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Field and Utterance: The Problem of Discourse Articulation / *Campo e enunciado: problema da articulação do discurso*

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ABSTRACT

According to Bakhtin, to speak is to reply, and replies are neither known in advance, as they are unrepeatable creative acts, nor completely novel, as they recreate the given word. Thus, one relevant question is how a given utterance leads to a specific contingent contestation among many possible others. In order to contribute to answering this question, we elaborate on the notion of discursive fields, offering an integrative account of their dynamic, virtual and dialogical nature. Bergson, Simondon and Deleuze help us to better understand how it is that the repetition of a sign, when it takes place within a field of anticipation, has the effect of an unrepeatable turn. Bakhtin and Voloshinov, in this connection, help us to explain how this field works as the historical background against which social and subjective positionings introduce novelty to the ongoing transformation of the common ground among speakers.

KEYWORDS: Anticipation; Dialogicality; Memory; Imagination; Field; Return; Utterance

RESUMO

De acordo com Bakhtin, falar é responder, e as respostas não são nem conhecidas antecipadamente, já que são atos criativos irrepitíveis, nem são totalmente inéditas, uma vez que recriam a palavra dada. Assim, uma questão relevante é como um enunciado leva a uma específica resposta contingente, entre tantas outras possibilidades. A fim de contribuir para responder a esta pergunta, desenvolvemos a noção de campos discursivos, oferecendo uma explicação de sua natureza dinâmica, virtual e dialógica. Bergson, Simondon e Deleuze nos ajudam a entender melhor como a repetição de um signo, quando esta ocorre dentro de um campo de antecipação, tem o efeito de um turno irrepitível. Bakhtin e Volóchinov, nesta conexão, nos ajudam a explicar como este campo funciona como o contexto histórico em que os posicionamentos sociais e subjetivos introduzem novidade para a transformação contínua do conhecimento compartilhado entre os falantes.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Antecipação; Dialogicidade; Memória; Imaginação; Campo; Retorno; Enunciado

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Introduction

Imagine that one speaker cries “Hey!” At this point, this sign is a new event and we have to track the history in which this utterance is embedded. The second “Hey!” is uttered by another speaker. The sign is the same, but the utterance is new: it was not determined, caused or implicated by the previous discursive act, and only because this second move historically considers and includes the first one does it take a new connotation. A third speaker adds another “Hey!” that is uttered, produced or articulated from or against the previous turns, which still resonate inside the last utterance but create a new tone.¹

The influential works of Bakhtin (1986a) and Vološinov (1986) are key to understanding unrepeatability in discursive practices. They propose a notion of language as *living* discourse, not as formal systems, and whose unit is the “utterance”, not the sentence or the proposition. Each utterance is an unrepeatable event of interaction of different voices (BAKHTIN, 1986a), a response to other utterances, so that it has a meaning in the context of other utterances pre-existing one's word, or anticipated in the shaping of one's word (BAKHTIN, 1981). Therefore, the utterance is not a semiotic composition but the taking of a position of a speaking subject by means of such semiotic composition, so that it essentially implies an evaluative stance towards the other voices involved in the field of interaction (VOLOŠINOV, 1986). These other voices, as well as the extra-verbal situation of the interaction, participate in any utterance as the social atmosphere that gives every word and position its particular ideological density (BAKHTIN, 1981; VOLOŠINOV, 1986).

However, how is it that utterances, dependent on past discursive practices, become unrepeatable and openings to new paths? What is the theoretical explanation for the creative force of discourse and the novelty that every turn along a conversation brings about? Why does the background of virtual voices of a single utterance condition its form and content while at the same time pushes it towards singularity? How is it possible that utterances are neither known in advance, insofar as they are unrepeatable creative acts, nor completely novel, as they recreate the given word? As discourse

¹ A similar example has been analyzed by Vološinov (1929/1986), Vygotsky (1934/1999) and Bakhtin (1986a) to suggest that meaning is not attached to words in themselves but to broader discursive movements in which words introduce otherness and sociality as principles of becoming, or genesis.

