

LEITE, C. M. S.; HAAG, C. R.; OTHERO, G. A. *ReVEL – 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary: An interview with Cândida Manuela Selau Leite, Cassiano Ricardo Haag, and Gabriel de Ávila Othero*. Tradução de Sara Luiza Hoff. *ReVEL*, v. 22, n. 42, 2024. [www.revel.inf.br].

## ***ReVEL – 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary: An Interview with Cândida Manuela Selau Leite, Cassiano Ricardo Haag, and Gabriel de Ávila Othero***

**Cândida Manuela Selau Leite<sup>1</sup>**

**Cassiano Ricardo Haag<sup>2</sup>**

**Gabriel de Ávila Othero<sup>3</sup>**

**ReVEL - Can you tell us a little about the origins of *Revista Virtual de Estudos da Linguagem - ReVEL*? How did the idea of publishing it come about? Was there any resistance to the idea of creating an entirely online journal at a time when academic publications were printed?**

**GABRIEL DE ÁVILA OTHERO** - I believe it was in 2001, right after I finished the Undergraduate Course in Languages and Literature at Unisinos, that I started working as a researcher on a Computational Linguistics project led by Professor Renata Vieira. There, I met Cassiano and we not only became friend, but we established a good academic partnership. In 2003, I started my Master's degree in Linguistics and started to spend several hours at the libraries at PUC and Unisinos, leafing through journals (*DELTA, Letras de Hoje, Language...*) looking for articles that were relevant to the topic of my dissertation (which was about the development of a syntactic parser in Portuguese based on the formalism of a relatively simple phrase structure grammar, written with the programming language Prolog). When I found an interesting article, I copied it and read it at home. The standard, at that time, was paper: there were some

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journals that already had an online version, but all academic publications, as far as I know, circulated regularly in their printed versions.

So, I asked Cassiano what he thought about founding a journal that was exclusively online, without a printed version. This would certainly make it much easier for students to read articles and search for subjects within the journal. At the time, no journals in Brazil were exclusively and regularly published online and had a regular circulation. There was a single journal-website, called Linguanet, which published articles online, but it was not published regularly. And there were online versions of prestigious journals, such as *DELTA* and *Letras de Hoje*, for example. However, there were no linguistics journals that were fully and exclusively accessible online and that preserved the same academic and editorial rigor as traditional printed journals.

Cassiano, a good partner in new ventures, accepted the invitation. We thought about an editorial board and an editorial line and created, ourselves, a website for the newly created *Revista Virtual de Estudos da Linguagem*, affectionately called *ReVEL*. It was the first exclusively online regularly published linguistics journal in Brazil. At the time, we didn't think it was a big deal; today, 20 years later, I think it was a good idea and an important contribution to the development of Brazilian linguistics.

We decided that we would publish two issues per year and that the issues would be themed. The first issue, in August 2003, was about Text Linguistics. In each issue, we thought it would be cool to have a section with articles and an interview with a great theoretician in the field. In this first issue, we published four articles and an interview with Professor Ingedore Villaça Koch. The issue was small, but it already displayed its quality, which encouraged us to keep the project going.

The theme of the second issue, in March 2004, was Foreign and First Language Teaching. There was a demand for online journals and we received many articles after the publication of the call for papers. The issue published nine articles, a book review (we decided it would be interesting to establish a section dedicated to book reviews in the theme of each issue) and two interviews, one with a Brazilian researcher and the other with a foreign researcher – something we do to this day. In this issue, we interviewed Professor Luiz Carlos Travaglia and Canadian professor Nina Spada.

Later, we also decided to establish two other sections in the issues: the Translation section and *ReVEL* na Escola. In the Translation section, we publish the translation of an important article in the theme area of the issue, a text that is still unpublished in Brazil; In *ReVEL* na Escola, we invite a prominent researcher in the

thematic field of the issue to write a text aimed at elementary and high school teachers, explaining how the subject of the issue (Morphology, Historical Linguistics, Formal Syntax, Sociolinguistics...) may be relevant in the school context.

