Lenisa Brandao's research experience is in communication and its relations with the cognition of older adults, with and without brain damage and dementia. Lenisa is interested in studying the relations between communication and emotion as well as the interplay between cognition and socio-emotional factors. The most innovative aspect of her work is related to the application of the arts of narrative and clowning in interventions applied to promote the enhancement and recovery of cognitive-communicative skills of older adults, with and without neurological disorders.

Lenisa believes that in her home country of Brazil, many older adults in vulnerable and disadvantaged conditions who are at risk of developing dementia or who are suffering from it do not receive special care. In particular, she feels there is a great lack of awareness about the importance of non-pharmacological interventions which can improve the quality of life of this population.

"To reduce the scale and impact of dementia around the world, we need to encourage more interdisciplinary work which will benefit the cognitive health of older adults and includes crucial aspects such as dignity, life quality and well-being. As an Atlantic Fellow at GBHI, I’m committed to promoting non-pharmacological interventions that will help prevent the decline of cognitive-communicative skills and possibly help with recovery of these skills. In particular, I’m interested in the effect of positive socio-emotional experiences in the communication of older adults with aphasia due to stroke and for those suffering from dementia. Moreover, through my fellowship, I will work on developing a clowning and storytelling intervention program for vulnerable and disadvantaged older adults in my home country Brazil. In my spare time I love traveling and practicing clowning, storytelling, creative writing, swimming and meditating. I also need to be out in nature whenever I have the chance and to keep in touch with my family and friends."

Bio: Lenisa Brandao is a Speech-Language Pathologist with a doctoral degree in Psychology which she received in Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), Brazil. She was a postdoc in Lund University (Sweden) and in Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Portugal). After completing her post-doctoral studies, she joined the
Health and Human Communication Department at UFRGS as a Professor in Language and Cognition. Combined with her academic career, she values continuous artistic training in storytelling and clowning.