occurs through social interaction framed in social practices, the structure of interaction (i.e. the theme, power relations, familiarity of speakers, speech genre and social practice, among others) may facilitate an understanding of the emergence of specific responses. However, even when the characteristics of social interaction facilitate the comprehension and even anticipation of specific responses, insofar as they play a constitutive role in the unfolding of discourse, there are many possibilities for a given discourse to unfold within a specific and concrete social interaction. The aim of this paper is to explore how the old and the new are articulated in a dialogical notion of discourse. In order to do so, we elaborate on the notion of the discursive field (see Haye; Larraín, 2011) and try to give an integrative account of its dynamic, virtual and dialogical nature, from the point of view of the articulation between the given and the new. We gather concepts from two very different theoretical perspectives, both strongly arguing for a genetic or generative approach, to illuminate different aspects of the problem of articulation. On the one hand, Bergson (2004), Simondon (2008) and Deleuze (1994) help us to better understand how it is that the repetition of a sign, when it takes place within a field of anticipation, has the effect of an unrepeatable turn. Bakhtin (1981) and Vološinov (1986), on the other hand, help us to explain how it is that this field of anticipation, when mediated by open or living discourse, works as the historical background against which social and subjective positioning movements introduce change and novelty to the ongoing transformation of the common ground among speakers.

1 The Problem of Articulation

Articulation is a rather general word and can be used in very different ways. It can be used to refer to a joint or juncture between two moving parts or units; to emphasize a sound and clear speech; to point out the coordination and interdependence of different aspects of reality; and to refer to the structuration of chaotically emerging events; among many others. By pointing out some specific features of this notion in the following, we do not aim to give an exhaustive account of its multiple meanings, but rather to make rough distinctions in order to delimit the general meanings of articulation

to keep in mind hereafter. Further clarification of the concept requires a theoretical discussion, which we elaborate in the following sections.

Articulation as a juncture (joint). Probably the first use that comes to mind when thinking of articulation has to do with a joint, that is, a bodily structure that allows two independent parts of the body to move coordinately. A joint is not just the point of juncture or bonding between two independent structures (normally bones) but a complex structure in itself that enables complex coordinated movements to occur.

Articulation as linking or associating. It is also possible to think of articulation as the link between two or more pre-existing aspects of reality. Authors such as Vygotsky (1999) and James (1952) conceived of articulation as the main characteristic of thinking: to link or associate two independent aspects of reality. This meaning is also related to the idea of juncture but points out a movement in itself, not a structure that enables coordinated movement.

Articulation as structuration. One of the possibilities of articulation as association involves the idea of introducing a specific order to an otherwise chaotic state of events. Again, it is a movement, but here it is not only linking different aspects of reality that counts, but doing so imposing a specific figure, organization or structure that is not given in reality but projected in it. This notion of articulation lies behind structuralist social science thought, such as Piaget (1985), Levis Strauss, (1974) and Chomsky (1965), among others. It may also emphasize the role of self-regulation as part of the articulation movement.

Articulation as the production of a contingent new reality from the given, or becoming. A fourth meaning of articulation is related to neither the linking nor organizing of given realities, but rather the movement of creating something completely new from what has been given. Articulation here refers not to the act of creating something new (to the creative aspect), but to the act of creating *that* something new, and not another. This meaning of articulation, which in the same way implies all the previous three, accounts for the emergence of a specific and concrete new event or aspect, among many other possibilities, from a given event or situation.

As the object of our inquiry is the becoming of a specific response or piece of discourse from a given one among exceeding possibilities, we will hereafter focus on this fourth meaning of articulation in order to explore the articulation of the dialogical unfolding of

discourse. In this fourth sense, articulating is what we do when we speak. To speak is to articulate a reply from an anticipated field of replies, but the complexities of discursive articulation are far from understood. Our quest is precisely for both the movement and principle of intelligibility in discursive communication. That is, the becoming of something new from the given, the becoming of specific responses among vast possibilities, from previous ones, is indeed chaotic but unfolds according to certain principles. We understand Heraclitus as suggesting that *Logos*, the principle that explains all movements from among themselves, is always divided, that is, it works articulating oppositions, never arriving to a final unity or definite end. There is an immanent law of movement: change. We understand that every utterance produces a new provocation to reply with an ever new provocation-utterance, thus altering experience with new possibilities. Discourse is, in this heraclitean perspective, nothing beyond the tension and movement across interlocution positions within a virtual, not actual, field of movement. We employ the term “field” because of its reference to the notion of a whole constituted by tensions, as in the case of magnetic fields. Fields are broadly understood in what follows, in connection with the problem of articulation, as the virtual dynamics in which actualities take place. Our first step will be to analyze how virtuality operates in the articulation of living becoming, that is, in the genesis of living forms, adding to the notion of the field as a temporal core. Our second step will be to analyze the genesis of utterances, performed within a dynamic field of perspectives with which speakers establish interlocution, adding to the field a dialogical condition. Dialogicality means that *Logos* is always divided, never a synthesis or a definite realization. We will develop the concept of articulation in order to be able to describe “living” language in terms of the conflicting articulation of fields with which speakers become.

