

Saussure, Bakhtin and Benveniste: The Legacy of Three Pillars in Language Teaching and Thought / *Saussure, Bakhtin e Benveniste: o legado de três pilares no ensino e no pensamento linguístico*

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ABSTRACT

Ferdinand de Saussure, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Émile Benveniste came from different countries and continents; these authors coexisted throughout the 20th century, leaving a significant legacy for linguistic thought—a heritage that continues to shape and influence contemporary academic discourse. Besides their roles as linguists and philosophers of language, another shared characteristic binds them together: their commitment to education. Throughout their careers, all three were dedicated educators. This article explores the biographical intricacies that unite and set apart this trio towards linguistic studies, especially in their pedagogical pursuits, emphasizing singular attributes that characterized their academic journeys.

KEYWORDS: Teaching; Biography; Academic legacy; Linguistic studies; Education

RESUMO

Ferdinand de Saussure, Mikhail Bakhtin e Émile Benveniste, originários de diferentes países e continentes, coexistiram durante o século XX, deixando importante legado na história do pensamento linguístico, herança que continua a moldar e a influenciar as atuais discussões acadêmicas. Além de suas contribuições como linguistas e/ou filósofos da linguagem, outra característica comum os une: a dedicação ao ensino. Ao longo de suas carreiras, os três foram eminentemente professores. Este artigo explora as nuances biográficas que aproximam e distinguem essa tríade nos estudos linguísticos, em especial no que diz respeito à atuação docente, destacando características singulares que definiram suas trajetórias acadêmicas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Docência; Biografia; Legado acadêmico; Estudos linguísticos; Ensino*

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Introduction

Ferdinand de Saussure, Emile Benveniste, and Mikhail M. Bakhtin are mandatory references in training those interested in language studies. The vast number of publications about the authors makes it challenging to write something original. Each had common and distinct interests at their time and place, making any comparison risky. The three references have contributed to the advancement of language studies. They continue to generate research and inspire new and experienced readers.

To bring some news about this consecrated triad in the science of language studies, we resort to the lesson of the longest-standing master, who is necessary to establish a point of view. Thus, we decided to describe a familiar and little-explored trait of these three authorial references: the teaching exercise. Saussure, Benveniste, and Bakhtin exercised, at some point in their lives, the teaching profession. Those who have read and studied the authors for some time do not doubt that they are great masters; we often refer to them as *our masters*. As evident as this reference may be, as we learned from them, “but it is sometimes useful to require proof of the obvious.” (Benveniste, 1995, p. 284).¹ Therefore, we guided precisely this characteristic that unites the three excellent references of language sciences: the teaching role mainly because they share an attribute that we consider fundamental to the professor, being a researcher.

The professor is that curious subject that keeps asking, showing, and learning, as it is taught by the master Paulo Freire (2001, p. 259), by whom we are inspired:

The teacher’s learning when teaching is verified to the extent that the humble, open teacher is permanently available to rethink their thinking and review themselves in their positions, in which they seek to engage with the students’ curiosity and the different paths they take.²

Thus, we seek to show who these teaching subjects were. In this search, we did not follow a historical linearity. We consulted different sources for each author,

¹ BENVENISTE, Émile. *Problems in General Linguistics*. Miami: University of Miami Press, 1971.

² In Portuguese: “O aprendizado do ensinante ao ensinar se verifica à medida em que o ensinante, humilde, aberto, se ache permanentemente disponível a repensar o pensado, rever-se em suas posições; em que procura envolver-se com a curiosidade dos alunos e dos diferentes caminhos e veredas, que ela os faz percorrer.”

respecting the uniqueness of each person's life. In the search for sources, we select and exclude texts and works, assuming the risk of our choices.

Thus, we started this enterprise to understand the professor that each one was, Ferdinand de Saussure, this linguist who, according to the editors of the *Writings in General Linguistics* (Saussure, 2006),³ described his thought as a philosophy of linguistics.⁴ The text follows with a foray into the biography of Émile Benveniste, the young scholar who 'found' Saussure very early and sometimes approached him, sometimes distanced himself from him, as Normand (2007) describes very well. We finish the task we set ourselves, exploring the biographical and theoretical aspects of Mikhail M. Bakhtin, the philosopher of freedom (Clark; Holquist, 1985).⁵

As sources of consultation, especially for Saussure and Benveniste, we use many paratexts, or frame texts, using Brait's expression (2021) to the texts of researchers and translators who accompany the authors' works, namely the *Course in General Linguistics*,⁶ from now on *CGL*, for the first; and the *Últimas aulas no Collège de France (1968 e 1969)* [Last classes at the Collège de France (1968 and 1969)], for the second. As for Bakhtin, we used two main works: *Mikhail Bakhtin. The Duvakin Interviews, 1973*,⁷ and *Questões de estilística no ensino de língua* (2019). If we refer to biographical data, it is because we believe that they have a direct or indirect relationship with the teaching practice of each author. We do not doubt that good professors are researchers by nature. Thus, starting with Saussure, we will show that the scientific practice in each is intertwined with teaching practice.

³ SAUSSURE, Ferdinand. *Writings in General Linguistics*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

⁴ Authors' note: Suppose the origin of the *word* philosophia refers to the *Greek* components *Philo*, which indicates the capacity to love, and *Sophia*, which refers to acquired knowledge. In that case, we can say that Saussure's lessons expressed this love for knowledge from the study of language.

⁵ CLARK, Katherina; HOLQUIST, Michael. *Mikhail Bakhtin*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1984.

⁶ SAUSSURE, Ferdinand. *Course in General Linguistics*. Edited and annotated by Roy Harris. London-New Delhi-New York-Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2011.

⁷ DUVAKIN, Viktor. *Mikhail Bakhtin: The Duvakin Interviews, 1973*. Edited by Slav N. Gratchev and Margarita Marinova. Translated by Margarita Marinova. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2019.

1 Saussure, *the Genevan Master*

Ferdinand de Saussure completed his Ph.D. at the University of Leipzig in 1880 with the thesis *De L'emploi du Génitif Absolu in Sanscrit* [The Use of the Absolute Genitive in Sanskrit]. He wrote and published the only book *Mémoire sur le système primitif des voyelles dans les langues indo-européennes* [Memoirs about the Primitive System of Vowels in the Indo-European Languages] while he was still a student in Leipzig, between 1876 and 1880.

The posthumous work that consecrated him as the great theorist of General Linguistics and Semiology of the 21st century was published in 1916, three years after his definitive departure, without witnessing the effects of the publication of the work, which was organized by his colleagues from the notes of six students and a student who participated in the three courses taught by him at the University of Geneva between 1907 and 1911.

Talking about Saussure is a complex task. There is a vast number of sources for research that integrate manuscripts (published and unpublished), letters (personal and professional), student notes, student letters, critical editions of the *CGL*, and anagrams (published or unpublished). Given the heterogeneity and complexity of the available sources, as recommended by José Luiz Fiorin, Valdir Flores, and Leci Barbisan (2013), to talk about Saussure, it is necessary to establish a point of view. Flores (2022) teaches that it is possible to study the Saussure of anagrams, legends, general linguistics, comparative grammar, Indian studies, and phonetics, among other things.

