

**Benveniste-Saussure: A Never-Ending Affiliation Relationship /
*Benveniste-Saussure: uma relação de nunca acabar***

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ABSTRACT

In this article, we discuss the concept of affiliation in the theoretical-methodological framework of Discourse Analysis to analyze the relationship between Benvenistian thought and Saussurian thought as a relationship of affiliation within the history of ideas that delimits the field of language studies. The analysis, which cuts out paraphrastic formulations from the *Course in General Linguistics* and *Problems in General Linguistics*, allowed the understanding of this affiliation relationship as a dialogue, in which a constitutive paradoxical relationship is materialized. This relationship signifies the movement of approximation and displacement/detachment of Benvenistian thought to Saussurian thought. This understanding showed that the different ways of reading the Benveniste-Saussure relationship, already historicized in some way within the history of linguistic ideas belongs to the order of the effect of interpretation in the dispute of the history of science games.

KEYWORDS: Benveniste; Saussure; Affiliation; History of linguistic ideas; Discourse

RESUMO

Neste artigo, discutimos o conceito de filiação no quadro teórico-metodológico da Análise de Discurso, para analisarmos a relação entre o pensamento benvenistiano e o pensamento saussuriano como uma relação de filiação no interior da história das ideias que delimita o campo dos estudos da linguagem. A análise, que recortou formulações parafrásticas do Curso de linguística geral e dos Problemas de linguística geral, permitiu a compreensão dessa relação de filiação como diálogo, no qual se materializa uma relação paradoxal constitutiva que significa o movimento de aproximação e de deslocamento/destacamento do pensamento benvenistiano ao pensamento saussuriano. Essa compreensão mostrou que as diferentes maneiras de ler a relação Benveniste-Saussure, já historicizadas de algum modo no interior da história das ideias linguísticas, é da ordem do efeito da interpretação no jogo dos jogos da história da ciência.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Benveniste; Saussure; Filiação; História das ideias linguísticas; Discurso

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[...] it is the very possibility of rendering material form to the thought (thinking) that is in dispute in the history of science games.¹

Eni Orlandi

Introduction

In this article, the central focus of our analysis lies on the affiliation relationship between Benvenistian thought and Saussurean thought, seeking to understand how such affiliation produces effects, on the one hand, in a determined way, on how the Saussurian thought, established from the *Course in General Linguistics* (*Cours de Linguistique Générale*, 1916), can be (re)interpreted in and by Benvenistian thought, and, on the other hand, in a determined way, on how the foundation of language can be theorized differently in *Problems in General Linguistics* (*PGLs*). In other words, we seek to discuss the following issue: based on signification as the foundation of language, how does Émile Benveniste's inscription take place in a determined mo(ve)ment of affiliation to the Saussurian concepts established in and by the *Course in General Linguistics* (*CGL*)?

We highlight that this affiliation relationship has been discussed and understood differently in several approaches, including, in many cases, from specific angles and concepts, as well as from different theoretical-methodological perspectives. Among these viewpoints, we highlight the approaches by Claudine Normand (2009a) and Valdir do Nascimento Flores (2013). The former presents five possible discursivities that forge considerations about such relationship: continuity (Benveniste as Saussure's follower), novelty (Benveniste different from Saussure), influence/application (Benveniste applies Saussure), interdisciplinarity (Benveniste reconfigures the interdisciplinarity of Linguistics within other fields of knowledge) and institutionality (both authors' intellectual relevance).

The latter approach, in turn, addresses the marks of Ferdinand de Saussure's presence in Benvenistian thought, especially in the chapter entitled "Saussurian foundations of Benvenistian thought." In that chapter, Flores (2013) recognizes some constitutive movements of this relationship, among which we highlight: difference

¹ This text in English is not available to us: "[...] é a própria possibilidade de dar forma material ao pensamento (de pensar) que está em jogo nos jogos da história da ciência."

(Benveniste would distinguish himself from Saussure by theorizing how the principle of arbitrariness can determine the nature of the linguistic sign); agreement (Benveniste would agree with Saussure regarding the linguist's task, defending, however, a displacement of the object, redefined in Benveniste by the consideration of language as a whole – rejecting the Saussurian cut between language and speech –, expanding the perspective of the linguist's work by inserting the issue of signification and, consequently, enunciation); attribution (the Benvenistian notion of “formal apparatus of enunciation” would be tributary of the Saussurian notion of “linguistic system”). Stemming from this argument, the author defends a relationship in which Benveniste would have gone beyond Saussure by placing linguistic analysis in the world of the sentence, therefore, at the level of the discourse. This surpassing view would culminate by stating the proposition according to which the language would develop meaning semantically, articulated with the Saussurian world of the sign, which Benveniste would re-read as the semiotic way by which language conveys meanings.

In addition to these positions, we believe it is worth remarking that both Saussurian and Benvenistian thoughts are objects of extensively substantial criticism. This article also addresses, in specific mo(ve)ments, the Saussure-Benveniste relationship. The numerous productions that discuss and analyze the relationship between Saussurian thought and Benvenistian thought have shown that this relationship is made up of nuances – complexities, contradictions, inaccuracies –, which are also taken in consideration to back up the viewpoint defended here, according to which the relationship of affiliation between Benvenistian thought and Saussurian thought operates discursively as a “never-ending” relationship.

Another caveat is related to the way Benveniste established *PGL1*, which was reproduced by Mohammad Djafar Moïnfar, in the establishment of *PGL2*, under Benveniste's supervision. On this issue, Benveniste himself states, in the preface to *PGL1*, that the organization of his studies – published at different moments of his production in different periodicals – into six sessions (parts) defined by him –, aimed at building a certain effect of unity and of coherence. As we understand it, this unity and coherence are forged from Benveniste's recurrently stated position: looking at linguistic

problems from the relationship between language, signification and man.² We can read this position taken in the quotations below, among others, established in different mo(ve)ments of Benveniste's production.

Prior to anything, human speech carries meaning, and that is its primordial feature, its original vocation that transcends and explains all the functions it provides in the human milieu. [...] They [...] are linked to the exercise of discourse: to put it a nutshell, I would say that, quite before being suitable to communicate, human speech is suitable to *live*. When we state that the absence of language would not create possibility to society, neither to human kind it is precisely because, above all, human speech's own nature is to carry meaning. From the extension of such definitions, one can measure how important signification should be (Benveniste, 2006, p. 222; author's emphasis, free translation).³

Between the signifier and the signified, the connection is not arbitrary; on the contrary, it is *necessary*. The concept (the "signified") *bœuf* is perforce identical in my consciousness with the sound sequence (the "signifier") *böf*. How could it be otherwise? Together the two are imprinted on my mind, together they evoke each other under any circumstance [...]. The mind does not contain empty forms, concepts without names [...] (Benveniste, 1971, p. 45).⁴ What Saussure demonstrated remains true, but true of the *signification*, not the sign (Benveniste, 1971, p. 47; author's emphasis).⁵

In the former quote, the relationship between human speech, signification and man is presented more obviously: it is stated, for example, that signification ensures the functions of the human milieu by being linked to the exercise of discourse, that is, linked to a certain injunction that operates in the "world of signification" (Harris *apud*

² Benveniste's use of 'man' to mean 'human being of both genders' is repeated along the text in order to respect his words. The effect of meaning is reproduced in and by the use of 'man' by authors of this text.

³ There is no equivalent in English to this text. It was originally published in French in *Le Langage II (Sociétés de Philosophie de langue française. Actes du XIIIe Congrès, Genève, 1966)*, and translated to Portuguese as "*a forma e o sentido da linguagem*" [form and meaning in language] (Benveniste, 2006, p. 222). "Antes de qualquer coisa, a linguagem significa, tal é seu caráter primordial, sua vocação original que transcende e explica todas as funções que ela assegura no meio humano. [...] Elas [...] estão ligadas ao exercício do discurso: para resumi-las em uma palavra, eu diria que, bem antes de servir para comunicar, a linguagem serve para *viver*. Se nós colocamos que à falta de linguagem não haveria nem possibilidade de sociedade, nem possibilidade de humanidade, é precisamente porque o próprio da linguagem é, antes de tudo, significar. Pela amplitude desta definição pode-se medir a importância que deve caber à significação."

⁴ BENVENISTE, Émile. The Nature of the Linguistic Sign. In: BENVENISTE, Émile. *Problems in General Linguistics*. Translated by Mary Elizabeth Meek. Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, [1939]/1971. pp. 43-48.

⁵ For reference, see footnote 4.

