

**Saussure, Benveniste, Bakhtin: About an Event – An Interview with Professor Eduardo Guimarães / *Saussure, Benveniste, Bakhtin: em torno de um acontecimento – entrevista com o Prof. Eduardo Guimarães***

Verli Petri\*  
Heitor Pereira de Lima\*\*

In this interview, we face the challenging task of presenting Professor Eduardo Roberto Junqueira Guimarães.<sup>1</sup> We know that there are many different ways of doing it and all of them show the power of his path in Language Studies. A path that can be recognized by the originality of his academic-scientific research (articles published in journals, book chapters, books, research projects, etc.) together with his fruitful career in teaching and in supervising masters, doctors and post-doctors theses. The excellence of his work in the elaboration and development of institutional scientific policies; in the repercussions of his actions at Anpoll<sup>2</sup> and Abralin<sup>3</sup> combined with his tireless work with research funding agencies such as CAPES – *Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior* [Coordination for Higher Education Staff Development]; CNPq – *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico* [National Council for Scientific and Technological Development] and FAPESP – *Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo* [São Paulo Research Foundation]. The influence of his work at Brazilian Universities<sup>4</sup> specially at the *Universidade Estadual de Campinas* [State University of Campinas] (UNICAMP), in his work as a researcher at the *Instituto de Estudos da Linguagem* [Institute of Language Studies] (IEL) – and at the

---

\* Universidade Federal de Santa Maria – UFSM/DLV, Campus Sede, Santa Maria, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil; <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3132-3438>; [verli.petri72@gmail.com](mailto:verli.petri72@gmail.com)

\*\* Pontifícia Universidade Católica de Minas Gerais – PUC Minas, Programa de Pós-graduação em Letras, Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil; CAPES, Código de Financiamento 001; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3247-4847>; [oiheitorlima@gmail.com](mailto:oiheitorlima@gmail.com)

<sup>1</sup> We deeply thank Renata Ortiz Brandão by the technical translation of the text, and Sheila Elias de Oliveira by the technical revision to the English language.

<sup>2</sup> Between 1996 and 1998, professor Eduardo Guimarães was the president of *Associação Nacional de Pós-graduação e Pesquisa em Letras e Linguística* [National Association of Post-Graduation and Research in Languages and Linguistics] (Anpoll) together with professor Margarida Maria Taddoni Petter.

<sup>3</sup> *Associação Brasileira de Linguística* [Brazilian Association of Linguistics], where he was the advisor.

<sup>4</sup> In addition to his contribution to universities in France and in Argentine.

*Laboratório de Estudos Urbanos* [Urban Studies Laboratory] (LABEURB) where he contributed in a crucial way with the founding of CORPUS<sup>5</sup> Laboratory at the *Universidade Federal de Santa Maria* [Federal University of Santa Maria] (UFSM), to which we are currently affiliated, and at the *Universidade do Estado de Mato Grosso* [State University of Mato Grosso] (UNEMAT), where he is a Visiting Professor.

In fact, we could cite many items from his curriculum<sup>6</sup> available on the Brazilian *Lattes* [Official CV researchers' platform] and we would have pages and pages of registers about his vast production. Considering the difficulty to do that, we give ourselves the right to “choose” to repeat his own words when he says that when working with Semantics “he dedicates himself to the study of designation and names with particular attention to proper names; the study of argumentation; and the characterization of the space of enunciation,”<sup>7</sup> and in the scope of the History of Linguistic Ideas “he has worked with the history of Portuguese studies with the analysis of notions and concepts such as those of civilization, linguistic borrowing and history, with language policy and with the historical analysis of structuralism.”<sup>8</sup>

From our position as materialist discourse analysts who work with the History of Linguistic Ideas and investigate the history of words from a discursive perspective, we recognize that there are many words – and their different meanings – that we could take as “our words,” talking about this Brazilian researcher who is so important for us and for Brazil. However, we know that using the “right” words (or fighting with them) is a vain fight or as Carlos Drummond de Andrade teaches us, in the poem *Lutador* [Fighter], “fighting with words is the vilest battle.”<sup>9</sup> Therefore, we thought it would be prudent to use the words of love for *Minas*, from this *mineiro* from Itabira (MG) to introduce another *mineiro*, this one from Prata (MG), a city in the interior of *Minas Gerais*.

