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EXPERIENCE REPORT

REFLECTING ON **FUNCTIONAL DISCOURSE GRAMMAR** AS I SELF-ISOLATE

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ABSTRACT

These reflections begin by sketching the origins of Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG) in Simon Dik's Functional Grammar and then by setting out some of the major principles of FDG. The Dik-inspired approach emphasized here puts a focus on an interpretation of the theory that gives a prominent place to dialogue and the speakers' communicative strategies. The discussion commences with speakers' discursive strategies and then moves on to their lexical strategies. Finally, drawing on corpus data, attention is devoted to the verb self-isolate in English, a new verb that was created in the early days of the coronavirus crisis.

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RESUMO

As origens da Gramática Discursivo-Funcional (GDF) encontram-se na Gramática Funcional de Simon Dik. Depois de explicitar alguns dos principais princípios da GDF, este ensaio salienta uma abordagem pós-dikiana que dá um lugar de destaque ao diálogo e às estratégias comunicativas dos falantes. O núcleo das reflexões debruça-se sobre as estratégias discursivas dos falantes e, em seguida, passa para as estratégias lexicais. Finalmente, com base em dados de corpus, dedica-se atenção ao verbo self-isolate em inglês, um novo verbo que foi criado nos primeiros dias da crise do coronavírus.

KEYWORDS

Functional Discourse Grammar; Dialogue; Communicative Strategies; Neologisms; Language and COVID-19.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Gramática Discursivo-Funcional; Diálogo; Estratégias Comunicativas; Neologismos; Linguagem e a COVID-19.

INTRODUCTION

I wish to begin by thanking ABRALIN and its President Miguel Oliveira Jr. for honoring me with an invitation to contribute a talk and now an article to the fantastic ABRALIN ao Vivo initiative. This series of conferences and round tables – as well as the videos and articles that have arisen in their wake – is a perfect answer to the challenges of the pandemic which, in addition to many other horrible effects, has severely perturbed university teaching and research. The series is also a response to the anti-intellectualism that characterizes current times and is nowhere in the world more visible and more tangible than in Brazil. I see this contribution of mine as a continuation of the many opportunities that have been granted me in recent years by Brazilian colleges and institutions to lecture and teach courses on Functional Discourse Grammar (FDG).

It is a remarkable fact that FDG is practiced at numerous Brazilian universities, and I would like to take this opportunity to greet and pay my respects to my colleagues at the São Paulo State University (UNESP) of São José do Rio Preto, the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul, the Federal University of São Carlos, the Federal University of Goiás, the Federal University of Ceará, the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, and the State University of Maringá, in addition to the colleagues that invited me to teach at the Mackenzie Presbyterian University and to lecture at the UNESP campus in Araraquara, and last but not least, at the University of São Paulo.

In these reflections, composed during a period of self-isolation in Lisbon, I want to begin by sketching the origins of FDG in Simon Dik's Functional Grammar (DIK, 1997), briefly setting out some of the principles of FDG (HENGEVELD and MACKENZIE, 2008), and then focusing on an interpretation of FDG that gives a prominent place to dialogue. I intend to enter into speakers' discursive strategies and then their lexical strategies, and finally dedicate a few words to the verb *self-isolate* in English, a new verb that was created in the early days of the coronavirus crisis.

Functional Discourse Grammar emerged in the early years of this century as a successor theory to Functional Grammar as developed by Simon C. Dik, one of the key figures of linguistic functionalism. Dik's Functional Grammar (DIK, 1978; 1980; 1989; 1997) was conceived as a grammar of the clause. We must bear in mind that his model emerged in the seventies and eighties of last century, in the context of the dominance of Generative Grammar (CHOMSKY, 1981), the Case Grammar of Fillmore (1968), the Relational Grammar of Perlmutter and Postal (1983), and many other models of the clause. At that time Dik was working with very much the same assumptions: the focus on clauses was also apparent in his work on the computational implementation of his theory (DIK, 1992). In the nineties Simon fell ill and passed away in 1995. In the last chapter of his final, posthumously published book

(DIK, 1997), he outlined what he called a "grammar of discourse", which he saw as an extension of his previous work on the clause. This chapter was certainly a response to a growing wave of interest on the part of Functional Grammar practitioners in general in the extent to which the theory could be made to cover not only the impact of discourse on syntactic structure but also discourse itself. After all, most of these practitioners were teachers and researchers in foreign language departments (as I was, too, in an English language department): our daily work confronted us with the interface between grammar and textuality. In addition, there was a strong presence in the group of scholars of classical languages whose corpora of Latin and Greek texts were by definition textual and increasingly consultable by computer. After Dik's death, there was a lively debate in the last years of the twentieth century on how to incorporate elements of pragmatics and even discourse analysis into Functional Grammar (MACKENZIE, 2016).

The resolution of this debate came in the year 2000. At a conference in Madrid, Kees Hengeveld, Dik's successor as Professor of Theoretical Linguistics in Amsterdam and his most distinguished disciple, proposed a new model that synthesized the points of conflict and corrected several limitations of the existing model (published as HENGEVELD, 2004). He suggested that the new model should be called Functional Discourse Grammar, inserting the word Discourse between Functional and Grammar, and the name was accepted. FDG had, and still has, as its central proposal the idea that the organization of grammar into layers characteristic of Dik's theory should be applied not only to the semantic aspects already covered by Functional Grammar but also to various discourse-related aspects, specifically the illocution and other grammatical reflexes of verbal interaction.