Benveniste, 1971, p. 10, author's emphasis)⁶ determining that what we find in this world is "a man speaking to another man" (Benveniste, 1971, p. 224).⁷ And that is why we can understand that human speech suits man to live. That view projects the issue of signification to the center of Benveniste's thought regarding the question of the relationship between human speech, signification and man.

In the latter quote, when bringing up the issue of the sign's impression on the human spirit, Benveniste places signification at the center of the understanding the linguistic sign as a necessary element for man's recognition of existence. This is the reason why, in order to be recognized as a sign, the signifier must be inalienably related to a signified, since, as Benveniste argues, the human spirit rejects empty forms, unnamed concepts.

Concerning these readings, we recognize the need to display and understand how this affiliation takes place, its specificity, and what it can produce, as possible effects, in the socio-historical and political-ideological process that determines the (re)interpretation of the Saussurian thought in and by the Benvenistian thought. For this article, this investigation used as analytical material *Problemas de linguística geral I and II* [Problems in General Linguistics 1 and 2] (Benveniste, 2006), *Course in General Linguistics* (Benveniste, 1971),⁸ and Saussure, 1959).⁹

This choice of material is justified on the basis of a determined historicity and a determined political practice that, by signifying a certain scientific mo(ve)ment within studies on/of language, allows us to say that the publication of the PGLs affected the way in which Benvenistian thought circulated to the point of producing the imaginary concept that PGLs would comprise the foundation of Benveniste's General Linguistics. The publication of the Portuguese translation of the PGLs in Brazil, in particular, was essential

⁶ BENVENISTE, Émile. Recent Trends in General Linguistics. In: BENVENISTE, Émile. *Problems in General Linguistics*. Translated by Mary Elizabeth Meek. Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, [1954]/1971. pp. 3-15.

⁷ BENVENISTE, Émile. Subjectivity in Language. In: BENVENISTE, Émile. *Problems in General Linguistics*. Translated by Mary Elizabeth Meek. Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, [1958]/1971. pp. 223-230.

⁸ BENVENISTE, Émile. *Problems in General Linguistics*. Translated by Mary Elizabeth Meek. Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, [1966]/1971.

⁹ SAUSSURE, Ferdinand de. *Course in General Linguistics*. Edited by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye, in collaboration with Albert Reidlinger. Translated from the French by Wade Baskin. New York City: Philosophical Library, [1916]/1959.

to bring his linguistics to integrate the training of Brazilian linguists (Brait, 1995). A similar situation took place with the publication of the Portuguese translation of the CGL.

The inclusion of *CGL* in the analytical selection was justified by the fact that Benveniste was a “critical” reader of the *Cours [de linguistique générale]*. We highlight that Benveniste read CGL text and related it to other writings, many of which were cited by Benveniste himself in the PGLs. These other writings include, for example, letters exchanged between Saussure and Meillet between 1894 and 1911 (Testenoire, 2015), the work by Godel (1969), *Les sources manuscrites du Cours de Linguistique Générale de F. de Saussure*, Bloomfield’s analysis on *Cours* (1924), published in the *Modern Language Journal*, Guillaume’s article, *La langue est-elle ou n’est-elle pas un système?*, published in *Cahiers de Linguistique structurale de l’Université de Québec* in 1952, as well as different issues of *Cahiers Ferdinand de Saussure*.

The accomplished analysis, based on the questioning above, mobilized the discursive method, which allowed us to problematize the different ways the relationship Benveniste-Saussure can be read. This problematization stemmed from the restoration of a determined material condition of existence of the discourse-building processes in scientific and exegetical practices and theories and the affiliation relationships pertinent to them. This specific condition established limits of different orders to the exercise of intellectual production, such the discontinuity of thought and theoretical elaboration, as well as, ultimately, the finitude of life itself.

Discursively, this condition prevents us from embarking on readings that interpret the Benveniste-Saussure connection as a relationship of “overcoming,” “overtaking,” “reproduction,” “application,” “continuation,” “influence,” “reception,” “of precursory nature,” “inheritance-transmission,” “innovation.” In analysis, the suspension of these significant relationships became possible by shifting the way one reads the paraphrastic relationships that bring affiliation meaning to the relationship between Benvenistian thought and Saussurian thought. Based on this analytical procedure, we understood the discursive process in operation in the socio-historical and political-ideological determination of this affiliation.

In this analytical procedure, we approached the text by Normand (2009a), who translates the “Saussure-Benveniste” relationship in the metaphor of the encounter:¹⁰ “Benveniste came across Saussure in what he could learn from his writings” (Normand, 2009a, p. 198; free translation).¹¹ But, for us there is at least one substantial difference: Benveniste failed and fails to encounter Saussure in a never-ending¹² relationship – as we announced in the title and will demonstrate below. In that sense, we suspend the evidence that reduces Benveniste to a mere “critical” reader of Saussure. And we remark the fact that, in the history of language studies, relationships of affiliation between founding authors, such as the “Benveniste-Saussure” relationship, are relationships established by gestures of interpretation liable to (re)updating.

In order to carry out this analytical gesture, we have mobilized the Pecheutian theoretical-methodological framework of Discourse Analysis aiming at understanding the affiliation between Benvenistian thought and Saussurian thought as a movement in the process of signification in the history of linguistic ideas. In addition to this introduction, this analytical gesture comprises the following sections: in the first, we explain how we view the designations “Saussurian thought” and “Benvenistian thought;” in the second, we work discursively on the concept of affiliation in the history of linguistic ideas. In the third, we analyze how Benveniste-Saussure’s affiliation can be re-read from this perspective. We conclude this article by developing our understanding of this affiliation, considering its possible impact on the linguists’ education.

¹⁰ Benveniste also refers to the theoretical relationship by using such a metaphor. For example, when talking about his relationship with Antoine Meillet, his master, he says that: “[...] It was because I *happened to meet him* when I was very young, during my studies in Sorbonne, and because I doubtlessly enjoy research much more than the teaching routine, *meeting* him was decisive for me” (Benveniste, 2006, p. 11; author’s emphasis, free translation).

¹¹ This text in English was not available to us: “Benveniste encontrou Saussure no que pôde conhecer de seus escritos.”

¹² To name this article and signify the point of view defended here, we borrowed the expression “never ending relationship” inspired both by the title to the Mexican translation, by Beatriz Job, from the work by Françoise Gadet and Michel Pêcheux (1981, *La Langue introuvable*, Ed. La Découverte), *La lengua de Nunca Acabar* [Never-Ending Language], and by the title of the *I Seminário de Estudos em Análise do Discurso*: “*Michel Pêcheux e a Análise do Discurso: uma relação de nunca acabar*” [1st Seminar on Studies in Discourse Analysis: “Michel Pêcheux and Discourse Analysis: a never ending relationship”] (*Instituto de Letras* [Language Institute], UFRGS, Porto Alegre, Nov. 2003) and the eponymous book (2005, Ed. Claraluz) resulting from it, organized by UFRGS professors Freda Indursky and Maria Cristina Leandro Ferreira.

1 “Saussurian Thought,” “Benvenistian Thought”

Bearing in mind our analytical objective, it becomes relevant to explain how we can understand and operate, in the work presented here, what we call “Saussurian thought” and “Benvenistian thought.” By referring to Saussure’s thought, we designate a certain scientific and exegetical tradition (Normand, 2009b) within language studies, which recognizes that the *Course in General Linguistics*, produced and published after Saussure’s death,¹³ would function as an index of a discursivity that produces, as an effect, determined evidence attributable to the theorizing work carried out by Saussure, between 1907 and 1911, in three courses in general linguistics taught by him at the University of Geneva.

In this same context, there is, at least, another tradition that (de)negates the *Course in General Linguistics* as a discursive index of Saussurian thought. This tradition is based on the knowledge of Saussure’s original texts made public as of the mid-1990s. Concerning this issue, take, for example, Simon Bouquet (2004). As an explanation, we have read Bouquet himself. On the one hand, he denies such discursive functioning of the *Course* by stating, for example, that the work written by Charles ally and Albert Sechehaye “offers [...] a distorted reflection of the thought [Saussurian] that intends to divulge by faking [] the course notes and Saussure’s manuscripts on which it is based (Bouquet, 2009, p. 13, free translation);¹⁴ and, on the other hand, he discredits such operation by also stating that “Bally and Sechehaye accomplished a masterful summary of the Saussurian reflection [] proven fact by the success his work has attained” (Bouquet, 2009, p. 13, free translation).¹⁵

We emphasize that, by referring to a determined scientific and exegetical tradition, we discursively take the scientific and exegetical practices that constitute them as political practices. Therefore, they organize themselves as “a net of affiliation of meanings in an [intellectual] memory that can only be singular in its specific conditions” (Orlandi, 2009,

¹³ Concerning this process of posthumous production and publication, we recommend reading Gadet (1996), Bouquet (2004) and Normand (2009b).

