

Discourse analysis and ethnomethodological discourse analysis*

Análises do discurso e abordagem etnometodológica do discurso

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to present and discuss a range of theoretical perspectives towards discursive phenomena, in particular the different research techniques broadly known as , as well as the . After presenting the core assumptions of these approaches, we discuss their potential to analyze phenomena of discursive interaction, face-to-face or technologically mediated. We believe that, by focusing on the pragmatic aspects of discourse, an ethnomethodological approach to discourse may represent an important contribution for media interaction studies.

Keywords: Communication, discourse analysis, ethnomethodology, social interaction

RESUMO

O objetivo deste texto é apresentar e discutir diferentes perspectivas teóricas aplicadas à compreensão dos fenômenos discursivos, em particular as diferentes técnicas denominadas e a chamada . Após apresentar os principais elementos dessas perspectivas, discutimos o seu potencial analítico para explorar fenômenos de interação discursiva, tanto face a face quanto tecnologicamente mediada. Acreditamos que, ao privilegiar a dimensão pragmática dos fenômenos de produção discursiva, a abordagem etnometodológica do discurso pode representar um importante contributo para os estudos de interações midiáticas.

Palavras-chave: Comunicação, análise do discurso, etnometodologia, interação social

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INTRODUCTION

CURRENTLY, WHEN WE use the term discourse, we are building a metaphor and, with this metaphor, we may be designating different objects of our experience. We do not notice the metaphorical meaning of the term because we have forgotten its origin, because we are before what Paul Ricoeur named dead metaphor. In fact, the term *discourse* is derived from the Latin noun *discursus*, which is a nominalization of the Latin verb *discurrere* that means to run (*currere*) back and forth, in different directions (*dis-*). The Romans would say, for example, *milites discurrent*, meaning that soldiers, disoriented on the battlefield, *ran in all directions*. As such, a discourse is different from a concourse, a running together (*cum-*), or a course, a race through (*cur-*) anything. In the same way, we frequently use the term text, which is another metaphorical expression. It is derived from the Latin term *texere*, which means to weave, and with this metaphor we emphasize the fact of a text being a yarn interlacement, the utterances, arranged in such a way that results in a given configuration, a fabric, a text.

It shall be mentioned that we did not aim at erudition when recalling the etymology of the term discourse, but at showing the metaphorical nature of the term instead and, thus, making understandable that the context of an object of study with this designation stems from its linguistic construction. On these grounds, we can define boundaries to set us apart from the naive representationist illusion according to which the researcher would have direct access to reality, as if his/her object of study were independent from the context accomplished by the term used to designate it.

The aim of this paper is to present and discuss a range of theoretical perspectives towards the understanding of the phenomena that is given the name of discursive, particularly the ones that tend to be identified, sometimes under the generic term *discourse analysis*, sometimes under the call *ethnomethodological approach to discourse*. For the sake of discussion, after presenting the aspects of these approaches, we discuss its potential to analytically explore phenomena of discursive interaction, both face to face and in media environments. We believe that, by focusing on the pragmatic and interactional aspects of discursive phenomena, the ethnomethodological discourse may represent an important contribution to the studies of media interactions. Additionally, the contributions from a range of approaches to discourse are explained and illustrated with data collected from fieldwork conducted in digital media environments (Braga, 2008). With the intention of preventing misunderstandings, we would like to recall that discourses produced in digital environments have the advantage of, on the one hand, deriving from media and, on the another one, showing,

through its study, its eminently interactional nature. Despite its specificity, the discourses produced in digital media environments mobilize significant part of conversational devices that people make use in their spontaneous interactions¹.

THE DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

There are innumerable definitions for discourse; however, as recognized by the editors of *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (Schiffrin, Tannen & Hamilton, 2003: 1-2), we think we can group them into three sets. The first one comprises definitions that are commonly proposed by linguists who are inspired by structuralism: *discourse is any range of expressions of natural language that comprises two or more phrases or clauses*. The second one is considered by authors who have a pragmatic conception of language: *discourse is the usage that human beings make of natural language*². And finally, the third combines definitions proposed by social scientists and, in particular, by scholars of communication: *discourse is any manifestation or expression, verbal and/or nonverbal, of a social practice*. Each of these definitions stems from specific theoretical presuppositions and, thus, not only delimits objects of observation, but also deals with problems and follows specific paths of investigation.

