



Semiotics and discourse analysis: roads between pragmatism and pragmatics

Semiótica e análise do discurso: caminhos entre pragmatismo e pragmática

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Abstract: This article revises some of the main elements within Peirce's general theory of signs and their relationship with discourse analysis. Our discussion focuses on the dialogues between researchers in the areas of semiotics and discourse analysis to follow up interdisciplinary studies on the processes of language signification. The article firstly relates the Peircean *trivium* and discourse analysis; secondly, examines Pignatari's analysis on the relations between verbal and non-verbal codes; and, thirdly, discusses Peirce's footprints in the development of the *Linguistic Turn*, especially through his influence in the works of Wittgenstein, Grice and Austin. The article concludes that such interdisciplinary postmodern dialogues can be used for the development of more grounded modalities of pragmatic discourse analyses.

Keywords: Discourse analysis. Peircean semiotics. Postmodern dialogues.

Resumo: Este artigo revisa e discute alguns dos principais elementos dentro da teoria geral dos signos de Peirce e sua relação com a análise do discurso. Nossa discussão centra-se nos diálogos entre pesquisadores das áreas de semiótica e de análise do discurso para acompanhar estudos interdisciplinares sobre os processos de significação da linguagem. O artigo primeiramente relaciona o *trivium* Peirceano com a análise do discurso; em segundo lugar, examina a análise de Pignatari sobre as relações entre códigos verbais e não verbais; e em terceiro lugar, discute a contribuição de Peirce no desenvolvimento da Virada Linguística, especialmente através de sua influência nos trabalhos de Wittgenstein, Grice e Austin. O artigo conclui que tais diálogos pós-modernos interdisciplinares podem ser usados para o desenvolvimento de modalidades mais bem fundamentadas de análises pragmáticas do discurso.

Palavras-chave: Análise do discurso. Diálogos pós-modernos. Semiótica peirciana.



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1 First considerations

The purpose of this article is firstly to re-establish historical links between Pragmatism and Pragmatics; secondly, between semiotics and discourse analysis; and thirdly, to fill in gaps, correct omissions and reveal Peirce as a “pathfinder” (JAKOBSON, 1980, p. 1) opening new avenues that were later used, often without the necessary credits, by postmodern authors in the fields of language sciences. However, whilst Peircean semiotics still manages to stir intense academic debates among philosophers and semioticians, it remains largely unknown, and it is not properly investigated among discourse analysts.¹

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¹ Based on personal exchanges with professors Nöth and Santaella in the hallways of the 19th EIP PUC/SP, 04-07/05/2019.

Following the paths suggested by Jakobson (1980), we are led first to roads connecting pragmatism and pragmatics. History, theory and practice help us put together a clear enough epistemological working map where two schools of philosophy and a discipline run somewhat independent courses, but eventually converge to help address the problem of meaning. For the record, we are talking about the logical relations among Pragmatism, Philosophy of Language and Pragmatics, which will eventually trace a conceptual map, provide a compass and a logbook to guide discourse analysts interested in the question of meaning through the intricate interdisciplinary fields of language-related studies.

We, therefore, proceed to briefly discuss how Pragmatism and Pragmatics, in the course of time, logically intersect into what we know as Philosophy of Language. But first, we turn our attention to the origins of a significant thought movement called American Pragmatism. Bernstein (2010) credits William James (1842-1910), John Dewey (1851- 1952) and Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), as the founders of an American philosophical movement that flourished circa 1870-1920. They believed that knowledge is only meaningful when associated with action. This philosophy was deeply rooted in the realities of life and the individual's direct experience of the world he inhabited. The movement began in the early 1870s in the short-lived *The Metaphysical Club* (MENAND, 2001), within which American pragmatists reacted against the philosophical ideologies prevalent in the 19th century, with their metaphysical excesses and very abstract conceptions about truth and reality – which Bernstein (2010) expertly described as Cartesian anxiety. Peirce, James and Dewey felt the need to reform, revolutionise, and naturalise concepts such as Kant's normative reason and Hegel's historicism. They thus developed pragmatism as a philosophy of practice and engagement with issues of real importance to daily routines (SILVA; EFKEN, 2020). American pragmatism thus naturally evolved into three independent perspectives: the psychological pragmatism of James, the ethical pragmatism of Dewey and the logical pragmatism of Peirce (SILVA, 2021). However, this paper is chiefly concerned with Peirce's semiotics and a more detailed discussion of his philosophical elaborations, related today to discourse analysis, will be developed in section 1 of the present article.