¹⁴ This text in English was not available to us: “oferece [...] um reflexo deformado do pensamento [saussuriano] que pretende divulgar, falseando [...] as notas do curso e os manuscritos de Saussure em que se apoia.”

¹⁵ This text in English was not available to us: “Bally e Sechehaye realizaram uma síntese magistral da reflexão saussuriana [...] fato comprovado pelo sucesso alcançado por sua obra.”

p. 122; free translation).¹⁶ In our words, we understand that the conditions for the production of a scientific and exegetical tradition are specific to a given socio-historical-ideological situation, which causes particular cuttings in the relationship between theorizations and the memory affiliations they evoke. This particularization produces, as an effect, a difference in repetition, and consequently it renders scientific and exegetical traditions singular. For instance, the same note from a Saussure class can originate different interpretations, which, in turn, can be part of different scientific and exegetical traditions. These traditions, in dispute for meaning, operate, imaginarily, in the attempt to delimit/determine what “Saussurian thought” would be.

This network of affiliation, still following Eni Orlandi (2009), is indicted, that is, historically marked, by a process of elaboration, argumentation, produced according to the way this affiliation affects the relationship of interpretation between author-functions¹⁷ and, therefore, the process of theorization implied in/by a specific history of constitution of each authorship, inscribing them in a regime of intellectual memory. This memory is constituted by conditions such as digging into itself, forgetting, deleting, (dis)continuing, (Pêcheux, 1999), in a relationship with a determined institutional memory, determined political-scientific memory and by means of the social-historical-ideological process in the struggle for the scientific knowledge.

Following this line of understanding, although the term “Saussurian thought” may imaginarily evoke notions of homogeneity and uniqueness, in fact, from a discursive point of view, the theoretical thought results from a diffuse, unconscious, incomplete and non-linear path of affiliations (theoretical, to other thoughts, other discursivities) and from

¹⁶ This text in English was not available to us: “uma rede de filiação de sentidos em uma memória [intelectual] que não pode ser senão singular em suas condições particulares.”

¹⁷ As proposed by Orlandi (2001), the author-function is an effect associated with a significant position that operated in relation to a given text. When in operation, “it builds an organized relationship – in terms of discourse – producing an imaginary effect of unity (beginning, middle, progression, non-contradiction and end) [...] imaginarily placing the subject at the origin of the meaning, held responsible for the subject’s production” (Orlandi, 2001, p. 65, free translation. This text in English was not available to us: “constrói uma relação organizada – em termos de discurso – produzindo um efeito imaginário de unidade (começo, meio, progressão, não contradição e fim) [...] colocando imaginariamente o sujeito na origem do sentido e sendo responsabilizado por sua produção”). In the field of scientific production, the author also states that “authorship in science always has a long journey that is not made up by ‘influences’ but, rather by reflections within a ‘tradition’, a ‘scientific memory’ under certain conditions” (Orlandi, 2009, p. 136, free translation. This text in English was not available to us: “a autoria em ciência tem sempre um longo percurso que não é feito de ‘influências’, mas de reflexões dentro de uma ‘tradição’, uma ‘memória científica’ em determinadas condições”).

materializations (classes, notes, articles, communications, books, etc.), made up of mo(ve)ments that are not always precisely delineable. It is a socio-historically and political-ideologically determined path/process, configuring this thought as a necessarily prismatic object, that is, subject to different interpretations and, at the same time, the material basis for different gestures that constitute a discursive process (meaningful) without a beginning nor an end. Furthermore, theoretical thought is itself made up of interpretations of these affiliations.

From this perspective, we understand “Saussurian thought” as an object of knowledge with multiple materializations, founded on the relationship between language and interpretation. When this object operates discursively, it (de)regulates the implicit notions associable to materializations. Thus, it organizes a net of affiliation of meanings to the discursive memory that constitutively crosses language studies. That is the relationship in which the memories evoked by these objects and their materializations can be read as “a moving space of divisions, disjunctions, displacement and resuming, conflicts of regularization... a space of developments, replicas, polemics and counter-discourses” (Pêcheux, 1999, p. 50; free translation).¹⁸

As a consequence of this movement of affiliations, which is neither homogeneous nor ahistorical, as explained above, subject positions are configured in the history of sciences and, in particular, in the history of language studies, delimiting, at the same time, the difference between authors (author-functions) and theorizations, that is, between scientific and exegetical traditions. This movement of affiliation is constitutive of what Thomas Herbert (Michel Pêcheux) (2011) denominated “methodical reproduction of the object.” In the author’s own words, “as long as science [...] announces its object, it is taken to confront its discourse against itself in order to demonstrate its need. [...] *the methodic reproduction of the object* consists in a *reflection* of the theoretical discourse around itself, which brings cohesion to it” (Herbert (Pêcheux), 2011, p. 49; author’s emphasis, free translation).¹⁹

¹⁸ This text in English was not available to us: “espaço móvel de divisões, de disjunções, de deslocamentos e de retomadas, de conflitos de regularização... um espaço de desdobramentos, réplicas, polêmicas e contradiscursos.”

¹⁹ This text in English was not available to us: “desde que a ciência [...] enuncie seu objeto, ela é levada a confrontar seu discurso com ele mesmo para provar sua necessidade. [...] *a reprodução metódica do objeto* consiste em uma *reflexão* do discurso teórico sobre si mesmo que lhe confere a coesão.”

We would also say that the “methodical reproduction of the object” can open, given its particular production conditions, to displacement. Consequently, this dislocation provides opportunities for the emergence of other objects, theorizations, scientific and exegetical traditions, affiliations, that is, (other) “projections on the horizon of science” (Orlandi, 2009, p. 125; free translation),²⁰ even with the possibility of expanding this horizon. As a result of this shift, the emergence of other authors becomes possible as well.

To this extent we understand the methodical reproduction of the object as a bending movement,²¹ a return movement, of the theoretical discourse around itself. This movement is produced, on the one hand, as a simultaneous need to prove and stabilize both its cohesion and its coherence, beyond its heuristic reach. On the other hand, this same mo(ve)ment produces discrepancies, disconnections, failures, opening scientific discourse to other articulations and discursive latitudes.²² This bending movement, owing to the effects we have just described, is constitutive of scientific practice and the functioning of scientific discourse in the human sciences.

Based on this argument, we can understand that Saussurian thought operates, imaginarily, as we denominate it in Discourse Analysis, as a founding discourse related to the net of affiliation of meanings that makes up the field of human speech studies itself. Therefore, we can state, together with Orlandi (2009), that the *Course* text functions “as a place of memory” (2009, p. 124; free translation),²³ that is, it constitutes itself imaginarily, as a “place of origin and principle of closure of regression in time and dispersion in space” (Orlandi, 2009, p. 124; free translation).²⁴

The fact that Saussurian thought functions as a founding discourse, according to Orlandi (2009), “opens a discursivity and creates, at the same time, an affiliation of intellectual memory, in which the meanings make another meaning [...]” (Orlandi, 2009,

²⁰ This text in English was not available to us: “projeções no horizonte da ciência.”

²¹ “Bending” is here understood in the terms proposed by Eduardo Alves Rodrigues, Cármen Agustini, Luiza Castello Branco and Renata Chrystina Bianchi de Barros (2020).

²² We have taken “articulations and discursive latitudes” in the terms proposed by Eduardo Alves Rodrigues, Cármen Agustini and Luiza Castello Branco (2021b).

²³ This text in English was not available to us: “como lugar de memória.”

²⁴ Translation into Portuguese by Orlandi (2009) from the French original: “lieu d’origine et principe de fermeture de la régression dans le temps et de la dispersion dans l’espace” (Puech; Chiss, 1995, p. 112), free translated into English in this paragraph.

p. 124; free translation).²⁵ This discursivity, the author adds, “is also the work of other authors (external evaluation, prestige, legitimation, affiliation, tradition, inheritance, projection in the horizon of science)” (Orlandi, 2009, pp. 124-125; free translation).²⁶

By associating the functioning of this discursivity to the *Course*, we can restore a discursive process that produces the construction of a theorization, its object and method. Furthermore, we take the *Course* as the materialization of Saussurian thought on which we have based the analysis undertaken here. We also add that, despite the knowledge produced about Saussurian thought, especially in contemporary times, stemming from manuscripts found in the mid-1990s, the *Course* remains a fundamental reading in linguistics education processes. In addition, it is still considered a milestone in the history of linguistic ideas. In other words, although it is not the only materialization of Saussurian thought, the *Course* remains a “horizon of retrospection” (Auroux, 2009; free translation),²⁷ projecting and producing effects on the outlines and affiliations of Saussurian thought.

