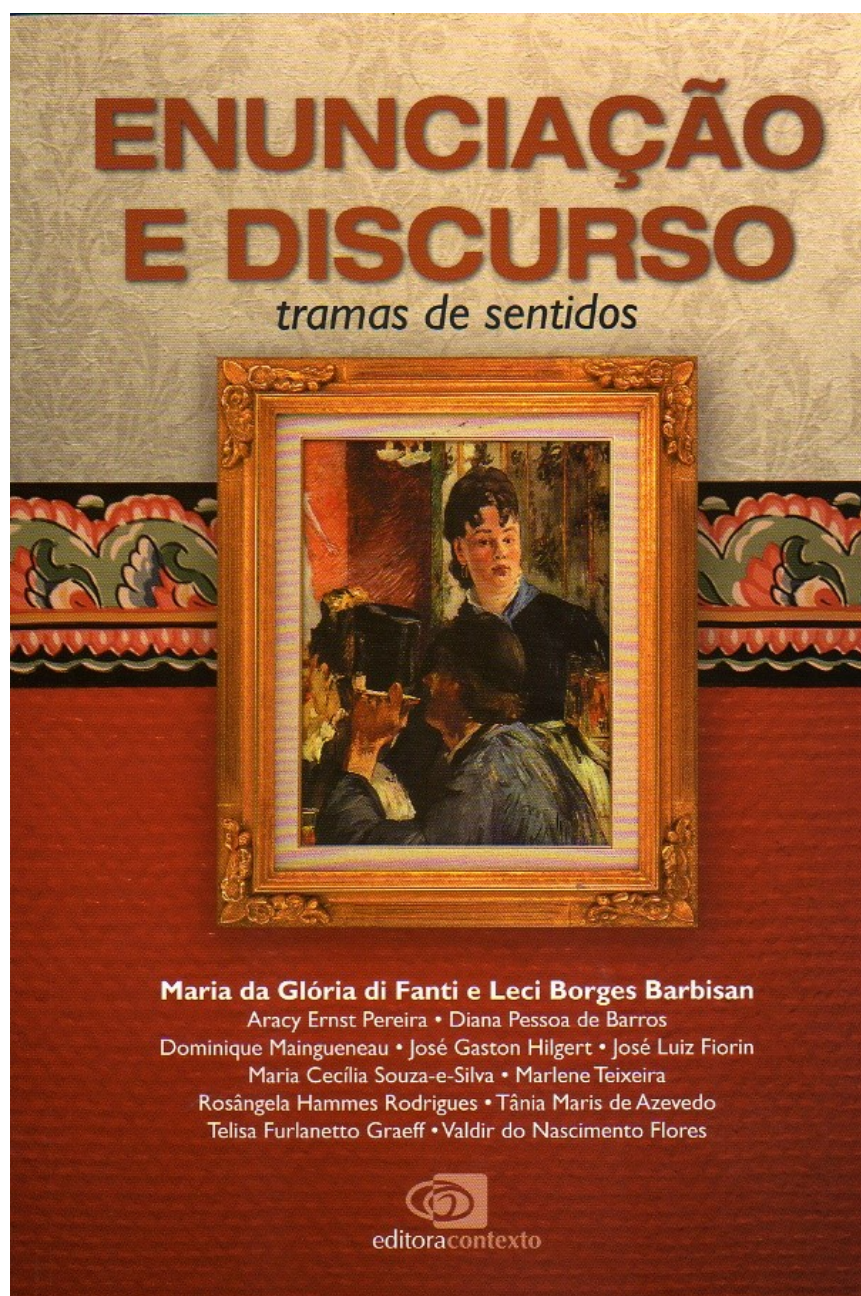


DI FANTI, Maria da Glória; BARBISAN, Leci Borges (orgs.). *Enunciação e discurso: tramas de sentidos*. [Enunciation and Discourse: Webs of Meanings] São Paulo: Contexto, 2012. 196p.

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*Enunciação e discurso: tramas de sentidos* [*Enunciation and Discourse: Webs of Meanings*] is composed of twelve essays, written by eleven Brazilian researchers and a French researcher. These essays approach language phenomena through different text and discourse theories. It is, undoubtedly, more of a collection of essays than an organized book, which means that it is not easy to notice a theoretical or thematic thread that clearly defines the book. This characteristic makes the book heterogeneous, but not in terms of the quality of each essay, once they are all interesting and relevant texts.

However, instead of facing this characteristic as fragility, we can see a daring proposal in it: the establishment of a bridge to dialogue among theories that, very often, even when trying to explain “the same” phenomenon (with all the exceptions that we can make to the term “the same”, considering that “the point of view creates the object”), simply ignore one another’s existence. To group, hence, in one volume, essays that approach the discourse from the perspective of the Conversation Analysis or Pêcheux’s Discourse Analysis, of the French Semiotics or the Theory of Argumentation in Language (among others) becomes an important manifest in itself, once there is a search for contact among different lines of thinking.