2 Temporal Dimension of Fields: Articulation of Affect, Memory and Imagination

Simondon (2008) argues, departing from Bergson’s theory, that habits are basically motor schemes formed as a consequence of past experience (on an ontogenetic scale, but also on sociogenetic and phylogenetic scales). Yet, these moving patterns are already an anticipation of reactions and effects of movement. Memory, in a joint effort

with imagination and language, operates a return of the stream of becoming that embeds the present in the past and, on a second level, embeds these two in the future. In our argument an initial (and partial) approach to the form of articulation utilizes what may be called a “psychological” description of the movement of embedding and enclosing discourse one into the other. Bergson and Simondon have explained that memory, imagination and action are the main psychological operations involved in becoming. Action in living beings is always oriented, basically by means of sensorimotor anticipations, themselves generated beforehand, in the past of experience. The phylogenetic and ontogenetic past is transformed into enduring and prepared means to recover the immediate present of action (perception) with motor anticipations (imagination) – thus recovering the present passage with paths between what is gone and what is possible. In doing so, the past enters into the present, with the effect of pushing and orienting it into the future, that is, into action again – but experience returns to the past to transform the present, not only on the animal action timescale, that is, behavior, but on a “symbolic” scale. For both Bergson and Simondon this psychological organization of becoming is characterized by the mediation of virtuality: images, symbols, representations and words are forms of connecting past and future. The transit of action is then shaped by these virtualizing psychological operations.

As a consequence of this return and mediation, movement acquires a different quality, best described in terms of unrepeatability. For Bergson (2004) this implies the articulation between dying and emerging movement tendencies, whose conflict is the hallmark of the psychological effort of passage as a conflicting effort, made up by tension and affect. These are the psychological dimensions that are relevant for *duration*. For Simondon (2008), the articulation of the given and the new implied in living (action) is always an assemblage of processes at different timescales and, as such, it is a synthetic effort crossed by potentiality and disparity that results in the production of the new. Images and symbols fundamentally have to do with the affective organization of the psychological process (see especially the third part of Simondon, 2008). And the result of tension and affect is novelty. A new behavioral path is created that makes compatible two orders of magnitude that were thus far incompatible: the given situation and the idea of the completed action. Invention, as the resolution of a crisis, is the last phase of the cycles of action, memory, and imagination.

On this basis, Deleuze proposed (1994) that present, past and future consist of three syntheses or productions from which the form, the ground and the series of time are defined, jointly producing time itself. The content of time acquires the *form* of present, past and future; time is also *totalized* and enclosed as the joint of these moments, and the course of time is *ordered* and directioned as series – in an effort towards “synthesis” that Deleuze describes as having the nature of *repetition*. Production by repetition, a paradoxical notion that problematizes the relation of the new and the given, is the very problem at issue in discourse, according to our earlier discussion.

Past, present and future are already repetitions, each in a specific modality. “The present is the repeated, the past is the repetition itself, but the future is that which is repeated” (DELEUZE, 1994, p.94). According to Deleuze, the first synthesis of the present corresponds to habit, by virtue of which time takes the form of a living present in passage, a transit – a passive ground for both past and future. The second synthesis, of the past, corresponds to memory, according to which time takes the dimensionality of the past as such, actively grounding the present as passage and forcing the present to *become from* beforehand. However, the third synthesis of time, the repeated, is the very future, that to come, which is a different kind of production: the third operation of the synthesis of time embeds and involves the present and the past in an affirmation that displaces both, replacing their difference with an articulation of past and present that engenders something that goes beyond their difference and their scope. Borrowing from Nietzsche’s formula of the *eternal return*, Deleuze argues that the third synthesis of time is repetition in the modality of a return.