Therefore, the first definition assumes that language is an organized system of expressive units that possess a signification that is independent of its usage and, therefore, make possible the signification of what speakers say. Thus, language would be a competence, innate to human beings and independent of how they use it. The signification of expressions that people speak would be, therefore, immanent to the system of language. When approaching discourse, authors of this conception aim at investigating how people apply this linguistic system that is innate to humankind; how they use it when referring to the world; and which processes the linguistic system possesses so that the discourses are cohesive and coherent. Thus, the matters of importance of this approach are the referential processes as well as the mechanisms that assure cohesion and coherence to the texts.

Next, the second definition is used by authors who have a pragmatic conception of language, which assumes that language is an institution that results from behaviors unchained by the organism in the course of interactions that are established with other organisms to which it is guided. Discourse would be, then, an activity, and this approach seeks to discover the devices that unchain this activity, through the observation of what people say, as well as the regularities to which the discursive behaviors of people obey. This definition broadens the scope of the discourse concept of the first definition, since the discourse would not only be formed by linguistic expressions, but also by prosodic components

1. Among its specificities, the discourses of media-tized nature mobilize just some resources of face to face interactions, in accordance with the potentialities of the media technical devices. Thus, for example, the telephonic interactions mobilize the auditory resources to the detriment of the visual, gestural and olfactory and tactile, while television interactions value the visual, gestural and auditory to the detriment of the olfactory and tactile resources. We believe that it is only in face to face interactions that all the interactional devices and all its components are mobilized and, therefore, it is only in comparison with them that the interactions in media environments can be defined.

2. The expression *natural language* refers to the ones which use languages as, for example, Portuguese, French or English or Swahili; it is opposed to the expression *artificial languages*, which refers to formal languages that possess a syntax but do not have semantics, such as, for example, mathematics or computer languages.

and mimic-gestural language that follow verbal behaviors unchained by social interactions. Discourse analysis inspired by works of T. Van Dijk (2011), for example, adopt this second definition of discourse.

Given that this second definition of discourse is adopted by authors who embrace the pragmatic approach to language, the most studied issues in this context are also the ones focused by this subject, particularly the ones related to the study of a variety of reference modalities, to the study of speech acts, to cognitive processes involved in the constitution of meaning, with particular prominence to the study of the presuppositions and implicit³. Additionally, bring attention, particularly, to the importance of the presuppositions of utterances, provided that it is not what the utterances state, but the agreement on what they presuppose that makes possible the formation of both the agreements and disagreements, and the debate concerning what the utterances state.

Lastly, the third definition, adopted, mainly, by researchers in social sciences and particularly in communication sciences, broadens even further the scope of discourse notion, since it does not limit its object of study to expressions or verbal and prosodic behaviors nor to the mimic-behaviors that follow them, but comprises in it any manifestation, both verbal/nonverbal, of behaviors and of social practices. Besides that, authors who adopt this approach usually deal with discourse of science, for example, in order to refer to the procedures followed by researchers and to the strategies of credibility followed by the scientific community so as to validate their proposals (Latour & Woolgar, 1986; Gilbert & Mulkey, 1984), of architectural discourse, in order to refer to the characteristics of a style or to the way the buildings or constructed spaces are organized, of urban discourse (Rosemberg, 2000), in order to refer to the urban layout of a city, of pictorial discourse (Krüger, 2005), in order to designate the organization of the pictorial forms of an era, of a style or the works of a painter.

Thus, in this third definition the critical analyses of discourse, as proposed by Norman Fairclough, and the ones that are inspired by the works of Michel Foucault are emblematic. Although Foucault has never spoken of discourse analysis nor has made any proposal in this direction, some studies on media discourses assume the notion of *discursive formation* proposed by Foucault (1969) and have come, in recent years, to seek to reinterpret them in their works. This conception of discourse is very common in the scope of cultural studies, in which we find the term *discourse* connected, for example, to *racist*, *sexist*, *gender*, *power*, *hegemonic*. Furthermore, it was in this context that, in the last few decades, the line of *critical discourse analysis* (Fairclough, 2001 [2008], 1995a, 1995b, 2003; Pêcheux 1988; Orlandi 2012a, 2012b) emerged. We can say that authors who have their works grounded on this perspective are suspicious

3. For an understanding of these processes see, namely, Rodrigues (2005: 141 and ss.).

in relation to discourses, especially those produced in media environments, and aim at denouncing the most diverse ideological manifestations that impose views on class.