This was achieved by distinguishing two separate levels within the grammar, each with its own internal layering: the Representational Level, which resembled the underlying representations in Dik's grammar, and the Interpersonal Level, which encompassed the impact of discourse on grammatical organization. In addition, Hengeveld outlined two other levels of analysis, now called the Morphosyntactic and Phonological Levels, both also divided into hierarchically organized layers, in the same way as the Interpersonal and Representational Levels. This was how FDG emerged, and in the last twenty years it has slowly but effectively replaced Dik's model.

The central text of the FDG is the book *Functional Discourse Grammar: A Typologically-Based Theory of Language Structure* (HENGEVELD and MACKENZIE, 2008); for a more introductory book, see *A Functional Discourse Grammar for English* (KEIZER, 2015). See the extended bibliography for a succession of books and special issues of academic journals dedicated to FDG since 2004.

What, then, are the major characteristics of FDG? The most prominent is that, while Dik's Functional Grammar, like the vast majority of grammatical models, was a grammar of the clause, FDG is a grammar of Discourse Act. Human beings who engage in verbal

interaction are expending energy in an attempt to influence each other; this activity is divided into Discourse Acts. In syntactic terms, these Acts can take the outward form of a clause, but also one or more phrases or a simple word or indeed units that cover more than one clause. These Discourse Acts ($A_{1...n}$) are the central elements of the Interpersonal Level and are grouped into Moves ($M_{1...n}$):

(1) (M_1: [(A_1) ... (A_n)] (M_1))

There has been a lot of interest in the internal organization of these Moves, that is, in the relations between Discourse Acts, in terms of both equipollence (similar to parataxis) and dependency (similar to hypotaxis). Work on such external relations of Discourse Acts has been located at the interface between grammar and discourse analysis. But FDG also pays attention to the internal structure of Acts. While the Move represents a higher layer than that of Discourse Acts (cf. (1)), there are also lower layers. In the case of the Discourse Act, there are usually four units: the Illocution (F_1), the speaker (P_1), the addressee (P_2), and the Communicated Content (C_1).

The analysis at the Interpersonal Level of an utterance such as Portuguese *Cansada?* ('Tired?') will run as follows. The Act consists of four parts in an equipollence relation, signaled by the square brackets: an Interrogative Illocution, a Speaker, a female Addressee (the femaleness being indicated by the lowercase operator f), and a Communicated Content, which in this case contains, at a lower layer, a single Subact of Ascription (T_1):

(2) (A_1: [(F_1: INTER (F_1)) (P_1)$_S$ (f P_2)$_A$ (C_1: (T_1) (C_1))] (A_1))

Compare the analysis of *Obrigada!* ('Thank you!') in (3):

(3) (A_1: [(F_1: (D_1: obrigad-$_{Intj}$ (D_1)) (F_1)) (f P_1)$_S$ (P_2)$_A$] (A_1))

Here we see a Discourse Act with only three parts, with no Communicated Content, but with a female speaker, an addressee, and instead of an abstract illocution like INTER(rogative), a lexical illocution. (3) contains the layer (D_1) for lexical Deeds, as proposed by Giomi (2021); this added layer helps us to understand how we can add modifiers to expand these illocutions, for example in *infinitamente obrigada* 'lit. infinitely obliged, thank you so much'. The analysis in (3) shows that to thank is not to communicate a State of Affairs (the Act has no Communicated Content) but to perform an interactive act.

For a more complete description of these two examples, we would need other levels than the Interpersonal Level: the Representational Level for the ideational element *cansad-*, the Morphosyntactic Level for the attachment of the suffix *-a*, and the Phonological Level

for the prosodic contours. But this is not the time to go into technical details; all necessary information can be found in Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008). Rather, let us focus on some considerations that have played a role in the most recent work in FDG, including my own work. Within the group of researchers in FDG there has been a debate between those who favor a view of grammar as a tool used by the individual speaker and others who insist more on a dialogical dimension. The former view was articulated in Hengeveld and Mackenzie (2008, p. 1-2), where it is stated that a model of grammar will be more effective the more its organization resembles linguistic processing in the individual. This view has favored an interpretation of the FDG architecture (for which see Figure 1) as a succession of operations: the sequence starts in the Conceptual Component with pre-linguistic cognitive activity and the emergence of the speaker's communicative intention; it continues in the Grammatical Component with the two formulation operations (which generate the Interpersonal and Representational Levels. Then there are the two codifying operations, which generate the Morphosyntactic and Phonological Levels. All four operations are impacted by the Contextual Component; and the sequence ends with the phonetic, graphological or gestural articulation in the Output Component.