*ReVEL* was growing... we received many articles per issue, even while we maintained the editorial policy of monothematic issues. And the reception in Brazilian academia was good, which made us very happy. Many colleagues came to us asking if they could organize an issue of *ReVEL* or publish the papers of an event they were organizing. Therefore, in 2007, we decided to expand *ReVEL*'s scope: we started publishing a third annual issue, the November special issue. In this issue, we invited a colleague to organize the entire journal (articles, book reviews, translations, etc.).

The first special issue of *ReVEL* was published in November 2007 and was organized by PUCRS Professors Leda Bisol and Cláudia Brescancini. They organized an issue with thirteen articles presented during the event III Seminário Internacional de Fonologia PUCRS [III PUCRS International Phonology Seminar].

Since *ReVEL* was taking on greater proportions than we had originally planned for, we decided to enlist precious help. That's when Cândida, originally a friend of Cassiano, joined the *ReVEL* team. We became a trio of editors, which made life at *ReVEL* a lot easier.

**CASSIANO RICARDO HAAG** - I have the impression that *ReVEL* started at the best time, which made it much easier for a new journal to be accepted by the linguistics community. There was a demand for the digitization of academic knowledge and *ReVEL* seized this moment well. Afterwards, there was a widespread movement towards this, which facilitated a perhaps even exaggerated growth of new journals. This growth gave rise to different movements to make the creation of new journals increasingly difficult, which even affects the maintenance of traditional journals currently. Today, starting is probably much more difficult than it was 20 years ago. Fortunately, the academic community embraced *ReVEL* from the beginning, which I ascribe in large part, firstly, to the friendliness of Gabriel, our diplomat, but also to the person I regard as *ReVEL*'s first godmother, the great professor Ingedore, who granted two students a generous interview for the first issue of a journal that did not even exist. From then on, there was no way anything could go wrong.

**CÂNDIDA MANUELA SELAU LEITE** - I joined Cassiano and Gabriel to contribute with the demands related to *ReVEL* in 2014. When I joined the team, I was beginning my studies in the Postgraduate Program in Applied Linguistics at Unisinos and, therefore, I regarded this invitation as an opportunity to contribute to scientific research in another way, as an editor.

At that moment, both because I was in the very good company of the founders of the journals and because I wanted to explore language studies more closely (reading, observing, getting to know different approaches), I put all the energy that a recent postgraduate student can put into it and I started taking great pleasure in dedicating my time with great pleasure.

The trio's meetings were held in Unisinos' coffee shops and restaurants and, as we had so much to think about and share, the clock was never really our friend. Always with great seriousness, humor, and utopia, we reached agreements and made decisions that were always very suitable for the purposes designed by us, the editors.

Evidently, since the beginning, I realized that *ReVEL*, already extremely successful and with well-structured policies, always left room for the emergence of new ideas and for collaborating with other people. I am therefore sure that *ReVEL*, just as it was transgressive in publishing entirely online *da capo*, will reach many more disruptive milestones in the coming years.

**ReVEL - The journal usually makes room for other productions in addition to articles. We always try to publish national and international interviews, book reviews, translations and the section ReVEL na escola. How did this idea come about? What are the intended contributions of this type of publications?**

**GABRIEL DE ÁVILA OTHERO** – Given that the issues are monothematic, we always had the idea that each issue could be seen as a kind of “dossier” on a certain subject. As I mentioned previously, we started by publishing an issue on Text Linguistics and included articles and an interview with Professor Ingedore Koch, who provided readers with a beautiful interview. Over the years, in order to make the “dossiers” more complete, we added sections: *ReVEL* na escola, book reviews, translations, interviews with Brazilian and foreign researchers. We think that, with this, each issue would be able to cover its theme in a very thorough way. We are not

always able to publish texts in all sections, but when this is possible, the result – as a rule – is beautiful issues.

For example, the issue on Language Policies (vol. 14, n. 26, March 2016) features two texts in the section *ReVEL na escola* (“Do que tratam as políticas linguísticas” [What language policies are about], by Pedro de Moraes Garcez and Lia Schulz, and “Programa Nacional do Livro Didático de Língua Estrangeira” [National Foreign Language Textbook Program], by Simone Sarmento), besides the translation of a text by researcher Bernard Spolsky (“Towards a Theory of Language Policy”), three book reviews in the field of Language Policies and two interviews (one with Bernard Spolsky and another with Gilvan Müller de Oliveira) – in addition, of course, to the articles (eleven articles). This is an issue that is a rich material for those developing their studies in the area of Language Policies.