The range of discourse conceptions exemplified here shows that discourse is not an object specific to a particular scientific subject, but an interdisciplinary object that even inside a subject can be approached from different perspectives. Despite its immanentist perspective, authors who adopt the first perspective in their studies on discourse have emphasized the importance of processes of utterance production for the constitution of language structure and, thus, for the articulations of semantics and syntax with the uses that speakers make of language. The approaches related to the second and third perspectives, despite their differences, present some common characteristics:

- a) Discourse is not only the expression of proposals endowed with vericonditional values, but also an activity that produces effect;
- b) Discourse symbolically constructs the world of experience, which is equivalent to the adoption of a perspective, which is commonly named constructivist;
- c) Discourse performs speech acts, such as assertions, greetings, invitations, requests, orders, questions;
- d) The units of discourse are the speech acts and the analysis of a discourse that is consistent in its identification, inventorying and systematic explication of how they are organized.

THE ETHNOMETHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO DISCOURSE

In addition, we would like to show that the ethnomethodological approach, unlike the proposals of discourse analysis presented previously, is relatively homogeneous, as it adopts a perspective that has followed a line of relative continuity, from works of Harold Garfinkel, Harvey Sacks and Emmanuel Schegloff.

We can recognize in the ethnomethodological approach a phenomenological foundation, by focusing on a movement of *going back to the things themselves* and the consequent will of observing the concrete phenomena, bracketing the preconceptions of the researcher, movement that Edmund Husserl designated with the Greek term *epoché*, and, similar to the second and third notions of discourse, a pragmatic inspiration, by distinguishing itself from the structuralist conceptions of language. Authors who study discourse from the ethnomethodological perspective deny neither the linguistic structure nor the innate nature of the language device; they only suspend the acceptance of these presuppositions, instead of trusting the introspection of a researcher,

preferring to adopt as principle the observation of how people behave when interacting with each other.

The phenomenological foundation of this approach to discourse is followed by authors such as Aaron Cicourel and Harold Garfinkel who, from the 1960s, have distanced themselves from the dominant structural-functionalist line, following closely the proposals of Georg Simmel, George Herbert Mead and Alfred Schütz.

As the expression *ethnomethodology* may wrongly imply that it is a research methodology, we would like to clarify its meaning. Ethnomethodology is not exactly a theory or a school, but a certain attitude or a way of facing social reality, which firstly emerged in the United States of America, in the late 1930s, and spread later, mainly from the 1970s, to other regions.

So, ethnomethodology focuses on the study of meaning that social actors and agents attribute to their own social practice, breaking, thus, with trends that consider the meaning that citizens attribute to their action as just a misshapen reflex of the structural determination of the social system. Thus, bracketing the Marxist presuppositions according to which it is the economic infrastructure that determines the direction that individuals give to their action, the ethnomethodology seeks to analyze to what extent the awareness people have of their action is constitutive of the very sense they attribute to it. Moreover, ethnomethodology is also distinct from behaviorism, dominant in the United States at that time, as it does not intend to extend to the study of social phenomena the same procedures used in the study of sciences of nature, insisting on the specificity of social phenomena and considering, therefore, a different attitude, both for its description and understanding, and for its explanation.

We can consider that it was the education that, as from 1939, Alfred Schütz (1899-1959) provided in New York, in *New School for Social Research*, that gave rise to the movement that would be given the name of ethnomethodology, although this designation only appears from the mid-1940s, probably because it would be the name that Harold Garfinkel would use to characterize his study of the strategies used by jurors of Chicago to take their deliberations, from the recording of debates during court hearings. Schütz (1967), before emigrating to New York, had studied in Vienna and followed the lessons of Edmund Husserl. It is also evident the influence that Max Weber exerted on his works. De weber adopted the concept of *ideal type*, as well as the conception of Sociology, considering it as the subject that studies the *meaning* that social agents and actors attribute to their own activity (Weber 1971: 4 and ss.).

As mentioned before, ethnomethodology's authors usually base theoretically and methodologically their perspectives on the phenomenological

principle of requirement of *going back to the things themselves*, following in this point the proposal by Edmund Husserl (1950: 187 and ss.). The ethnomethodology perspective focuses on, therefore, the empirical studies, the field observation of naturally occurring social practices, the interest for daily life and spontaneous interaction of talk⁴, the use of notions and categories of social actor, the pictures of experience, and the knowledge of shared common sense.