It would be possible to state that just to place these essays side by side, sharing the same ISBN, is not enough. I disagree. First of all, because, we don’t usually have, in our area and in our country, the habit of reading productions from other theoretical lines of thinking, different from the one we practice, even if they intend to explain the “same” aspect of language. Secondly, because the act of gathering a collection of essays in a book never simply means to place them side by side. It means, somehow, to suggest partnerships, choices and debates, which is what *Enunciation and Discourse: Webs of Meanings* does.

The book is divided into three sections, each of which presents four essays. The first section, *Enunciação e discurso* [Enunciation and Discourse], comprises essays by Dominique Maingueneau, Diana Pessoa de Barros, José Luiz Fiorin, and Marlene Teixeira. The second one, *Enunciação, discurso e produção de sentidos* [Enunciation, Discourse and Production of Meanings], includes texts by José Gaston Hilbert, Aracy Ernst Pereira, Rosângela Hammes Rodrigues and Maria Cecília Souza-e-Silva. At last, the third section, *Enunciação, discurso e argumentação na língua* [Enunciation, Discourse and Argumentation in Language], is composed by a more homogeneous and

articulated group, because the first three of the four essays take the Theory of Argumentation in Language (Anscombre and Ducrot) and its current repercussion on The theory of Semantic Blocks (Ducrot and Carel) as their theoretical foundation. The authors of this section are Leci Borges Barbisan (who is also the co-organizer and translator of Maingueneau's essay), Telisa Furlanetto Graef, Tânia Maris de Azevedo, and Valdir do Nascimento Flores. The essay written by Flores, the last one in the book, is a regardful reading of *Course in General Linguistics*, by Saussure. Flores highlights and analyzes the treatment given to the Linguistics of Speech. It is, therefore, an essay of theoretical basis discussion, which harmonically composes the third section, in spite of not directly mentioning Ducrot and the Theory of Argumentation in Language.

Therefore, the first two sections, as well as their titles, leave it mostly to the reader to fill in the construction of their internal coherence and their possible partnerships and debates. Yet, the third section presents itself as a small dossier, much more tied in itself, almost a book organized within a bigger book. It is the most "well behaved" section of the book, not because it could be lacking in boldness, but due to the theoretical harmony and homogeneity in the use of terms and concepts on the essays.

The reader of this book is not granted with the project that motivated it and, thus, we can only assume some kind of "request" at the beginning of Pereira's essay (I must, however, confess that, initially, several questions came up: what should I or could I say about text and discourse?)<sup>1</sup> (p.96), but we don't know where this request comes from. In the Presentation, the editors point out, as a common ground among the authors, the fact that all of them are situated in the studies of the discourse. Resuming what was known as the "Saussurian break" and thinking about it from the new discoveries about Saussure (specifically *Writings in General Linguistics*, published in 2002), the editors declared that "the several theories of the discourse have a common element (what enables us to place them in the same field), the comprehension that the language and the use of it are inseparable"<sup>2</sup>(p.8).

After reading this initial consideration, the text from the Presentation devotes itself to describe each one of the essays, in successive paragraphs, going from one to

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<sup>1</sup> In the original Brazilian edition: "Devo, porém, confessar que inicialmente várias questões me interpelaram: o que eu deveria ou poderia falar sobre texto e discurso?"

<sup>2</sup> In the original: "as várias teorias do discurso têm como ponto em comum, o que permite colocá-las em um mesmo campo, a compreensão de que a língua e o emprego da língua são indissociáveis".

another without relating them (exception already made to the third section) and also without expliciting the reason to gather them in each one of the sections and name them as they have been named: the first section just like the title of the book – “Enunciation and discourse”-, and the second one adding “and production of meanings” to it – “Enunciation, discourse and production of meanings”.

After a brief synopsis of each one of the essays, the editors conclude, concerning specifically the texts that compose the book, that “they are different views all converging to the same finality: to explain the functioning of language in different materializations”<sup>3</sup> (p.10). Concluding the Presentation, they invite the reader “to travel the mazes of language that are brought into play”<sup>4</sup> (p.10).

All the essays share a way of working with linguistics that does not limit them to the system, and a way that includes the situation of enunciation and the analysis of texts that were effectively produced in localized sociohistorical contexts. If we make, therefore, a first general separation between linguistics research that don’t take into account sociohistorical factors in their analyses and, on the other hand, research that do that, all the twelve essays from *Enunciation and Discourse: Webs of Meanings* will be in the second group. Teixeira declares that “there is some kind of consensus surrounding the idea that the closure in the linguistic system has produced the mistaken effect of drifting the linguist apart from matters that (...) compel the contemporary debate and demand a position statement and even an intervention”<sup>5</sup> (p 63). I consider that the perception and nominalization of this “consensus” (even relativized by “some kind of”) can imply the author’s conviction about the legitimacy of this second group.

Some of the essays precisely approach its belonging and declare the legitimacy of this group, which mainly occurs in the case of Flores, Rodrigues and Barbisan as the establishment of the theoretical foundation, in the cases of Barros, Fiorin, Teixeira, Hilbert, Graeff, and Azevedo.

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<sup>3</sup> In the original: “são diferentes olhares voltados para um mesmo fim: explicar o funcionamento da linguagem em variadas materializações” (p.10).