**CASSIANO RICARDO HAAG** - *ReVEL* is a journal conceived by students. In my opinion, this is its DNA. The idea of a dossier, as Gabriel explained, has always been discussed and accepted as a goal of *ReVEL*. But this idea, it seems, has a deeper origin, which is *ReVEL*'s understanding that an academic journal needs to dialogue with new generations of researchers. All these genres in *ReVEL*, in my opinion, have a much greater impact on younger researchers and are also very well received by experienced researchers, given the quality of the papers. But I have the impression that intuitively *ReVEL* has always aimed at training and dialogue with postgraduate students and young doctors, many of whom are already experienced professors nowadays and maintain close ties with *ReVEL*, reviewing articles, submitting texts, recommending it to their students, etc. This strategy was also very well received by more experienced researchers, who have always been partners of the journal and to whom we are always grateful.

**CÂNDIDA MANUELA SELAU LEITE** - I think that *ReVEL na escola* is concerned with making language science/linguistics (not always in language accessible to the non-academic audience) closer to those who work with teaching languages at the most different levels of education. For a teacher, for example, who works in literacy, it is important to know how a particular study can contribute to their school practice and, thus, to also be up-to-date on studies in the field they trained for.

The interviews, both national and international, are, in this scenario, an attempt to provide, especially for academics, a more accessible overview of some objects of language study. In this format, we provide a space for the guest researcher to talk about the subject with greater freedom, with, if they wish to do so, the possibility of including information that is relevant to the subject that might not otherwise fit the structure of a scientific article. Many interviews we receive are written in a way that resembles a behind-the-scenes conversation, with an informal structure, without losing track of the topic it is intended to explain.

The book reviews and translations, in turn, fulfill similar functions. While the book review focuses more on showing the structure and approach of a given book, the translation is intended to increase the scientific circulation of a text. And how are they similar, then? Anyone who reads a book review or a translation will realize that both aim to support readers and academic researchers, mainly facilitating their epistemological and writing journeys.

**ReVEL - *ReVEL* is one of the only (if not the only) linguistics journals that is not linked to a university or a post-graduate program. What are the challenges and positives aspects of this characteristic?**

**GABRIEL DE ÁVILA OTHERO** - In this sense, *ReVEL* is an independent journal. It is run by seven editors (the founders: Cassiano and me; the oldest editor after us: Cândida; and the new generation, which is full of good ideas: Larissa, Melissa, Mônica and Sara), in addition – naturally – of colleagues who make up the Editorial Board (see [revel.inf.br/pt/conselho](http://revel.inf.br/pt/conselho)). *ReVEL* is not linked to any university or post-graduate program. On a positive note, I see that we managed to maintain our autonomy and make *ReVEL* a field for experimentation. As we mentioned before, we created sections (*ReVEL* na Escola, Translation, Interviews, etc.) and we have the freedom to develop the layout of the journal and its publication guidelines. As a negative aspect, I believe that sometimes we are a little left out of the circuit of university academic publications, whether in the assessments made by CAPES [Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education] or in meetings with other journals.

**CASSIANO RICARDO HAAG** - As Gabriel mentions, the freedom that the journal has to maintain or modify itself, decide themes, without internal disputes, or other

pressures that are common in the academic world, is perhaps the most positive aspect of *ReVEL*. When a decision needs to be made, we sit among friends, free of interests other than the one we understand to be best for *ReVEL* and language studies. The decisions do not lead to any attrition, which is essential to bolster morale for work. The negative aspect we had, in addition to those pointed out by Gabriel, is that *ReVEL* was always at risk with only two or three editors, as there is no institution that guarantees the continuity of the work if something happens to us. The arrival of the new editors, in addition to renewing spirits and qualifying the work, also makes the journal more secure for the future. Academic publishing is an eternal puzzle and it takes a lot of commitment to keep the work alive. The people in a postgraduate program are constantly changing, which ensures the journal's operation: for better or for worse, there will be a professor or a postgraduate student working on the journal. One professor leaves, another comes in. It's like a 4X100 relay. *ReVEL*, in turn, is a marathon. We strive for continuity, which requires highly dedicated people for long periods of time.