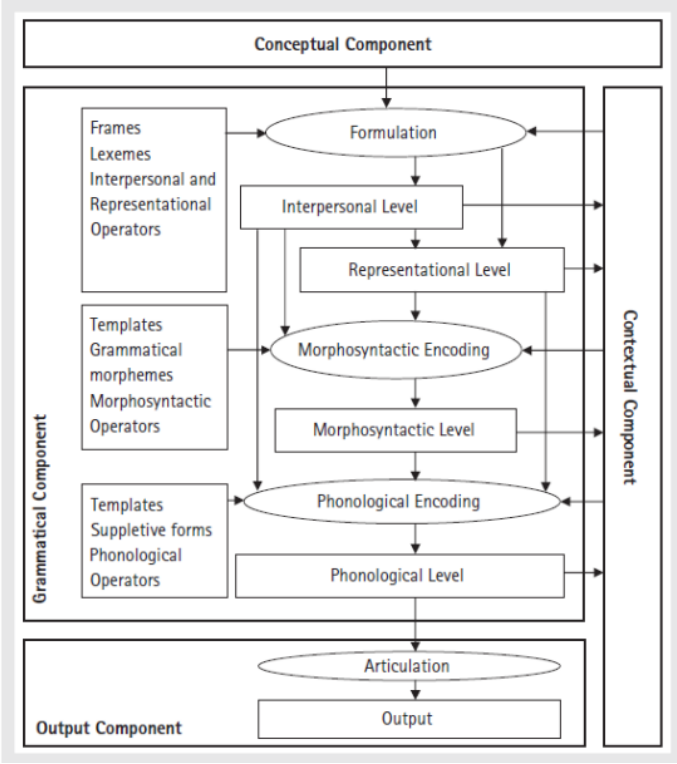


Figure 1. The architecture of Functional Discourse Grammar.

The second view, the dialogic one, brings back into play the approach advocated by Simon Dik's Functional Grammar, who defended the model represented in Figure 2 (DIK, 1997, Part 1, p. 8).

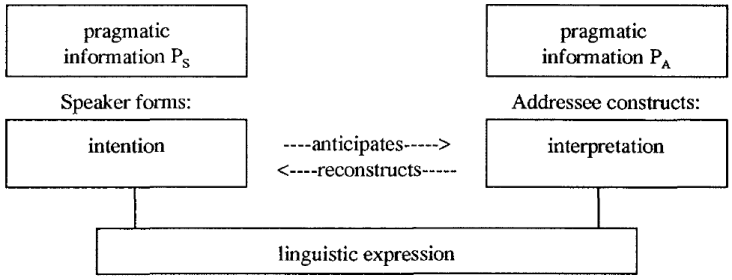


Figure 2. Dik's model of verbal interaction.

Figure 2 represents the speaker and the addressee at some point in a dialogue. Both share a code in the sense that both have the ability to use a shared language actively and passively, as well as sharing their surroundings, the communicative situation in which they find themselves. But they do not share the individual stores of what Dik called their 'pragmatic information'; these stores are entirely personal and encompass the totality of knowledge, beliefs, prejudices, feelings, etc. which together constitute the mind of a participant in a dialogue at a given moment. Seen from this perspective, linguistic communication is equivalent to an attempt on the part of the interlocutors to bridge the gap between their minds by exploiting their shared linguistic competence and their common awareness of the surroundings of their interaction. Then, based on a certain intention, the speaker performs a Discourse Act, and formulates and encodes it in a linguistic expression in such a way that the resulting statement has a reasonable chance of effecting the desired change in the addressee's pragmatic information. The addressee, in turn, when decoding the statement, tries to interpret what they have heard, reconstructing the presumed communicative intention of the speaker. The speaker knows this and anticipates that the addressee will reconstruct their intention.

All of this means that the formulation adopted by the speaker when carrying out a Discourse Act makes a contribution to its interpretation, but does not dictate it. The speaker's words are almost never a complete verbalization of their communicative intention, especially because of additional motivations that go beyond the mere transmission of knowledge, such as the desire to respect the rules of politeness. In the same way, the information decoded by the addressee is only part of the meaning they will take away from the utterance: the total meaning is the addressee's interpretation, which is based on several abductive inferences; this interpretation, for example, often contains an assessment of the speaker. Thus we can conclude that the Discourse Act is

underdetermined, in the sense that the content of the Act itself represents much less than its total impact; but the Act is obviously also an essential lever for having that impact on the addressee. The view that derives from this dialogical perspective is one of grammar as an instrument, as an intricate, sophisticated tool, used by language users to cast a bridge, sometimes a rather shaky bridge, between the different individuals involved. All of this leads to the conclusion that the two representations of meaning that characterize the FDG analysis of a Discourse Act, the pragmatic meaning at the Interpersonal Level and the semantic meaning at the Representational Level, do not replicate the speaker's conceptualization, nor even the communicative intention his. Instead, the speaker creates the two representations as elements of a 'strategic campaign', so to speak, which aims to have the desired effect on the addressee. For this reason, a Referential Subact (R_1) as part of a Communicated Content (C_1) is never inherently Topic but can be treated as such if that fits into the speaker's communicative strategy; likewise, the desire to make a request never inherently leads to an Interrogative Illocution, but within the framework of a pragmatic strategy of indirectness this is a possible (and indeed generally highly entrenched) option.

This strategic approach was further developed and applied by Hannay and Kroon (2005). After a detailed demonstration of the fact that a Discourse Act, as we have already mentioned, does not have to correspond to a syntactic clause, they maintain that the 'chunking' of ideation into Discourse Acts depends on the speaker's strategic planning (HANNAY and KROON, 2005, p. 104). They agree with the consensus that the most reliable evidence of Discourse Act status comes from prosodic clues. They compare the three examples (4a), (4b) and (4c):

(4) (a) He waited, for ages.
(b) He waited. For ages.
(c) He waited for ages.

