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TÍTULO: *Alzheimer through Role and Reference Grammar: A Corpus-based Approach*

*Role and Reference Grammar* (RRG; Van Valin & LaPolla, 1997; Van Valin, 2005) will be the model basis for our research in order to, first, determine the sort of language impairment that there exists in the production of English-speaking patients of Alzheimer's disease and, secondly, to test the robustness of RRG when applied to the clinical field. From this perspective, our work follows the qualitative approaches that have explored cognitive impairment in patients with Alzheimer's disease (Malagón, Rodríguez, Hernández & Pardo, 2005; Grasso, Díaz & Peraita, 2011; Rodríguez-Rojo, Lugo-Marín & Moreno-Martínez, 2015). Although there exist more cases of studies based on quantitative analysis (Bäckman, Jones, Berger, Laukka & Small, 2005; Guerrero, Martínez-Tomás, Rincón & Peraita, 2015), we consider that qualitative research may offer highly relevant results in the description of the linguistic production of Alzheimer patients during their different stages.

RRG is placed within functionalism, which views language as a tool of social interaction and explores the pragmatic and cognitive functions of language, distancing from a derivative viewpoint and proposing a one-level analysis. By means of defined interface rules, RRG offers a two-way linkage of the meaning found in the lexicon and the syntactic constructions of a given language. The set of rules proposed in this linking algorithm will be the tool that will permit us to analyze a selected set of excerpts from a corpus of patients with Alzheimer's disease in English, namely the Pitt Corpus (Becker, Boller, Lopez, Saxton & McGonigle, 1994), and to compare the production of these patients in the first stage of their disease. Our analysis will contain the logic structures that characterize this grammar, which allow us to identify what type of operators are used, how macro-roles are assigned to arguments, whether there exists a pattern in the usage of specific verb classes, whether clauses are simple or complex, etc.

This analysis may prove, on the one hand, the feasibility of RRG as a descriptive tool where deficit in linguistic production is encountered. On the other hand, the results of this analysis will permit us to show preliminary results on the types of linguistic impairments observed in English-speaking patients with Alzheimer's disease.

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