom** / Sejam bem-vindos ao penúltimo não é / É um penúltimo Graças a Deus / que é um programa com um grande nome /

b. COM: **Well** / Welcome to the penultimate isn’t it / It’s the second-to-last Graças a Deus / which is a program with a big name /

Since the English discourse marker “*well*” has a number of functional Portuguese equivalents, including, among others, the markers “*bem*” and “*bom*”, it is assumed that, as has been seen from the given examples, both markers fulfill the same function in the discourse, namely, to initiate the discourse and to signal a change of topic. It is rather difficult, however, to trace any presence of the category of ER in the given subcategory of the discourse markers.

The analysis of the corpus has demonstrated two possible functions that the discourse marker “*então*” (“*so*”) can perform in stand-up comedy: it can either have an argumentative orientation (and can thus be successfully replaced by “*portanto*” (“*therefore*”), or it can be used as a phatic conversational marker, the latter being the most predominant. As stated in Coutinho (2008: p. 204), “the argumentative value is described from the classic inferential scheme (modus ponens): in these cases, “*então*” (“*so*”) suggests that the proposition that it introduces must be interpreted as a conclusion, with respect to the antecedent discourse (that functions as an argument or a premise)”.²² In these cases, “*então*” (“*so*”) can be successfully substituted by another discourse marker “*portanto*” (“*therefore*”) as seen in the example below:

²² “O valor argumentativo é descrito a partir do esquema inferencial clássico (modus ponens): nestes casos, *então* marca que a proposição que introduz deve ser interpretada como conclusão, relativamente ao antecedente (que funciona como argumento ou premissa)”, (Coutinho 2008, p. 204).

(11) a. COM: Se nós formos almoçar às cinco / na boa / se nós formos almoçar à uma e um quarto / menos bom não é? / porque aquilo parece o desembarque de Normandia não é? / Pessoas a andar de um lado para outro / batatas fritas no chão / cadeiras do avesso / e aquilo <aquilo> está sempre cheio nós temos que <temos que> adotar estratégias para encontrar um lugar não é / aquilo é impossível / **então** / o que nós podemos fazer é por exemplo dividir os nossos amigos não é? /

b. COM: If we go to lunch at 5 o'clock / it's cool / if we go to lunch at a quarter past one / less good isn't it? / because there it looks like the landing of Normandia right? / People walking from one side to another / French fries cooked on the floor / overthrown chairs / and it's always <always> full we have to <have to> adopt strategies to find a place right / it's impossible there / **so** / what we can do is for example to divide our friends right? /

“Então” (“so”) introduces a guaranteed conclusion that resulted from a previous statement, and it can be replaced by “portanto” (“therefore”): “/ aquilo é impossível / **portanto** / o que nós podemos fazer é por exemplo dividir os nosso amigos não é /”.

Moreover, there are cases where “então” (“so”) is very similar in meaning to “neste caso” (“in this case”) (Coutinho 2008, p. 205), and a successful substitution can occur. Such substitution is possible when “então” (“so”) “highlights that the conclusion is legitimized by the speaker’s reasoning”²³ (Lopes, 1997: p. 184 *apud* Coutinho, 2008, p. 205). The example below provides an illustration of such a case:

(12) a. COM: Tu vais comprar uma embalagem de fiambre tu nunca leste o que está inscrito no rótulo / e o rótulo diz / Fiambre Nobre / Fatias finíssimas da perna extra //

AUD: hhhhhh

COM: E eu pergunto / Vizinha / então o porco aqui em Beja tem quantas pernas? //

AUD: hhhhh

COM: Tem quatro / **Então** se o fiambre vende a perna extra //

AUD: hhh

COM: Acho que vou levar um queijo Flamengo //

AUD: HHHHHH

b. COM: You go and get a package of ham you never read what it says / the package says / Noble Ham / Finest slices of Ham Extra Leg //

AUD: hhhhh

²³ “...quando se trata de marcar que a conclusão é legitimada pelo raciocínio do falante”, (Lopes, 1997: p. 184 *apud* Coutinho, 2008, p. 205)

COM: And I ask / Neighbor / so how many legs does a pig have here in Beja? //
COM: Four / **So** if a ham sells an extra leg //
AUD: hhh
COM: I think I'll go for Flamengo cheese //
AUD: HHHHH