All three examples convey the information that he has waited 'for a very long time, obviously with the figure of speech of hyperbole strategically employed by the speaker, setting an easy puzzle which the addressee will solve without problems in the inferential process of interpretation. But the difference between the three examples, informally represented in the punctuation, also depends on the strategy adopted by the speaker: in (4c) the speaker formulates a single Discourse Act with a Focus on *ages* and lets the words speak for themselves; in (4a), however, we see two Discourse Acts, one dependent on the other, each with its own Focus, respectively *waited* and *ages*; and in (4b) there are two equipollent Discourse Acts within a Move with a terminal break after the first. It is evident that the addressee will be influenced in their interpretation by the strategy adopted by the speaker, for example when estimating the degree of impatience and irritation of the man.

Let us now move on to lexical strategies, approached from the point of view of FDG, appealing to some more recent work on the lexicon (HENGEVELD and MACKENZIE, 2016). A crucial concept is that of the 'frame'. The repertoire of frames (the 'frameset') available in a given language is part of the speaker's competence, captured in FDG in the so-called 'primitives', shown as rectangles on the left side of the Grammatical Component in Figure 1. For example, in Portuguese there are frames for configurational properties of zero valence (like *chove-* 'rain'), monovalence (like *brilha-* 'shine'), bivalence (like *le-* 'read') and trivalence (like *da-* 'give'), where valence is the number of arguments attributed by the speaker to a predicate.

(5)

a.	chove-$_V$	>	(f_1: ♦$_V$ (f_1))
b.	brilha-$_V$	>	(f_1: [(f_2: ♦$_V$ (f_2)) (x_1)$_U$] (f_1))
c.	le-$_V$	>	(f_1: [(f_2: ♦$_V$ (f_2)) (x_1)$_A$ (x_2)$_U$] (f_1))
d.	da-$_V$	>	(f_1: [(f_2: ♦$_V$ (f_2)) (x_1)$_A$ (x_2)$_U$ (x_3)$_L$] (f_1))

The lozenge ♦ indicates the location of the lexeme, which has its own variable (f_2); ($x_{1...n}$) here indicate arguments, and the subscripts {A,U,L} stand for the semantic functions {Actor, Undergoer, Locative}. The Configurational Property (here shown as f_1) is a layer of the Representational Level and functions as the head of the representation of the so-called State-of-Affairs, the next higher layer. There are also other frames in the model, but let us focus here on the most accessible frames, those of quantitative valence within the Configurational Property exemplified in (5). The key point is that the choice of the frame is again a strategic action on the part of the speaker.

The approach depends on the idea that determining which frame will be applied precedes the choice of the lexical item that will occupy it. This procedure is inspired by the literature on speech production, for example by Konopka and Brown-Schmidt (2014). When developing the intention of describing a particular situation, in a first step, speakers start by delineating its global configuration (Is it a state or an event? How many participants are there? What is already known, what is new?); we know this on the basis of eye-tracking studies. Only in the second step will speakers look for lexical items capable of denoting the participants present. In FDG this is modeled by first determining which frame is appropriate and thereafter attributing lexemes to the chosen frame. In this second step, several factors come into play, such as the speaker's intentions, the discourse context, the nature of the interaction (for example in terms of politeness), but also the impact of the entrenchment of the various lexical options as well as the influence of priming. García Velasco (2007) refers in this context to the "lexical competence" of the speaker, defined as the ability to use words based on a set of mostly unconscious beliefs rooted in lifelong experience of hearing and pronouncing those words.

At this point, I would like to refer to my own experience of learning and adopting the verb *self-isolate* in English. In the epidemiological crisis, citizens were encouraged or even forced in an initial phase to isolate themselves from possible contagion by staying at home and/or by respecting social distance. At the time of preparing this material for my Abralin ao Vivo talk, I was still limiting my physical contacts with other human beings to a minimum, hence the title of this article. I very well remember the first time I heard the verb *self-isolate* on British television. The presenter read the word from her teleprompter, the equipment attached to the cameras that displays the text for her to read, and she hesitated, obviously surprised by the word *self-isolate*, and then felt the need to explain the verb by using the reflexive construction: "That means isolate ourselves, I suppose". The incident reminded me of my own research in the framework of the FDG, published as Mackenzie (2018), into English verbs prefixed with *self-*, such as *self-publish*, *self-harm*, *self-regulate*, etc. The prefixation of *self-* is long-standing in the language and dates back to at least the 16th century; in Shakespeare's work, for example, there are 45 words ('types') with this prefix with 59 occurrences ('tokens') in total. But none of these is a verb.

The prefixing of *self-* to verbs, according to Google Ngram Viewer (https://books.google.com/ngrams), only started centuries later, around 1970, with the first verb being *self-destruct*, which still leads the field, cf. Figure 3.

