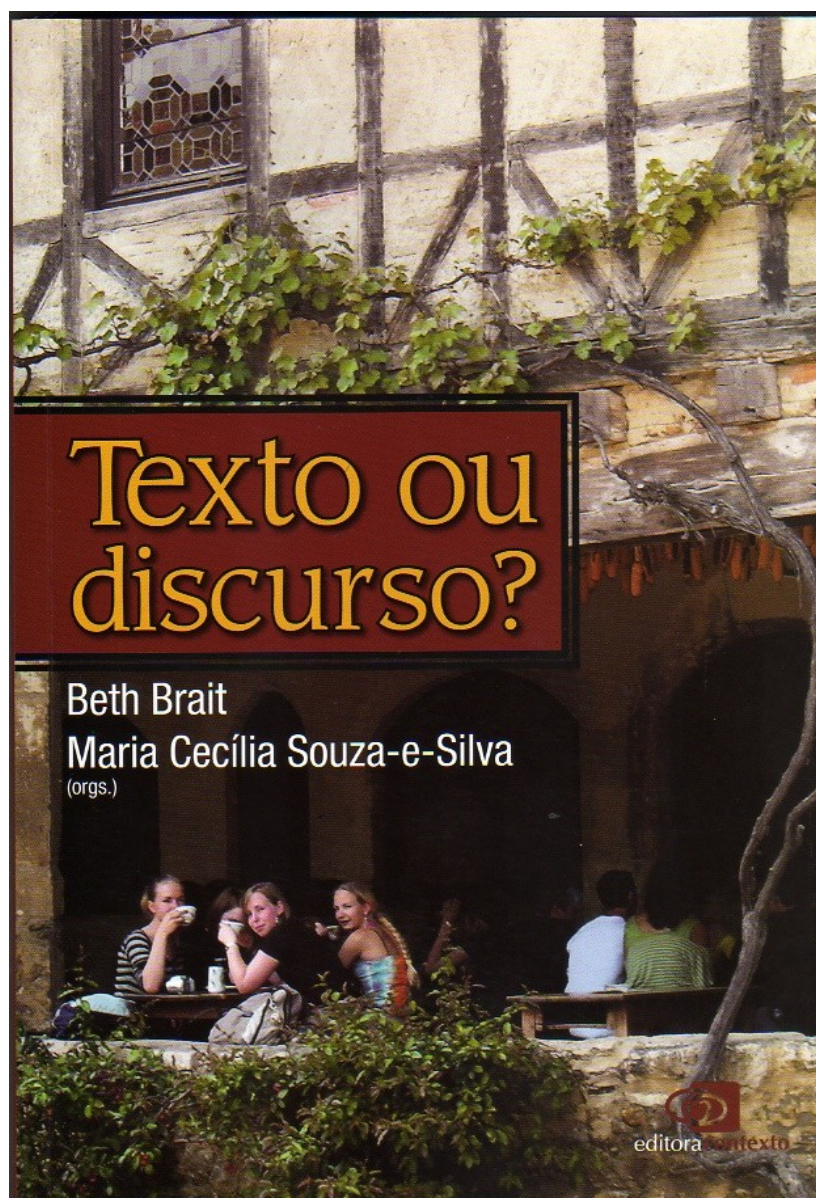


**BRAIT, Beth; SOUZA-e-SILVA, Maria Cecília (orgs.). *Texto ou discurso?* [Text or Discourse?]. São Paulo: Contexto, 2012. 302 p.**

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This is definitely a book our libraries have been craving for!

The question – *Text or Discourse?* – stirs the interest of readers who will not find a clear-cut-answer on how to distinguish text from discourse. From the very beginning, the editors emphasize their goal, which is to present, discuss and problematize the different ways of comprehending the several elements involved in this question. And, actually, this is what readers will find in this book.

As everyone knows, this broad theme is of great relevance today. In the past decades, studies about language activities have concentrated around notions of text and discourse. Nevertheless, the meaning of these terms can be profoundly different in each theoretical approach. This book presents more than a dozen studies, from different perspectives in Language Sciences – Bakhtinian, Foucaultian, French Discourse Analysis, Text Linguistics, Semiotics, Grammar, Discourse Studies, Corpus Linguistics – based on examples or on corpora analysis. In this sense, it gives a broad and diversified idea of the different ways to understand discourse and text as well as a multiplicity of forms of conceiving possible relationships between these concepts.

It also brings an overview of language studies. In fact, through the discussion of key questions related to this subject, it is possible to clarify and mobilize concepts from each theoretical perspective and take into consideration, whether explicitly or not, in different levels, other concepts related to this field: Language, meaning and sense, subject, utterance and enunciation, and scenes of enunciation, speech genres, interaction, exterior and interior of language, functioning of language, process of comprehension and production of utterances or texts.