Thus, to avoid repeating what competent researchers of the Saussurian legacy have published, we chose to describe what seemed most obvious (and least mentioned) in the references to Saussure: his role as a teacher. Inspired by the *Genevan master* expression, often used (apparently only) as a bet and anaphoric, we searched for what is known or said about Saussure, the teacher.

Furthermore, using the Brazilian edition of the *CGL* as the main corpus, we initially searched for the word *master* and its most recurring synonym, *professor*. Then, as there is no *professor* without *students* or *students*, nor *master* without *disciples*, in referential association, we searched for the occurrences of these words in the *CGL*.

Taking as reference the posthumous work organized by Bally and Sechahaye with the collaboration of Albert Riedlinger, we find the *master* word in ten occurrences. The first, located in the preface to the Brazilian edition, signed by Isaac Nicolau Salum (2003, p. xviii), describes one of the difficulties faced by the editors of *CGL* in preparing the work's edition: "The notes hardly correspond *ipsis verbis* to the words of the *master*. As R. Godel notes, 'they are student notes, and these notes are only a more or less clear reflection of the oral exposition'."⁸ The reference to the *master*, Salum's option, probably occurs in association with the words *students* and *oral exposition* used by Robert Godel.

The preface to the first edition, signed by Bally and Sechahaye (2011, pp. 26-29),⁹ uses the *master* word five other times. The first is in the second paragraph of the preface: "After the death of the master [After his death in *CGL*, p. 26, footnote 6],"¹⁰ probably using indirect anaphora since the first paragraph contains information about Joseph Wertheimer's success at the University of Geneva. The other four occurrences reiterate the same objective: to ensure the text's cohesion and coherence by resuming a concept that can be inferred from Saussure's craft at the University of Geneva.

Thus, among the ten occurrences of the *master* word in the *CGL*, six are found in the frame texts, which lead us to the conclusion that as the reader's first contact with Saussure's thought occurs in the first pages of the *CGL*, before they really enter the lessons, they already come across the reference to Saussure as *a professor*.

The other four occurrences do not refer to Saussure. They only illustrate examples of words for analysis, which occur when discussing syntagmatic and associative relationships. They are all in the same paragraph at the beginning of page 144 of the 2003 Brazilian edition.

The word *professor* is recorded only twice in the work, both in the biographical table preceding the first edition's preface. In this context, the reader identifies when Saussure was hired as *an extraordinary professor* in Geneva, where he joined at age 34

⁸ In Portuguese: "Os apontamentos dificilmente correspondem *ipsis verbis* às palavras do *mestre*. Como nota R. Godel, 'são notas de estudantes, e essas notas são apenas um reflexo mais ou menos claro da exposição oral.'"

⁹ Although there is an English edition for *CGL* [See footnote 6], the analyses and reflections produced by the authors correspond exclusively to the Brazilian translation of the *Cours*. For this reason, some parts of the analyses and reflections do not have a direct correspondence to the English translation. That is the case of the word *master*.

¹⁰ In Portuguese: "Após a morte do mestre [...]"

in 1891 and became a full professor in 1896. Continuing the search, we located the word *students* in five occurrences; three are in the preface to the Brazilian edition, and the other two are in the text of the lessons. The word *students* appears in the preface to identify the number of students enrolled in each of the three courses taught: six in the first (January to July 1907), eleven in the second (November 1908 to July 1909), and twelve in the third (October 1910 to July 1911).

The word '*students*' appears twice in the body of the work. Chapter IV deals with the analogy principle, occurring in the same paragraph. The reference occurs in the description of European grammar, which uses the principle of analogy in the formation of German and Hindu grammar and does not refer to students enrolled in the Saussure course.

The word '*students*' is shown seven times. All are in the preface of the Brazilian edition. The first three occurrences identify the probable interlocutors of the work, Brazilian higher education students, as in the third occurrence: "Sometimes to the question asked to students who have already obtained approval in Linguistics, if they have already read Saussure, we obtain the sincere answer that they only 'did research' in it." (Salum, 2003, p. xvi).¹¹

The other four occurrences of the word '*students*' deserve a more accurate look, so we transcribe them:

1^o - Saussure was not happy with the development of the subject. Not only did he have to include subjects related to Indo-European languages due to the need to obey the program, but he also felt limited by the '*students*' understanding. He did not feel his ideas were definitive. Here is what he says to L. Gautier:

"I face a dilemma: either expose the theme in all its complexity and confess all my doubts, which cannot be suitable for a course that should be an exam subject, or do something simplified, better adapted to an auditorium of *students* who are not linguists. However, I find myself held back by scruples at every step."

2nd - The notes would hardly correspond *ipsis verbis* to the master's words. As R. Godel notes, "they are *student's* notes, and these notes are only a more or less clear reflection of the oral exposition."

3rd - About these two deformations of Saussure's thought - the one he made to be simple for the *students* and the one the students made in the annotation approximately - is added to that of the organization of the

¹¹ In Portuguese: "Às vezes à pergunta feita a estudantes que já conseguiram aprovação em Lingüística se já leram Saussure, obtemos a resposta sincera de que apenas "fizeram pesquisa" nele."

subject by two disciples, illustrious, but who declare that they were not present at the courses (Salum, 2003, p. xvii-xviii).¹²

The four occurrences appear in the context of an explanation by the linguist who prefaces the Brazilian edition about the problems faced by the organizers of the students' notes that gave rise to the work. However, it should be noted that Salum does not use two of these. The first and last of the four occurrences derive from two other contexts of use; the second occurrence seems to originate in a statement by Ferdinand de Saussure himself when confessing his hesitation about the complexity imposed in the organization of the content of his classes before an audience that was not exclusive of linguists (according to a handwritten source in a note by Túlio de Mauro). The third is a direct quote from Godel.

Thus, the author of the Brazilian preface used the term as a mere cohesion resource in a situation of reference for remission and anticipation of words. However, the use of this term did not go unnoticed. Furthermore, its relationship with Saussure's teaching function is evident.