Similarly, we understand what we refer to as “Benvenistian thought,” with a capital difference: its constitution is crossed by Saussurean thought, by this founding discursivity, as one of its *claimed affiliations* (Guimarães, 2018).²⁸ We understand, based on Orlandi (2002), that this type of affiliation is marked by the way in which an author explicitly reports to and inscribes himself/herself in a given scientific and exegetical tradition. These movements materialize, for example, by means of citation mechanisms that produce, as an effect, the assumption of an author as a “first reference.” Thus, this

²⁵ This text in English was not available to us: “abre uma discursividade e cria, ao mesmo tempo, uma filiação de memória intelectual, onde os sentidos fazem outro sentido [...]”

²⁶ This text in English was not available to us: “é também um trabalho de outros autores (avaliação externa, prestígio, legitimação, filiação, tradição, herança, projeção no horizonte da ciência).”

²⁷ This text in English was not available to us: “horizonte de retrospectção.”

²⁸ Concerning this point, we recall Bernard Colombat, Jean-Marie Fournier and Christian Puech (2017), who state that “20th century linguists have a relationship with Saussureanism by *assumed affiliation, formation, or reaction*” (Colombat, Fournier, Puech, 2017, p. 31; authors’ emphasis, free translation. This text in English was not available to us: “os linguistas do século XX têm relação com o saussurianismo por *filiação assumida, formação ou reação*”). It is worth remarking that “*claimed affiliation*” and “*assumed affiliation*” do not necessarily maintain a synonymous relationship. Furthermore, we agree with these authors in their assumption that takes “affiliation” as a historical object. As such, it can be inscribed in different regions of memory, circumscribed by different discursive processes of theorization. This inscription (im)poses that this historical object be theorized, in order to restore the opacity of the relationships between related theoretical positions. In this movement of theorization, it becomes possible to avoid reducing the concept of “affiliation,” that otherwise would be, for example, a mere relationship of agreement.

author established himself/herself as an emblematic figure in a circumstantial discursive process of specifically detailed theorization.

As Orlandi (2002) explains, when taken discursively, these quoted mechanisms do not correspond to ways that characterize how the “influence” of one author would affect another, but, rather, to ways that demonstrate how a discursive position in/of scientific discourse is filiated to certain net of meanings aimed to interpret, formulate and argue,²⁹ establishing an author in a process of theorization limited to a certain scientific and exegetical tradition. As Orlandi shows, this affiliation is not only marked by these quotation mechanisms, but it is also instituted by specific production conditions, for example, by the way this affiliation is signified in and by the mo(ve)ment of institutionalization of scientific practices.

This claimed affiliation approach is postulated in *PGLs* in relation to Saussurian thought. As it will be seen in the analysis, Saussurian thought is marked in them as a primary reference, constituting part of the theoretical construction that allows us to mean what we refer to as “Benvenistian thought.” An example of how this claimed affiliation is textually marked can be observed in: “[...] In order to emphasize them, we shall consider only the primordial characteristics of semiology *as Saussure perceives it*, and furthermore, as he recognized it long before alluding to it in his teachings” (Benveniste, [1969]/1981, p. 8; emphasis added).³⁰ In this formulation, the mo(ve)ment of claimed affiliation to Saussure is marked by Saussure’s signification as a starting point, an unequivocal reference to the reflection in the production by Benveniste.

In the sequence of this article we will explain, based on what we have just developed, how we can understand “affiliation” discursively in order to think about relationships of meaning and relationships between authorships in the history of linguistic ideas.

²⁹ “Argue” herein has the same meaning as we attribute to it in Rodrigues and Agustini (2023).

³⁰ BENVENISTE, Émile. *The Semiology of Language*. Translated by Genette Ashby and Adelaide Russo, *Semiotica*, 37, n. supp 1, 5-23, 5-23, De Gruyter Mouton Publishers, Berlin, [1969]/1981. Available at http://afsemio.fr/wp-content/uploads/Benveniste_1981_Semiology-of-language_Semiotica.pdf. Accessed in January 2024.

2 Conceptualizing Affiliation Discursively in the History of Linguistic Ideas

Right from the start, we should explain that our affiliation to the history of linguistic ideas follows to the way Discourse Analysis deals with it. This standpoint has created conditions for the construction of a particular way of reading and analyzing the production of linguistic ideas in history. As a result of this perspective, we have worked on the guiding question of this article by mobilizing the theoretical-methodological framework of Discourse Analysis.

In that framework, based on Orlandi (2009; 2002) and Mariana Marinho (2021), affiliation is neither understood as agreement or influence, nor mere theoretical reproduction or reception – or continuation, or inheritance, or overcoming, or surpassing, or application, or transmission, or precursorship – of authors. Orlandi (2002) conceptualizes affiliation as relationships of meaning, as a movement of transference and resignification; recognizing, therefore, that what is in question is a historical labor of signification of relationships between authors; in other words, recognizing that the affiliation between authorships arises from a metaphorical work. Following that trend of senses, “filiate” also means to formulate, elaborate, argue, that is, to interpret.

With Marinho (2021), we expand the way of understanding, discursively, the concept of affiliation. For this author, affiliation is “a relationship of dialogue between theories, meanings, ideological positions of and in theoretical practice” (Marinho, 2021, p. 21; free translation).³¹ Consequently, formulating, elaborating, arguing and interpreting in the process of affiliation implies taking a significant position in dialogue, that is, in a socio-historical and political-ideological practice of signification, in which the metaphorical work is presupposed. It is, therefore, a political and ideological movement in the face of the relationships of meaning involved in the discursive process of theorization, of imaginary construction of scientific and exegetical thought.

As a practice characterized in this way, this dialogue also implies non-communication (Pêcheux, 1982),³² both simultaneously and constitutively, as it

³¹ This text in English was not available to us: “uma relação de diálogo entre teorias, sentidos, posições ideológicas da e na prática teórica.”

³² PÊCHEUX, Michel. *Language, Semantics and Ideology*. Translated by Harbans Nagpal. St. Martin’s Press: New York, 1982.

reproduces and transforms the material conditions of existence within the class struggle, within social life, therefore, also within scientific and exegetical practice. Communication/non-communication arises from the fact that no subject can mean from the same significant position occupied by another. Between what a subject writes/says and what his/her interlocutor reads/hears him/her, there are disconnections, discrepancies, mismatches as well.

This is the reason why we say that communicating is also not communicating. Therefore, dialoguing is also non-dialoguing. This is also the reason why, inspired by Pêcheux (1982),³³ we can say that the material form “dialogue” is simultaneously, the basis for division and contradiction as well. Furthermore, the production of a dialogue between different authors takes place under specific production conditions. If these conditions change, the dialogue may be different. In fact, this functioning allows Saussurian thought, for example, to be read in different ways, and also to be reread indefinitely. As we have learned in Discourse Analysis, interpretation does not come to an end.

Consequently, affiliation conceived as dialogue, does not foresee, except as an effect, a relationship capable of stabilization between two significant positions (authorships), because it has always been crossed by inequalities, asymmetries, silencing, differences, divisions and (dis)continuities specific to the relationships of meaning produced in specific socio-historical and political-ideological conditions. Owing to these same conditions the dominant forces, which lead the class struggle in the field of language studies, compete for signifying, discursively (re)producing the naturalization of certain imaginaries. This naturalization effect, in turn, is supported by the effects of chronological linearization and the hierarchization of relationships of meaning – between forces, power – and subjects.

By means of this, they begin to circulate and produce identification with, for example, the imaginary of precursorship (an author as a precursor of another(s)), that of superiority (an author superior to, who surpasses other(s)), that of inheritance (one author who inherits something from (an)other(s)). Therefore, we (re)read the Benveniste-Saussure relationship as a never-ending relationship: on the one hand, there are different

³³ For reference, see footnote 32.

ways of possible identification with these imaginaries; on the other hand, these different modes of identification can produce, as an effect, militancy in favor of a specific interpretation (to the detriment of others), dispute, confusion, rectification, theoretical churches, silencing, in such a way that dissent, polysemy, the difference remains signifying, moving the practice of scientific and exegetical production, particularly in language studies.

