Introduction to the issue: Discourse, mutimodality and processing. Studies in honor of Giovanni Parodi

The passing of Giovanni Parodi plunged his family and friends into deep sorrow, while leaving the Chilean, Latin American and international scientific communities with a profound sense of loss. He died on November 14, 2020, and that Saturday the grief left all of us who knew him bitterly speechless. One year later, the intense sadness of that time is insignificant in comparison with the immense happiness that Giovanni brought to those around him throughout his life.

In different academic circles, he is remembered as a cheerful, enthusiastic, intelligent, and, above all, restless man. He was capable of involving everyone around in his projects. His teaching and research methods were modern and successful. This earned him extraordinary respect and recognition, such as the Award for Excellence in Research from his university and his appointment as a corresponding member of the Chilean Academy of Language. His talent for institutional development and his leadership made possible the creation of important academic structures (courses, graduate programs, international cooperation and research institutes) from which he promoted a new vision and an important development of Chilean and Latin American linguistics, favoring, without any contradiction, its articulation in international networks and its attachment to the surrounding academic, professional and social reality. He was one of the most international Chilean researchers and the most Chilean of international researchers.

Part of his legacy is this academic journal, Revista Signos, which he directed from 2006 until he passed. Under his editorship, the journal succeeded in stimulating academic exchange among linguistics and neighboring disciplines, especially through empirical research. This new issue, dear readers, is a special volume in many ways. It is now under the editorship of its new director, Carolina Bernales, to whom we all wish the best possible success in this endeavor. She and the authors of this introduction, as representatives of the editorial and scientific committees, wanted this first volume

without Giovanni to serve as a tribute to our colleague, mentor and friend. Thus, it brings together research that addresses highly relevant issues in the study of linguistic communication and, at the same time, each manuscript reveals a connection with Giovanni's work and his contribution to the field.

From the beginning of his academic career, Giovanni Parodi was extensively concerned with the comprehension of written discourse, which due to its complexity led to the study of the different aspects related to it, such as the generation of inferences, the levels of discourse representation and, of course, the connection between reading and writing, an interest that is reflected in his publication *Relaciones entre lectura y escritura: Una perspectiva cognitiva discursiva* (1999). Subsequently, he also explored issues within Corpus Linguistics, conducting multidimensional analyses based on multifactorial computational techniques. In this respect, the research compiled in his books *Discurso especializado e Instituciones Formadoras* and in *Lingüística de corpus y discurso especializado. Puntos de mira* (2007*)*, were extremely novel for the Latin American scientific community of the time and motivated a major development in the field. Already during the second half of the first decade of the century, and without abandoning his previous interests, he was fascinated by academic literacy, which he approached from the framework of Genre Theory and with clear references to Systemic Functional Linguistics. This phase is reflected in his book *Géneros Académicos y Géneros Profesionales* (2008), which was later published in English by John Benjamins. Although his scientific curiosity led him to explore various other topics and objects of study, his interest in the comprehension of written discourse was constant and was not only manifested in *Saber Leer* (2010), but also in his work *Comprensión de textos escritos. La Teoría de la Comunicabilidad* (2014), in which he proposed his own perspective on the phenomenon, emphasizing a multimodal perspective. With inexhaustible energy and true to his innovative spirit, during the last few years he studied discourse comprehension, with online techniques that allow us to observe the behavior of the mind during comprehension; a collection of such research can be found in the edited volume *Comprensión del Discurso. Del Movimiento Ocular al Procesamiento Cognitivo* (2020). With these recent publications, he complements the empirical study of discourse as a semiotic and cognitive fact that had had until then a main focus on the study of discourses from corpora. Without a doubt, this superficial overview of Giovanni Parodi's work does not reflect his vast scientific production, which exceeds 80 scientific research articles and 20 books of authorship or edition; however, it allows us to show the significance and the reasons for the content of the present issue.

In the following pages, we have gathered some of his former students and colleagues from all over the world who have maintained and continue to maintain a close relationship with Revista Signos. They responded to our open call and have allowed us to offer you this exceptional tribute issue. We have organized the volume

into four thematic areas that reflect Giovanni's research interests: Discourse Studies, Multimodality and Multimedia, Corpus Studies, and Comprehension and Processing.

The first part presents manuscripts that show the plurality of theoretical and descriptive approaches to discourse. The first two articles are complementary in different ways, as Adriana Bolívar, on the one hand, and Elvira Narvaja de Arnaux, on the other, respectively value Giovanni Parodi's contributions to the analysis of different discourse issues and the debates they currently raise in Hispano-American research. Next, Guiomar Ciapuscio, from the perspective of text linguistics, offers a generic characterization of the commercial agreement letter. Teun van Dijk, in a case study of political discourse, delves into a socio-cognitive model of discourse analysis, showing the importance of participants in a discursive interaction maintaining a common mental model in a given situation. Jim Martin, from the theoretical framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics, explores the reasons why a text is coherent in pedagogical terms. This section closes with a study by Christian Matthiessen, also from Systemic Functional Linguistics, which examines the functional varieties of language used in different academic spaces, both in school communication and in the communication of different university disciplines.

The second part of the volume is devoted to the issues of multimodality and multimedia communication. John Bateman deals theoretically and methodologically with the synergetic interpretation of different forms of nonverbal expression in the field of multimodality. Cengiz Acartürk, Melda Coskun and Serap Emil, in the area of multimodal comprehension, investigate, on the one hand, the relationship between spontaneous gestures and arrows in teaching contexts and, on the other hand, study the impact of gestures on comprehension learning. This section closes with a contribution by Daniel Cassany and Liudmila Shafirova, who deal with the use of multimedia material in school contexts.

The third part of this issue begins with the work of Francisco Moreno Fernández, who shares his insights on the way in which variation is reflected in linguistic corpora, paying special attention to the dialectal dimension and the way in which geographical configuration is reflected in them. René Venegas presents various applications of artificial intelligence for the automated classification of communicative purposes in a particular discursive genre. Finally, in order to show the link between corpus linguistics and psycholinguistics, Max Louwerse demonstrates, using examples of word order from the different spaces of Spanish-speaking countries, that language creates meaning.

The fourth and final section is devoted to issues of comprehension and discourse processing. It begins with Manuel de Vega's review of the corporeal perspective on language processing and comprehension, highlighting the functional advantages of corporeal meaning over purely symbolic meaning. Inés Recio, Óscar Loureda and Ted Sanders present an overview of current experimental research, especially concerning

referential and relational coherence mechanisms. Romualdo Ibáñez, Fernando Moncada and Andrea Santana address the effect of exposure to coherence relations on the processing and comprehension of Chilean school students. Lauren Flynn, Danielle McNamara, Kathryn McCarthy, Joseph Magliano and Laura Allen present a study in which they use cohesion analysis of student-constructed responses to assess coherence construction processes, paying attention to the degree to which these vary across individuals and across text types. Finally, in a move from comprehension studies to the use of automated processes for teaching, Arthur Graesser, Daphne Greenberg, Jan Frijters, and Amani Talwar show the usefulness of the AutoTutor tool in an intervention with adult readers.

Taken together, the seventeen contributions presented here reflect the diversity of topics, methods and objectives of current discourse research. We would like to thank the authors for their scientific contribution, their enthusiasm and the affection shown during the preparation of this issue, which we should never have had to write without Giovanni.

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