Thus, ethnomethodology is not meant to be the range of methodological procedures used to accomplish the research work, on the contrary, it means the methods or procedures that people adopt, while members of *ethnos*, in order to give locally meaning to their concrete social practices. We can summarize the main characteristics of the ethnomethodological approach to discourse as:

a) The meaning of discourse stems from the fact that it is not an isolated behavior, but a social activity, in which people perform in common, at each of the interactional situations established among them locally, in the course of everyday life;

b) In the discursive interactions in which they are involved, people mobilize knowledge of common sense which are shared among themselves and, thus, constantly constitute and reconstitute their own world;

c) When people talk they do not perform isolated speech acts, but interactional acts, in such a way that the meaning of a participant's talk depend, not only on the interactional picture (*setting*) in which is engaged, but also on the other participants' answers;

d) Discourse is, therefore, constituted by interactional units that are revealed in what is given the named of *adjacency pairs*, units that involve more than a participant, such as, for example, greeting - greeting, question - answer, invitation - acceptance or refusal;

e) The units of discourse are not, therefore, phrases or clauses, but utterances that can be constituted by verbal entities, prosodic units or related to intonation, by mimic-gestural units and also by silencing⁵;

f) The discursive activity is not a disconnected and arbitrary activity, but regulated and commanded and, therefore, it not only can be identified and inventoried, but also described and systematized.

RULES OF DISCOURSE IN INTERACTION

The most recurrent issues in the works of ethnomethodological approach to discourse are related to the concern of showing the regulated nature of the discursive activity, opposing, thus, the frequent idea, among authors with a structuralist approach to language, that discourse would be a random practice that would not obey precise rules.

4. Talk is commonly understood in a broad meaning by ethnomethodology, as in the notion speak-in-interaction, to relate its works to the interactional discursive activity, both in informal and institutional, face to face or mediated environments.

5. We make use of the term *silencing* to refer to the absence of a marked speech for the reason it is an expected speech. The absence of a greeting is marked when, for example, it does not occur in the sequence of the greeting of one of the participants.

a) The devices of turn taking

Many ethnomethodological authors dedicate great part of their works to the study of *turn taking*, they understand that participants create rules and obey rules in order to know when it is their turn of speaking or listening, preventing, thus, two phenomena susceptible of putting in danger the interaction itself: the lengthy overlap of speech and the lengthy hiatus among the speeches. In the example below, during a personal interview, the interrogative structure of AB intervention is understood by L as the signal of turn ending and of addressing of speak invitation, and the intentional repetition from the intervention of AB for L make evident the collaborative construction of the interaction:

AB: The first thing I'd like to know is about the computer in your life. (...) How was your first contact with computer?

L: **My first contact with the computer** was my work (it continues)

b) The repairing phenomena

The phenomena of repairing errors constitute a very frequent domain in the ethnomethodological studies of verbal interactions, distinguishing the cases in which errors are signalized and/or corrected by the speaker who committed them and the cases in which the errors are signalized and/or corrected by their interlocutors. Particularly interesting is the fact that, initially, the participants show preference for the cases in which it is the utterer who signals and corrects his/her mistakes. This phenomenon of *preferential organization* is, however, more general, since it regulates other interactional devices, as the organization of adjacency pairs. In this example, L corrects his own utterance during the interview:

AB: How old is this list?

L: Two years, **two or three** years.

c) The interactional units: the adjacency pairs

For ethnomethodology, unlike discourse analysis, it is not the speech act, but the adjacency pairs that form the dialogic units of discursive interaction. It was in a seminal text that Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson (1974), later developed in a classic work by Emanuel Schegloff (2009), presented the notion of adjacency pair, which was briefly formulated by Stephen Levinson as:

Adjacency pairs are sequences of two utterances that are:

- i) adjacent
- ii) produced by different speakers
- iii) ordered as a first part and a second part

iv) typed, so that a particular first part requires a particular second part (or range of second parts) – e.g. offers require acceptances or rejections, greetings requires greetings, and so on and there is a rule governing the use of adjacency pairs, namely: Having produced a first part of some pair, current speakers must stop speaking, and the next speaker must produce at that point a second part to the same pair (Levinson, 1983: 303-304).

