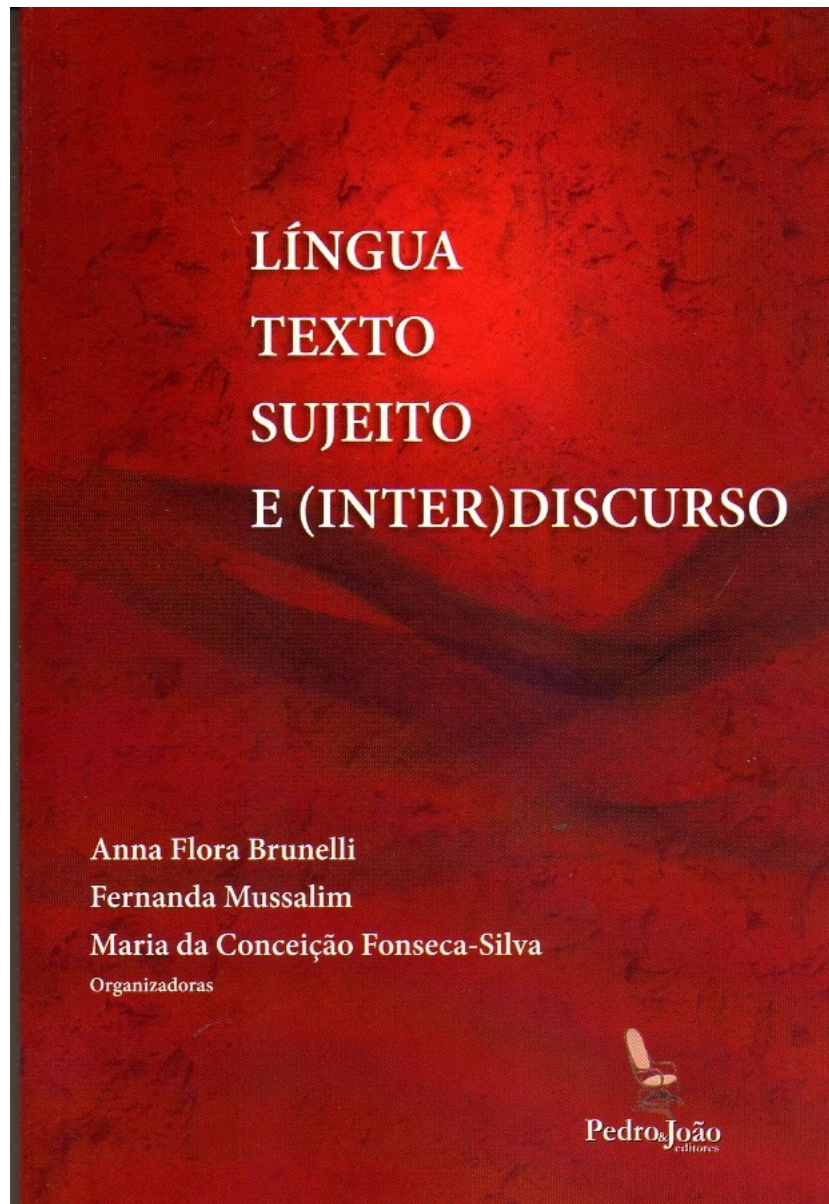


BRUNELLI, A. F., MUSSALIM, F., FONSECA-SILVA, M. C. (org.)
Língua, texto, sujeito e (inter) discurso [*Language, text, subject and*
(*inter*) *discourse*]. São Carlos: Pedro & João Editores, 2013, 226 p.

*Ida Lucia Machado**



* Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, UFMG, Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil;
idaluz@hotmail.fr

One of the first factors that attracted our attention in this book was its list of authors: Why were there twelve professors and researchers from different Brazilian universities and one French professor/researcher? However, after an initial reading, the reason for this selection becomes evident. Beth Brait, Raquel Salek Fiad, Carlos Alberto Faraco, Maria Irma Hadler Coudry, Maria da Conceição Fonseca-Silva, José Luiz Fiorin, José Borges Neto, Fernanda Mussalim, Roberto Leiser Baronas, Anna Flora Brunelli, Luciani Ester Tenani, Luciana Salazar Salgado and Dominique Maingueneau do not appear in this book only to demonstrate the respective Brazilian or French points of view on the work of a Brazilian intellectual. There is *something else* that goes beyond which University they belong to, and which binds them all to Sírio Possenti: the voice of appreciation.

We would therefore like to congratulate the organizers for the wonderful idea of paying tribute to Sírio Possenti through this Collection. They have shown care and sensitivity in compiling and directing this group of *voices*, which came from the colleagues of the Professor who is the object of tribute. It is evident that the eleven chapters of the work reveal moments in which the authors felt close to Possenti, either due to common research (in some of his Projects), through the reading of one of his books, for having the same passion for a specific *corpus*, or for having the same interest in certain discursive concepts, or even for participating in the same research groups.