The second point we want to equally, but briefly, address now is concerned with the roots and development of pragmatics. Bublitz and Norrick (2011, p. 6) state that “despite its roots in philosophy, classical rhetorical tradition and stylistics, pragmatics is a relatively recent discipline within linguistics”. The authors attribute to C.S. Peirce and C. Morris the introduction of semiotics into pragmatics early in the twentieth century. The first pragmatic studies referring to *performance phenomena* were only developed between the early 1950s and late 1960s by ordinary language philosophers such as Wittgenstein, Austin and Ryle. The classic division between syntax (signs in relation to other signs), semantics (signs in relation to objects) and pragmatics (signs in relation to interpreters) is attributed to Morris, who distinguished three separate *dimensions of semiosis* within his science of signs and helped establish a close relation between language use and social context. Nevertheless, we are still faced with the formidable challenge of having to pick our way through “the exceptionally vast, unusually heterogeneous and still rapidly expanding field of pragmatics” (BUBLITZ; NORRICK, 2011, p. 16).

In Brazil, Rajagopalan (1999, p. 6) admits that “pragmatics is still seen by many scholars, not without reason, as a real bag of cats”. The author reveals that: “the interest of pragmatics, for me, has always been the inexistence of the discipline itself – in fact, it seems much more sensible to speak of pragmatics, in the plural” (Idem). Marcuschi (1996, p. 21-22) also warns that pragmatic studies among us need a “more technical and theoretically centered characterization” due to the confusing picture he saw when he proposed to survey the interest of researchers in different subareas of linguistics and found studies impregnated with semantics and pragmatics, but without a clear definition of either.

Pinto's (2012, p. 55) overview of pragmatic studies in Brazil also reveal ambiguities and controversies. The author notes that the question “how can linguistic studies classified as pragmatic be defined?” can generate answers as varied as the number of people who are willing to answer it. For Pinto, pragmatic studies analyze language according to the concepts of society and communication,

discarded by saussurean linguistics in its subtraction of speech. Pragmatic studies are made up of three main groups: (i) the American pragmatism of William James; (ii) the studies of speech acts in Austin’s philosophy of language; and (iii) interdisciplinary studies focusing on social, class, gender, racial and cultural relations influenced by the Bakhtin Circle, among others.

We proceed with our analysis and discussion to gather more information on the relevant connections between pragmatism and pragmatics and their importance for the development of a comprehensive overview of the different possibilities of meaning-related language studies. In *Dialogues between Semiotics and Discourse Analysis*, we deal with the relations between the Peircean semiotic *trivium*, its categoriology and discourse analysis. In *Semiotics and Literature*, we analyse the relationships between verbal and non-verbal codes; prose and poetry; paradigm and phrase; similarity and contiguity. In *Semiotics and Pragmatics*, the interdependence between the *Pragmatic* and the *Linguistic Turns* come into focus when we point to Peirce’s influence on the second Wittgenstein and the development of concepts such as *implicatures*, *cooperation*, *shared knowledge*, and *conversation strategies* in Grice; *assertion and energy*, *commitment and ethical responsibility in speech* in Austin. The article concludes with considerations on the need to rescue and establish such interdisciplinary dialogues in the philosophy of language in order to pave new avenues for the development of more pragmatic-oriented discourse analyses.

2 Dialogues between Semiotics and Discourse Analysis

Nöth (2000) describes Peirce as a polymath who has made significant contributions to many fields of study, from phenomenology to astronomy and physics to metaphysics. Only about 12,000 pages of his writings have been published, but that there are still about 90,000 pages unpublished manuscripts where language and linguistics are recurring topics. Manuscript MS 1184, for example, presents an analysis of the pronunciation of Shakespearean English. Despite the growing influence of Peirce’s general semiotics in contemporary linguistics, his conceptions and insights about language remain practically unexplored today (NÖTH, 2000). Although Peirce had “no claim to being a linguist” (CP 2328), the catalogue of his publications and manuscripts lists no less than 127 articles classified as *linguistic* and contains references to many other manuscripts dealing with different aspects of language (MS 427; MS 1135-1261) such as phonetics, graphemes, morphology, grammar, lexicography, semantics, translation studies, historical and evolutionary linguistics, general and comparative linguistics. Peirce wrote articles on aspects of Greek, Latin, German, Italian, Spanish, French, Basque (MS 1226-1247) and even one on Arabic grammar (MS 1243) (NÖTH, 2000).