*Minas is not a mountainous word  
It is an abyssal word*

---

<sup>5</sup> Available at: <https://www.ufsm.br/laboratorios/corpus/informacoes-gerais>. Access on 21 jan. 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Available at: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/8015275228271541>. Access on Jan 20, 2024.

<sup>7</sup> In Portuguese: “dedica-se ao estudo da designação e dos nomes, com atenção particular para os nomes próprios; ao estudo da argumentação; e à caracterização do espaço de enunciação.”

<sup>8</sup> In Portuguese: “tem trabalhado com a história dos estudos do Português, com a análise de noções e conceitos como civilização, empréstimo e história, com a política de línguas e com a análise histórica do estruturalismo.”

<sup>9</sup> Translated directly from the original version in Brazilian Portuguese: “lutar com as palavras é a luta mais vil” (Drummond, 2012, p. 215).

*Minas is within and deep  
Mountains hide what Minas is.  
On the most celestial top, underground,  
It is a vertical gallery, seeping the iron  
to reach no one knows where.  
No one knows Minas. The rock  
the local palm tree  
the scowl  
the fog  
the lightning  
seal the primary truth,  
buried in dreamy geological ages.  
Only people from Minas know.  
And they do not even tell themselves  
the concealed secret  
called Minas.<sup>10</sup>  
(Drummond, 1992)*

To this edition of *Bakhtiniana. Journal of Discourse Studies*, we invited Professor Eduardo Guimarães to tell us about the work of Ferdinand Saussure, Émile Benveniste and Mikhail Bakhtin asking questions concerning language. This way, we understand the dossier organized by professors Valdir do Nascimento Flores and Pierre-Yves Testenoire, as an event which will let us know a little more about the work of the Genevan Master, the Syrian-French Linguist and the Russian Thinker, at the same time that reveals points that theoretically bring them together or hold them apart. It is from the position of a language scientist, interested in enunciation as a political practice of great importance, that our interviewee is willing to consider the questions we propose. Thank you very much professor! Now, taking the floor: Eduardo Guimarães.

## **Interview**

*1) Professor Eduardo, we would like to start our interview suggesting a reflection concerning the notion of language.<sup>11</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, Émile Benveniste and*

---

<sup>10</sup> Translated directly from the original version in Brazilian Portuguese: *Minas não é palavra montanhosa/ É palavra abissal/ Minas é dentro e fundo/ As montanhas escondem o que é Minas./ No alto mais celeste, subterrânea,/ é galeria vertical varando o ferro/ para chegar ninguém sabe onde./ Ninguém sabe Minas./ A pedra/ o buriti/ a carranca/ o nevoeiro/ o raio/ selam a verdade primeira,/ sepultada em eras geológicas de sonho./ Só mineiros sabem./ E não dizem nem a si mesmos/ o irrevelável segredo/ chamado Minas.* (Drummond, 1992, p. 433).

<sup>11</sup> N.T. The notion of *language* which is the object of this question is that of *langue*, the essential part of the *langage* (the human faculty which can also be translated in English as 1language1), as it is proposed in

*Mikhail Bakhtin took this notion as an object of study, which enabled different theoretical approaches that are important to language scholars nowadays. Considering the theoretical position of these researchers, which point (or points) bring them together or place them apart when we choose the notion of language?*

Considering close or different relations among these authors in the History of Language Studies, these relations lead us to a fundamental difference. For Saussure and Benveniste, language (*langue*) is a semiological system of oppositions that Saussure expressly characterizes as social, and Benveniste, when he thinks about the issue in a more theoretical text (*Semiology of Language* or *Sémiologie de la langue*), he characterizes this system as semiotic. For Benveniste, the way of meaning in this semiotic way is distinct from another mode of meaning, the semantic, which he will consider at the enunciation level. In this case, we have an affiliation between Benveniste and Saussure, and Benveniste seeks to introduce something that lacks in Saussure: language (*langue*) functioning. Another difference is that for Saussure language (*langue*) is social and for Benveniste there is a relation between language (*langue*) and society, which he talks about in more than one moment.