It is worth highlighting that the different ways of identification with such imaginaries are constitutive of scientific and exegetical practice, as a result of the functioning of theoretical practice. In other words, and resuming the epigraph of this text, “[...] it is the very possibility of rendering material form to the thought (thinking) that is in dispute in the history of science games.” (Orlandi, 2009, p. 138; free translation).³⁴ This observation leads us to understand that affiliation, as a practice of dialogue, as we conceptualize it here, is a necessary movement in the discursive process that gives substance to theoretical thought, establishing the possibility of expanding the field of science. From this perspective, dialogue involves, for example, non-agreement, whether explicit or not.

From this perspective, and inspired by Orlandi (2009) and by Edward William Said (1983),³⁵ we understand that the affiliation process can establish, as an effect, the viability of a process of (re)territorialization of authorship and theorization, that is, of knowledge(s), (scientific, exegetical) practices and relationships of meaning (and forces). The understanding of affiliation as dialogue, in which the metaphorical work is presupposed, restores its complexity as a process of (re)production of relationships of meaning, signification, interpretation.

We have mobilized this concept to present below a reinterpretation of the process of affiliation of Benvenistian thought with Saussurian thought.

³⁴ This text in English was not available to us: “[...] é a própria possibilidade de dar forma material ao pensamento (de pensar) que está em jogo nos jogos da história da ciência.”

³⁵ Especially by the difference established between ‘filiation’ and ‘affiliation’.

3 How Can Benveniste's Affiliation with Saussure Be Reinterpreted?

Saussure was first and always a man of fundamentals.
Benveniste

In the PGLs, the formulation of Saussure's recognition as a man of fundamentals is applied: "there is not a linguist today [1963] who does not owe him something. There is not a general theory that does not mention his name. [...] The science of human speech was gradually changed by him" (Benveniste, 1971, p. 29).³⁶ This recognition institutes Benveniste's thought, in a decisive way, endorsing it. This endorsement is evidenced throughout Benveniste's theoretical production, and, in particular, when he resumes Saussure's theorization about the linguistic system by proposing the theorization of the double functioning of language,³⁷ which will culminate, in particular, in the distinctive production, in "The Semiology of language" (PGL2, 1981),³⁸ of the concepts "semiotic functioning" and "semantic functioning" of language.³⁹ It is worth remarking that Saussurian foundation constitutes Benveniste's thought, reiterated, for example, in this passage also from "The Semiology of language": "For the one which we call semiotics, Saussure's theory of the linguistic sign will serve as a basis for research" (Benveniste, 1981, p. 20).⁴⁰

According to Benvenistian thought (1971), Saussure was experiencing a drama in regarding the dominant scientific and exegetical practice in his days, comparative grammar, which was modeled by Saussure (Benveniste, 2006) when he was very young. As we read in Benveniste's own formulation, it is possible to identify a certain hesitation

³⁶ BENVENISTE, Émile. Saussure After Half a Century. In: BENVENISTE, Émile. *Problems in General Linguistics*. Translated by Mary Elizabeth Meek. Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971. pp. 29-40.

³⁷ See, for example, the texts "The Nature of Pronouns" (PGL, 1956, see footnote 8), "The Levels of Linguistic Analysis" (PGL, 1964, see footnote 8), "Form and Meaning in Language" (PGL2, 1966), "Structure of Language and Structure of Society" (PGL2, 1968), "Semiology of Language" (PGL, 1969, see footnote 30) and "The Formal Apparatus of Enunciation" (PGL2, 1970).

³⁸ For reference, see footnote 30.

³⁹ We highlight the analysis carried out by Eduardo Guimarães (2018), in which he shows that the semiotic-semantic distinction, although formulated in 1969, had already appeared in germinal state in Benveniste's theorization since, at least, 1939, the year when Benveniste published "The Nature of the Linguistic Sign" (PGL1, 1939).

⁴⁰ For reference, see footnote 30.

in Saussure's thought regarding the publication of the foundations of his linguistic theory within the comparative framework.

Saussure alienated himself from his period in the same proportion as he made himself more and more master of his own truth, for that truth made him reject everything that was then taught on the subject of language. *But, while he was hesitating to undertake that radical revision which he felt was necessary, he could not bring himself to publish the slightest note if he was not assured first of the fundamental bases of the theory* (Benveniste, 1971, p. 33; emphasis added).⁴¹

Saussure is described as a comparatist dissatisfied with the fact that comparative grammar operated from excessively logical concerns, lacking a linguistic theoretical foundation. Still, in the words of Benveniste (1971),

linguists were then absorbed in a huge effort of historical investigation, in organizing the comparative materials, and in building up stocks of etymologies. *These great undertakings, [...] did not leave room for theoretical concerns. Thus, Saussure was alone with his problems.* The immensity of the task to be accomplished and the radical character of the necessary reform were enough to make him hesitate and sometimes become discouraged. Nevertheless, he did not give it up. He contemplated a book in which he would say these things, in which he would present his views and undertake the complete overhauling of the theory. [...] *The book was never written, but it survives in rough sketches, in the form of preparatory notes, remarks tossed out rapidly, and drafts;* and when he had to give a course in general linguistics in order to fulfill his obligations to the university, he would take up the same themes and bring them to the point at which we know them (Benveniste, 1971, pp. 34-35; emphasis added).⁴²

According to Benvenistian thought, although Saussure was dissatisfied, he would have never completely broken with his comparative position/affiliation. This non-breakaway is indicated by the fact that Saussure left only “sketches, preparatory notes, quickly thrown observations, drafts,” as described in the above-mentioned excerpt. And such non-separation is also indicated, as Benveniste points out, in the way Saussure theorizes the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign. The way how Saussure approaches this

⁴¹ For reference, see footnote 36.

⁴² For reference, see footnote 36.

property is described, in “The Nature of the Linguistic Sign” (Benveniste, 1971),⁴³ as an anomaly in Saussure’s reasoning justified by the overlap of his comparative position/affiliation:

[...] There is thus a contradiction between the way in which Saussure defined the linguistic sign and the fundamental nature which he attributed to it.

Such an anomaly in Saussure’s close reasoning does not seem to me to be imputable to a relaxation of his critical attention. *I would see instead a distinctive trait of the historical and relativist thought of the end of the nineteenth century, an inclination often met with in the philosophical reflection of comparative thought. [...] The Saussurian concept is in some measure dependent on this system of thought [...]* (Benveniste, 1971, p. 44; emphasis added).⁴⁴

For Benveniste, as we have read, Saussure rejected the frameworks and notions in force at the time because to him they would seem strange to the nature of the language itself (Benveniste, 1971), which justified Saussure’s great concern to enlighten to the linguist what his/her task should be: to explain the fundamentals of linguistics. According to Benveniste, Saussure

[...] *He wished to make people understand the error in which linguistics had been engaged from the time it began the study of human speech as a thing, or as a living organism or as a matter to be analyzed by an instrumental technique, or again, as a free and incessant creation of the human imagination. One must get back to the fundamentals and discover that object which is language, to which nothing can be compared* (Benveniste, 1971, p. 35; emphasis added).⁴⁵

Based on this report by Benveniste, we can understand that the (dis)encounter with Saussurian thought is marked by the interpretation that reinstates to this thought “hesitation,” “dissatisfaction,” “incompleteness,” “rejection,” “revision,” “desire of rupture,” “reform,” “dream,” “theoretical recasting,” “contradiction,” “reflection.” This affiliation with Saussurian thought does not occur, therefore, outside of a relationship of interpretation of the socio-historical and political-ideological process of how such thought

⁴³ For reference, see footnote 4.

⁴⁴ For reference, see footnote 4.

⁴⁵ For reference, see footnote 36.

was produced. We can understand Benveniste's thought to this extent, by metaphorizing the process through which Saussure's thought is established. This metaphorization, in multiple directions of meaning, operates as the basis of this gapped dialogue between Benvenistian and Saussurian thoughts.