Nöth (2016) introduces us to Peirce as a reader and critic of universal literature and highlights elements and principles of what we now call discourse analysis within the framework of his semiotic *trivium* composed of *speculative grammar*, *critical logic* and *speculative rhetoric*. His *trivium* allows us to focus on discourse analysis as interpretation, reasoning, and the treatment of the text as an argument. Peirce classified poets, writers, novelists and playwrights as *men of feeling*, in contrast to *men of action* and *men of thought*, a tripartition evidently inspired by his cenopitagoric categoriology.

Table 01: Categories and Classes of Signs

CENOPITAGORIC CATEGORIES	CLASSES OF SIGN		
	REPRESENTAMEN/ SIGN	SEMIOTIC OBJECT	INTERPRETANT
1. Firstness (<i>Quality</i>)	1. <i>Qualissign</i>	1. <i>Icon</i>	1. <i>Rema</i>
2. Secondness (<i>Relation</i>)	2. <i>Sinsign</i>	2. <i>Index</i>	2. <i>Dicissign</i>
3. Thirdness (<i>Representation</i>)	3. <i>Legissign</i>	3. <i>Symbol</i>	3. <i>Argument</i>

Source: Silva (2021, p. 62).

Poets, scientists, and philosophers work with three different types of reality, according to Peirce. The reality of what really exists belongs to only one of the three, which he calls the reality of Secondness. The other two types are the realities of Firstness and Thirdness, respectively (NÖTH, 2016). Firstness is the reality of the possible, Thirdness is the reality of laws, habits and rules. This extended conception of reality leads Peirce to recognise the affinity between fiction and scientific texts. Since writers, scientists and philosophers work in different realities, Firstness is the reality of poetry and fiction, Secondness is the reality of natural scientists and Thirdness is the reality of philosophers. Each of these three realities forces its observers to search for “tracks and traces of meaning in the domain of their reality in order to transform them into intelligible forms” (NÖTH, 2016, p. 36-37). The foundations of the Peircean approach to discourse analysis, continues Nöth (2016), are found in its comprehensive, though little-known, logical theory or “one General science of the nature of signs” (CP 8.378). These fundamentals of general semiotics belong to a *trivium* inspired by the order of the three medieval liberal arts – grammar, logic and rhetoric. Peirce adopts the terms *speculative grammar*, *critical logic* and *speculative rhetoric*, which brings us to the Morrisian triad of *syntax*, *semantics* and *pragmatics*. Peirce defines the first branch of his *trivium*, speculative grammar, as the study of the “general conditions of symbols and other signs having the significant character” (CP 2.93). Also, speculative grammar is the “general theory of the nature and meanings of signs, whether they be icons, indexes or symbols” (CP 1.191). Peircean categoriology deals mainly with discourse analysis according to the relations between: sign/sign, sign/object and sign/interpretant (see Table 01 above). Nöth (2016) notes that the themes of speculative grammar are not very different from the themes of linguistic grammar morphology and syntax. However, Peirce’s general typology of signs works with a much broader conception of language that goes far beyond the specific structures of natural languages.

The second branch of general semiotics, critical logic, deals specifically with the relations between signs and their objects. “It is [...] the formal science of the conditions of the truth of representations” (CP 2.229). And, the third branch of general semiotics, speculative rhetoric, aims to “study the necessary conditions of the transmission of meaning by signs from mind to mind and from one state of mind to another” (CP 1.444). Peirce, unlike in traditional rhetoric, extends his definition beyond the dialogues between speaker and listener and includes the analysis of inner dialogues in the thinking of individuals, thinking as the language of the soul, as in Plato’s formulation. The sequence of our thoughts is a dialogical discourse because thinking is a process that “always proceeds in the form of a dialogue – a dialogue between different phases of the ego” (CP 4.6).

Santaella and Nöth (2004) understand that speculative rhetoric is also a semiotic theory of communication, as it studies “the formal conditions of force of symbols, or their power of appealing to a mind” (CP 1.559). In addition, Nöth and Gurick (2011) also note that, since the beginning of the 20th century, under the influence of Carnap and Morris (1938), the Peircean *trivium* served as an inspiration in linguistics and in the philosophy of language for the establishment of a less ambitious *trivium*- usually without recognition of its Peircean roots. Syntax, semantics and pragmatics constitute three branches of contemporary linguistics that clearly correspond to Peirce’s *trivium*. The expression *discourse analysis* is not part of the Peircean technical vocabulary, who prefers the hermeneutic term *discourse interpretation* or sign *interpretation* or *reasoning* (NÖTH, 2016). Peirce says: “if, by reasoning [...] we mean ‘any process by which knowledge already possessed by a mind is led to greater knowledge’, [...] we recognise that any interpretation of a sign is reasoning” (MS 667).