Some of the fourteen chapters of this book are directly focused on the distinction between text and discourse and, due to that, they have been examined in detail.

The first one – *Dialogical Approach* – written by Beth Brait, examines the Bakhtin Circle's works and emphasizes the relationship between text and discourse; the text is not considered autonomous, but as something that is inserted into a broader perspective in which the text is linked “to the concrete utterance which shelters it and the discourses which constitute it” (p.10)<sup>1</sup> as well as to the spheres of activity, production, circulation, and interaction. The discussion of this contribution brings some elements of this conceptual framework – utterance, interaction, sign, and ideology –

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<sup>1</sup> Text in original: “ao enunciado concreto que o abriga, a discursos que o constituem”.

and, above all, the dialogical dimension of every utterance, a term which is more used than “text” by authors working in this perspective. Brait finishes this dense study with an interesting analysis of a Zeca Baleiro’s song - “A Shared Ball” (*Bola dividida*) -, a text constituted by various discourses; this is a good way to illustrate that text and discourse are distinct, but they are also interwoven and may be in confrontation by using, for instance, double-voiced expressions.

Also dealing directly with this question, Fiorin’s chapter - *About the Need to Distinguish Text from Discourse* – points out that text and discourse are both products of enunciation, but “they have a different semiotic existence” (p.148)<sup>2</sup>: The discourse is of the order of immanence; the text is of the order of realization. In this way, the same discourse may be concretized in different texts. Fiorin brings an example, *The Hour of the Star* (*A hora da estrela*), a Lispector’s novel, adapted to the cinema by Suzana Amaral. We can think of many others such as the emblematic *Zazie dans le Metro*, a Queneau’s novel which became a Louis Malle’s film with the same title. In these cases, the same discourse is made concrete in a written text (the novel) and in a film, a text in which several languages are merged: Visual, audio, and verbal. To discuss the various nuances related to the difference between text and discourse, Fiorin stresses some concepts such as *interdiscourse*, that is, the dialogical aspect present in discourses, and *intertextuality*; he also illustrates these concepts and many others through the analysis of literary works, movies and paintings. In this sense, he distances himself from approaches which conceive text and discourse as synonymous, such as studies in some trends in Text Linguistics.

In agreement with the previous chapter, Possenti’s text – *Notes about Language, Text and Discourse* – emphasizes the distance between the treatment of text in the field of Text Linguistics and in Discourse Analysis, the framework of his own studies. However, before that, the author presents the concepts of the three words in the title of his text and searches for their interrelations, going through the different stages of French Discourse Analysis. He raises some central theoretical-methodological questions, such as the nature of language in Pêcheux’s framework as well as in Courtine’s formulations and Maingueneau’s studies. He also takes into consideration the ideas of Granger, the epistemologist – for whom the natural languages are symbolical semi-systems – as well

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<sup>2</sup> Text in original: “diferem quanto ao modo de existência semiótica”.

as the ideas of Franchi, who considers language as a semi-structured system. Possenti reminds us that to construct a concept of discourse, French Discourse Analysis had to deal with many other concepts, such as speech, text, lexicon, authorship, subject/speech subject, analysis, and, above all, to explicitly discuss the relationship between language and discourse.

Maingueneau, in *Text, Speech Genres and Aphorization*, emphasizes that, in a Bakhtinian perspective, although the notions of text and speech genres are inseparable, they are distinct from one another: “a text belongs to a speech genre of which it is its trace; in a reciprocal way, all speech genres produce a text” (p.109)<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, we may ask the following question: Can a single phrase be considered a “text”? The aim of this article is the study of sentences without a text, the “detached utterances,” focusing on the most frequent ones: slogans, proverbs, maxims, headlines, but also taking into consideration sentences extracted and detached from a text. Maingueneau concludes that the aphorizing utterance follows its own order and that aphorizations are not a marginal phenomenon, but are linked to text and speech genres.

Very close to authors linked to French Discourse Analysis, Rocha explores the Foucauldian approach with a study about DFs (Discursive Formations), an essential concept, not only because it is important in Foucault’s thinking, but also because it is a fundamental concept in French DA. If one examines the definition of DF, “a group of utterances which belongs to a single system of formation”<sup>4</sup> (clinical discourse, economical discourse, psychological discourse, legal discourse), text and discourse cannot be confused. Rocha also discusses what an utterance is to Foucault and he clarifies that the subject of an utterance is neither the grammatical subject nor the instance which produces the utterance. To illustrate this perspective, he carries out a discursive analysis, *à la Foucault*, of an advertising text, a folder – the kind of material distributed at traffic lights in our cities – where the construction of a new building is advertised, in Barra da Tijuca<sup>5</sup>, Rio de Janeiro, stimulating the interlocutor to perform a “French Revolution” in his/her life. It is a multi-semiotic text constituted by images – cutout/reformulated paintings of Delacroix and David – along with refrains, texts, and

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<sup>3</sup> Text in original: “um texto pertence a um gênero de discurso do qual ele é o traço; de forma recíproca, todo gênero de discurso produz um texto”.