**CÂNDIDA MANUELA SELAU LEITE** - For the journal to keep existing, everything needs to be in excellent alignment. It is very easy for the priorities of each individual editor to quickly become more important in relation to *ReVEL*. Today, for example, being out of academia and, consequently, reading less about my field, I have a strong tendency towards thinking about my work commitments as a manager and as a teacher first and foremost. From time to time, we need to regain our constancy and our role as editors. I believe that is a difficulty we face.

I feel the need to mention that, apart from the recognition and passion for carrying out work that enhances our soul, we do not receive any type of external investment for the development of the many activities that the journal requires. In fact, some costs, such as the development and maintenance of the website, are covered by individual resources to this day. I do not know exactly if this aspect makes it difficult, but I know it is burdensome.

In contrast, I offer the main positive aspects: no one who gets involved with *ReVEL* has the obligation to continue contributing without wishing to do so (editors, board members, etc.); although there is a history linked to Gabriel and Cassiano, everyone can contribute to *ReVEL* in a horizontal, democratic way; whenever an idea

makes sense for the group it can be put into practice; and the group can explore the freedom to choose sections and the structure/organization in general.

### **ReVEL - What are most challenging and what are most rewarding aspects of the work to publish *ReVEL*?**

**GABRIEL DE ÁVILA OTHERO** - We created *ReVEL* from scratch, literally. At the time, we were two students interested in democratizing access to quality research in the area of linguistics in the country. We invited people who did not even know us to be part of the Editorial Board, we got an ISSN, we created a layout, a logo and a web page; We thought about our editorial policy, we talked for hours and hours thinking about creating a high-quality journal. And, in the first issue, we invited one of the greatest linguists who have ever worked in Brazil to give an interview. This was all very challenging, come to think of it. At the time, I admit, we did not understand the magnitude of the undertaking – and this made the challenge smaller and easier to manage.

In *ReVEL*'s daily operations, the most difficult parts, for me, are: (i) thinking about a topic that is interesting and relevant in the context of national linguistics; (ii) finding reviewers who are available to provide reviews for the submitted articles; (iii) meeting deadlines so that the issues are not delayed; and (iv) getting permission to use a copyrighted work for the translation of influential texts in a foreign language, for the “Translation” section.

These are small challenges that are part of *ReVEL*'s daily routine.

The most rewarding parts of the work at *ReVEL* work are probably the following: (i) spending time with Cândida and Cassiano – and now, also, with Larissa, Mel, Mônica, and Sara; (ii) the satisfaction of seeing an issue published; (iii) dialogue with people I admire academically and who participate in issues of *ReVEL* as interviewees, reviewers, translators, proofreaders, book reviewers, or authors.

Furthermore, I am always very happy to see that the articles in *ReVEL* circulate widely in the country and are often cited in articles, books, communications, lectures, etc. I am happy that *ReVEL* has been, over the last 20 years, a space to publish so many quality papers.



**CASSIANO RICARDO HAAG** - I wouldn't change a single word of what Gabriel said.

**CÂNDIDA MANUELA SELAU LEITE** - I want to highlight, very briefly, two aspects that make my work at *ReVEL* rewarding. As a person, I have the pleasure of working with intelligent, creative, competent, critical, fun people who deserve all my affection and recognition. As an editor, I believe that the high density of *ReVEL* citations in the academic community and the intensity of access to the website are the indicator that shows that everything continues to work well - and the numbers, in this case, also communicate my pride in being part of this group.

**ReVEL - How has *ReVEL* changed over its 20 years of existence? How do you see the future of the journal?**

**GABRIEL DE ÁVILA OTHERO** - *ReVEL* tries to always be the same and, at the same time, become better and better. It is not easy to follow this formula, but we always try to keep the same *ReVEL* “look”, so that readers think that browsing the journal’s website is comfortable and familiar. We also try to maintain uniform text formatting over time, to create an editorial identity.