When formulating both the first and the second parts of the adjacency pairs, people obey the rule of preferential organization. It is important to highlight that the notion of preference is not a psychological notion, which is not related to what participants prefer, but a logical notion, which is related to what is preferred by the discursive interaction organization itself. As a whole, people, when producing a preferential intervention, make it without hiatus, hesitation nor justification, while, when producing a non-preferential intervention, make it after an assignable pause, after a preface as, for example, “well!”, “you know”, “uhm”, and follow the non-preferential act of justifications of their intervention. In (1) we can observe an example of preferential second part and in (2) an example of non-preferential second part, emphasizing the trend of agreeing with whom occupies the position of power, strategy widely explored by media discourse:

(1) AB: Is there a way of identifying a person who accesses again with a different name?

L: Yes, there is, through the IP.

(2) AB: Do people put their names there? L: **Yes (.) but** sometimes they don't.

d) The involvement strategy

Involvement strategy has deserved attention of ethnomethodology, as from a great diversity of materials, excerpted from daily talks, media discursive interactions or politics discourses (Tannen, 2007). Below, there are some examples of narrative elaboration and enumeration as strategies of involvement, deriving from commentaries of a blog environment:

(1) Who walked first, who gave up diaper, who is taller, fatter, who has made this, that...

(2) My made **doesn't have** vacation, **doesn't have** a day off, **hasn't** received Christmas bonus for 3 years... **And is not** a good professional:

– She can't do laundry

– **Can't** iron

- Complains a lot to do the dishes...
- **But** she is a very cute person, loves my daughter as if she were hers and I can't fire her...

We can see here the use of repetitions, irony, antitheses, among other rhetorical phenomena as strategies of self-involvement.

Involvement is a kind of facilitator of discursive interaction, making the relation among participants both pleasant and rewarding, and also facilitates the agreement among them. For this purpose, the participants have at their disposal, not only the poetical resources of language, but also the mimic-gestural components in personal situations or graphical resources in digital environments.

The discursive involvement is the process responsible for the elaboration of emotional states that are part of the aesthetic aspects of verbal interaction, making use of the poetical resources of language. Among these resources we can emphasize the repetitions, enallages, ellipses, intertextuality. Rhetorical figures and the trope, such as metaphor, metonymy, irony and antitheses supply a wide domain of strategic resources of which the participants make use in order to create the discursive involvement.

In addition, involvement can be positive, when it contributes to the intensification of the relation among participants, or negative, when it provokes the rupture among them. We can distinguish three modalities of involvement: the self-involvement, the interpersonal involvement and the involvement with which discourse handle (Tannen, 2007). In the following examples, derived from Internet forums, we can observe the use of prosodic devices such as strategy of involvement in utterances elaborated from writing:

This talk about smoking a... I've smoked **a loooooot** (isn't it, Mi?), I've tried almost all drugs!

Júlia, you have endless **paaaaaaatiencia**.

e) The hierarchical structural organization of discursive interaction

When we proceed to the ethnomethodological approach from certain discursive interaction we observe that people take the opportunity to neither speak disorderly nor say what is on their minds, but intervene at the appropriate moment and produce speeches appropriate to what is at stake at the moment of their speaking turn. Their interventions present coherence, which are chained according to the understanding of what is at stake at each of the moments involved.

When dealing with this *organization*, authors from Geneva School mention a *hierarchical structural organization* of the discursive interactions

(Roulet, 1981), showing that the chaining of the participants' interventions obeys regularities, both semantics and syntax, and pragmatic. For the purpose of this organization, metaphors commonly used by ethnomethodology assume full relevance, comparing the behavior of human beings involved in the verbal interactions to dancers or musicians of an orchestra: the participants coordinate among themselves their interventions as, for example, the dancers adjust their steps according to the steps of their peers and each of the musicians coordinates their interventions with the interventions of the other musicians.

The verbal interactions obey a hierarchical organization that comprises a range of structuralized levels:

INTERACTION > SEQUENCE > EXCHANGE > INTERVENTION > SPEECH ACT

Each of the levels, with exception of the highest level, namely, *interaction*, is constituted by the immediately superior level and constitutes the immediately inferior level, apart from, evidently, the most elementary level, namely, *speech act*.