We can also understand that, from Benveniste's point of view, it was Saussure who established the foundations of European linguistics, in particular, by making the founding proposition according to which language is a system of linguistic signs, and the terms therein only know the pure difference. From our point of view, Benveniste also mismatches this fundament: the interpellation by the Saussurean concept of language produces, as an effect, a discursive latitude, that is, a discursive-argumentative re-dimensioning in relation to the interpretation of Saussurian thought. As an effect of this latitude, Benveniste's thought inscribes the argument according to which language could not be thought only from the point of view of the linguistic system, but also from the point of view of its use within social life.⁴⁶

In other words, Benveniste's thought is crossed by Saussure's concept of language; however, there are gaps in this affiliation, that is, in the dialogue between Benvenistian thought and Saussurian thought there is a constitutive divergence between the conceptual formulation (Saussurian, in this case) and its possible interpretations, among which the one that is present in the *PGLs*. This divergence is based on and by the constitutive communication/non-communication of the theoretical dialogue and it determines the way in which Saussurian thought is interpreted in the *PGLs*.

When compared with Benveniste's concept of "semiotic domain," that is, mastery of everything that concerns the interior and use of language (Benveniste, 2006), Saussure's own concept of language undergoes a certain displacement. This displacement is configured by the fact that the "semiotic" concept is meant as the basis of the process of theorizing language, in its double functioning, within social life, in opposition to what Saussurian thought advocates, which places structure and functioning of language at the center – and not at the base – of its theorizing process. Benveniste explains that

⁴⁶ Although this issue is presented in the CGL as a projection of Semiology, as the "*science that studies the life of signs within society*" (Saussure, 1959, p. 16; author's emphasis), in Benveniste it is implemented, constituting his look at linguistic problems stemming from the relationship between language, signification and man. For reference, see footnote 8.

Consequently, we must admit that *language comprises two separate domains*, each of which requires its own conceptual apparatus. *For the one which we call semiotics, Saussure's theory of the linguistic sign will serve as a basis for research. The semantic domain, on the other hand, should be recognized as separate. It will require a new conceptual and definitional apparatus* (Benveniste, 1981, p. 20; emphasis added).⁴⁷

This displacement functions as a discursive latitude, from which the concept of language begins to appear in another theoretical entanglement, necessarily comprising two domains that function inseparably, since signification is understood by Benveniste as the foundation of language. Signification assumes centrality in Benveniste's reflection on the relationship between language, signification and man, in which language appears as a basis. Thus, a gap in Saussure's affiliation is uncovered, and it opens Benveniste's theorization to other discursive articulations. It is precisely this openness, from our point of view, that gives rise to discourse and semantics as a dimension of significance, in theorizing the use of language within social life.

The effect of these articulations and discursive latitudes projects on the landscape of theorization about language, in *PGLs*, the articulation with the notions of "practice" and "action" which start to characterize language in a specific way of meaning when "generated by *discourse*" (Benveniste, 1981, p. 19; author's emphasis).⁴⁸ In other words, the language engendered by discourse exposes language in practice and in action, that is, the use of language within social life. This means exposing language to a specific semantic functioning, which organizes – makes meaningful – all human life:

The notion of semantics introduces to us the domain of the language in practice and action; this time we see in language its mediating function between man and man, between man and the world, between the spirit and the things, transmitting information, communicating the experience, imposing adhesion, claiming replies, begging, embarrassing; in sum, organizing men's lives as a whole. It is language as an instrument of description and reasoning. Only the semantic functioning of the language allows society's integration and adequacy to the world, and, as a consequence, the normalization of thinking and

⁴⁷ For reference, see footnote 30.

⁴⁸ For reference, see footnote 30.

development of consciousness (Benveniste, 2006, p. 229; emphasis added, free translation).⁴⁹

This formulation of Benvenistian thought displays the concern with the relationship between the functioning of language and human social life and, therefore, it indicates a movement of displacement/detachment in the process of affiliation with Saussurian thought. And, from our point of view, it avoids the consideration of Benvenistian thought in a relationship of mere theoretical reproduction – or reception, continuation, inheritance, application, transmission – of Saussurian thought.

Based on what has already been presented, we can say that the nature of the dialogue between Benvenistian thought and Saussurian thought does not have a precursory nature because the relationship between these authors does not lie in a chronological relationship (of announcement, prefiguration, anticipation, origin, etc. of the Benvenistian thought), but rather in a historical work of signification of meaning relations of that allow Benveniste to miss/encounter Saussure in different formulations/theorizations. Nor does Benvenistian thought overcome or surpass Saussurian thought, because the production conditions of these thoughts do not coincide. Before our eyes, history poses Benveniste as a reader of – in dialogue with – Saussure.

From our point of view, this reading, by showing how these two authors happen to miss and to encounter each other, allows the interpretation of Benveniste's thought, in his relationship of affiliation with Saussurean thought, as a theoretical revolution in the way of conceiving language, which highlights its necessary relationship with signification. This revolution is indicated by the displacement of the point of view that creates the theoretical object, thus establishing another object. This displacement focuses on the question of signification. That is the issue from which Benveniste starts to move the sign from the system to the discourse, that is, to the language in practice, in use, in action.

⁴⁹ This text in English was not available to us: “*A noção de semântica nos introduz no domínio da língua em emprego e em ação; vemos desta vez na língua sua função mediadora entre o homem e o homem, entre o homem e o mundo, entre o espírito e as coisas, transmitindo a informação, comunicando a experiência, impondo a adesão, suscitando a resposta, implorando, constrangendo; em resumo, organizando toda a vida dos homens. É a língua como instrumento da descrição e do raciocínio. Somente o funcionamento semântico da língua permite a integração da sociedade e a adequação ao mundo, e por consequência a normalização do pensamento e o desenvolvimento da consciência.*”

This revolution that can be read in the theorization of *PGLs* places Benveniste at a point of view different from that of the Saussurian thought current in the *CGL*. Benveniste presents himself from the point of view of signification, and, from this point of view, he establishes that the foundation of language is signification itself. This point of view guides Benveniste to create a double theoretical object: the language-system, which corresponds to the semiotic domain, and the language-discourse,⁵⁰ which corresponds to the semantic domain. This point of view can be recognized when Benveniste states that meaning is at the center of language, as we can read in:

At this point the problem that haunts all of modern linguistics arises: the relationship between form and meaning. Many linguists would like to reduce it to the notion of form alone but somehow they cannot succeed in freeing themselves of the correlative, meaning. What has not been attempted in order to avoid, ignore, or expel *meaning*? It has been useless: *this Medusa's head is always there at the center of language, fascinating those who contemplate it* (Benveniste, 1971, pp. 106-107; emphasis added).⁵¹

We insist on the understanding of Benveniste's point of view recognizing that "language is informed with meaning, which gives it its structure, and that that condition is essential to the functioning of language among other systems of signs" (Benveniste, 1971, p. 11).⁵² And he also recognizes language as "a structure informed with signification" (Benveniste, 1971, p. 64).⁵³ This is the perspective from which we can understand that the semiotic and semantic domains work, inseparably, together. This double functioning of language, in turn, corresponds to the semiology of language itself, in Benvenistian thought: it is the study of language within social life (differently from the study of language in itself and by itself, as established in the *CGL*). This theoretical

⁵⁰ In *PGLs*, the term language-discourse appears (Benveniste, 2006, p. 233), but not the term language-system. However, Benveniste advocates the dual functioning of language as semiotic and semantic. In semiotics, the Saussurian concept of language is at its base, therefore making it possible to refer, by analogy, to the term language-system in relation to language-discourse.

⁵¹ BENVENISTE, Émile. The Levels of Linguistic Analysis. In: BENVENISTE, Émile. *Problems in General Linguistics*. Translated by Mary Elizabeth Meek. Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971. pp. 101-111.

⁵² For reference, see footnote 6.

⁵³ BENVENISTE, Émile. Categories of Thought and Language. In: BENVENISTE, Émile. *Problems in General Linguistics*. Translated by Mary Elizabeth Meek. Coral Gables, Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971. pp. 55-64.

foundation is readable in different formulations throughout the *PGLs*, among which, in the following paraphrase:

The semiology of language has been obstructed, paradoxically, by the same instrument which created it, the sign. We cannot brush aside the idea of the linguistic sign without omitting the most important characteristic of language; nor can we extend it to discourse as a whole without contradicting its definition as a minimal unit.

In conclusion, *we must go beyond Saussure's concern for the sign as a unique principle, on which depend both the structure and the function of language.*

This transcendence is achieved through two channels: *in intralinguistic analysis, through the opening of a new dimension of meaning, that of discourse (which we call semantic), henceforth distinct from that which is connected to the sign (which we call semiotic); and in the translinguistic analysis of texts and other manifestations through the elaboration of a metasemantics founded on the semantics of enunciation.*

The instruments and methodology of this 'second generation' semiology shall in turn contribute to the development of other branches of general semiology (Benveniste, 1981, p. 21; emphasis added).⁵⁴

In this quote, Benveniste points out that the sign, taken as a single principle, is not sufficient to understand how language is used within social life. In this place, language is used to mediate significances, which goes beyond the semiotic domain. Therefore, Benveniste also points out to the need for a translinguistic analysis, on materials in which the sign appears already shaped by signification.