Finally, as a synonym for *students*, the word *disciples* calls attention ten times in the work. Nine occurrences are found in the 'frame texts,' most of them, that is, six in the preface to the Brazilian edition, one in the biographical table, two in the preface of the organizers of the French edition, and only one in the text.¹³

That is, taking into account the work *CGL*, the reference to Ferdinand Saussure as a *professor*, built in a seemingly subtle way, is explicitly present in the use of the words *master* and *professor*, but also by indirect association, through the use of the words *students (estudantes)*, *students (alunos)* and *disciples*. Using these referencing forms in

¹² In Portuguese: "1º - Saussure não estava contente com o desenvolvimento da matéria. Não só tinha que incluir matéria ligada às línguas indo-européias por necessidade de obedecer ao programa, mas também ele próprio se sentia limitado pela compreensão dos *estudantes* e por não sentir como definitivas as suas idéias. Eis o que ele diz a L. Gautier: 'Vejo-me diante de um dilema: ou expor o assunto em toda a sua complexidade e confessar todas as minhas dúvidas, o que não pode convir para um curso que deve ser matéria de exame, ou fazer algo simplificado, melhor adaptado a um auditório de *estudantes* que não são lingüistas. Mas a cada passo me vejo retido por escrúpulos'. 2.º - Os apontamentos dificilmente corresponderiam *ipsis verbis* às palavras do mestre. Como nota R. Godel, 'são notas de *estudantes*, e essas notas são apenas um reflexo mais ou menos claro da exposição oral'. 3.º - Sobre essas duas deformações do pensamento de Saussure - a que ele fazia para ser simples para os *estudantes* e a que eles faziam no anotar aproximadamente - soma-se a da organização da matéria por dois discípulos, ilustres, mas que declaram não terem estado presentes aos cursos. (Salum, 2003, p. xvii-xviii)."

¹³ This occurrence occurs in the Appendices' text in the context of an explanation about suffixes, in the discussion about the units of the language: "Reading Bopp is his disciples [...]" (Saussure, 2002, p. 214).

constructing texts, especially frame texts, greatly influenced the author's reception and his thinking in the Brazilian context, as hardly anyone writes anything about Saussure without referring to him as a *master*.

If we know Saussure as a language scientist, it is undoubtedly because he was (also) a professor. His deep knowledge of languages was shared in the three celebrated courses, and thanks to the students who recorded the content of his classes, he gained fame and became popularized scientifically. We did not have access to the unique characteristics of Saussure as *a professor in a direct source*. However, studies may still come to light that reveal this hidden face of the master, thanks to the persistence and curiosity of the researchers. It cannot be denied that Saussure was an obstinate researcher-professor whose value is recorded in the history of science of the twentieth century.

After introducing Ferdinand de Saussure, the professor, we will deepen the teaching perspective of another linguist with research interests similar to those of the Genevan master.

2 Émile Benveniste, the Syrian-French Linguist

Although they did not meet in person—in the year that Saussure left, the Benveniste boy had just arrived in Paris to study as an intern at the rabbinical school in the Universal Israeli Alliance—Ferdinand de Saussure's influence on his theoretical production is undeniable.¹⁴

Born Ezra Benveniste in 1902 in Aleppo, Syria, Émile Benveniste, the anthropologist of language, expert in Indo-European languages, specialist in comparative grammar, and innovative theorist of general linguistics, became a naturalized Frenchman in 1924, adopting the name that made him known among the most influential thinkers of the twentieth century (Coquet and Fenoglio, 2014).

A coincidence brings Saussure and Benveniste closer. Benveniste was a student of Antoine Meillet, the master, at the time, of the comparative grammar of Indo-European

¹⁴ For example, Saussure's name is mentioned 90 times in the Brazilian translation texts that make up the *Problems of General Linguistics I* [see footnote 1], between textual references and footnotes. In the English translation, Saussure appears 114 times. For the sake of maintaining coherence with the authors' reflections, we will consider the Brazilian edition.

languages, which, in turn, had been a student of Saussure, of whom he became one of the main interlocutors, at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études* [Practical School of Higher Studies]. Benveniste himself acknowledges his affiliation with Meillet in an interview granted to Pierre Daix and first published in the magazine *Les Lettres françaises* [The French Letters] in July 1968:

[...] This meeting was decisive for me because I found him very young when I studied at the Sorbonne, and I undoubtedly enjoyed research much more than the teaching routine. [...] It is necessary here to go back earlier because, through him, the teachings of Ferdinand de Saussure in Paris were partly transmitted to Meillet's disciples (Benveniste, 1989, p. 11).¹⁵

From this interview, in which Benveniste affirms his *preference for research rather than for the teaching routine*, interpretations were generated that the linguist did not like being a professor, given his preference for research. For us, a research interest is a professor's highest quality. It is the research that produces knowledge. What influence can a professor who prefers teaching rather than research have on the lives of students? Or a professor who does not like to study? A professor who preferred the routine of studies to research would be a mere reproducer of content, the opposite of what is expected of a master, in the best meaning this word can have.

The published texts do not explicitly refer to Mikhail Bakhtin's theorizations, as the Russian language philosopher was a contemporary. We know that there are possible approaches from a theoretical point of view,¹⁶ especially regarding issues related to discourse. In addition, they shared some biographical coincidences, some unfortunate ones, such as political persecution, exile, illness, financial scarcity at the end of life, and even the year of departure, with a difference of just over a year. Bakhtin died on March 7, 1975, and Benveniste on October 3, 1976. Other coincidences include an interest in languages, knowledge of several of them, and more (or less) close contact with the

¹⁵ In Portuguese: “[...] Foi pelo fato de tê-lo encontrado muito jovem, quando de meus estudos na Sorbonne, e por eu ter, sem dúvida, muito mais gosto pela pesquisa que pela rotina de ensino, que este encontro foi decisivo para mim. [...] É necessário aqui voltar um pouco antes porque, através dele, foram os ensinamentos de Ferdinand de Saussure em Paris que foram em parte transmitidos aos discípulos de Meillet.”

¹⁶ The authors' theoretical approach is separate from this text; if the reader is interested, they can consult Todorov (2014, p. 257).

primary representative of the Prague Linguistic Circle, Roman Jakobson, and a particular appreciation for the controversy.

Regarding languages, Benveniste's knowledge was particularly exceptional and, therefore, incomparable. With a family of polyglot origin,¹⁷ he learned many languages at a young age because in his family environment, he spoke Turkish, Arabic, modern Greek, and probably Slavic (Kristeva, 2014). Throughout his life, Émile Benveniste studied languages such as Sanskrit, Hittite, Tocharian, Indian, Iranian, Greek, Latin, Old Persian, Avestic, Ossetian, Sogdian, all Indo-European languages. On a study trip through Iran and Afghanistan, he studied five Pamirian languages. On another study trip through North America, he encountered and fell in love with two indigenous languages of the Atapasco family. Knowledge and interest in languages were more than a lifetime dedication; they were his exclusive passions (Todorov, 2014).