Return is the transformation of the present (a “second” moment constituted is a reference to a past experience) into an agent to be erased; and of the past (the “first” moment) into a condition operating by default. In this sense, return constitutes neither a living present nor a pure past, but a future (a “third” moment) that asserts the indeterminability of the product regarding its conditions and the independence of the work regarding its author. Deleuze states that habit is the kind of repetition that produces an agent, and memory is the repetition reproducing and recreating the agent as connected, involved and embedded within previous conditions that operate as the ground, determining possibilities for action. However, since repetition is repetition of

the future, return operates a double move. On the one hand, it gives the form, collects the set and completes the series of time, and in this sense return is time returning on itself, braking and changing the automatic tendency towards action, in an enveloping, folding and layering of different time frames. As soon as return operates the turn of time towards itself, repetition is transformed into difference, because the repeated corresponds to estrangement or alteration: a centrifugal movement of overflow, or flooding, opening time to the unanticipated – that which cannot be reduced or deduced from the present of the subject and the subjection to past experiences. That is, repetition as return is the opening to the new. The folding of time implies an excess, because the third moment of the series, the moment that collects a set and gives shape to time, erases and transforms the other two times into moments embedded within that which is new, that is, which is not contained in the present or the past.

The contributions of Bergson, Simondon and Deleuze account for the temporal articulation of experience in terms of a return or “reflux” within the genetic or generative flux of the living, in which memory and imagination become interlaced with action. Novelty in experience is the result of being rooted in ongoing action fields that open the door for the blurring past tracts of action and the anticipated possible or timely paths, to enter into the actual and modify its course. This means that a specific kind of relationship between memory, imagination and action is crucially involved in the production, not the experience, of time, but rather *experience as time*. From this point of view, understanding discursive articulation as the act of creating *that* new response from what is given involves understanding the intertwined action of memory and imagination unfolding, not in an individual mind but in a virtual field. However, what is that field? How is it formed? What is the material reality of that field? From our point of view, and following Bakhtin (1981) and Vološinov (1986), that field has a discursive nature insofar as the history of discursive practices (including their tensions, contradictions, different valuations, etc.) is sedimented in a virtual field of meanings and positionings that is supposed when using language: “Outside the material there is no experience as such. In this sense *any experience is expressible*, i.e, is potential expression” (VOLOŠINOV, 1986, p.28; italics in the original). Temporal articulation, as described by Bergson, Simondon and Deleuze, operates through specific properties that emerge as a function of social practices mediated by words.

In the following we suggest that the articulation of experience in speaking beings cannot be fully understood without considering how language modifies the condition of the living being. Discursive practices introduce in their becoming double-voicedness and heteroglossia, thus radically amplifying the dynamic and virtual reality of *action fields*, interlacing memory and imagination at vast scales of *interlocution fields*. This enables traditions and their contestations across generations, as well as conversations across situations and along the lifespan of speakers in a variety of divergent and convergent relations. An utterance may seem necessary or obvious after it has been produced, because it fits the field in which it takes place, but such an adjustment to the field can be judged only if we assume that the field is given or static and not that it is also the result of modifications of utterances of social relations. From the point of view of the dialogical articulation of the given and the new in discursive practices, utterances are tendencies rather than actualities, and as such they are radically contingent upon the streams of modification of the field of relations. The possibility of an utterance is not determined by the past structuring of discourse but opened by virtual orientations towards its future. An utterance is not causally or logically determined by other utterances, but dialogically pushed by them towards the unheard. So far we have learned the primacy of anticipation in the temporal articulation of experience. The more specific question we pose is how the passage from the given to the novel takes place in discourse.

3 Discursive Dimension of Fields: Articulation of Positioning, the Given and the Anticipated

We propose a concept of a discursive or interlocution field, drawing on Bakhtin (1986a) and Vološinov (1986), according to whom the utterance, as the unit of discursive communication, must be conceived of as a dialogical unity, that is, the unity of a movement of social interdependence, which consists in the emergence of a new perspective in a web of virtual positions, past and anticipated, that surpass the immediate positions of the actual others. Bakhtin describes this discursive field as a virtual web or environment, “made up of contradictory opinions, points of view and value judgments—that is, precisely that background that, as we see, complicates the path of any word toward its object” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.281). This environment,

however, is not an external context, but an inner component of one's utterance. Consequently, we conceptualize positioning, as entailed by each utterance, not as an isolated process but as taking place in an *interlocution field*, or as a discursive field. This interlocution process is configured by tension among perspectives, because perspectives are interested ideological stands. In other words, positioning takes place in a tissue of convergent and divergent interests that constitutes a problematic conflict of interests in the here and now of the utterance. The field instigates the speaker to take a position that may eventually resolve the impasse generated by the crossroads of interests. In this context, every utterance is like an effort towards solving the impasse in one way or another, favoring in different possible ways one interest or another. The interlocution field is not a static background but a dynamic social atmosphere from which every positioning takes its meaning. The field is not a tissue in which all the possible perspectives about everything are already present at once. The field is an ever-changing emergent constellation of interested perspectives that establish relations with the emergent positioning. Coherently, every emergence of a new positioning involves a particular transformation of the field, in which some perspectives are “activating” and others are “silencing”.