Nöth (2016) highlights three characteristics of a semiotic discourse analysis: the self-generation of interpretations, its iconicity (see column 03 in Table 01 above) and the dialogism of discourse. The first characteristic refers to the listener or interpreter. Peirce again innovates when he affirms that it is not the interpreter who creates an interpretation, but it is the discourse that is interpreted, since it is the sign itself that creates its interpretation in a semiotic process. The whole purpose of a sign

is to be interpreted in another sign; and his whole claim lies in the special character he attributes to that interpretation: “When a sign determines an interpretation of itself in another sign, it produces an effect outside itself, a physical effect [...] in an indisputable sense” (CP 8.191). The second semiotic characteristic of the discourse is revealed in the iconicity and indexicality (see column 03 in Table 01 above) of the process of its interpretation. Discourse consists essentially of symbolic signs, but their interpretation process is built from iconic and indexical signs. Symbols cannot produce interpretations because they are too abstract. “[...] it is by icons only that we really reason, and abstract statements are valueless in reasoning except so far as they aid us to construct diagrams” (CP 4.127). Symbols, indexes and icons are the three types of signs equally “indispensable in all reasoning” (CP 1.369), but diagrams, “the icons of intelligible relations” (CP 4.531), are the signs which make speech transparent for understanding and guarantee clarity of reasoning. The third semiotic characteristic of discourse as an aspect linked to the dialogical nature of reasoning and thinking in general. Nöth (2016) reiterates the connections between speculative rhetoric and dialogism in Peirce. Any speech and any reasoning are dialogical, even when there is only one author. Even thought, which looks like an inner monologue, is a kind of internal conversation. Peirce characterizes thought as a dialogue in which the “self” seeks the consent of a “deeper” self (CP 6.338) and this is an anticipation of similar concepts that later appeared in Bakhtin’s discursive semantics.

Nöth (2016) also emphasizes the breadth and scope of the concept of the sign in Peirce, whose definition is not restricted to words, propositions, arguments, signs or symptoms, but also includes *books, poems, essays, short stories, novels, prayers, plays, operas, newspaper articles, scientific reports and mathematical tests, etc.* Therefore, a sign may be a constituent part of a more complex sign, but all parts are also rightful signs. “All words, books and other conventional signs are symbols” (CP 2.292). Libraries, literature, language or anything else composed of words are examples of signs. Even man as such is a sign, because “[...] the fact that every thought is a sign, taken in conjunction with the fact that life is a train of thoughts, proves that man is a sign” (CP 5.314). At the same time, the entire universe is a sign, a “great symbol of God’s purpose, working out its conclusions in living realities” (CP 5.119).

Queiroz, Emmeche and El-Hani (2010) analyse another important aspect in Peirce’s dialogue with post-modernity and highlight how the plasticity of Peircean semiotics fits into several models of research on meaning in different areas of knowledge involving research today about language and communication between sentient and non-sentient beings. Peirce defined semiosis (signification process) as “an irreducible triadic relationship between *sign-object-interpretant* (S-O-I)” (see Table 01 above) (PEIRCE, 1998, p. 487). The authors point out that one of the most notable features of Peirce’s theory of signs is its dynamic nature. Its focus is not on content, essence or substance, but on the dynamic relationships between signs. As a scientist interested in natural processes, Peirce conceived his semiosis basically as a process in which the triads are systematically linked to each other in order to form chains. Table 01 above shows how categories and classes are combined, interchanged and exchanged to generate 10 signs from 09 classes, according to the perspective of the *sign*, the *object* and the *interpretant*. It is important to distinguish between the interpreter, the system that interprets the sign, and the *interpretant*, the meaning of the sign. The interpreter is described by Peirce as a “*quasi-mind*” (CP 4.536), a description that requires a clear recognition that Peirce’s broad concept of *mind* treats language as an ability present not only in beings endowed with rational intelligence. Biosemiosis, for example, can be found in the complex cell transcription machinery that synthesizes RNA from a DNA chain or in a membrane receptor that recognizes a certain hormone or an insect that recognizes a leaf among several other objects in a garden (QUEIROZ; EMMECHE; EL-HANI, 2010).