Faced with so many themes that instigate curiosity, the interest of this article – we insist – is due to the characteristic/condition of the teacher of the master. So, just as we did with Saussure, we chose a source to address one of Benveniste's roles for most of his life. The choice was for the frame texts that are part of the work *Últimas aulas no Collège de France (1968-1969)* [Last classes at the Collège de France (1968-1969)], published just over a decade ago in France, translated and published in Brazil in 2014.¹⁸

The work begins with a presentation to the Brazilian edition, authored by professor and *gaúcho* researcher Valdir Flores, who has been dedicated for more than 30 years to sowing the legacy of Benveniste in the country, and a preface, signed by Júlia Kristeva, the linguist who was a student of Benveniste and presents the reader with her most illustrious professor, as “an austere scholar, connoisseur in ancient languages, expert in comparative grammar, authority in general linguistics” (Kristeva, 2014, p. 31).¹⁹

The introduction of the work, which was organized and written by Jean-Claude Coquet and Irène Fenoglio, anticipates what the reader will find in the work: notes, leaflets, and folders with unpublished content that is part of the set of classes taught by

¹⁷ His mother was a Hebrew, French, and Russian teacher at the Universal Israelite Alliance school in Samokov, Bulgaria; his father spoke Ladino, a language derived from medieval Spanish, with influences from Hebrew and other languages spoken primarily by Sephardic Jews.

¹⁸ Jean-Claude Coquet and Irène Fenoglio organized the work, which was brought to Brazilians' attention through a translation team coordinated by Valdir Flores.

¹⁹ In Portuguese: “um estudioso austero, exímio conhecedor das línguas antigas, expert em gramática comparada, autoridade em linguística geral.”

Émile Benveniste at the Collège de France in 1968 and 1969. The organizers warn about the published content: the classes, until then accessible only to the specialists who attended them, “innovate about the articles published in *Problèmes de linguistique générale*” (Coquet and Fenoglio, 2014, pp. 68-69).²⁰

The classes taught over these two years were organized in three chapters, each with a theme title, due to the nature of the discussions. Precise information on the dates on which the classes took place, such as day, month, and year, with handwritten notes by the author himself, was digitized. Furthermore, it was made known that the typeface was almost always quite legible, with firm strokes, and slightly inclined to the right. According to Coquet and Fenoglio (2014), each class edited with Benveniste’s manuscripts included the notes of the linguists already mentioned: Coquet and Normand and Jacqueline Authier-Revuz, who provided her notes of the classes that constitute the first two chapters of the work. The texts that make up the set of the last classes are complex and gave rise to several dissertations and theses. Therefore, they are not the main object of this article, whose interest is to describe Professor Émile Benveniste.

In addition to the classes, the work presents the reader with two annexes and an afterword. Annex 1 publishes the only unpublished and unfinished biography of Émile Benveniste, written by his personal friend, Georges Redard, who also became his heir after the death of Carmelia Benveniste, Benveniste’s only sister and patrimonial beneficiary. Redard, a professor at the University of Bern and then rector of the University of Geneva, presents to the newly arrived reader the innovative theorist of general linguistics and makes known to the initiated reader several pieces of information hitherto hidden from the reserved and disciplined linguist in studies. Thus, data on the family nucleus, personal notes from their notebooks, work reports, and travel diaries can provide insight into the last years of life and suffering in convalescence.

In Annex 2, signed by Émilie Brunet, the reader learns of what became the Benveniste collection of the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France* [France National Library]: Benveniste’s work papers, notes from when he was a student of Antoine de Meillet, for example, to the last notes taken during the most challenging period of his life, after the stroke in December 1969.

²⁰ In Portuguese: “inovam em relação aos artigos publicados em *Problèmes de linguistique générale*.”

Finally, the afterword signed by Tzvetan Todorov ends with due homage to the work that Benveniste did not write and that, therefore, bears some resemblance to Saussure's posthumous publication. It also makes known the personal testimony of Todorov, a Benveniste student in a general linguistics course in 1963, and it announces important references for Professor Émile Benveniste.

Thus, taking as a source the frame texts that make up the set of this work in honor of Émile Benveniste, we aim to describe the professor who became the founding foundation of enunciation studies.

Explicit references to Benveniste's teaching are already at the beginning of the work, in the section on *Cronologia biográfica* [Bibliographic Chronology]. The information that "Benveniste seeks an auxiliary teacher position in a secondary school" (Coquet and Fenoglio, 2014, p. 24)²¹ is from October 1918, which must have been his first experience in school. In the afterword, Todorov (2014) will ratify the information about Benveniste's beginning teaching experience as a secondary school assistant and university student. The second mention is that between "1922 and 1924, he taught at Colégio Sévigné in Paris" (Todorov, 2014, p. 24).²² The third and last mention of the *Cronologia biográfica* section informs 1927 as the year of his entry as a full professor at the *École Pratique des Hautes Études*, where he remained as a professor until December 1969.

In the preface, signed by Júlia Kristeva, the reference to Benveniste as a professor goes almost unnoticed in two brief mentions: "Back in France, he studies with Antoine Meillet, whom he succeeds as a professor (chair of Comparative Grammar) at EPHE, where he exerts great influence among his colleagues" (Kristeva, 2014, p. 32).²³ Moreover, "After liberation, Benveniste resumes his classes at EPHE and the Collège de France, forming several generations of students [...]" (Kristeva, 2014, p. 33).²⁴ As can be seen, they are brief and objective, without highlighting the profession performed by the linguist. To resume Benveniste's name, in a nominalization appeal, Kristeva (2014) refers

²¹ In Portuguese: "Benveniste procura uma vaga de professor-auxiliar em uma escola secundarista."

²² In Portuguese: "1922-1924 leciona no colégio Sévigné, em Paris."

²³ In Portuguese: "De volta à França, estuda com Antoine Meillet, ao qual sucede como professor (cátedra de Gramática Comparada) na EPHE, onde exerce grande influência entre os colegas."

²⁴ In Portuguese: "Após a libertação, Benveniste reassume suas aulas na EPHE e no Collège de France, formando várias gerações de estudantes [...]."

to him as “the young man born in the heart of the Ottoman Empire” (p. 35),²⁵ “the theorist” (p. 37),²⁶ “the linguist”(p.42),²⁷ “the author” (p. 48),²⁸ “the Sanskritist” (p. 55),²⁹ and “the great scholar” (p. 58).³⁰ Rarely, and always in a more private context, we find the reference to the professor.

The mention of Benveniste as a *professor* occurs in a circle of the personal sphere of the then-French government scholarship student when she describes the work office in the author’s house, where he guided her: “Quickly dispatching the administrative details, the professor inquired about my work” (Kristeva, 2014, p. 58);³¹ “I remember that the professor advised me to read” (Kristeva, 2014, p. 59).³²

Although the context is restricted since it is the testimony of a student in a situation of individual orientation, it is possible to find a little-explored face of the linguist, who reveals to the reader a professor who challenges the reader to think. This is what we can gather from reading, for example, these excerpts:

Benveniste was a pedagogue and protective as he was attentive. [...] He often answered my questions with cutthroat, somewhat provocative statements: “See, I’m only interested in the little things. The verb *être* [to be], for example,”. [...] Or, to answer my questions, he opened the Sanskrit text of the *Rigveda*, translating the appropriate passages directly into French (Kristeva, 2014, p. 59).³³

Kristeva’s text reveals worthy characteristics of great masters, such as the ability to instigate students, make them think, and affection. In the introduction text of the work, we find other distinct qualities, as it is possible to read in this description:

²⁵ In Portuguese: “o jovem nascido no coração do Império Otomano.”