Furthermore, we propose using the word “articulation” technically to refer to the form of movement of discursive fields that generates the new from the old by means of the refraction and assimilation of given and anticipated words. The core of this movement is the embedding of past and future discourses into discourse. This basic form was originally elaborated by Vološinov (1986) in terms of referred discourse. Any word “cites” other words explicitly or implicitly and “calls” other words beyond the effective, tracing virtual relationships in the field. An utterance is always, in one way or another, embedding other utterances given in the interlocution field and its history or drift, either recalled as past or evoked as possible. Then Bakhtin (1984) discussed the implications of the double-voicedness of any discursive act for discourse analysis and, in general, for human sciences or sciences of text and culture, such as literary analysis. The epistemological condition of the social sciences is that the becoming of discourse is inevitably about another discourse: the object of an utterance is yet always another utterance. Any discourse is a discourse about other discourses. On this basis, we suggest that the alien word is not next to or before the actual utterance (it is, but only in relative

terms, depending on a map or model against which events are measured, as with topological maps and chronological timing) but rather inserted on it by means of discursive operations. Speakers do their best to fulfil, through their gestures and words, and especially their composition, a fundamental function of discourse (a constitutive and distinctive feature of language): include, resume, embed or insert the alien into the proximal and close life, to confront otherness through diverse embedding operations, to open life to the borders of the familiar and to cross boundaries in understanding. Making reference, citing, commenting, presupposing and responding to another utterance are dialogical (and political) forms of articulation. These are dialogic relations, not measured chronologically as “dialogal” relations are.

The question, again, is why that given new is born and why that given past is embedded or resumed. From our reading of Bakhtin, particularly the passages of *The Discourse in the Novel*, it is possible to distinguish three basic features of discursive life that account for the dialogical articulation of utterances: thematic or semantic relevance; evaluative or ideological relevance; and anticipation of a listener’s horizon of understanding.

Semantic relevance. Specific virtual voices, positions and perspectives are “activated” or “salient” in a given field when their object or theme makes it relevant:

But no living word relates to its object in a *singular* way: between the word and its object, between the word and the speaking subject, there exist an elastic environment of other, alien words about the same object, the same theme, and this is an environment that is often difficult to penetrate (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.276).

Consider any word that establishes relations with all those perspectives with which it has had thematic commonalities: they “refer” to the same discursive “object.” That is, given a new positioning, some perspectives become active in a particular elastic environment because of semantic or thematic commonalities. The author came back to this point, emphasizing its importance, in his late notes on *The problem of the text* (BAKHTIN, 1986b). For instance, when referring to ideology, Bakhtin clarifies that a particular field of voices emerges as a background to what is being said, which constrains and enables the actual meaning. We cannot talk about ideology as being the first speakers and conveying a totally new meaning. Hence, in any piece of discourse

the issue at stake makes relevant particular semantic networks or relations with past virtual voices, speakers or positions at different timescales, involving an effort of memory to return.

Indeed, any concrete discourse (utterance) finds the object at which it was directed already as it were overlain with qualifications, open to dispute, charged with value, already enveloped in an obscuring mist—or, on the contrary, by the “light” of alien words that have already been spoken about it. It is entangled, shot through with shared thoughts, points of view, alien value judgements and accents (BAKHTIN, 1986a, p.276).