3 Semiotics and Literature: dialogues between Peirce and Pignatari

Among the most fruitful dialogues between Peirce and post-modernity, we find the insightful contributions of Décio Pignatari² on the relationship between semiotics and literature. Pignatari, poet, publicist, writer, translator and semiotician, analyses the importance of semiotics for the study of literature, since it transits between the universes of textual and non-textual signs. Semiotics, “a science that helps to read the world” (PIGNATARI, 2004, p. 9), allows the understanding of the non-verbal sign universe, as well as the very nature of verbal signs in relation to other signs. Peirce conceived his semiotic theory as a study of language as logic, the result of a labour of more than 40 years that, unfortunately, has gone a long time without recognition. His semiotics was developed from a dialectic logic, unlike Saussure, who defended an Aristotelian positivist logic. Differently from saussurean restrictive dichotomies (signifier/signified), Peirce develops his work based on a complex triad (sign, object and interpretant) and its multiple interlacements and possibilities.

Pignatari (2004) points out that Peircean semiotics begins by overcoming the classic conflict between *form* and *content* by including the pragmatic notion of *interpretant*, allowing for a better understanding of the processes of signification in language. Peirce describes the *icon* as a sign of the possible qualities of verbal and non-verbal universes, the *index* is described as a sign of the relations between verbal and non-verbal objects, whereas the *symbol* is used primarily in the organisation of verbal systems – it is the sign of generalisation and the norm. Certain signs “tend to favour discreet and specific forms and articulations” (2004, p. 113). The icon tends to create paramorphisms articulated by parataxis – paronomasia and puns articulated by coordination. The symbol, on the other hand, requires metonymy organised by hypotaxis – relationships and substitutions articulated by subordination. Pignatari points to a predominance and a greater prestige of the verbal written code over other codes and attributes this phenomenon to the invention of the press during the Industrial Revolution. The mechanised word strongly contributed to establish the hegemonic code of the written word as a translator of the other codes. However, at the same time, the industry began to peripherally generate means of producing iconic, non-verbal signs from the end of the 17th century such as lithography, photography, metallic structures (bridges, towers and skyscrapers), the phonograph, and culminating in the emergence of new technologies such as cinema, radio, television and holography. Today, it is the written language that retreats before the advance of iconic codes and other sign systems. Machado de Assis and Edgar A. Poe worked in typography and journalism related activities; Raul Pompéia was a writer, cartoonist, and draftsman; Manuel Bandeira and Mário de Andrade studied music; Oswald de Andrade had connections with the cinema; João Cabral’s poetry includes elements of architecture and painting; and the exploits of *Poesia Concreta*³ are already “deliberately intersignic” (2004, p. 115).⁴ Pignatari (2004) understands that, although under a verbal disguise, all poetry and literature are in fact intersignic and that the symbolic function in poetry, as Jakobson⁵ has well observed, depends on a superposition of the paradigm over the syntagma.

Signs can be associated by similarity, by analogy, that is, around a *paradigmatic axis*, characterized as icons. They can also be associated by contiguity around a *syntagmatic axis* and represented as symbols. The poetic phenomenon consists in the transformation of symbols into icons or a more iconic treatment of the verbal sign. Only semiotics is able to break the linearity of speech and reveal its nature and logic in the form of an iconic-diagrammatic syntagma or phrase. Pignatari’s statements about the

2 Décio Pignatari played a very important role in the introduction and growth of pragmatism in Brazil. See The Reception of Peirce in Brazil (SANTAELLA, 2014).

3 Brazilian Poetry movement (circa 1955) which explored the graphic patterns of letters, words, or symbols rather than by the conventional meaning of words, the critical evolution of forms through its taking into account graphic space as a structural agent (<https://www.britannica.com/art/concrete-poetry>).

4 All authors are Brazilian, with the exception of Poe.

5 The impact of Jakobson’s talks on Peirce in Brazil is described in detail in Santaella (2014).

close links between semiotics and literature are further illustrated through the semiotic cracking of the ciphers and encryptions present in Poe's works such as *The Gold Bug*. Pignatari (2004) draws a striking analogy between the manual composition of words and phrases in the work of the typographer and the logical-aesthetic composition in the writer's craft. Recalling that Poe, besides being a writer, poet and literary critic, was also an editor and, therefore, familiarised with typographic processes. His poetic function is pervaded by anagrammatic processes, as in the short story *William Wilson* (I am Wilson), and hypogrammatic as in the poem *The Raven*. We owe to Jakobson's extraordinary analysis the discovery that Raven is the mirror image of *never*, as the single and repeated response of the grim bird to the constant questions of its tortured interlocutor.