Thinking a little more specifically, as I said before, about Saussure and Benveniste we have to consider that both characterize language in a semiological way. This is what leads Saussure to characterize language (*langue*) as a system of oppositions, which is studied in a science (Linguistics) that is part of Semiology. Benveniste then seeks to advance this semiological characterization of language by distinguishing two modes that mean, the semiotic (as a system of oppositions) and the semantic (which is produced by the language (*langue*) functioning in enunciation).

Saussure is not directly present in enunciation research, but if we think that Benveniste takes into account the foundations of linguistic thought, like Saussure, he will maintain the Saussurian position, in this particular case, and seek to find the foundations for the study not only of language (*langue*), but also of its functioning in producing meaning, that is, enunciation.

Regarding Bakhtin, we have to consider that his work is decisively dedicated to the study of literary texts. His studies on the work of Dostoevsky and Rabelais, for

---

the *Cours de Linguistique Générale* signed by Saussure. Every time “language” concerns *langue*, and not *langage*, we will add the French word.

example, are widely known. In these studies, he makes extraordinary analyses on literary functioning, always considering the language issue, the way language works. In this example, he formulates the polyphony concept. He distinguishes literary texts that are polyphonic from literary texts that he considers non-polyphonic ones. What characterizes this mode of enunciation of the literary text (polyphony) is that the characters' speeches are configured without a dominant voice which directs or presents the characters. This does not even occur with the narrator's voice in third-person narratives. It is the case of Dostoevsky's novels, for example. The narrator's voice is just one voice among the others; it is a voice alongside the characters' voices. I will consider the issue of language (*langue*) in the theorizations about language that he makes in the framework of his theory of genres in *Speech genres and other late essays* (M. Bakhtin, 1986 [1979]).<sup>12</sup> In this work, we find a formulation that gives another place to the concept of language (*langue*). When talking about the uses of language, linked to the different "fields of human activity," he tells us, for example, that these uses, whose forms are multiform, "in no way disaffirm the national unity of language" (Bakhtin, 1986 [1979], p. 60).<sup>13</sup> In other words, language (*langue*) is considered as a political relation between people, nation and language (*langue*). In another point of his considerations, he says: "Moreover, a study of the utterance as a *real unit of speech communion* will also make it possible to understand more correctly the *nature of language units* (as a system): words and sentences" (Bakhtin, 1986 [1979], p. 67).<sup>14</sup> In other words, language (*langue*) is a system of words and sentences. Even though the notion of system here does not have Saussure's characterization, the question on the systematicity of elements such as words and sentences arises.

2) In chapter 3, "Saussure after half a century," published in the work *Problems in General Linguistics* (1971 [1966]),<sup>15</sup> Benveniste stated that "Saussure was first and always a man of fundamentals. He went instinctively to the most basic characteristics which govern the diversity of the empirical datum. In the sphere of language, he suspected the existence of certain qualities which were not met with anywhere else" (Benveniste,

---

<sup>12</sup> BAKHTIN, Mikhail [1979]. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*. Translated by Vern W. McGee. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986.

<sup>13</sup> See footnote 12.

<sup>14</sup> See footnote 12.

<sup>15</sup> BENVENISTE, Émile [1966]. *Problems in General Linguistics*. Translated by Mary Elizabeth Meek. Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971.

1971 [1966], pp. 29-30).<sup>16</sup> Saussurian studies were important for Émile Benveniste's theoretical construction. Based on current Brazilian academic-scientific production, how do you interpret the presence (or absence) of Saussure in research in the field of Enunciation?

Strictly speaking, the presence in enunciation studies belongs to Benveniste. The presence of Saussure is because, according to Benveniste, enunciation is language (*langue*) functioning, as a system of oppositions (which he brings from Saussurian thought). Saussure opposes language (*langue*), the object of Linguistics, to speech, an individual act, and it is not considered in the descriptions of language.

On the other hand, it is observed that enunciation studies are developed in other domains of language sciences such as, for example, Discourse Analysis, on the one hand, and Pragmatics, on the other. In the case of Discourse Analysis, enunciation is fundamentally affected by production conditions and ideology. In the case of Pragmatics, the meaning of enunciation is linked to the notion of meaning as intention and then the notion of enunciation is the act of saying this intention.