What an important and delightful tribute! We have read many “tribute” books in which the authors seem to forget that they are there to *speak about the recipient of the tribute*; and we have seen others in which excess praise detracted from the theoretical virtues and the knowledge spread by the recipient of the tribute.

However, *Lingua, Texto, Sujeito e (Inter) Discurso [Language, Text, Subject and (Inter) Discourse]*, does not fit into either of these categories. It succeeds where some tribute books have failed. The texts are good. It combines into a harmonious whole. The authors are unusually well balanced, being able to discuss scientific and intellectual knowledge without hiding their admiration and fondness for the human being. More than a “tribute” book, what we see is a publication with excellent theoretical content celebrating the friendship that binds one researcher to others. The voices in the book that – through the theoretical vein – show friendship towards *Sírio*, also represent the voices of many other professors/researchers/students who know his work (or part of it)

and who have also had the opportunity to confirm that great researchers are simple, kind people, as he is.

Lingua, Texto, Sujeito e (Inter) Discurso is a tasteful book, which can be read as one would read a (theoretical) *life narrative* compiled by thirteen speakers – fourteen including *Sírio*, whose voice runs through all the chapters. Here, theory explains life as one intertwines with the other, with grace and lightness.

Although each of the authors has an opinion and a *style* to discuss different topics relating to contributions made by Possenti, all the chapters have a common thread: to encourage dialogue about and respect for that instigating object of study, which is language and its practice. This dialogue should be considered in the critical and positive sense of the word, as something that strives to offer the reader material for reflections and constructive exchanges, using the work that is paid tribute to as an example.

The book shows different theoretical sides of Possenti. Those who know little about his scientific activity and production are surprised to see the dimensions of his work and how he fights not only for the respect of discursive studies, but also for their better and more current application. It is commonly known that working with language is complicated, but few realize that the great virtue lies in unraveling the complication. This is what Possenti has been doing and what the authors of the collection show in their writing.

The book begins with a detailed *Presentation* by the editors. They not only explain “why” the tribute is being made, but they introduce Possenti as an intellectual, professor and author.

How does one pay tribute to someone like Possenti, whose work has such a broad spectrum? Although the book does not have specific themes – which is good, as such an attitude is libertarian and certainly stimulated the inspiration of the authors – to review it more effectively, we have regrouped it according to five themes: (i) Style, authorship and AD; (ii) Analyses and comments on Possenti’s books; (iii) Comedy and humor; (iv) Studies about different linguistic concepts (natural languages, *ethos*, scenography) and, finally (v) *FESTA* (according to Luciana Salazar Salgado, this stands for *Centro de Pesquisa Fórmulas e Estereótipos: Teoria e Análise / The Centre for*

Research, Formulae and Stereotypes: Theory and Analysis). We will briefly comment on these groups in this order.

First, the question of style, the focus on which has become increasingly urgent in current discourse analysis, is dealt with by Beth Brait, with her usual mastery. We highlight here the way that the author returns to the past in order to deal with the present theme more efficiently. It is Brait's *trip to the past* that reminds us or teaches us that the famous phrase *style is man* comes from an eighteenth-century French man, George-Louis Leclerc, count of Buffon. To weave in the theme and the plot, the author starts with a statement by the President of the United States, Barack Obama, to the then-President of Brazil, Luiz Ignácio Lula da Silva: "That's the guy." The segments dedicated to *Discourse style and analysis* and to *Bakhtinian style and thought* will provide help amplifying and strengthening theories of discursive studies. This is an essential chapter for every discourse analyst and a fitting way of paying tribute to Possenti.

Still on item (i), in the second chapter, Raquel Salek Fiad presents her thoughts about *style and authorship in the acquisition of written language*. The author describes the dialogue that she had with Sírio Possenti about the topic in question. The text discusses the topic, from a theoretical point of view, as well as showing its applicability in didactic practice – helping teachers to value the writing of their young pupils and to encourage them to write more and more, without hesitation, and giving them confidence in *their authorship*. Salek Fiad closes the chapter with some "basic directions" (op.cit., p.47), which are quite useful for teachers.

In item (ii), we consider two articles together. Chapter 3, written by Carlos Alberto Faraco, announces in the epigraph that the author's text was inspired by Possenti's book (1996): *Why (not) to Teach Grammar at School*. Faraco reflects on the (non-) interaction among linguists with Portuguese instruction and the efforts that linguists have undertaken to collaborate with language teaching. The theory should have already been put into practice, but Faraco reminds us that, despite innovative books such as that of Possenti, little has changed in school practice. This chapter is written with a contained emotion reflecting the feelings of the author, and his indignation towards those who erroneously affirm that linguists refuse to hold dialogues with fellow Portuguese teachers. "Perhaps my short-sightedness has worsened with age," says

Faraco (op.cit., p.51), using pure irony, as the short-sightedness belongs to others and not to him or Possenti.