Pignatari attributes to David Hume the distinction between two basic forms of association: contiguity and similarity. However, he observes that the association by contiguity receives a privileged treatment for creating an illusion mainly in the western linguistic systems due to the greater prestige of the written word. The classical Aristotelian logic itself is linear, that is, a logic based on the Greek language and organised by contiguity. Our alphabet, "the most powerful logical machine, a discrete and highly abstract source of signals, [...]" (PIGNATARI, 2004, p. 166), is an open system of combinatorial permutations that allows the formation of words syntagmatically, linked essentially by logical principles. The predicates, in turn, are organised hierarchically by connecting elements, such as subordinate or coordinating conjunctions (hypotaxis) or, alternatively, by simply juxtaposed clauses and without conjunctions (parataxis).

Although the western mind leans towards the contiguity of verbal language and the word is taken as the central code that offers the best translation of the sign, Pignatari defends the possibility that there is another type of logic organised by similarity and argues that European semiology is still very much linked to semantics, which prevents a clearer demarcation between semantics and pragmatics. The author also points to unavoidable differences in orientation on the relationship between semiology and linguistics. While Roland Barthes states that the former is a branch of the latter, Cobley (2001) argues that it is linguistics that is part of semiology and justifies his claim based on the fact that we need a theory of the sign capable of covering the almost unimaginable extent different types of sign activity present in nature, far beyond the narrow limits of the natural languages investigated by linguistics.

The core of Pignatari's (2004) argument about the affinities and symmetries between semiotics and literature is in the operations and interactions between Hume's paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes. Peirce calls them "primary principles of association" (CP 7.391) and defines similarity (paradigmatic axis) "as a mode of association by the inward nature of ideas and of mind" (CP 7.392). And Peirce defines contiguity (syntagmatic axis) "as the suggestion by an idea of another associated with it, not by the nature of thought, but by *experience* or the course of life" (CP 7.391). Peirce thus maintains that contiguous association depends on how our direct and immediate experiences are organised as parts within a whole. The process of association by similarity, on the other hand, is much more complex because it involves the perception and organisation of essences, qualities and sensations in independent blocks, "that which is equal to itself"⁶ and not part of something. Similarity association requires the use of memory and reflection to remember, compare and contrast. "All the suggestions of pure mathematics, of which there is a vast body, are associations by resemblance" (CP 7.392).

The table below presents different perspectives, possibilities and combinations of the interactions between the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes.

6 See *Fedon*, middle period dialogue of Plato.

Table 02. Sign and its Axes

Sign				
SIMILARITY		CONTIGUITY		
analogic	<i>S</i>			logic
icon	<i>I</i>			symbol
non-verbal	<i>N</i>		<i>D</i>	verbal
arts	<i>S</i>		<i>I</i>	science
poetry	<i>I</i>		<i>C</i>	prose
parataxis	<i>G</i>		<i>E</i>	hypotaxis
East	<i>N</i>		<i>N</i>	West
paronomasia/metaphor			<i>T</i>	metonym
firstness				thirdness
model				concept
simultaneity				linearity
synchrony		<i>I</i>		diachrony
paradigm		<i>N</i>		syntagma
signified		<i>D</i>		signifier
form		<i>E</i>		content
synthesis		<i>X</i>		analysis
unconscious				conscious
right lobe of brain				Left lobe of brain
<i>INTERPRETANT</i>				

Source: Pignatari (2004, p. 186).

The processes of language signification are built from the joint or alternate work of these two axes. However, Pignatari maintains in his analyses that the relations between semiotics and literature are predominantly organised according to similarity paradigms.

4 Semiotics and Pragmatics: dialogues between Peirce, Austin and Grice

We find this particular section of great interest for fellow discourse analysts because it contributes with significant historical references for our conceptual map and helps to point out the origins and trace the movements of what we call today the *Linguistic Turn* in ordinary philosophy. In addition, according to Rorty (1967; 1992), besides ordinary language philosophy, the *Linguistic Turn* also includes Ideal Language. Bernstein (2010), Hookway (2011), Misak (2017) and Silva (2021) argue that a *Pragmatic Turn* preceded and informed the development of the *Linguistic Turn* and that the influence of Peirce can be seen in the works of the later Wittgenstein and other ordinary language philosophers. Due to the limited space of this paper, we turn our attention to Grice and Austin.