²⁶ In Portuguese: “o teórico.”

²⁷ In Portuguese: “o linguista.”

²⁸ In Portuguese: “o autor.”

²⁹ In Portuguese: “o sanscritista.”

³⁰ In Portuguese: “o grande erudito.”

³¹ In Portuguese: “Despachando rapidamente os detalhes administrativos, o professor inquiria sobre meu trabalho.”

³² In Portuguese: “Lembro que o professor me aconselhou a ler.”

³³ In Portuguese: “Benveniste se mostrava tão pedagogo e protetor quanto atento. [...] Na maioria das vezes, ele respondia às minhas perguntas com declarações lapidárias, um tanto provocadoras: “Veja, eu só me interesse pelas pequenas coisas. O verbo *être* [ser/estar], por exemplo”. [...] Ou então, à guisa de resposta às minhas interrogações, ele abria o texto sânscrito do *Rigveda*, traduzindo diretamente para o francês as passagens apropriadas.”

Among all its facets, the publication of these last classes allows us to show the one that is least known of the linguist: the extent of the scholar is known, the clarity of the theoretical study is admired; one begins to glimpse the dimensions and orientations of the researcher, but *the dynamism and firmness of the professor* had been forgotten. Now, if the scholar discovers and develops an increasingly in-depth knowledge about specific linguistic spaces, if the researcher builds, article after article, his theory and the concepts that support it, the didactic unfolding for the constitution of an ingenious transmission had yet to be unveiled. However, several listeners of Benveniste had witnessed it (Coquet and Fenoglio, 2014, p. 69).³⁴

In the organizers of the work words, we find a highlight of what we consider essential attributes of a professor, in addition *to being a researcher: dynamism and firmness, the ability for didactic unfolding*, that is, the methodological capacity that makes it possible to call a professor by the master's terminology. It is possible to be a researcher without being a professor, but it is impossible to be a good professor without being a researcher. Still, a professor-researcher without dynamism and methodological capacity will be forgotten by his disciples, which was not Benveniste's case.

Another teaching ability of Professor Benveniste is his organization and planning. Croquet and Fenoglio (2014, p. 80) found the following note in one of the loose block sheets in preparation for the course that brings together the last classes: "Focus classes on the semiotic/semantic character of language."³⁵ A scholar like Benveniste could give up previous preparation because, obviously, as a great connoisseur of the subject on which he would teach the classes, improvising would be straightforward. That is not what the handwritten notes reveal. Even the master of masters - the enrolled students constitute the bibliography we studied – used to organize and plan his classes.

After the presentation of the three chapters that combine the set of 15 classes and the *Last class* taught by Benveniste, we arrive at the unpublished text by Georges Redard, which does not emphasize the role of the professor. There, we meet the great scholar of

³⁴ In Portuguese: "Dentre todas suas facetas, a publicação destas últimas aulas permite mostrar aquela que menos se conhece do linguista: a envergadura do erudito é conhecida, a limpidez do estudo teórico, admirada; começa-se a entrever as dimensões e orientações do pesquisador, mas *o dinamismo e a firmeza do professor* haviam sido esquecidos. Ora, se o erudito descobre e desenvolve um saber cada vez mais aprofundado sobre espaços linguísticos específicos, se o pesquisador constrói, artigo após artigo, sua teoria e os conceitos que a sustentam, o desdobramento didático para a constituição de uma engenhosa transmissão ainda não havia sido desvelado, embora vários ouvintes de Benveniste a tenham testemunhado."

³⁵ In Portuguese: "Focar as aulas no caráter semiótico/semântico da linguagem."

many languages, the obstinate and methodical researcher with few friends outside the work circle, and also the lonely man who rarely took vacations and spent the last years of his life, after his illness, hospitalized in hospitals and health homes.

Without obeying a linear, chronological sequence, the text begins with reports of the consequences of the heart attack that the linguist had suffered in 1956 and that had affected his health, according to records in personal correspondence, about the fatigue that affected him regarding classes and trips. Little information about Benveniste's role as a professor is available, such as the date of his appointment as a comparative and Iranian grammar lecturer at EPHE, November 1, 1927. He is the curious and determined researcher we know in this biography, as in the account of a trip made between 1952 and 1953 of a linguistic incursion along the west coast of North America to the interior of Alaska, where he studies two languages of the Atapasca family: Haida and Tlingit, still spoken, but already endangered. This trip allowed him to teach a course at the *Collège de France* on the Indian languages of Alaska in 1954, an unprecedented subject in a teaching program in France. In addition to his time, Benveniste was not a mere *transmitter* of knowledge; he was a ruthless and curious scholar who taught courses and classes most of the time. He was a unique and active professor who used to teach classes and usually stood up.

Émilie Brunet's essay follows the work and, thanks to the conservation of the documents, introduces the reader to the diversity of Benveniste's roles. Although dispersed in different places, administrative documents, correspondence, reports, class programs, notes of classes taught by Benveniste, and 27 notebooks with notes of research on a trip to Alaska, among others, prove how much remains to be revealed about the researcher and anthropologist of language.

Finally, we come to Todorov's Afterword. Little news about Benveniste's personal or professional life can be found in the section that concludes the work. It is the testimony of those close to the learned linguist to the novelty. Close as an assistant to the course that Benveniste taught and close to the convalescent in the hospital. This is how the text begins:

When I arrived in Paris in the Spring of 1963, I began to look for a course that dealt with the general aspects of the language. I discovered

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that Émile Benveniste was teaching a course in General Linguistics at the Collège de France. Attending the course was no difficulty; no enrollment was required (Todorov, 2014, p. 243).³⁶

He was a professor who used to teach a course to a few students³⁷ interested in General Linguistics. The students used to have a master who spoke slowly and without looking at them. As Redard points out in the master's collected correspondences, this information, which could denounce an unmotivated teacher,³⁸ must be placed in the context of Benveniste's fragile health, which is not the case, as we can see in this testimony:

However, this speech's attraction to me did not diminish his status as a professor. I had the impression of witnessing the exemplary development of the scientific method, both prudent and firm, and of being placed simultaneously in the presence of an archetypal scholar, discreet, modest, even timid, but whose spirit threw itself audaciously. There was no turning speech, no fuss, no dazzle: an accurate knowledge of facts, a preoccupation with clarity, an ability to see beyond appearances and to reveal the general beyond the particular (Todorov, 2014, p. 244).³⁹

The testimony of the admirer by the master confirms the genius of the most remarkable French linguist of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, more than that, it tells us that a scholar of such magnitude, even during a period of physical vulnerability, did not lose the ability to enchant his disciples. Throughout this, we learn more about the characteristics of Professor Émile Benveniste. In the next section, we will learn more about the last representative of this triad consecrated in language studies.