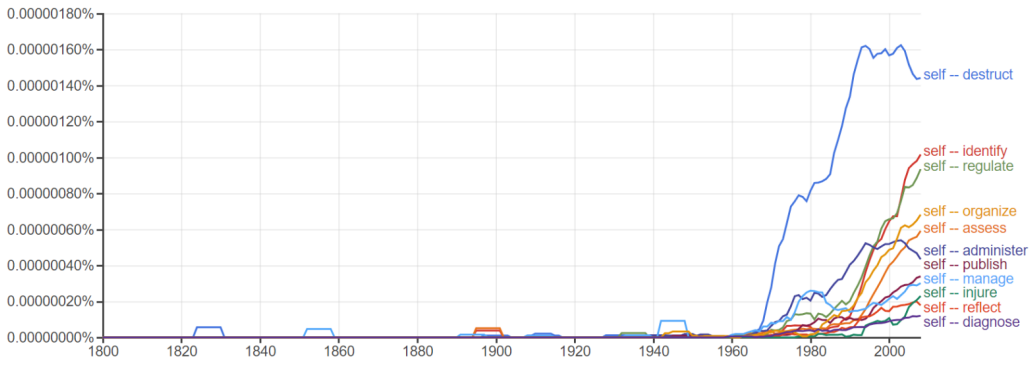


Figure 3. *Self-*prefixed verbs in Google Ngram Viewer.

The word was possibly coined in science fiction films: spaceships 'self-destruct' in those films for fear of falling into the wrong hands, and then the word *self-destruct* spread across society in general. This relatively new lexical strategy, compressing a situation with two identical participants into a monovalent frame by means of the prefix *self-*, is a good example of what García Velasco (2016) has called the 'flexible lexicon'. Confronted by an unknown word like *self-isolate*, the addressee is usually able to interpret the speaker's intention by invoking another lexeme that displays some analogy with the new item, in this case the lexeme *self-isolation*, which had already existed in the lexicon of many English

speakers. With the entry of the verb *self-isolate* into the English lexicon, it can be said that the lexical family {*self-isolation*, *self-isolating*, *self-isolator*, etc.} acquired a new member. In addition, as the number of verbs with the prefix *self-* increased in the English lexicon, so more and more exemplars became available, and these came to form, in the happy expression proposed by Haspelmath and Sims (2010, p. 128), a 'lexical gang'.

To account for the FDG framework of verbs with prefix *self-* I will profit from an idea launched by Keizer (2016), namely, that of 'partially instantiated frames'. The frames exemplified in (5) are general frames; but the partially instantiated ones inherently contain specific lexical operators or lexical items. For *self-*prefixed verbs Mackenzie (2018) proposed some partially instantiated frames.

Let's start with (6), the simplest:

(6) $(f_1: [(/self/\ f_2: \blacklozenge_V\ (f_2))\ (x_1)_A]\ (f_1))$

This structure allows the insertion of a verbal lexeme (at position ♦) into a frame that is partially instantiated in containing a so-called 'lexical operator', phonologically specified as /self/. (7) shows an example of such an insertion, namely of the verb *isolate*, yielding our verb *self-isolate*:

(7) $(f_i: [(/self/\ f_i: /\ \text{ˈ}\text{a}\text{ɪ}\text{s}\text{ə}\text{l}\text{e}\text{ɪ}\text{t}/_V\ (f_i))\ (x_i)_A]\ (f_i))$

In this case, the prefixed verb corresponds to a reflexive conceptualization, as was already mooted by that television presenter.

But in my corpus of the hundred most frequent verbs prefixed with *self-*, taken from Mark Davies's GloWbE Corpus (DAVIES, 2013), there are also verbs that fit into exactly the same frame but without a sense of reflexivity. These verbs have a meaning associated by König (2011) in his study of *self-*prefixed nouns, with exclusivity, the idea that someone takes action alone, excluding any help, as in (8):

(8) He decided to self-build when he went in search of a more spacious house.

The most plausible interpretation of this statement is that when he was looking for a bigger home, he decided to build his own house, without help.

There are also verbs in the corpus that the reader can interpret in terms of either reflexivity or exclusivity, for example *self-certify* in (9):

(9) a. You will be able to self-certify for a week of illness.

b. Some retailers self-certify, which in reality means very little.

The most plausible interpretation of (9a) is that you can register your own illness (the reflexive interpretation), while the most plausible interpretation of (9b) is that some retailers certify products without assistance (the exclusive interpretation). But what I want to emphasize is that the frame is not a representation of the meaning but rather a tool used by the speaker (or in this case the writer) to stimulate an interpretation process on the part of the addressee (or in this case, the reader). The choice of a frame is therefore part of the speaker's strategy.

In the corpus there are also several examples of verbs prefixed with *self-* with two arguments, bivalent verbs, for which I propose the frame in (10):

(10) $(f_1$: [(/self/ f_2: ♦$_V$ $(f_2))$ $(x_1)_A$ $(v_1)_U]$ $(f_1))$

Consider the examples in (11):

(11) a. Students must self-declare that they wish to graduate.
b. I'm just trying to self-justify drinking Guinness.

The most plausible interpretation of (11a) is that students must themselves personally declare that they wish to be present at the graduation ceremony (the exclusive interpretation), while the most plausible interpretation of (11b) is reflexive, namely that I am trying to justify drinking Guinness (an Irish beer) to myself. This bivalent frame has even a third interpretation, the causative one, exemplified in (12):

(12) He threatened to self-deport Hispanics.