The linguistic status of the sign in these materials is different: it does not only function as a pure difference, but also as a support for the (re)producible meaning in and by the process of signification that the sentence, understood in Benvenistian thought as a unity of language-discourse,⁵⁵ carries out. In these materials, through which the sign circulates within social life, the sign also signifies the relationships that organize the entire lives of men.

This program, consisting of intralinguistic analysis and translinguistic analysis, has such design in the practice of the linguists who want to dedicate themselves to understanding how language conveys meaning within social life. This is the program that

⁵⁴ For reference, see footnote 30.

⁵⁵ Check the understanding of a sentence as a unit of discourse in "The Levels of Linguistic Analysis" (Benveniste, 1971, p. 101. For reference, see footnote 51).

is designated, in Benveniste's thought, as second-generation semiology, distinguished from the former one, which was dedicated to the analysis of the sign within the linguistic system.

In view of the above, considering that semiotics is the basis for semiological research, which takes signification as its point of view, and considering that Benveniste conceives language as a double object, he does not attribute to Saussurian thought the status of "beginning" [of language semiology], but of foundation (in the sense, for example, of "base"): foundation that can both generate possible theorizations and open projections in the field of science.

[...] *Saussure, he is not a start, he is something else, or another kind of start. His contribution consists in this: "Human speech, he states, is form, not substance." There is nothing like substance in human speech. All sciences of nature find their constituted object. Linguistics, and that is what makes it different from any other scientific discipline, focuses on something that is not an object, it is not substance, but it is rather form. If there is nothing substantial in human speech, what is there in it? Human speech data do not exist out of their differences, they do not have any value without their oppositions. One can contemplate a stone in itself, classifying it in the series of minerals. Otherwise, a word, in itself, means absolutely nothing. It does not have any existence out of opposition, vicinity or difference in relation to another one, a sound in relation to another sound, and so forth. (Benveniste, 2006, p. 31; emphasis added, free translation).*⁵⁶

Therefore, Saussure is presented as the author of a foundation, because the sign, within social life, will have values related to discourse, language in use and in action, in such a way that there is not just one sign that distinguishes itself from the other signs of the linguistic system for being what others are not, but for accomplishing or constituting a sentence and, thus, becoming a unit of discourse, evoking different possible meanings. As we demonstrated in another text (Rodrigues; Agustini, 2021a), the word "silence,"

⁵⁶ This text in English was not available to us: "[...] *Saussure, ele não é um começo, ele é outra coisa, ou é um outro tipo de começo. Sua contribuição consiste nisto: 'A linguagem, diz ele, é forma, não substância'. Não há nada de substancial na linguagem. Todas as ciências da natureza encontram seu objeto constituído. A linguística, e é isto que a diferencia de qualquer outra disciplina científica, se ocupa de algo que não é objeto, não é substância, mas que é forma. Se não há nada de substancial na linguagem, o que há? Os dados da linguagem não existem senão por suas diferenças, eles não valem senão por suas oposições. Pode-se contemplar uma pedra em si, localizando-a na série dos minerais. Enquanto que uma palavra, por si mesma, não significa absolutamente nada. Ela não é senão por oposição, por vizinhança ou por diferenciação em relação a um outro, um som em relação a um outro som, e assim por diante.*"

posted on a board on a hospital wall does not only constitutes a linguistic sign, but it also constitutes a sentence.

As a sentence, it conveys the meaning as, for example, “the relationships between the word ‘silence’ and the institution, the subjects therein, as well as the possible discourses that can be evoked thereby. The meaning, therefore, is not in the word or in the sentence out of discourse, but in the discursive relations that they establish in a specific use in the instance of discourse” (Rodrigues; Agustini, 2021, p. 3).⁵⁷ Some of these relationships can induce, as a meaning effect, “a request whose syntactic form could be ‘please be silent (while you are here in the hospital)’” (Rodrigues; Agustini, 2021, p. 3).⁵⁸

This same sign, “silence,” current in other referential coordinates of the enunciation, that is, carried out in another instance of discourse, could evoke other relationships, therefore, other meanings. For example, the sentence “The continual breathing of the world is what we hear and call silence.”⁵⁹ does not evoke a request for silence. This is how the sign, pure difference because it is form, according to Benvenistian thought, is shaped by signification in and through discourse and gains the status of word/sentence. In Benveniste’s thought, “the word can thus be defined as the smallest free unit of meaning susceptible of effecting a sentence, and of being itself effected by phonemes” (Benveniste, 1971, p. 105).⁶⁰

If we follow the reasoning described by Benvenistian thought, considering the sign as a unit of the system, the word as a free significant unit capable of making up a sentence, and the sentence as a unit of discourse, we can understand them, from the point of view of Benvenistian thought, as guiding principles of the linguist’s work within of the semiology of language. In other words, Benveniste’s thought borrows from Saussure’s thought the foundation that the sign is form, pure difference, therefore “empty.” Because it is empty, according to Benvenistian thought, the sign must be inserted in discourse in

⁵⁷ This text in English was not available to us: “as relações entre a palavra ‘silêncio’ e a instituição, os sujeitos ali presentes, assim como os discursos possíveis de ali serem convocados. O sentido, portanto, não está na palavra ou na frase fora do discurso, mas nas relações discursivas que elas contraem em um emprego específico na instância de discurso.”

⁵⁸ This text in English was not available to us: “uma solicitação cuja forma sintática poderia ser ‘por favor, faça silêncio (no tempo em que estiver aqui no hospital).’”

⁵⁹ LISPECTOR, Clarice. *The Passion According to G. H.* Translated by Idra Novey. New York: New Directions, 2012.

⁶⁰ For reference, see footnote 51.

order to signify. At the same time, paradoxically, nothing exists in language without having first passed through discourse (Benveniste, 1971),⁶¹ that is, “It is in discourse, realized in sentences, that language [langue] is formed and takes shape” (Benveniste, 1971, p. 111).⁶² We can assume from this reasoning that the language-discourse domain, that is, the semantic domain, is the place where the (re)production of meaning processes becomes possible, having the semiotic domain as their basis.

Grounded on this argument we can say that Benveniste did not surpass Saussurian thought because Benvenistian thought cannot be reduced to the mere continuation of Saussurian thought. We can state that Benveniste produced another theorization by presenting the foundation of language by means of the proposition of other principles, such as the concept of word and sentence, articulated with the principle of language as a system. It is worth highlighting that these other principles were forged, in the process of Benvenistian theorization, in relation to the semantic domain of the functioning of the language.

Final Considerations

With the analysis presented in this work, we attempted to discuss and understand how the affiliation of Benvenistian thought to Saussurean thought was inscribed. The analysis showed Saussurian thought and Benvenistian thought in dispute in the historical-political-ideological game that constitutes the field of language studies. This game is materialized when we bring into dialogue, for example, the *PGLs* and the *CGL*.

In this game, both contribute for the signification of the foundation of language. Each one in his own way, by inscribing himself in the history of ideas that delimits the aforementioned field, produces a change in the conceptual networks, methods and points of view that constitute the theoretical object and the scientific and exegetical practices possible to operate with it. From this perspective, it is worth remarking the lesson by Herbert (Pêcheux) (1995), for whom all science

⁶¹ For reference, see footnote 7.

⁶² For reference, see footnote 51.

[...] whatever its current level of development and its place in the theoretical structure happens to be – it is produced by means of a conceptual mutation within a conceptual ideological field in relation to which it stands at a distance that can provide it, at a simple movement, with the knowledge of previous wanderings and the guarantee of its own scientific nature. Thus, every science is initially a science of the ideology from which it derives (Herbert-Pêcheux, 1995, pp. 63-64; emphasis added, free translation).⁶³

Following this reasoning, the analysis allowed us to understand the relationship between Benvenistian thought and Saussurian thought as characteristic of the order of affiliation, herein considered discursively, that is, as a dialogue in which the relationship between repetition and difference is present, precisely because the production of metaphorical effects operates on the basis of this dialogue, such as the formulation of the language-discourse concept, in a relationship with the Saussurian concept of language. In this process of affiliation, Benvenistian thought reinterprets Saussurian thought, in such a way as to produce, as an effect, a mutation of its foundation, language. This mutation is based on a discursive shift: the functioning of language in and by itself (Saussure) is replaced, metaphorically, by the double functioning of language (Benveniste). And this work of interpretation takes place within the network of meanings that *CGL* establishes as synchronic linguistics.