The authors give the name of *interaction* to the highest level of this structural organization. This level corresponds to the range of verbal interaction; it is not, therefore, constituted by any other level, but constitutes the level immediately below, which is given the name of sequence. The *sequence*, which is constituted by the level of interaction, constitutes, in turn, the level we address as exchange. The *exchange*, which is constituted by the level of sequence, constitutes the level we give the name of intervention. Finally, the *intervention*, which is constituted by the level of exchange, constitutes the latest level of the structure, the one we nominate as *speech act*.

e.1) Interaction

Interaction corresponds to the superior level of the structural organization of verbal interactions. The delimitation of its borders, knowing when it starts and when it finishes, sometimes places particular difficulties, since there is no unquestionable criterion for this delimitation that can be applied to all the circumstances. Although it is possible to consider the unit of place and time in which the participants meet and talk to each other as criteria for its delimitation, the maintenance of interaction among the same people and the maintenance of the same thematic object, in many cases cannot be applied with severe criteria. Therefore, it is not uncommon to witness the introduction of several topics along the same interaction.

Concerning this level, one of the interesting problems is the fact that very often an interaction is inserted in the frame of a *conversational or interactional story* (Golopentia-Eretescu, S. 1985; 1988), as, for example, the case of a talk among close people, in which proceeds many other previous talks and, at the end, it is projected on other potentials talks in the future.

e.2) Sequence

An interaction comprises one or more sequences. It is possible to give a generic definition about sequence, saying it is the negotiation of an object, in other words, of any focus of attention common to the participants, which mobilizes their involvement.

The issue about the delimitation of sequence is not always easy. The participants use devices or marks of delimitation of sequences. In the following example, in a commentary from a blog, we can observe the use of the expression “Ah” as the device of sequence change:

We’re going to the dentist on Thursday. Kisses and thanks for the help.

Ah, I’ve already thrown a party at Pizza Hut.

We can identify three ranges of sequences, in accordance with the following scheme:

Sequence of opening > Sequence(s) of the body of interaction > Sequence of closing

The sequences of opening and closing possess the common characteristic of being more ritualized, while the sequence that form the body of verbal interactions are commonly less ritualized.

We can observe in the example below the use of ritualized forms of opening and closing in digital interactions in the same commentary of a blogger:

Hi, Zu, good to seeing you here. (...)

A kiss for you, thanks for the so riveting participation.

Both in the sequence of opening and closing, the participants are confronted, more directly, with the constraints that influence the interaction itself, mainly, with the fact of trying to demonstrate good figure and preventing bad figure, as well as with the fact of tending to safeguard the potentially antagonistic values of the relation and the own territory of each one.

The ritualization of opening and closing sequences is manifested in the unchaining of conversational devices that are more clichéd following predefined *scripts*.

In the case of opening sequence, the *script* comprises, respectively, the chaining of acts of mutual and reciprocal identification and greeting. On the other hand, in the closing sequence, the *script* comprises, respectively, the negotiation of closing of the interaction followed by farewell, as we can observe in the following example of closing sequence of interaction by instant messenger:

J: I hope many new cool and interesting people show up!

D: it's gone 08pm, I gotta go, I won't revise it very hard. If you need me to write more, change something, cry out, ok?

Kiss!

e.3) Exchange

The exchange is the smallest dialogic unit of the interaction, having as prototype the structure of the adjacency pair. As such, it is constituted by the sequence and constituent of the intervention. It is the smallest dialogic unit because, for its accomplishment, two or more participants contribute and also because, under it, we find monologic levels, in other words, produced only by one of the participant.

e.4) Intervention

The intervention is the monologic unit accomplished by only one of the participants. It corresponds to the level constituted by the exchange and constituent of the most elementary level, the speech act. An intervention can, however, be formed by one or more than a speech act.

For these authors of Geneva School, the intervention can comprise a directive act and a subordinated act; the latter can be situated in previous or subsequent position to the directive act. The directive act corresponds, initially, to the act that derives from the enunciation of the propositional content of the utterance, while the subordinated act comprises, among others things, the justification of the enunciation of the main act as well as the investigation of the conditions that make possible, plausible or reasonable to accomplish the main act. In the following example, "I always knew that everything that we wrote was public" accomplishes a directive act and "since I started to visit the blog" accomplishes a subordinated act:

Since I started to visit the blog, I always knew that everything that we wrote was public

e.5) Speech act

The speech act is the elementary level of the monologic units of the interaction. An intervention can have one or more speech acts and the relation

among the speech acts is hierarchically marked. We give the name of speech acts the actions that people accomplish with the utterances they utter, such as, assertions, promises, requests, orders, questions, answers, invitations. It corresponds to what John Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) give the name of illocutionary acts.