This example alludes to the Republican candidate in the 2012 presidential elections in the USA, who threatened to make the lives of migrants from Latin America so unpleasant that they would voluntarily return to their countries of origin. It is seen very clearly in this example that the attribution of a verb (in this case *deport*) to this frame triggers a process of interpretation that is sometimes quite complex and depends on various pieces of background information and inferences.

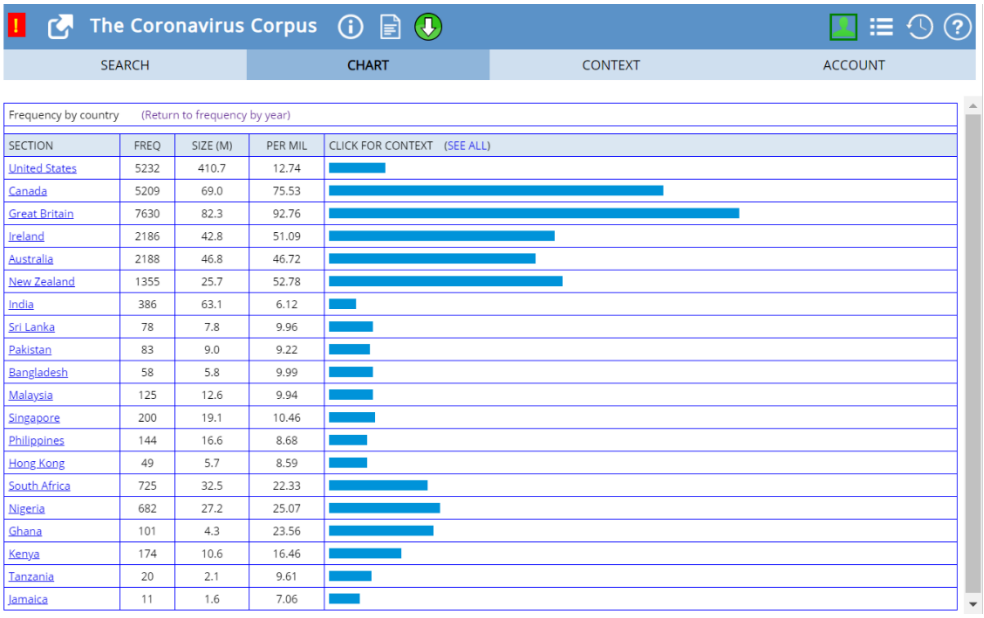
For the sake of completeness, I do not want to neglect a third frame, which corresponds to several examples (which I did not expect to find in the data at the beginning) with not only the prefix *self-* but also an explicit reflexive pronoun. The frame is shown in (13) and two examples are given in (14):

(13) $(f_1$: [(/self/ f_2: ♦$_V$ $(f_2))$ $(x_1)_A$ $(x_1)_U]$ $(f_1))$

(14) a. He got his name splashed around the media to self-promote himself.
b. No one likes to self-apply categories such as "baby boomer" to themselves.

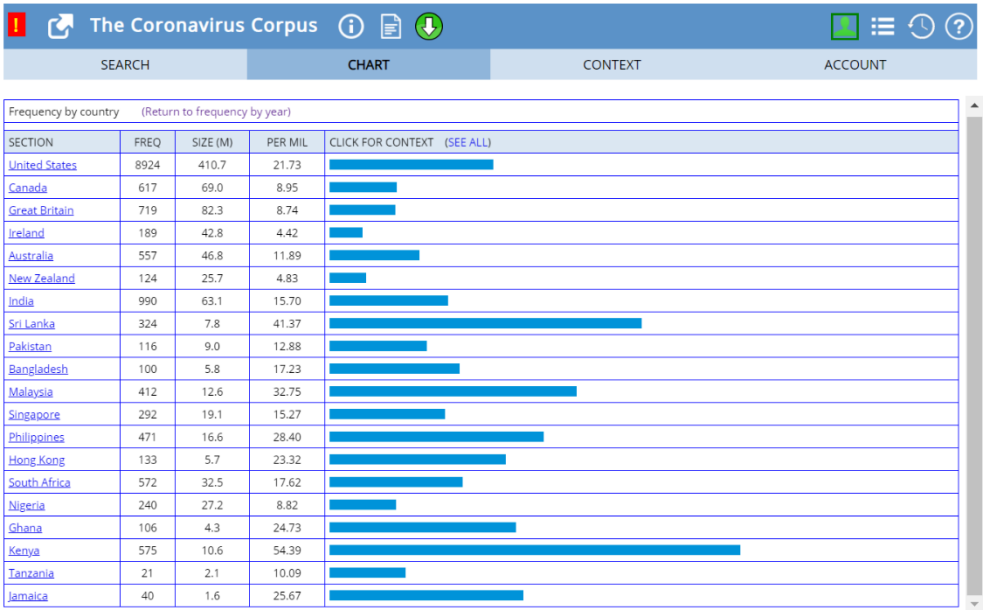
(14a) means that he had his name distributed through the media in order to promote his own career and (14b) that no one likes to apply categories like "postwar generation" to themselves. So there seems to be a redundancy in *self-promote himself* or *self-apply … to themselves*, and in fact it would be perfectly possible to omit either the prefix or the reflexive pronoun and retain the same interpretation, but not both of course. For me, these types of examples are more proof that the frames do not represent the meaning but are indeed a tool that aims to circumscribe the reader's interpretation process. It is possible that, in this case, the presence of the apparently redundant reflexive pronoun serves to guide this process of interpretation, limiting it to a reflexive interpretation.