Pietarinen (2006) argues that many of the pragmatic notions that are commonly attributed to Grice or are related to his work on pragmatics, such as assertion, implicatures, cooperation, shared knowledge and conversational strategies, have their origins in the logic or theory of signs of Peirce. Both Grice and Peirce, states Pietarinen, based their theories on normative rationality, antipsychologism and on the relevance of assertions. With respect to the post-Gricean era of pragmatics, theories of relevance can be seen as having been guided, albeit unconsciously, by Peirce's pragmatic agenda.

In this dialogue between Peirce, Austin and Grice, Pietarinen (2006) serves as a mediator and asks whether Grice, recognised for his fundamental contributions to the pragmatic discipline, would not have developed his work from Peirce's original formulations. The central concept about the relationship between assertion and energy is a recurring theme in the thinking of these three authors. Peirce's

semiotics, Austin's theory of speech acts and Grice's pragmatics describe orbits around this logical axis. For Peirce, each statement has a degree of energy, that is, there is no assertion or judgment unless there is someone for whom such statements or judgments can be accepted as propositions. If that someone accepts a proposition, it becomes a judgment, and if that one is accepted, we will finally have the assertion of a proposition. Peirce thus describes the logical process of signification in the energy exchanges that organise discourse between speakers and listeners. Pietarinen (2006) interprets Peirce's categorical statement about the energy degree of the statements as a definite and meaningful idea. The act of affirming or asserting must be considered analogous to actions between objects in a physical sense. Assertions are statements about the validity of a given situation, system or model and exert a kind of force on the listener, mainly because such validity is mutually testable and verifiable. Thus, statements become binding because they represent commitments and assume responsibility. Both Peirce and Grice, understand that the different energy levels in the assertions determine their usefulness, success and failures in the contexts of language exchanges. Pietarinen (2006) further argues that, in the specific case of assertions, Peirce anticipated several formulations that appeared much later in speech acts theory.

Including Austin in the dialogue, Pietarinen reports that Austin found Peirce's semiotics to be overly ambitious and vague: "With all his 66 sign divisions, Peirce does not, I believe, distinguish between a phrase and a statement" (PIETARINEN, 1960, p. 87). Austin embarked on his own project to develop a more practical and formal performative version of his theory of speech acts in the form of a dichotomy between illocutionary and perlocutionary forces. These notions of force, beyond any semantic analysis of meaning, made it possible to characterise pragmatics as an autonomous discipline separate from the aims of semantics. Pietarinen (2006) opportunely clarifies that Peirce developed, decades earlier, a broader and more in-depth discussion of the relationship between language and energy in terms of its effects and consequences and assumed commitments and responsibilities.

Every new concept first comes to the mind in a judgment [...] and a judgment is something that *ripens* in the mind, [...] the ripe judgment, at least, involves an element closely analogous to *assertion*. But what is that? [...] we can select for examination a very formal assertion [...] If a man desires to assert anything very solemnly, he takes steps to go before a magistrate or notary and take a binding oath to it. Taking an oath [...] is not mere saying, but is *doing*. The law, I believe, calls it an "act". It would be followed by very real effects, in case the substance of what is asserted should be proved untrue. This ingredient, the assuming of responsibility, which is so prominent in solemn assertion, must be present in every genuine assertion. For clearly, every assertion involves an effort to make the intended interpreter believe what is asserted, to which end a reason for believing it must be furnished. (CP 5.546, italics and bold in the original).

As we know, this concept of *asserting* is *doing* forms the backbone of Austin's speech act theory: "We were to consider, you will remember, some cases and senses (only some, Heaven help us!) in which to *say* something is to *do* something; or in which *by* saying or *in* saying something we are doing something" (AUSTIN, 1955, p. 12, italics in the original).

As for Grice, recognised in the late 20th century for having virtually redefined the pragmatic discipline, Pietarinen (2006) warns us that this historical mistake does not take into account Peirce's legacy. Pietarinen supports his argument based on two passages. In the first, he draws our attention to the following statement by Peirce:

[...] honest people, when not joking, intend to make the meaning of their words determinate, so that there shall be no latitude of interpretation at all. [...] the character of their meaning consists in the implications and non-implications of their words;

and they intend to fix what is implied and what is not implied. They believe that they succeed in doing so, and if their chat is about the theory of numbers, perhaps they may. But the further their topics are from such precis, or “abstract,” subjects, the less possibility is there of such precision of speech. (CP 5.447).