In fact, what we see, in the studies on the field of enunciation, is a conception of enunciation formulated in line with Benveniste, which coexists with other conceptualizations from other theoretical fields. In addition to those, I have mentioned above, are the positions formulated by the Bakhtin Circle.

Therefore, analyzing the issue in relation to Saussure, Benveniste and Bakhtin, I consider that there is a notion, a concept of enunciation that is presented in Benveniste and Bakhtin; however, in different ways.

Benveniste, seriously considering Saussure's foundations, will dedicate himself to establish the principles of enunciation based on the Saussurean foundations that constituted Linguistics (as Semiology) as a language science. Thus, he defines enunciation as putting language into operation by a speaker. In Benveniste, enunciation is the speaker's appropriation of language, when the speaker makes it work. Therefore, enunciation is to make a language work producing meaning, producing what Benveniste calls the semantic mode of meaning.

Bakhtin's position is different from this. For him, enunciation is the production of statements in discursive communication. On the one hand, enunciation is defined as the

---

<sup>16</sup> See footnote 12.

action of saying as communication; on the other hand, enunciation is defined as what begins when someone starts to say and ends when they stop and someone else starts to say. Enunciation is defined as “a real unity of speech communication” (Bakhtin, 1986 [1979], p. 67).<sup>17</sup> He characterizes enunciation this way: “The boundaries of each concrete utterance as a unit of speech communication are determined by a *change of speaking subjects*, that is, a change of speakers” (Bakhtin, 1986 [1979], p. 71).<sup>18</sup> He also says after: “Any utterance (...) has, so to speak, no absolute beginning and no absolute end: its beginning is preceded by the utterances of others, and its end is followed by the responsive utterances of others” (Bakhtin, 1986 [1979], p. 71).<sup>19</sup>

These are not questions for Saussure. He was dedicated to deal with language (*langue*) producing a linguistic concept of the sign that will lead to the definition of language (*langue*) as a system of signs. What is on the plan of saying is speech, which is not part of the object because it is individual. This way, Saussure lays the foundations for a non-historical Linguistics (moving away from the 19th-century Linguistics) and raises the issue of language (*langue*) characterized by its semiological character, by the fact that it means. He places Linguistics in the scenario of scientific subjects, in the domain of sciences.

Benveniste, for his part, will take these fundamentals and, when reflecting on them, he will carry out analyses that bring enunciation to the scene (see his articles in the section “Man and Language,” for example, collected in *Problems in General Linguistics* (Benveniste, 1971 [1966])).<sup>20</sup> He will study the enunciation that is inscribed in the language (*langue*) system and as the act of making language work. In other words, Saussure’s questions appear transfigured by the notion of an enunciation that for Benveniste is also an object of Linguistics.

3) “*Language and society cannot be conceived without each other*” (Benveniste, 1971 [1966], p. 26).<sup>21</sup> *Through this statement by Benveniste, present in Problems in General Linguistics, how do you understand the combination of language and society in Saussure’s and Bakhtin’s production?*

---

<sup>17</sup> See footnote 12.

<sup>18</sup> See footnote 12.

<sup>19</sup> See footnote 12.

<sup>20</sup> See footnote 15.

<sup>21</sup> See footnote 15.

Benveniste says in the paragraph before the one where the sentence quoted in the question is found: “Beyond the biological sphere, the capacity for symbolizing is the most characteristic of the human being” (Benveniste, 1971 [1966], p. 26).<sup>22</sup> The relationship between one person and another and between a human being and the world is not natural. The symbolic character of language is what makes this “possible.” Benveniste, for his part, reminds us that what characterizes language is its semiological character. It is not a relationship with things, neither a relation with thought. These are relationships that can be made because of the fundamental characteristic of language, for both, its symbolic character. The language (*langue*) system is a symbolic system.

In other words, there is society if there is language and if there is society, it is because there is language. This is one of the elements providing the basis for Saussure’s entire reflection. This way, sign systems are social and they make possible the relationship among human beings and with the world, with things, in society.