³⁶ In Portuguese: “Tendo chegado a Paris na primavera de 1963, comecei a procurar um curso que tratasse das propriedades gerais da linguagem. Descobri que um certo Émile Benveniste dava um curso de linguística geral no Collège de France. Não havia nenhuma dificuldade para assistir ao curso: nenhuma inscrição era necessária.”

³⁷ According to Todorov (2014), students grew considerably after the publication of *Problems of General Linguistics I* in 1966.

³⁸ Seven years ago, in 1956, Benveniste had suffered a heart attack that had compromised his health and good mood. (Redard, 2014).

³⁹ In Portuguese: “No entanto, a atração que essa fala exercia sobre mim não diminuía. Eu tinha a impressão de assistir ao desenvolvimento exemplar do método científico, tanto prudente quanto firme, e de ser colocado ao mesmo tempo em presença de um erudito arquetípico, discreto, modesto, até mesmo tímido, mas cujo espírito se lançava audaciosamente. Não havia discurso tornitruante, nem alarde, nem deslumbramento: um conhecimento preciso dos fatos, uma preocupação com a clareza, uma capacidade de ver além das aparências e de revelar o geral para além do particular.”

3 Bakhtin, the Russian Philosopher

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin was born in Orel, south of Moscow, in November 1895, thirty-eight years after the birth, in the same month, of Ferdinand de Saussure in Geneva, Switzerland, and only seven years before Émile (still Ezra) Benveniste in Aleppo, Syria.

Approximations and distances mark the life and thoughts of the authors. At eleven, Benveniste entered as an intern and started living far away from his parents at the rabbinical school in Paris. Bakhtin, at nine, moved with his family to the city of Vilno, the capital of Lithuania, due to his father's work. Moreover, he formally enters school in Vilno until age 15, when his father's new transfer takes the family to Odessa, where he completes his secondary studies. After attending a year of higher education in Odessa, Bakhtin transferred his studies to St. Petersburg,⁴⁰ where he completed his higher education. Bakhtin's Family life, characterized by city changes, accompanies him throughout his life and contributes to understanding some particularities of his biography.

A notable condition for the popularization of Bakhtin's name was that he had constituted a group of intellectuals that carried his name, the well-known Bakhtin Circle. He says about the Circle that bears his name: "The one around me is now called the 'Bakhtin Circle'" (Duvakin, 2019, p. 129).⁴¹ Between 1919 and 1929, Bakhtin was part of a group of intellectuals who met regularly, first in Nevel and Vitebsk, then in St. Petersburg. This group of intellectuals with diverse interests and backgrounds had an interdisciplinary characteristic, including the philosopher Matvei Kagan, the biologist Ivan Kanaev, the pianist Maria Yudina, the professor and scholar of literature Lev Pumpianski, the two best-known readers, and Bakhtin himself: the philologist and professor Valentin Vološinov, Pavel Medvedev, a lawyer, professor, and cultural manager, also participated (Faraco, 2009).

Recent translations from Russian into Portuguese have been necessary for repositioning essential questions about the ideas discussed by the Circle and have contributed significantly to advancing studies in Brazil.

⁴⁰ The city of St. Petersburg changed its name several times. Until 1923, it was Petrograd; from May 1924, it was already Leningrad (Bakhtin; Duvakin, 2012).

⁴¹ See footnote 7.

Unlike Saussure and Benveniste, in this section, we chose to focus less on the frame texts of one of the selected works and more on *an article* from the period in which he worked as a primary education teacher and in *an interview*, in which we have access to Bakhtin's testimony.

Bakhtin's interview with colleague Viktor Duvakin, a literature scholar and professor at the University of Moscow, in 1973, is "a unique document that contains precious testimonies of the Russian philosopher about his time and himself" Ponzio (2012, p. 7)⁴² attests in the preface to the work.

Bakhtin's experienced reader is likely aware of texts by researchers that discredit parts of Bakhtin's statements in this interview. During this time, his mental health at the age of 78 was excellent; there are several pieces of evidence that the philosopher recognized minor memory flaws when he states, on more than one occasion, that he is not sure about the year in which one fact or another occurred, as can be read in the following excerpts from the interview (Duvakin, 2019):⁴³

My memory is now so bad, especially about recent events... (p. 38);⁴⁴
See, my memory is awful. Impossible! (p. 38);⁴⁵
How can you say such a thing?
When I was young my memory was truly phenomenal. I could remember anything I read just once, poetry or prose, it didn't matter. Now my memory is gone, really gone . . . e (p. 38);⁴⁶
There were also many other members of the circle, whose names I might be able to remember later, but my memory is not what it used to be. Not at all. (p. 51);⁴⁷
His name was . . . It'll come to me... My memory, ugh! (p. 111).⁴⁸

Using a disabling argument to invalidate an older person's speech is not a respectful attitude. Thus, we often use Bakhtin's statements in this text, recognizing that he, more than anyone else, has the most significant authority to talk about himself.

⁴² In Portuguese: "um documento único que contém preciosos testemunhos do filósofo russo sobre o seu tempo e sobre si mesmo."

⁴³ See footnote 7.

⁴⁴ See footnote 7.

⁴⁵ See footnote 7.

⁴⁶ See footnote 7.

⁴⁷ See footnote 7.

⁴⁸ See footnote 7.

The six interviews given by Bakhtin between February 22 and March 23, 1973, occurred at an interval of one week, except the last two, which were recorded on March 22 and 23 of that year. Based on questions asked by the interviewer, who introduces the topics to be addressed in the conversation in the form of questions, Bakhtin responds as if it were an almost natural conversation.⁴⁹ With little commitment to the linearity of the facts, it is up to the reader to reconstruct the history, putting together the parts of testimonies collected at different times.

This is how, already in the first conversation, the subject of the group's existence emerges, which will later be referred to as the Bakhtin Circle.⁵⁰ It was not the only Circle in which Bakhtin participated; his presence occurred with greater or lesser intensity in different groups whose interests were philosophical, philosophical-religious, and literary. In some, his presence was more as a listener; in others, he made explanations, as seen in this excerpt from the testimony: "I participated more at Rugevich's gatherings" (Duvakin, 2019, p. 168).⁵¹

From what can be seen from Bakhtin's testimonies, one of the first group formations that met to discuss topics of interest and in which Bakhtin participated was raised in St. Petersburg, even before Bakhtin transferred his studies there. They called this group *Omphalos* (which means navel), and Bakhtin frequented it sporadically, even when he used to live in Odessa (1912-1913). The group did not have a rigid organization; it brought together students with ties to the university and graduates with common interests. It was led by his brother, Nikolai Mikhailovich Bakhtin, with whom he shared an interest in Philosophy. This group included Lev Vasilievich Pumpianski, one of his closest friends; the philologist and poet Mikhail Lopatto; and the brothers Sergei and Nikolai Radlov. "It was just a group of friends getting freely together," says Bakhtin

⁴⁹ We know that the situation is unnatural because you both know the conversation is being recorded.