When “*então*” (“*so*”) functions as a phatic conversational marker, which, according to our analysis, occurs in the majority of cases, it functions as a mechanism that signals discourse continuity. For instance:

(13) a. COM: Então Joana / Como é que foi o fim de semana? / Olha foi incrível / Que eu fui a Londres / Fui comprar M&M's //
AUD: hh
COM: Fiz 1500 km e estive duas horas numa fila / Mas consegui tirar uma fotografia com 80 quilos de plástico verde em forma de M&M's gigante / Foi mega mágico //
AUD: hh
COM: E ainda consegui comprar um pacotinho de M&M's de caju que aqui em Portugal não há à venda não é? //
AUD: hh
COM: **Então** e são bons? / Já provaste? / Não / Não amigo / estou na dieta //
AUD: hhhh

b. COM: So Joana / How was your weekend? / Look it was incredible / I went to London / I went there to buy M&M's //
AUD: hh
COM: I went 1500 km and I was in a queue for 2 hours / But I managed to take a picture with 80 kg of green plastic in the shape of a giant M&M's / It was magnificent //
AUD: hh
COM: And I even managed to buy a package of cashew M&M's since it's not for sale in Portugal right //
AUD: hh
COM: **So** is it good? / Have you tried it? / No / no buddy / I'm on a diet //
AUD: hhhh

Looking at this sample we see that in the first occurrence the discourse marker “*então*” (“*so*”) initiates the discourse, while in the second occurrence it fulfills the function of maintaining the discourse, thus contributing to a better flow of conversation. As for ER in the provided examples, we do not have enough evidence from the corpus to state that this category is present to a certain degree, nor does the literature review shed some light on the issue.

The last two examples below illustrate the usage of the discourse marker “*sabem*” (“*you know*”).

(14) a. COM: Sala de embarque do aeroporto / as pessoas vão e tiram uma fotografiazinha / aquela <aquela> ecrã onde está escrito o destino do avião / **sabem** / é pá! / Londres! / E nós em casa pensamos / Pronto / Olha / próximos dias o Facebook vai ser um folheto turístico da agência Abreu //

b. COM: Boarding room in the airport / the people go and get a photo of that <that> screen where the destination of the flight is written / **you know** / London! / And we’re at home thinking / All right / Look / during the next days Facebook will turn into a touristic brochure of Abreu //

(15) a. COM: Então havia dragões que pareceram aqueles dragões chineses / **sabem** / têm longos bigodes //

b. COM: So there were dragons that looked like those Chinese dragons / **you know** / they have long moustaches //

The meaning of the marker “*sabem*” (“*you know*”) is based on its literal semantic meaning. As stated in Schiffrin²⁴ (1987: p. 267), “*you know* gains attention from the hearer to open an interactive focus on speaker-provided information.” For Schiffrin, it suggests two discourse functions. First, “*you know*” is an interactional function in participation frameworks. Second, it is an information state marker. As an interactional marker, it “marks the speaker as an info provider, but one whose successful fulfillment of that role is contingent upon hearer attention” (Schiffrin, 1987: p. 190). As an info-state marker it can be of two types: 1) a marker of meta-knowledge about what speaker and hearer share; 2) a marker of meta-knowledge about what is generally known, i.e. “*you know*” appeals to shared knowledge (for instance, general truths that both the speaker and the hearer share through their membership of the same culture, society, or group). Thus, the comedian, who appears to be the member of the same epistemic society as the audience, signals shared knowledge between him and his listeners by means of the discourse marker “*sabem*” (“*you know*”).

²⁴ Since there is no study of the Portuguese equivalent of the English discourse marker “*you know*”, I follow Schiffrin (1987) on this point.

7. Conclusion

We have seen that the general distribution of the categories of the DMs of ER in Portuguese stand-up comedy are extremely unequal: while the presence of the categories of markers of reformulation and conversational structure leaves no doubt, the category of marker-mediators (or markers of sources of knowledge) is practically absent.

Considering the specific textual genre we are dealing with – Portuguese stand-up comedy – as well as the extracted conclusions, we can take a step towards characterizing this genre by highlighting the fact that marker-mediators are uncommon, while markers of conversational structure are particularly frequent, which contributes to a highly interactional and communicative nature of the genre in question.