Bakhtin builds his thought being opposed to the ones that, according to him, do not consider communication and to do so he cites Humboldt and Vossler (see Bakhtin, 1986 [1979], p. 67).<sup>23</sup> According to him, the positionings of these two authors “underestimate, if not altogether ignore, the communicative function of language” (Bakhtin, 1986 [1979], p. 67)<sup>24</sup> since language is then considered only from the speaker’s point of view. Considering this, he opposes the consideration that the person being spoken to has in the communication an “active, responsive attitude toward it. He either agrees or disagrees with it (completely or partially), augments it, applies it, prepares for its execution, and so on” (Bakhtin, 1986 [1979], p. 68).<sup>25</sup>

In a more specific way, Bakhtin states: “And the listener adopts this responsive attitude for the entire duration of the process of listening and understanding, from the very beginning (...). Any understanding of live speech, a live utterance, is inherently responsive (...). Any understanding is imbued with response (...): the listener becomes the speaker” (Bakhtin, 1986 [1979], p. 68).<sup>26</sup> Here is his dialogism, which treats, in its own way, social relations through language.

---

<sup>22</sup> See footnote 15.

<sup>23</sup> See footnote 12.

<sup>24</sup> See footnote 12.

<sup>25</sup> See footnote 12.

<sup>26</sup> See footnote 12.



4) Professor Eduardo, the concept of word has been driving our research interests in recent years. In our works, we take it as a clash between language (*langue*) and discourse based on the theoretical support of the Discourse Analysis and the History of Linguistic Ideas. Considering the notion of word in the studies of Saussure, Benveniste and Bakhtin, could you tell us a little more about the functioning of such notion in these authors?

I start with Benveniste. We can say that there is a notion of word that appears in his production in the Indo-European lexicon. The word as a term in the lexicon of a language (*langue*). Just as an example, we find, at the beginning of chapter 2 of the *Dictionary of Indo-European Concepts and Society*, the following: “The Latin term *verrēs* forms part of a group of words which refer to a particular species of animals, the pig” (Benveniste, 2016 [1969], p. 9).<sup>27</sup> In chapter 3, we find: “the first [term] is an ancient word of the common vocabulary” (Benveniste, 2016 [1969], p. 19).<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, there is Benveniste’s position expressed in “The Levels of Linguistic Analysis,” where he defines the word thinking about the relations at different levels of the enunciation: “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 [1966], p. 105).<sup>29</sup> In addition he says: “In practice, the word is envisaged above all as a syntagmatic element, a constituent of empirical utterances.”

This way we see at least two notions of words operating in Benveniste’s work. In both cases, the question concerning the meaning of these units arises, on one hand due to the relations in the lexicon, on the other due to the relations between the word and the syntagm and enunciation.

Regarding Saussure, the term *word* is used, but it is not a specific notion of theory. For Saussure, what is analyzed is the sign, and his basic work is to characterize the sign to view language (*langue*) as a system of signs. In the work *Course of General Linguistics*, he says something like this: “the written word tends to replace the spoken one in our minds” (Saussure, 1959 [1916], p. 26).<sup>30</sup> Here the term word is not a concept to constitute

---

<sup>27</sup> BENVENISTE, Émile [1969]. *Dictionary of Indo-European Concepts and Society*. Translated by Elizabeth Palmer. Chicago: Hau Books, 2016.

<sup>28</sup> See footnote 27.

<sup>29</sup> See footnote 15.

<sup>30</sup> SAUSSURE, Ferdinand de [1916]. *Course of General Linguistics*. Translated by Wade Baskin. New York: The Philosophical Library, 1959.

a specific theory or analysis, it is a term that refers to these units that, as speakers, we find in what we read or write or in what we speak or hear. The term word also appears in *Writings in General Linguistics* (Saussure's own notes, published in 2006): "[...] IN THE WORD (there is no need to consider the language) *courage*, it is in fact completely indifferent, in French, to pronounce *courir* with *r grasseyé non roulé* or with *r grasseyé roulé* [...]"<sup>31</sup> Word refers here to data that languages (*langues*) give us and that we must theoretically analyze.

In the work *Speech genres and other late essays*, Bakhtin places it as one of the items in your work this statement: "The utterance as a real unit of speech communion: the difference between this unit and units of language (words and sentences)." In the text he states, as I have shown before: "Moreover, a study of the utterance as a *real unit of speech communion* will also make it possible to understand more correctly the *nature of language units* (as a system): words and sentences" (Bakhtin, 1986 [1979], p. 67).<sup>32</sup> Bakhtin distinguishes the utterance as a unit of enunciation, of discursive communication ("speech communion"), as units of language, including words. Therefore, words are units of language (*langue*), as a lexicon and as elements of sentences. They have meaning in relation to the conditions of enunciation. In addition, to this extent, as elements of utterances.