⁵⁰ The existence of groups that met to discuss topics of common or diverse interest was widespread in Bakhtin's Russia. They called a circle both for some types of associations and for any other kind of grouping, as can be seen from one of Duvakin's statements: "But you understand that the circle governing Russia then was actually powerless." (Duvakin, 2019, p. 109 [see footnote 7]). In Bakhtin's testimony, we identified more than a dozen of these groups: *Omphalos*, Puchkinian Circle, *Opojaz*, Meier's Circle, *Acmeite Circle*, *Esenin (or Esenian) Circle*, *Bogaturov's Circle*, *Ruevitch's Circle*, *Gumilev's Circle*, *Pavel Nikolaevich Medvedev's Circle*, and *Lermontovian Circle*, in addition to the Circle that bore his name and that of Prague, of which Roman Jakobson became one of the leading representatives.

⁵¹ See footnote 7.

(Duvakin, 2019, p. 41),⁵² who also defined the group as “they were learned jesters, pranksters, or clowns of scholarship, if you will” (Duvakin, 2019, p. 51).⁵³ This was the peculiarity of the one who had been the first Circle in which he had participated.

Between 1919 and 1929, Bakhtin met in Nevel and Vitebsk with people from a broad spectrum of interests and professional occupations to discuss philosophical and literary texts, moving the cultural life of the cities (Clark; Holquist, 1984).⁵⁴ Bakhtin moved to Nevel shortly after completing higher education in 1918. Due to the consequences of the First World War, which had severely affected larger cities such as St. Petersburg, Bakhtin formally exercised his first experience as a professor:⁵⁵ he was a professor at the Svencianski Gymnasium, which later changed its name to the Unified School of Labor. He stays for two years in this city, then moves to Vitebsk with his friend Pumpianski, where he stays for another two years, that is, until the end of 1922. In the following years, between 1923 and 1929, he lived in Petrograd until he was arrested in 1929. He was sentenced to exile in Kazakhstan, where he remained for six years. Thus, between 1935 and 1945, without regular employment, he performed various activities as a professor and lecturer until, in 1945, he joined the Pedagogical Institute of Saransk in Mordovia, where he remained until 1975, when he definitively declined.

We highlight Professor Mikhail Bakhtin’s teaching experience during this period of about three years, between 1942 and 1945. This experience was published in an article “for the first time in Russian Philology journal [*Russkaya Sloviésnost*], 1994, no. 2, pp. 47-56 (publication and notes by L.S. Miélikhova),”⁵⁶ assigned by Ludmila Gogotichvíli, with the collaboration of Svetlana Savtchuk (2019, p. 45).

In 1997, under the organization of Serguei G. Botcharov and Liudmila A. Gogotichvíli, the article was published in volume 5 of the works gathered in seven volumes, referring to Bakhtin’s works produced between 1940 and 1960. This text, until then accessible only in English to researchers of Bakhtinian theory in Brazil, was brought to the attention of Brazilians through a translation by Sheila Grillo and Ekaterina Vólkova

⁵² See footnote 7.

⁵³ See footnote 7.

⁵⁴ See footnote 5.

⁵⁵ We could not find any further information about what must have been his debut as a professor.

⁵⁶ In Portuguese: “pela primeira vez na revista *Filologia Russa* [*Russkaya Sloviésnost*], 1994, no. 2, pp. 47-56 (publicação e notas de L.S. Miélikhova).”

Américo in 2013. In addition to translating Bakhtin's text from Russian to Portuguese, the work has an afterword and notes signed by the translators, a presentation by Beth Brait, and an essay assigned by Gogotichvíli that allows the reader to understand the complex reconstitution of the text that was found in manuscript form on notebook sheets of paper (similar to E. Benveniste's last classes). This work is the second leading source of consultation we use to describe Professor Bakhtin's personality traits.

The presentation of the work, signed by Beth Brait, brings the thought-provoking title *Lições de gramática do professor Mikhail M. Bakhtin* [Grammar Lessons from Professor Mikhail M. Bakhtin] and lives up to the description of the profile of the concerned professor and rigorous researcher that he was:

There is an explicit demonstration in this work by Bakhtin that he was aware of the school context and the crisis in language teaching in progress since the beginning of the twentieth century and that his performance consisted, among other things, of reviewing the position of grammar teaching in school, considering that specific stylistics, then at the center of his concerns, could, if articulated with grammar, help teachers and lead students to an active knowledge of procedures characteristic of literary language and also of the language of daily life, of the living language, in use (Brait, 2019, p. 11).⁵⁷

As Brait (2019) observes, Bakhtin's article reveals the intellectual's concern in articulating theory and practice to not only think about the teaching of the mother language but also show teachers "how to do it" in an article that resembles what we currently call a didactic sequence to teach the mother language.

We know much about the philosopher of linguistic and literary studies, authority on the work of Dostoevsky, author of the carnivalization in Rabelais, and founder of the theory of dialogism. However, more needs to be said or written about Professor Bakhtin. We searched the text from the early 1940s because we found indications that show characteristics of Professor Bakhtin that can inspire those who teach or intend to have this profession, as we seek to show below.

⁵⁷ In Portuguese: "Há explicitamente nesse trabalho de Bakhtin a demonstraco de que ele estava atento ao contexto escolar e à crise no ensino de língua em curso desde o início do século XX, e que sua atuação consistia, entre outras coisas, em rever a posico do ensino da gramática na escola, considerando que uma certa estilística, então no centro de suas preocupaces, poderia, se articulada à gramática, auxiliar os professores e levar os alunos a um conhecimento ativo de procedimentos característicos da língua literária e, também, da língua do cotidiano, da língua viva, em uso."

The brief text, approximately twenty pages long, begins with an evaluation of the author's experience teaching grammar in Russian schools. Bakhtin criticized purely grammatical teaching, which did not consider stylistic aspects. However, what draws our attention is the didactic-methodological concern and the researcher's posture toward this master. This is what we can confirm in this excerpt of the text: "To induce the students to understand this for themselves" or in this one: "The students should further be shown" (Bakhtin, 2004, p. 14),⁵⁸ where the professor's concern is highlighted, which is to help students understand the knowledge by themselves.