Another question posed in the beginning had to do with the degree of responsibility in all the three categories of discourse markers. The goal was to understand if the degree of responsibility is the same or if it differs between the categories. So far, we have seen that in the case of marker-mediators, the discourse marker “segundo” (“according to”) clearly points to the existence of epistemic mediation, and thus the responsibility is assigned to another source of knowledge. In fact, the category of marker-mediators and their function of non-assumption of responsibility does not raise questions. Furthermore, the category was already been investigated in previous studies (Fernandes, 2012; Nascimento et al. 2012; Santos et al. 2010) where the results are quite similar.

Concerning the markers of reformulation, the data analysis has shown that there is a frequent self-reformulation, i.e., modification of the PoV, which may be a signal of a partial assumption of responsibility. As for the functions performed by these markers, “quer dizer” (“I mean”) can be the marker of self-reformulation, can serve as a filler, or can be an attenuator / mitigator.

Now, the analysis did demonstrate the fact that such phenomenon as ER is very problematic to trace in the category of markers of conversational structure. It showed that the discourse markers of this category perform a number of textual and interactive functions. The markers “bem” (“well”) and “bom” (“well”) can signal a change of topic or mark the beginning of speech turn. The marker “então” (“so”) is mostly a phatic conversational marker, but it can also mark argumentative orientation and serve to maintain the

continuity of the discourse. The marker “*sabes / sabem*” (“*you know*”) performs two functions: it plays an interactional function in participation framework and it serves as an information state marker. This study has verified that the discourse markers of conversational structure fulfill a range of functions and are extremely present and important in Portuguese stand-up comedy oral discourse, for they delimitate segments of texts – a thesis postulated by Adam (2008: p. 178). Their role in the assignment of any responsibility, however, remains open (see TABLE 3):

TABLE 3: The degree of ER manifested in the categories of marker-mediators, markers of reformulation and markers of conversational structure accordingly

DISCOURSE MARKERS OF ER	MARKER-MEDIATORS	EPISTEMIC MEDIATION = NO ASSUMPTION OF ER
	MARKERS OF REFORMULATION	AUTO-REFORMULATION / MODIFICATION OF PoV = PARTIAL ASSUMPTION OF ER
	MARKERS OF CONVERSATIONAL STRUCTURE	ER IS NOT PERCEIVABLE

All things considered, although the discourse markers of conversational structure are included in the same “group” of markers of ER, there seem to be no manifestations of such phenomenon as ER. However, the analysis allowed for the identification of the functions that discourse markers perform in Portuguese stand-up comedy (see TABLE 4).

TABLE 4: The functions of discourse markers of ER in Portuguese stand-up comedy

Marker-mediators	<i>Segundo</i> (“ <i>according to</i> ”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Epistemic mediation
Markers of reformulation	<i>Quer dizer</i> (“ <i>I mean</i> ”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auto-reformulation • Filler • Attenuator / Mitigator
	<i>Ou seja</i> (“ <i>that is</i> ”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reformulation
Markers of conversational structure	<i>Bem</i> (“ <i>well</i> ”), <i>bom</i> (“ <i>well</i> ”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of topic • Marks the beginning of speech turn
	<i>Então</i> (“ <i>so</i> ”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phatic conversational marker • Marks argumentative orientation • Maintains discourse continuity
	<i>Sabes / sabem</i> (“ <i>you know</i> ”)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactional function in participation framework • Information state marker

8. Prompting further investigation

The main intention of this work was to draw attention to the linguistic category of ER that has not received proper consideration and that carries a substantial potential for future study both in specialized linguistic fields, and in interdisciplinary studies. Second, this study provided an original textual analysis, based on oral data from Portuguese stand-up comedy, which bears a two-fold function. On one hand, it serves as a complementary analysis to the TAD framework and contributes to studies on humor in general. On the other hand, it reveals a possible weakness of the TAD framework, especially when it comes to the discourse markers of conversational structure and the corresponding manifestations of ER in them. There may be a need for further investigation, or the development of another theory, to explain this category. Alternatively, a recategorization of the discourse markers of ER could also assist. These strategies, however, must become the goals for future studies.

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