Pietarinen (2006) contrasts the above passage with Grice’s text:

I wish to represent a certain subclass of unconventional implicatures, which I will call conversational implicatures, as being essentially connected to certain general characteristics of the discourse; [...] Our conversations usually do not consist of a succession of disconnected comments [...] they are characteristically cooperative efforts; and each participant recognises in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes. [...] We can then formulate an approximate general principle that participants (*ceteris paribus*) are expected to observe, namely: make your conversational contribution as expected, at the appropriate time, within the logic of the information exchange in which you are involved. We can call this the Cooperative Principle (GRICE, 1989, p. 26).

Pietarinen (2006) highlights the affinities between the two quotes. Both Peirce and Grice attribute the success of communication to the common purposes shared between the speaker and the interlocutor, who are responsible for starting a process of analysing the meanings of a sign. In addition, the notion of *honest people* defended by Peirce seems to be the origin of Grice’s *quality maxim*, consisting of principles such as: “Try to make a contribution that is true”, “Don’t say what you believe to be false” and “Don’t say what you lack adequate evidence for” (GRICE, 1989, p. 27). Pietarinen (2006) notes yet another intriguing identification between Grice’s pragmatics and Peirce’s pragmatism. In *Utterer’s meaning and intentions*, Grice refers to a three-way characterisation of *correlation modes*, which he describes as the terms “iconic”, “associative” and “conventional” (GRICE, 1989, p. 113). This categorisation of Grice’s corresponds almost exactly to the categoriology of the sign in relation to its object in Peirce, where the terms used are icon, index and symbol (column 03, Table 01 above). The author, however, considers the possibility that the convergences between Peirce and Grice’s thinking occurred for the simple reason that both shared mutual interests in the processes of signification in language. Nevertheless, he argues that there is evidence of a more direct influence by Peirce on Grice, including the use of typically Peircean terms as in the case of *interpretant*, which appears 11 times in Grice’s text (1989, p. 34, 36, 131, 301, 302). Although the term *interpretant* is of Peircean origin, Grice does not quote Peirce and does not reveal where the term was taken from. Pietarinen (2006) considers the hypothesis that part of the terms used above by Grice came from Morris, an author clearly inspired by Peirce’s theories, but not quoted by Grice either.

We subscribe to Pietarinen’s thesis that perhaps this confluence developed in the direction of Peirce’s pragmatism and, later, taken up by Morris and Grice’s pragmatics, point to a common origin, this time duly cited by Grice (1989), that is, Kant’s treatises on moral philosophy. This view is also shared by Koyama (2011) who defines Peirce and other ordinary language philosophers as Neo-Kantians. Grice’s implicatures, assumptions and maxims seem to have emanated from Kantian concepts of rationality and reason. The *principle of honesty* in Grice, for example, reminds one of Kant’s *categorical imperative* as a compass and moral justification for the need for a pragmatics of communication built around ethics in discourse.

5 Final considerations

For Nöth (2000), Peirce is better known today as the creator of general semiotics than a researcher concerned with questions of language. Ironically, the growing advances in the fields of cognitive

linguistics, diachronic linguistics, linguistic semantics and pragmatic and textual linguistics are largely due to his insights. The problem is that Peirce or the *Peircespeak* needs first to be translated and then discussed within familiar *vocabularies*, to use Rorty's expression. Thus, the purpose of this paper was to rescue and establish dialogues between Peirce and postmodern thinking to (re)discover bridges between different disciplines that, despite their different agendas, contexts and circumstances, share common interests such as the relations of meaning and language. Bernstein (2010) states that the conventional divisions that separate different movements and disciplines often obscure common themes of investigation. However, when we pay attention to what different thinkers are saying and doing, a new panorama emerges where it is possible to identify what Dewey expertly called "continuities and relations" (1998a, p. ix). We believe that it makes more sense to try to understand Peirce in comparison and contrast to divergent approaches. Noth (2000) analyses Peircean categoriology in contrast to what we currently call discourse analysis and describes the main characteristics of Peirce's semiotic approach. Pignatari (2004) uses Saussurean dichotomies to explain Peircean trichotomies and highlights the predominance of the paradigmatic axis (similarity) over the syntagmatic axis (contiguity) and, therefore, of iconicity and indexicality, in the construction of symbolism in literature. Pietarinen (2006) reveals a significant dialogue between Peircean semiotics and Austin's speech acts theory and Grice's pragmatics. This is the science that Fiorin (2008) called *participation*, not *exclusion regime*. The participation regime is based on the comparison between the equal and the unequal to identify convergences and confluences that, in the final analysis, can contribute to the development of new, better-founded categories of semiotic-pragmatic discourse analysis which are required for the study of language as a more encompassing phenomenon that goes well beyond natural languages.

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