I would like to end by returning briefly to the verb *self-isolate*, a verb that has played such a prominent role in these days of total and partial confinement. For this purpose I will make grateful use of some of the corpora made available by Mark Davies on his website English-Corpora.org (see his contribution to Abralin ao Vivo on May 26th 2020). Of particular interest here is the Coronavirus Corpus (DAVIES, 2020-), https://www.english-corpora.org/corona/, launched on May 15th 2020, which provides texts from newspapers and magazines published online in English around the world since the beginning of the epidemiological crisis. Each day some 3 to 4 million words are added. We see in Figure 4 (this and all following Figures derive from consultations on March 24th, 2021) that *self-isolate* is particularly common in the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Ireland and Australia, fairly common in Africa but relatively uncommon in Asia and the United States. Part of the explanation may be that in Africa, Asia and the United States the most commonly used verb is *self-quarantine,* see Figure 5. It is evident that the two verbs are more or less synonymous and are inserted into the same frame, shown as (6) above: the process of lexical insertion in this case appears to depend on what has become entrenched in the particular social environment of the language user.



SECTION	FREQ	SIZE (M)	PER MIL	CLICK FOR CONTEXT (SEE ALL)
United States	5232	410.7	12.74	
Canada	5209	69.0	75.53	
Great Britain	7630	82.3	92.76	
Ireland	2186	42.8	51.09	
Australia	2188	46.8	46.72	
New Zealand	1355	25.7	52.78	
India	386	63.1	6.12	
Sri Lanka	78	7.8	9.96	
Pakistan	83	9.0	9.22	
Bangladesh	58	5.8	9.99	
Malaysia	125	12.6	9.94	
Singapore	200	19.1	10.46	
Philippines	144	16.6	8.68	
Hong Kong	49	5.7	8.59	
South Africa	725	32.5	22.33	
Nigeria	682	27.2	25.07	
Ghana	101	4.3	23.56	
Kenya	174	10.6	16.46	
Tanzania	20	2.1	9.61	
Jamaica	11	1.6	7.06	

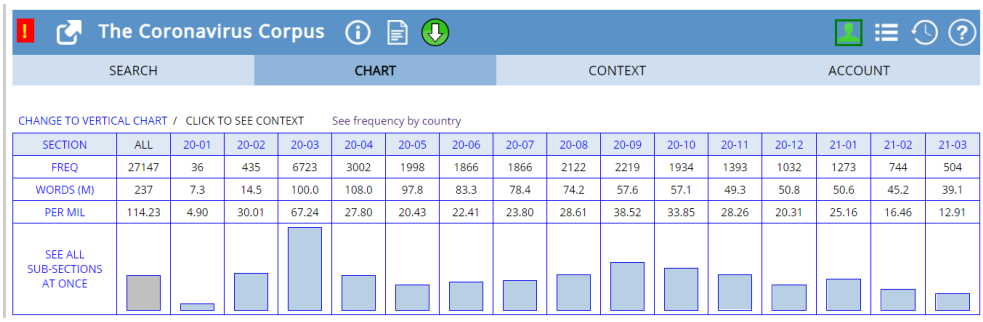
Figure 4. Relative distribution of *self-isolate* across English-speaking countries.



SECTION	FREQ	SIZE (M)	PER MIL	CLICK FOR CONTEXT (SEE ALL)
United States	8924	410.7	21.73	
Canada	617	69.0	8.95	
Great Britain	719	82.3	8.74	
Ireland	189	42.8	4.42	
Australia	557	46.8	11.89	
New Zealand	124	25.7	4.83	
India	990	63.1	15.70	
Sri Lanka	324	7.8	41.37	
Pakistan	116	9.0	12.88	
Bangladesh	100	5.8	17.23	
Malaysia	412	12.6	32.75	
Singapore	292	19.1	15.27	
Philippines	471	16.6	28.40	
Hong Kong	133	5.7	23.32	
South Africa	572	32.5	17.62	
Nigeria	240	27.2	8.82	
Ghana	106	4.3	24.73	
Kenya	575	10.6	54.39	
Tanzania	21	2.1	10.09	
Jamaica	40	1.6	25.67	

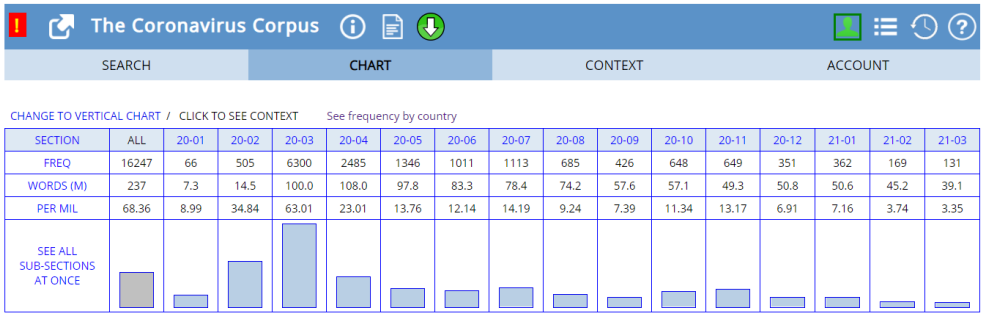
Figure 5. Relative distribution of *self-quarantine* across English-speaking countries.