Chapter 8, by Fernanda Mussalim and Roberto Leiser Baronas, also fits into our group (ii). The researchers' proposal is broad: to comment on all the articles in the collection *Questões para análise do discurso* (2009) by Sírio Possenti – fourteen in all. This article displays important notions of discourse analysis, enriched by the authors' comments. To better explain their procedures, Mussalim and Baronas regroup and “clip” the topics presented in the book, highlighting issues of concern to the discourse analyst. Unconsciously, this chapter takes on the form of a beautiful construction in *mise en abyme*: it takes the form of a small book within another, which is, in itself, within another (the collection).

In group (iii), we can see the articles on comedy and humor, chapters 4 and 5, by Maria Irma Hadler Coudry and Maria da Conceição Fonseca-Silva, respectively. Chapter 4 focuses on a work by Possenti in which he used humor to de-dramatize something as serious and sad as the speech of aphasic patients. Humor appears in everything that is beautiful and human: One does not mock the other. This is a good example of transgressive discourse in its most positive sense: the pleasant combination of aphasia and humor.

The second author, who is also an expert in this linguistic phenomenon of humor, shows that, behind the laughter brought about by the Maitena comic strips, which focus on the problems of today's working women who take care of the house, their husband, and their children, and who still have to be beautiful, talented, seductive, etc., there is the social side, which is the more unappealing side of life, enforced by a masculine society. In this way, both the joyous character and the tragedy of humor are highlighted. Taking *discursive memory* and the ethical-political character of humor, as a basis Fonseca-Silva once again finds the path set out by Possenti, which considers humor in the perspective of discourse analysis.

In group (iv), we consider chapters covering a variety of topics. For example, in chapter 7, José Borges Neto discusses and comments on natural languages such as Portuguese, a topic that always interested Possenti. Through a vein of ironic humor, this text deals with an everyday topic: how we face a world and its representations through language. The author's perspective is current: For him, words cannot have a fixed

meaning, free from the context of their speakers and communicative situations (op.cit., p.140). He manages to explain clearly issues that affect us all, highlighting certain “original sins”/“terminological misunderstandings” that still appear today.

Chapter 6 is a delightful tribute to a passion that its author, José Luiz Fiorin, has in common with Possenti. It deals with a text on Brazilian football and its anthems and discourse. Although the analysis made by the author, based on the anthems of a variety of football clubs, is serious and pertinent, one cannot help smiling at the description of the compliments, love, patriotic feelings, warriors, fighting and “blood if need be!” that disseminates those anthems. The reader has the sensation that he is listening to Ancient Roman echoes and watching Roman fights in the Coliseum. Even so, the analysis of the anthems’ lyrics pertinently reveals the explicit and the implicit, carefully examining the tricks of a well-used lexis that aims to evoke virile passions and the desire for combat, amongst other things.

The antepenultimate chapter is taken on by two researchers, Anna Flora Brunelli and Luciani Ester Tanani, who offer well-arranged explanations about the notion of discursive *ethos*, basing their arguments on sayings by Possenti. This chapter considers the exaggerated importance that is often given to extra-linguistic factors, and the lesser importance to linguistic materiality, in the all-consuming search for the discovery of meaning. In the search for meaning, one does not exist without the other and they prove this by proposing a linguistic analysis of the discourse from *Amway*. Here one identifies the context of these statements, leading to the *ethos* of the analyzed items.

In the penultimate chapter, Dominique Maingueneau presents three issues that are of interest to Possenti: political discourse, context, and *ethos*. Instead of observing some of the electoral propaganda of the French left or right (2007 presidential elections) Maingueneau innovates: the reader meets José Bové, a candidate who is an anti-globalization activist. The analyzed text is the *profession of faith* of the French candidate. To better explain its contents, the author bases himself on discursive contexts that are important to him: The context, the question of identity and space, and the properties of the speaker. In this last item, an instigating scene is proposed, which demonstrates the “modifying term” characterizing the *ethos* that Bové constructs while he is a candidate. The author reminds us that the great challenge of a politician is to make the voter enter the world that his statements announced and construct.

The book closes with a chapter that comprises our category (v). This chapter deals with the creation of a study Center, coordinated by Possenti, which has united various researchers. This Center was given the name of FEsTA, which seems to be a *clind'oeil* of the relationship the researcher has with academic work: Amid numerous problems and headaches, it also brings about moments of jubilation. This nucleus reunites Possenti's ex-students and colleagues. The author shows some echoes of the Center's work, which is a fitting way to close this collection.

As we have already said, the book is excellent. However, we can feel the lack of a guiding force on its cover. The title itself is broad, and upon reading the book we understand that it sought to retrace the various paths taken by Possenti. Nonetheless, the fact that there is no mention, perhaps as a subtitle, on this cover, that the collection pays tribute to Sírío Possenti, seems vague. However, this is merely an observation that does not remove the work's shine or utility.

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