However, as must have been clear from the answers to the questions here, a lot has changed over the years (hopefully for the better!). I believe that *ReVEL* participated in this movement of “digitization” of knowledge. Twenty years ago, it was much more common for linguistics professors, students, and researchers in the country to search for academic publications in university libraries, either for consultation or as a space to publish their research. Today, online journals are the standard– and I think *ReVEL* has somehow anticipated this movement.

Another characteristic of *ReVEL*, since its inception, was the fact that it is an open access journal, i.e., a journal that is completely free and fully accessible online by any researcher. Finally, I think that another mark present in *ReVEL*'s “DNA” is the fact that *ReVEL* is open to receiving articles from any researcher, regardless of whether they are undergraduate students or PhD professors. Submitted texts are reviewed with the same rigor and – most importantly – anonymously. I hope these two characteristics remain in the future of *ReVEL*.

I think I should have talked about what *has changed* at *ReVEL*, but I ended up talking about things that *have not changed* in the 20 years of *ReVEL*...

And what will the future of *ReVEL* bring? We don't know... but we are ready to continue working, with a lot of dedication to Brazilian linguistics. Recently, four new editors arrived at *ReVEL* – Larissa Colombo Freisleben, Melissa Lazzari, Mônica Rigo Ayres, and Sara Luiza Hoff. They are young, interested, and competent. They must certainly know how to answer the question “What does the future hold for *ReVEL*?” better than me. I trust them that the next 20 years of *ReVEL* will be as good as the first 20 – or better!

**CASSIANO RICARDO HAAG** - The impression I have is that *ReVEL* has not changed in 20 years; it only made small “renovations” with the aim of creating the greatest impact to language studies, but, in its essence, it remained the same journal as it was in the beginning. The “renovations” are the sections that were being created and that Gabriel has already mentioned in some detail. However, they do not seem to be changes. *ReVEL* is a linguistics journal created by students. That is why it has the characteristics it has. For example, the interviews, a genre that was practically non-existent academically when we started, meet the expectation that our great references are able to say precious things, especially to a student, that the hermeticism of academic writing often prevents from being said in articles. Likewise, *ReVEL* na escola helps to pierce the “bubbles” formed in academia, presenting topics mainly to those who are not necessarily researchers on that subject, but who are curious to know more, allowing the most curious Basic Education teachers to also be informed on the most current issues in Linguistics – besides, of course, to being great texts even for researchers. All the “adjustments” were always designed with the new generations of linguists, the students, in mind, and so we ended up pleasing – it seems – the more experienced researchers as well. Regarding the future, it is difficult to say anything, as there are very dynamic movements in the publishing of scientific journals that come externally and pressure the journals in this or that direction. However, I believe that *ReVEL* will continue to be a journal of the highest quality, especially due to the team of new editors that is beginning to work now.

**CÂNDIDA MANUELA SELAU LEITE** - The question caught me off guard! Which future do I hope *ReVEL* will build or track exactly? Over these 10 years, I have wanted to make the journal more accessible and to create new sections.

I remember a moment when Gabriel introduced us to a podcast called Sopa de Letras (which still exists!), created by the Tutorial Education Program (PET) of the Course on Languages and Literature at UFRGS; some episodes focus on discussing studies on language. We do not have our own podcast, but we have a lot of material that can be the basis for building other promotional formats in the future (I still cannot say which ones I think are the best).

When I mentioned the term “accessible”, I was referring especially to digital accessibility, making, for example, all content accessible to researchers who communicate through the Brazilian sign language LIBRAS. What this format will be like is something to be thought about by the new group.

I wish I could be more pragmatic in this answer, but I think that, with so many thirsty and attentive eyes, *ReVEL* is able to be the pioneer of many other future scenarios (not yet discovered, perhaps). In another ten years, I am sure that we will not be the same as *ReVEL* in 2024 - and that is why today it still excites and thrills me a lot.

### **The editors**

Revista Virtual de Estudos da Linguagem – ReVEL

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ISSN 1678-8931

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