At the beginning of the period January 2020 to March 2021, the verb *self-isolate* was still infrequent (4.90 words per million) but by mid-March it had reached 67.24 words per million before stabilizing at a lower level (see Figure 6); the verb *self-quarantine* (see Figure 7) initially follows a very similar path, but by December 2020 falls to an even lower level than its initial frequency.



SECTION	ALL	20-01	20-02	20-03	20-04	20-05	20-06	20-07	20-08	20-09	20-10	20-11	20-12	21-01	21-02	21-03
FREQ	27147	36	435	6723	3002	1998	1866	1866	2122	2219	1934	1393	1032	1273	744	504
WORDS (M)	237	7.3	14.5	100.0	108.0	97.8	83.3	78.4	74.2	57.6	57.1	49.3	50.8	50.6	45.2	39.1
PER MIL	114.23	4.90	30.01	67.24	27.80	20.43	22.41	23.80	28.61	38.52	33.85	28.26	20.31	25.16	16.46	12.91
SEE ALL SUB-SECTIONS AT ONCE																

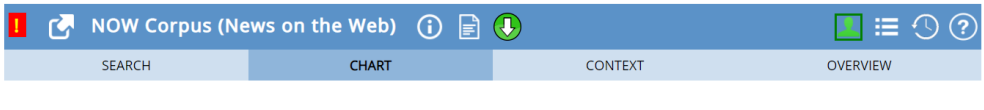
Figure 6. Frequency of *self-isolate* from 20-01-20 to 21-03-21.



SECTION	ALL	20-01	20-02	20-03	20-04	20-05	20-06	20-07	20-08	20-09	20-10	20-11	20-12	21-01	21-02	21-03
FREQ	16247	66	505	6300	2485	1346	1011	1113	685	426	648	649	351	362	169	131
WORDS (M)	237	7.3	14.5	100.0	108.0	97.8	83.3	78.4	74.2	57.6	57.1	49.3	50.8	50.6	45.2	39.1
PER MIL	68.36	8.99	34.84	63.01	23.01	13.76	12.14	14.19	9.24	7.39	11.34	13.17	6.91	7.16	3.74	3.35
SEE ALL SUB-SECTIONS AT ONCE																

Figure 7. Frequency of *self-quarantine* from 20-01-20 to 21-03-21.

A look at Mark Davies's ten billion-word NOW Corpus (DAVIES, 2016-) https://www.english-corpora.org/now/, see Figure 8, reveals that the verb *self-isolate* is really new and in effect was created in 2020, while Figure 9 shows a similar picture for *self-quarantine*.



SECTION	ALL	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
FREQ	28982	0	0	0	0	3	2	5	5	3	9	26458	2497
WORDS (M)	12200	244.1	304.8	371.3	401.5	429.4	512.5	1,531.3	1,746.5	1,569.1	1,987.5	2,607.8	547.9
PER MIL	2.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.15	4.56
SEE ALL SUB-SECTIONS AT ONCE													

Figure 8. Sudden appearance of *self-isolate* in 2020.

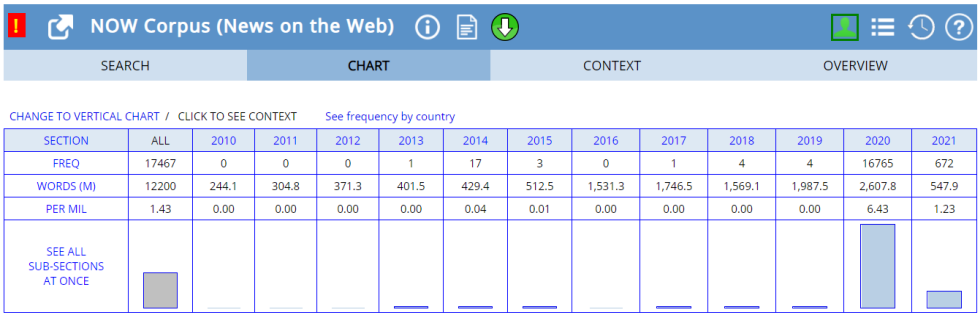


Figure 9. Sudden appearance of *self-quarantine* in 2020.

And what about the combination with the apparently redundant reflexive pronoun? The NOW Corpus reveals a total of 199 instances of *self-isolate* in 2020 with reflexive pronoun (and none in the preceding ten years) and 134 instances of *self-quarantine* with reflexive pronoun (and again none in the preceding ten years). Here are two examples chosen at random:

(15) I had to self-isolate myself for a week and I nearly cracked up.

(16) The asymptomatic contacts would be asked to self-quarantine themselves.

I conclude that the partially instantiated frame shown in (13) has also been co-opted in the coronavirus era, at least by some language users.

For those readers who did not yet know FDG, I trust this article has given a small sample of how (and how well) it works; for those who are already familiar with the framework, I hope to have contributed some valuable new reflections. The most important message is that a language is a tool in social interaction, used strategically by speakers to stimulate processes of inference and interpretation by the addressee. The task of FDG researchers is to study the internal structure of this tool.

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