5) In your studies in the areas of *Semantics of Enunciation, History of Linguistic Ideas, and Urban Knowledge and Language*, we come across reflections on the ways of naming and designating, as well as the functioning of the word in different "spaces of enunciation." In this sense, we would like to know a little more about the process of producing linguistic knowledge that you have been developing during your career.

Taking into account what I tried to say in the previous answers, I could say that my position is constructed from Ducrot's position – which was formulated from "Les Échelles Argumentatives,"<sup>33</sup> published in *La preuve et le dire* (Ducrot, 1974),<sup>34</sup> which produces a change in the path of the resumption of rhetoric from the end of the 1950s. He

---

<sup>31</sup> Translated directly from the version published in Brazilian Portuguese: "NA PALAVRA (não é preciso considerar a língua) *courage*, é de fato, completamente indiferente, em francês, pronunciar *courir* com *r grasseyé non roulé* ou com *r grasseyé roulé* [...]" (Saussure, 2004, p. 37).

<sup>32</sup> See footnote 12.

<sup>33</sup> In English, this term could be translated as *argumentative scales*.

<sup>34</sup> DUCROT, Oswald et al. *La preuve et le dire*. Paris: Éditeur Mame, 1974.

will place this not as the resumption of rhetoric, but as the posing of the question of argumentation for Linguistics. Ducrot will not treat the issue of argumentation as the search for convincing the other, but as a meaning, a relation in language (*langue*) that, when enunciated, argues. He does not care about convincing as the aim of the utterance.

This Ducrot's position, considering Benveniste's plan of enunciation, notably what he says in the article "The Semiology of Language" (Benveniste, 1981, [1957]),<sup>35</sup> and together with an intellectual relation with the Discourse Analysis development at Unicamp, led me to a position where I considered the argumentation as the support for an argument-conclusion relation, for example, the meaning of enunciation in a statement. The interesting part is what supports the conclusion regardless of intentions and results.

Parallel to this, I dedicated myself to the study of designation, notably of names. Among other things, this was a way to not reduce language to relations of argumentation in language (*langue*), as in Argumentative Semantics. What is basic here is that the designation of a name means something (designates) in the relation of this word with what is said and this designation makes it possible to refer to objects, events, ideas. In other words, the reference is not what the word means, but what is possible to do with what it means. Besides, this meaning is not something that presents the reference. Words mean and, because they mean, because they designate, because they produce identifications of what exists, because they designate as they designate, and they refer to what is identified.

An important aspect, basic to my position, is that the functioning of languages (*langues*) does not occur through the relation of a self that speaks in a language (*langue*), but through the relation between speakers and languages (*langues*) in what I consider a space of enunciation, where the events of enunciation happen.

Regarding the space of enunciation, it is a space of relations between languages (*langues*) and speakers, in which speakers are not simply the people who speak, but they are represented as speakers by the space of enunciation. More specifically, the space of enunciation is characterized by connecting languages (*langues*) to languages (*langues*), languages (*langues*) to speakers, and speakers to speakers. It is in this space that the enunciation takes place, that is, the event of enunciation happens.

---

<sup>35</sup> BENVENISTE, Émile [1957]. The Semiology of Language. *Semiotica: Journal of the International Association for Semiotic Studies*. Mouton Publishers, pp. 5-23, 1981.

For me, enunciation is not an act of a speaker, but an agency [*agenciamento*] of speakers that happens through the relation with the languages (*langues*) concerned in the space of enunciation, which produces a distribution of the languages (*langues*) in question for their speakers. This agency of speakers produces the event of enunciation and constitutes the relations of allocution in the enunciative scene. This diverges from Benveniste's position, for whom enunciation is the appropriation of language by the speaker, making it work. However, I keep one aspect of Benveniste's position: enunciation is language (*langue*) functioning. They function to the extent that speakers are involved in specific enunciation events.