e.6) Conclusion

This brief presentation of hierarchical organization of verbal interactions allows us to understand the unfolding of the interactional activity of human beings as negotiation or articulations of several levels chained among themselves. To conclude, we would like to emphasize that by hierarchical organization it should not be understood that we find all these levels in all the verbal interactions, but the emerging of each one always occurs accurately in the place foreseen by this order. Thus, for example, a sequence of opening may not occur, mainly in interactions that are inserted in a more or less long conversational story, but, if occurring, it is always at the beginning of the verbal interactions. It is equally frequent to find verbal interactions in which a single exchange, as for example the change of greetings among people who meet occasionally, coincides syncretically with the sequence of opening, body and closing of interaction. Thus, social situations are, to a great extent, determined by the interactional components, which deliver direct outcomes and preferred solutions, independently of the personal or psychological motivations of the citizens.

From the comparison of discourse analysis to the ethnomethodological approach to discourse the following points stand out:

a) Both discourse analyses and ethnomethodological approach to discourse have emerged from the turning processes in relation to the structural-functionalists perspectives dominant in several humanities sciences, turning processes that have been consolidated mainly from the 60s of last century. The discourse analysis was born through the pragmatic turn that occurred in language sciences in relation to the formalist perspective, particularly in relation to the generativist conception of language. It is from this field that later they would migrate to other areas of knowledge, such as psychology, sociology and epistemology of sciences. In turn, the ethnomethodological approach to discourse had its origin in the turn, occurred in social sciences, in relation to the structural-functionalism and sought to take seriously the concrete behavior of people involved in different modalities of activity, in particular the logic of common sense.

b) Discourse analyses choose their empirical objects mainly among written texts, and, when they lean on verbal discourses, generally, they analyze discourses produced in artificial situations, while the ethnomethodological approach to discourse focuses on the study of discourses produced in natural situations, not provoked by the research, the discourses that occur in interactions of daily life, being it spontaneous or institutionally fit, both face to face and mediatized.

c) Although many authors who work, nowadays, with discourse analysis take into consideration the interactional nature of discursive practice, its approach to interaction is understood as complementary, while to ethnomethodological approach the meaning of what people say is predominantly understood as derived from or dependent on the proper interactional situation in which they occur.

CONCLUSION

We think we have shown that the approach to discourse in ethnomethodology scope does not have its origin from the same issues as different versions of discourse analysis, nor has the same goals. It is not a surprise, therefore, that the results of its works are different and, therefore, complementary.

The critical analysis of discourse has over all the concern to discover and criticize the ideologies propagated and inculcated by the studied discourses, serving, thus, for intentions of agenda denunciation, explicit or implicit. The discourse analyses that obey a structural and functionalist conception of discourse have the concern of investigating the discursive forms used by people, as well as the greatest or the least conformity with the formal structure of language. The pragmatic analyses of discourse are worried about the identification of speech acts and are inspired by the idea that it is possible to make them correspond to the verbal forms of the utterances.

The ethnomethodological approaches, on the contrary, are worried about observing what people make when interacting with others, using resources of language. More than criticizing the observed discourses, the ethnomethodology constantly seeks to criticize its own way of looking, in order to intervene the least as it can in the observed phenomena, fighting against the trend to project the world views of the researcher on the observed world.

This is particularly important in a mediatized society in which the definition of *reality* itself goes under a complex texture of interactions and mediations, both in media discourse and in the social uses of these discourses by common people. We think it is about theoretical and methodological contribution that is precious for the study of social uses of medias.

The ethnomethodological approach seems, therefore, to consist in a perspective of study of discourses opposing to the discourse analyses that seek to identify, denounce and criticize the discourses of others, once it is a critical attitude of discourse of the researcher him/herself, in order to make him/her available to become amazed for the inexhaustible wealth of the discursive activity of human beings.

We think this discourse approach contributes to a finer understanding of what people make when interacting with others and to the critical monitoring on our procedures, in order to acquire greater availability to discover the meaning of what people make when speaking with each other and interacting with the medias, and not the meaning that we project from our preconceptions and presuppositions.

Moreover, we would like to emphasize that, more than justifying theoretically the importance of the ethnomethodological approach to discourse, our intention was to show, even briefly, through the description of some of the regularities of the discursive activity that it allows to discover, its complementarity compared to the different modalities of discourse analysis. ■

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