Inspired by Herbert (Pêcheux)'s quote (1995), we understand that Benveniste's thought does not break away from Saussure's synchronic linguistics, but projects and carries out another, different synchronic linguistics, delimited by the point of view of signification, of the (re)production of meaning. Benvenistian thought, thus, moves away from the point of view of language taken in and by itself, covering it with another scientific status by dividing language into a double piece: language-system and language-discourse.

However, we could identify, in analysis, how Benvenistian thought *testifies in dialogue* to the wanderings of the Saussurian thought: it dialogues with Saussurian thought to the point of detaching itself from Saussure's thought and starting *to make other*

⁶³ This text in English was not available to us: “[...] qualquer que seja seu nível atual de desenvolvimento e seu lugar na estrutura teórica – é produzida por um trabalho de mutação conceptual no interior de um campo conceptual ideológico em relação ao qual ela toma uma distância que lhe dá, num só movimento, o conhecimento das errâncias anteriores e a garantia de sua própria cientificidade. Nesse sentido, toda ciência é inicialmente ciência da ideologia da qual ela se destaca.”

meanings in the intellectual memory. In this shift of meanings, research about the functioning of language within social life prevails. In other words, it a semiological project prevails. Such semiological project admits that language, within social life, in practice and in action, used by speakers, is already shaped by signification in and through the dimension of discourse, that is, language in practice to grant life.

From the point of view of Benvenistian thought, language taken in and by itself – namely, the Saussurian linguistic sign – blocks the semiology of language (Benveniste, 2006). However, Saussurian thought is recognized, in the Benveniste-Saussure dialogue, as the place, the basis of foundations. This recognition inscribes Benvenistian thought in the scientific ideology from which it stands out, although it is the scientific ideology that sustains it, that stands as its basis (language is form and constitutes a system of pure difference).

In light of what has been discussed, we can understand that, in the dialogue between Benveniste and Saussure, more specifically, between the *PGLs* and the *CGL*, it is the issue of signification that determines how the affiliation of Benvenistian thought with Saussurian thought takes place. This event is indicated precisely by the shift in the foundation of linguistic research from language-system to signification.

Carrying out this analysis also allowed us to broaden the work horizons in the history of linguistic ideas because of the production of a more accurate understanding of the concept of affiliation and its effects for the analysis on how (other) authors can relate to each other *in the dispute of the history of science games*. Following this line of ideas, we also understand that the instance of speaking about precursorship, continuation, application, overcoming, belongs to the order of the effect of interpretation on the dialogue that a relationship of affiliation brings to dispute. Therefore, reducing the affiliation relationship to these effects implies reducing both the semantic density as well as the particularities and nuances of such dialogue.

As it has been demonstrated, this dialogue is constitutive of a relationship of intellectual affiliation; and it always takes place in one way or another, marked or unmarked, because it is impossible to produce knowledge in the area of language studies without being related to the horizon of retrospection and projection (Auroux, 2009), that is, without reporting to/ without establishing a dialogue with knowledge already produced

and without projecting a possible future. Taking the concept of affiliation to deal with these ways of dialoguing with knowledge, in our view, sounds consistent with what Sylvain Auroux (2009) states:

[...] the act of knowing holds, by definition, a temporal density, a *horizon of retrospection* [] as well as a *horizon of projection*. Knowing (instances that move to work) does not destroy its past as it is often mistakenly assumed; it organizes, forgets, imagines or idealizes it the same way as it anticipates its future by dreaming while constructing it. *Without memory and without project, there simply is no knowledge* (Auroux, 2009, p. 12; emphasis added).⁶⁴

From this perspective, thinking about the relationship between authorship, in the process of knowledge production based on the concept of affiliation in the terms explained here puts into perspective the movement that constitutes the scientist's own perspective, as well as the horizon of science. The concept of affiliation discussed in this article allows us to understand the paradoxical relationship that constitutes the process of knowledge production, especially regarding the way in which theories can relate and dialogue, in particular, within language studies.

This paradoxical relationship concerns the way this relationship between theorizations, in the inseparable movement between retrospection and projection, simultaneously admits both gestures of approximation and gestures of displacement/detachment. From this relationship, for example, the possibility of theoretical thinking, as an effect of interpretation, is open to *organizing, forgetting, imagining, idealizing, overcoming, continuing, applying...* another theoretical thought, as it happens, for example, in the affiliation relationship of the Benvenistian thought with Saussurian thought in the different readings that circulate in our society.

To conclude, we consider that the explanation defended here, which articulates the concept of affiliation with the dialogue movement, in terms of a paradoxical relationship, as we have demonstrated from the relationship of affiliation between

⁶⁴ This text in English was not available to us: “[...] o ato de saber possui, por definição, uma espessura temporal, *um horizonte de retrospectão* [...] *assim como um horizonte de projeção*. O saber (as instâncias que fazem trabalhar) não destrói seu passado como se crê erroneamente com frequência; ele o organiza, o esquece, o imagina ou o idealiza, do mesmo modo que antecipa seu futuro sonhando-o enquanto o constrói. *Sem memória e sem projeto, simplesmente, não há saber.*”

Benvenistian thought and Saussurian thought, can impact the formation of linguists, since it reorients the questioning from “*does a theory x have a dialogue with another theory y;? is it affiliated with another theory y*”? to how “*does a theory x have a dialogue with another theory y*”;? how “*is it affiliated with another theory y,?*” or from “*does a concept x have a dialogue with another concept y, is it affiliated with another concept y*”? to how “*does a concept x have a dialogue with another concept y;*”? how “*is it affiliated with another concept y.*”?

For example, from this perspective, no one questions whether or not generative theory dialogues, whether or not it is affiliated with structuralist theory. Nevertheless, one wonders how this dialogue, this affiliation, takes place. This redirection changes the point of view on scientific and exegetical production, which starts to be worked from a relational point of view. From this point of view, the construction of ideas, within the process of producing knowledge about human speech and about language, in their functioning, is a socio-historical and political-ideological process of dialogue between significant positions *in the (metaphorical) debate of history of science games*. From this point of view, we can conclude that knowledge does not arise from “discoveries,” but rather from this dialogical process that inscribes the process of knowledge production in a memory of affiliation networks.

As a result of the analysis presented, we conclude that taking affiliation as a process of constitutive dialogue between theorizations (im)poses that the Benveniste-Saussure relationship be perceived-accepted-experienced (Pêcheux, 1982) as “a never-ending relationship,” since this dialogue-relationship remains open to interpretation, to metaphor, to the symbolic, to the socio-historical and political-ideological game that constitutes the process of (re)production of language studies.

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Statement Author's Contribution

The authors Eduardo Alves Rodrigues and Cármen Agustini state that they are responsible for this manuscript, equally contributing to aspects related to the conception, design, analysis and interpretation of the facts and linguistic-discursive and theoretical-methodological functioning necessary for the treatment of the object/issue studied; they are also responsible for the writing and critical review of intellectual content; for the final approval of the published text. Finally, the authors state that they are responsible for all aspects of this work, assuring the accuracy and integrity of any part of it.

Reviews

Due to the commitment assumed by *Bakhtiniana*, Revista de Estudos do Discurso [*Bakhtiniana*. Journal of Discourse Studies] to Open Science, this journal only publishes reviews that have been authorized by all involved.

Review II

The proposal brings a unique thought on the question of whether or not Benveniste is a follower of Saussure. The way the theoretical apparatus is articulated is rich in relevant reflections, directing the reader, in a coherent and clear way, to the author's reasoning. The text developed offers a new perspective on the notion of "affiliation" to the field of knowledge, favoring the perception of Benvenistian and Saussurian thoughts from the perspective of the history of linguistic ideas. The bibliography referred to in the article is relevant and updated. I congratulate the author for an excellent reflection that can, indeed, impact the linguists' education. APPROVED

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Review III

The article presents an in-depth study of the relationship between Saussure's thought and Benveniste's thought as a way of investigating the status of theoretical "affiliation" between two authors in the scope of scientific practice. For that purpose, it mobilizes the theoretical framework of Discourse Analysis. The theme is relevant and original in the area of linguistics because it highlights the importance of thinking epistemologically about the development of linguistic ideas, both retrospectively and in the linguist's current work. Bearing this in mind, as well as the inexistence of errors or points that require reformulation, my opinion is APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION.

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