<sup>4</sup> Text in original: “um conjunto de enunciados que provém de um mesmo sistema de formação”.

<sup>5</sup> Translator’s note: “High middle class borough”.

utterances in a foreign language. The analysis of the whole text – from the very beginning until the end – which is generally presented by content analysis approaches, is a good example of an original analytical procedure.

Souza-e-Silva, in *Text/Discourse: what's the Relationship with Reading*, points out the primacy of *interdiscourse* over discourse and elects it as a unit of analysis. In fact, Souza-e-Silva follows Maingueneau, who states that, in their genesis, discourses “are constituted, in a regulated manner, within an interdiscourse” (p.183)<sup>6</sup>. With this reference as background, the author analyzes two sets of texts whose theme is the object of public debate: the participation of the Brazilian Armed Forces in the *United Nations Stabilization Mission* in Haiti. One set of texts is from the Armed Forces, therefore, the official discourse; the other one is “vulgar,” that is, the material published in magazines, in blogs, and on the internet. In delimitating these sets, Souza-e-Silva is in good position to interdiscursively treat the relationship between text and discourse, focusing upon discourse as subjected to historical coercion. This way, two divergent “discursive positionings” are examined: one in which the presence of the Armed Forces means Intervention/Invasion/Occupation and the other in which this presence means Pacification/Reconstruction/Stabilization. As a result of this analysis, it is possible to conceive reading as a mode of discursively interpreting texts.

The other texts in this book present important themes which allow an in-depth treatment of the concepts of text and discourse in diversified perspectives: in *Color and Sense*, under the French Discursive Semiotic perspective, Barros brings an instigating analysis of colors of nail polishes; from concepts used by Text Linguistics – referentiation, discursive object, intertextuality – Koch seeks to apprehend the very act of interactional construction of senses; in *Discourse and Production of Knowledge*, van Dijk conceives discourse as a complex and multimodal object and studies discourse processing through the contribution of cognitive theory models; the sociolinguist Boutet adopts an Anglo-Saxon perspective, the *Discourse Analysis*, and elects the study of discourse as an empirical object, showing examples of multidimensional analyses of conversations and socially situated interactions. Based on the notion of “formula,” elaborated by Krieg-Planque, who emphasizes lexicon issues in the field of French DA, Sardinha uses some procedures of Corpus Linguistics to highlight the importance of this

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<sup>6</sup> Text in original: “se constituem, de maneira regulada, no interior de um interdiscurso”.

approach to studies in Discourse Analysis and in the field of “formulas.” Zaslavsky, in turn, deals with the media coverage of a lawsuit case through the analysis of some Mexican newspapers; Quadros Leite, in *Interaction, Spoken Text and Discourse*, refers to “normativity” which, according to her, characterizes speech genres and examines examples which allow us to better understand what is unexpected in the interaction among interactants. Under a functionalist perspective of language studies, Moura Neves proposes important considerations concerning grammar and discursive-textual organization.

If for over a decade, in our country, text and discourse have been the object of studies under different theoretical perspectives, as those done by Barros in *Text and Discourse Studies in Brazil (DELTA. Documentação de Estudos em Linguística Teórica e Aplicada, vol.15. São Paulo, 1999)*, we can say that the majority of them have been treated in this book. Thus, throughout the book, readers verify the possibilities and limits of each theoretical and methodological framework as well as the interrelations, interdependence, and borders among the different perspectives; in sum, not only possible articulations and even intersections, but also oppositions among them can be inferred. A common aspect found is the necessary distance between all these approaches from the perspectives which consider phrasal studies as a unit of analysis.

It is also clear that the themes approached in this book are not fully covered in the present texts and that the panorama is far from being exhausted. Some would complain about the absence of some approaches which consider issues related to language acquisition, first or second language learning /teaching, or problems related to translation, themes closer to Applied Linguistics, due to the relevance of these concepts – *text and discourse* – in research carried out by specialists in this field. In this line of thinking, one could complain that the issues discussed in the book were dealt with in a more theoretical than empirical way and that there is little material about effective socio-cultural and/or didactic-pedagogical practices.

Nevertheless, it is worthy insisting that a collection thus elaborated organizes and primely “orders” these concepts on behalf of everyone who is interested in understanding language and carrying out research on it – teachers, researches, students and people who study issues directly or indirectly related with these two central concepts. The studies presented in this book are of ultimate importance because they

constitute a reference point to innumerable multidirectional developments and to the deep study of problems approached by related areas.

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*Received March 25, 2013*

*Accepted September 04, 2013*