The space of enunciation concept to which I refer has a political nature, as it considers that the distribution of languages (*langues*) to their speakers is unequal. Speakers are constituted in the relation with languages (*langues*) in such a way that some of these relations attribute a dominance of certain language-speaker relations over other relations in the same space of enunciation. For example, in the Brazilian space of enunciation, one is not a speaker of Portuguese in the same way as one is a speaker of an indigenous language (*langue*), for example. This way, speakers of indigenous languages (*langues*) are tacitly or explicitly prohibited to speak their languages (*langue*s) in certain conditions. This does not mean that they do not speak in these prohibited conditions. This "exclusion" leads these speakers to speak where they "cannot" speak, according to this way of distributing the right to speak. When they speak, those who are excluded, affirm themselves in the place from which they are excluded. Thus, in this space, because of its political character, in the sense that I take the notion of the political (Guimarães, 2002; 2018), there is a permanent dispute between "excluded" relations and dominant relations.

We can also think about the Portuguese language (*langue*) spoken in different regions. Therefore, in the Brazilian space of enunciation as a whole, for example, a certain region receives a large systematic immigration of speakers whose language (*langue*) is considered dominant, to this region whose local language (*langue*) is considered as "wrong," therefore is censured, it becomes segregated by immigrants who end up being dominant. However, even with this dominance, local speakers continue to speak as they do, at the cost of certain changes that take place in their language (*langue*) over time. This way, it is politically designed the continuous process of maintenance and change of languages (*langues*) and their speeches (regional, social).

We can consider, in a broader way, how Portuguese in Brazil presents itself in a process of colonization, of a similar nature, but more intense than the one I have just mentioned. That is why the official language (*langue*) in Brazil is Portuguese and this language (*langue*) was nationalized due to the way it was assumed after being imposed by colonization. All of this led Portuguese to become another language (*langue*) in Brazil in the history of colonization and started a relation with the large number of indigenous languages (*langues*), analyzing all history we already know, constituting the Brazilian space of enunciation, full of particularities, involving African languages (*langues*) and immigrant languages (*langues*), which came to Brazil in a more recent period.

6) *We would like to thank you for this interview.*

It was my pleasure!

## REFERENCES

ANDRADE, Carlos Drummond de. *Antologia poética*. In: Andrade, Carlos Drummond de. 1. ed. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2012. p. 215.

ANDRADE, Carlos Drummond de. *Poesia e prosa*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Aguilar, 1992. p. 433.

BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *Estética da criação verbal*. Introdução e tradução do russo de Paulo Bezerra. Prefácio à edição francesa de Tzvetan Todorov. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2006. [1979]

BENVENISTE, Émile. *Problemas de linguística geral I*. Tradução de Maria da Glória Novak e Luiza Neri. Campinas: Pontes, 1995. [1964]

BENVENISTE, Émile. *Problemas de linguística geral II*. Tradução: Eduardo Guimarães, Marco Antônio Escobar, Rosa Attiê Figueira, Vandarsi Sant'Ana Castro, João Wandereli Geraldi, Ingwedore G. Villaça Kock. Campinas: Editora da UNICAMP, 1989. [1970]

DUCROT, Oswald. *Provar e dizer: linguagem e lógica*. Tradução de Maria Aparecida Barbosa. São Paulo: Global, 1981. [1973]

GUIMARÃES, Eduardo. *Semântica, enunciação e sentido*. Campinas: Pontes, 2018.

GUIMARÃES, Eduardo. *Semântica do acontecimento: um estudo enunciativo da designação*. Campinas: Pontes, 2002.

SAUSSURE, Ferdinand de. *Curso de linguística geral*. Tradução de Antonio Chelini, José Paulo Paes e Izidoro Blikstein. São Paulo: Cultrix, 1970. [1916]

SAUSSURE, Ferdinand de. *Escritos de linguística geral*. Tradução de Carlos Augusto Leuba Salum e Ana Lucia Franco. São Paulo: Cultrix, 2004. [2002]

Translated by *Renata Ortiz Brandão* – [renata.o.brandao@gmail.com](mailto:renata.o.brandao@gmail.com);  
and revised by Sheila Elias de Oliveira – [silvaanneliese@gmail.com](mailto:silvaanneliese@gmail.com)

*Received February 28, 2024*

*Accepted October 21, 2024*