The text criticizes either the teaching procedures of the time or the methodology teachers use: "Unfortunately, often, our instructors are very poorly equipped to provide such elucidation" (Bakhtin, 2004, p. 15).⁵⁹

Regarding the professor's posture, it is possible to perceive a methodical professor, a rigorous researcher who carefully analyzes many texts his students produce. This is what we found when we read that he had analyzed in detail about 300 essays, written in the classroom and at home, from two groups of 8th grade and found that "In all these essays I encountered only 3 cases of a parataxic sentence (excluding quotations, of course)!" (Bakhtin, 2004, p. 16).⁶⁰

In addition to the typical methodological rigor of the researcher, we meet a professor who was able to learn from his students, as we see in this other passage of the text in which it is possible to see as if we were with a magnifying glass. There is a professor in action, someone who observes the students' writing, raises hypotheses, and projects a way of teaching something that he perceives that students do not know yet:

These dictations and subsequent interviews with students convinced me that, when they encounter a parataxic sentence in a printed text, they have little difficulty understanding it, remember the rules, and almost never make errors in punctuation. But at the same time, they are completely unable to use this form in their own writing and cannot work with it creatively. This is the result of the fact that, in seventh grade, the stylistic significance of this splendid form was never properly explained to them. The students were never made aware of its worth. It should

⁵⁸ BAKHTIN, Mikhail. Dialogic Origin and Dialogic Pedagogy of Grammar. Stylistics in Teaching Russian Language in Secondary School. In: *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, vol. 42, no. 6, November–December 2004, pp. 12–49.

⁵⁹ See footnote 58.

⁶⁰ See footnote 58.

have been demonstrated to them. By means of painstaking stylistic analysis of the characteristics and advantages of this form, the students should have been inculcated with a taste for it, they should have been taught to appreciate parataxis as a most remarkable means of linguistic expression. But how could this have been accomplished? (Bakhtin, 2004, p. 16).⁶¹

The highlighted excerpt points to another element that almost goes unnoticed: the professor's relationship with the students: "These dictations and subsequent interviews with students," says the master. Thus, we discovered that Professor Bakhtin was not a mere bureaucrat of teaching but someone who was close to the learners, listening to them and, most likely, (re)scheduling the classes. Indeed, the coexistence in study groups (circles) with members of multidisciplinary interests shaped the professor's training, who was the *other* of his students, an attentive listener and interlocutor.

Other excerpts from the article justify the analogy with a didactic sequence, as characterized by Brait (2019). This is what we perceive in these segments of Bakhtin's text (2004):⁶²

We direct the students' attention to a certain unwieldiness and lack of euphony in these conjunctions (p. 17).⁶³

We aid the students in coming to their own formulation of the following conclusions from our analysis (p. 18).⁶⁴

The students' attention must be focused only on the components in the second sentence that are new (p. 18).⁶⁵

We direct the students' attention to the form of the verb [...] in the first clause (p. 20).⁶⁶

We help the students reach the appropriate conclusion from our analysis (p. 20).⁶⁷

Next, working with the students, we should draw conclusions from our work on stylistics (p. 22).⁶⁸

All these excerpts show the master's concern in showing the professor how to teach the mother language so that the learning process makes sense for the students,

⁶¹ See footnote 58.

⁶² See footnote 58.

⁶³ See footnote 58.

⁶⁴ See footnote 58.

⁶⁵ See footnote 58.

⁶⁶ See footnote 58.

⁶⁷ See footnote 58.

⁶⁸ See footnote 58.

teaching them a language that only makes sense in the discourse. The lesson comes to an end with the recommendation that

In the ninth grade a complete breakthrough must be achieved, bringing the students out of the dead-end of bookishness onto the thoroughfare of the literate, cultured, and, at the same time, bold and creative language of real life. The depersonalized, bookish language—especially when it naively shows off its bookishness—is a sign of a half-educated writer. A fully cultured and mature person does not use such language (Bakhtin, 2004, p. 24).⁶⁹

Finally, even distant in time and space, we find, in Bakhtin’s pedagogical action, the principles of Paulo Freire (2001) on teaching with ethical, political, and professional responsibility, which requires permanent training based on practice.

Final Thoughts on Three Lives and a Legacy

The text sought to present particularities of the biography of three great authors who lived in the twentieth century and whose theoretical heritage is recorded in the history of language studies. We seek to address a face that we consider little explored by the three authors. Except for the differences, all were, for most of their lives, (also) professors.

The investigation of the authors’ teaching profile led us to know a few relevant coincidences. It revealed that the scientific practice of the three of them has always been intertwined with teaching practice, which shows us an important lesson. Suppose Saussure’s methodical face, concerned with the complexity of the topic to be addressed in the classes of a course for an audience that was not exclusive to language scholars, reveals a professor involved with the methodology. In that case, we learn that there was a professor there, this master who continues to inspire us. The anaphoric reference “master” received new contours by revealing that the professor’s role popularized the scientist of the language.

⁶⁹ See footnote 58.

Benveniste, in turn, as Normand (2006) asserted, was responsible for opening linguistic science to discussion with other areas, such as Sociology, Philosophy, and Psychoanalysis. The little explored face of the linguist-professor was revealed in the posthumous work of the last classes that he taught, whose manuscripts and notes of the famous students show didactic qualities that were little known until then. In addition, through the texts of friends, students, and colleagues, it was possible to meet the curious man who dedicated his life exclusively to linguistic research and whose learning was socialized in courses with original programs and dedicated guidance to students.

As for Mikhail Bakhtin, we know aspects of his biography that brought to light unique didactic-pedagogical characteristics that contribute to defining the profile of the intellectual and philosopher with whom he had identified in maturity. The research revealed a critical professor of the traditional teaching model who is competent in articulating theory and practice and concerned with developing students' autonomy.

These characteristics justify why these three names are excellent and admirable professors for all researchers interested in language. We hope to have brought some novelty to show that they were unusual and inspiring professors beyond their own time, in addition to uncontested researchers and thinkers. Like Paulo Freire, the Brazilian professor of whom we are most proud, the three did not consider research a mere quality in addition to practice. However, they supported the investigative spirit, inseparable from their teaching practice.

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The contents underlying the research text are included in the manuscript.

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.

Reviews I

The original text treats the chosen theme seriously and rigorously; it presents an excellent bibliographic review and fulfills what it announces in the abstract and introduction. Many aspects related to the teaching activities of the three authors, which are the objects of the article, are brought out throughout the text, evidenced by references to the works consulted. However, the final considerations leave something to be desired regarding the reflection on the relationships between the teaching work of the three scholars. Developing this topic a little more is necessary, as this will add even higher quality to the article. It is prudent to make a rigorous linguistic review of the text. APPROVED WITH SUGGESTIONS [Revised]

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Reviewed on April 03, 2024.

Review III

The article “*Saussure, Bakhtin and Benveniste: the Legacy of Three Pillars in Language Teaching and Thought*” presents an unexplored side of the three linguists that make up the current call of this journal, Ferdinand de Saussure, Mikhail Bakhtin and Émile Benveniste, which consists of the teaching practice of these authors. I consider the theme choice original, and the text demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of the bibliography related to these authors and provides essential data about their biographies. Nevertheless, I suggest to the author that the part dedicated to the ‘legacy’ of these scholars about teaching be more developed—if not in the article, in the research from which it stems—considering that I missed a theoretical elaboration on the subject.

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Another point to which I draw attention concerns that, perhaps, the editions referring to the notes of Saussure's students, published by Komatsu and Harris, give a better perspective on Professor Saussure than the CGL. These suggestions may or may not be accepted by the author and do not prevent the approval of the article. APPROVED

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