<sup>4</sup> In the original: “a percorrer os labirintos da linguagem postos em cena” (p.10).

<sup>5</sup> In the original: “Há uma espécie de consenso em torno da ideia de que o fechamento no sistema linguístico tem produzido o efeito equívoco de afastar o linguista de questões que (...) movimentam o debate contemporâneo e exigem uma tomada de posição e até mesmo uma intervenção” (p.63).

Others do not discuss this matter, considering its belonging to sociohistorical linguistics as an already established aspect. It's the case of Maingueneau, Pereira, and Souza-e-Silva.

Starting from this common element, the reader that reads through the book will be able to establish points of approximation and contact between the essays, as well as points of detachment between them that are equally interesting.

Barros and Fiorin, for instance, share the theoretical basis of the Greimasian Semiotics and some concepts mobilized by their essays are, for that reason, exposed twice in the book, as the case of the “enunciated enunciation” and the “enunciated enunciated”. The same occurs between Teixeira and Souza-e-Silva, when they expose the prior conjectures of Ergology, an interdisciplinary approach of the work activity. There are also similar theoretical explanations in the first three essays of the third section (Barbisan, Graeff, and Azevedo), on the origins and phases of Ducrot's theoretical course. Such partial “repetitions” seemed relevant to me, since allowed me to experience different points of view concerning the approached theories and also allowed me to compare them.

Another type of relation can also be considered in the book, when different authors, with different theoretical references, elect the “same” aspect or language phenomenon as an object. It is the case, for example, of the Framework of Enunciation proposed by Benveniste and revisited in a different way by Teixeira, who emphasizes the importance of welcoming the reference in this framework, reasoning that it is possible “to move along with Benveniste to the sphere of the socially situated discourse”<sup>6</sup> (p.62). This concept is also used by Barbisan, who highlights, from Benveniste's framework, the notion of “empty forms” credited to the deictics and proposes its relative ampliation to all signs. Hilbert, without quoting Benveniste, declares something similar. In an analogous way, the thoughts of Maingueneau mobilize Bakhtin's concept of genre to situate it in front of the problematic of aphorization and authorship (two ways of putting tension on the genre), differently from Rodrigues, who also mobilizes, in a central way in her article, the concept of genre, but only to defend that there is bigger incorporation of the studies of genre by the linguistics studies. Other

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<sup>6</sup> In the original: “transitar com Benveniste para o âmbito do discurso socialmente situado” (p.62).

analyses of “the same” object or concept being seen in different perspectives could equally stand out in this context.

Going from the theoretical approximations and going through the coincidences of object or concept, we get to the points of bigger detachment between the essays in this book, which turns it into a heterogeneous volume that nurtures polemics, even if they are not explicit. For that reason, obviously not aiming at being exhaustive, I emphasize only two more matters that last after reading the book all along, questions that strongly contribute to my recommendation to read it.

The first matter: Fiorin deals with argumentation as part of discourse, and not language. While the first three essays from the third section are about the Theory of Argumentation in Language, insisting that the theoretical assumption that “argumentation is in language”<sup>7</sup> (p.167) is vital to all of Ducrot’s theory.

The second matter: Hilbert deals with the phenomenon of comprehension “or even better, intercomprehension (...) [as] assumed condition to the communicative efficiency in social relations”<sup>8</sup> (p.77), affirming that the situation of comprehension is like the air we breathe. Pereira’s conception is very different from this one and consists of a theory (Pêcheux’s Discourse Analysis) “whose proposition is the construction of interpretations that take into consideration the language in its incompleteness and misconception; the subject, in its determination for the unconscious and for the ideology; and the meaning, in its sociohistorical dimension”<sup>9</sup> (p.96). We could, still, contrast the notion of “intercomprehension”, exposed by Hilbert, with the notion of “ruled interincomprehension”, a Maingueneau’s concept, mobilized in Souza-e-Silva’s essay.

Lastly, resuming the characteristic pointed out as common among the authors reunited in *Enunciation and Discourse: Webs of Meanings*, which is to practice a Linguistics that take into consideration the sociohistorical aspects of enunciation and of discourse, it’s now time to consider the consequences of these approximations and detachments. Could these different approaches be a sign of differences concerning the

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<sup>7</sup> In the original: “a argumentação está na língua” (p.167).

<sup>8</sup> In the original: “ou melhor, [d]a intercompreensão (...) [como] condição pressuposta para a eficiência comunicativa nas relações sociais” (p.77).

<sup>9</sup> In the original: “cuja proposta é a construção de interpretações que levam em conta a língua, em sua incompletude e equivocidade; o sujeito, em sua determinação pelo inconsciente e pela ideologia; e o sentido, em sua dimensão sócio-histórica” (p.96).

concept of language and discourse? It seems to me that the answer is yes. Could these different approaches be strong enough so we can question the mutual belonging to this group of “speech linguists”? I think that it is one of us to construct an answer. I believe that the different conceptions have a lot to teach one another and that we should not have the pretension of having a single theory to comprise all of the language complexity. The confrontation of approaches leads to the refinement of the theories and that’s what reading this book can do. For that reason, this is the type of publication that is worth reading so to face the debates that it suggests, even indirectly.

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