Evaluative relevance. Thematic or semantic relevance is not sufficient when accounting for the emerging field of voices. In the case of ideology, a large amount of voices may be semantically activated, and that is not the case. Besides, some of those voices enter into relations of agreement, disagreement, repetition, and so on. They are not neutral voices, linked only to the emerged positioning by semantical commonalities. Voices are evaluations, that is, emotional stands regarding that “object”. They are a particular way through which the “object” is viewed and valued. What ensues is that semantic commonalities are evaluative and emotional relations between those perspectives: the emerging positioning also establishes relations with a particular universe of perspectives because of its evaluative–emotional content, even when they are not semantically related. Following up the case of ideology, we may be crossly disagreeing with another interlocutor about the implications of ideology for everyday life. In doing so, some voices that are not thematically related to ideology may be activated because they involve anger as evaluations about other topics or life events:

These units of inner speech, these *total impressions of utterances*, are joined with one and other, and alternate with one another not according to the laws of grammar or logic but according to the laws of *evaluative* (emotive) *correspondence*, *dialogical deployment*, etc., in close dependence of the historical conditions of the social situation and the whole pragmatic run of life (VOLOŠINOV, 1986, p.38; italics in the original)

In this case, it is tension, the emotional quality, tone or accent of the present that drives memory and imagination in their efforts – specific experiences relevant to the present and involving them in the emergence of the new.

Anticipation of the listener's horizon of understanding. The emergent word is determined, then, not only by those words that have been spoken about the same object and with which it establishes relations, or emotional correspondence, but also by words that are anticipated as being part of the listener's background of understanding. These are not necessarily thematically or evaluatively connected, but may be politically related:

The word in living conversation is directly, blatantly, oriented toward a future answer-word: it provokes an answer, anticipates it and structures itself in the answer's direction. Forming itself in an atmosphere of the already spoken, the word is at the same time determined by [that] which has not yet been said but which is needed and in fact anticipated by the answering word. Such is the situation of any living dialogue (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.280)

Hence, every word brings to discursive life some other words that are supposed to respond. The rising position establishes relations with past and future words and these words are precisely the ones that constitute its social background. Yet Bakhtin continues: “[...] Only now this contradictory environment of alien words is present to the speaker not in the object, but rather in the consciousness of the listener, as his/her apperceptive background, pregnant with responses and objections” (1981, p.281).

In the emergence of new positions, in every utterance, there are perspectives that become part of the social atmosphere because they are supposed to pertain to the listener's future (perhaps silent) response. It is not the response in itself that constrains and enables the present emerging position, but the perspectives that, from the speaker's point of view and given his/her notion of the ideological consciousness of the listener, are supposed to respond. Here imagination – the symbolic and semiotic anticipation of the virtual future – plays a key role. Hence, it is this third principle, that of anticipation, which has the primacy over the previous two, because it makes pertinent both semantic and evaluative relevance, relating given themes and ideological stands to a new movement of articulation.

In synthesis, discursive articulation, as the birth of a new word from given words that are resumed and embedded, is unpredictable and contingent, but intelligible. It is not a completely random and chaotic process, but is driven by specific dynamics of discursive fields. These dynamics – semantic relevance, emotional relevance and

anticipation of the listener's background of understanding – involve the articulation of time at different scales accomplished by the intertwined effort of memory and imagination, and supposing specific discursive features of the fields through which past and anticipated words push forwards new perspectives and positionings that resume, embed, include and/or crash them on their way to becoming. The emerging position is a response to a previous one, and in that sense it responds to a previous evaluative stance in a constellation of semantic and emotional perspectives. Therefore, there are semantic and emotional relations that are already given in the positioning towards which a new position responds. The field that emerges in the previous positioning shapes the emergence of the new positioning: it gives form to the emergence of not only the previous positioning but also the newly responding one. Indeed, insofar as the field determines the emergence of a new position, it is transformed: the new response brings new anticipations, and new past emotionally and semantically related perspectives. Every utterance involves the emergence of the new from what counts as given: the previous positioning and the field of perspectives that emerged with it.

Discussion

Utterance and discursive field are complementary concepts. Following previous elaborations on the notion of utterance from dialogism (see Haye; Larraín, 2011), we aim to sharpen the dialogical theory of language regarding the role played by the interlocution field, that which exceeds the utterance, in the explanation of how discourse takes place in social interaction among speaking beings, such that every utterance is new and unrepeatable. Against systemic or structural accounts of language, dialogism implies that the context of an utterance is not external but operates within the utterance; that this context or milieu of the utterance is a changing stream of interlocution relations; that this context, being modified by each utterance, is the temporal condition for responses to be understood, anticipated and expressed; and that each utterance is not a structure but a genesis whose initial and final moments are a matter of debate, interpenetrating with the broader field within which it has become.

Speakers, through their interactions and sign exchanges, produce discourse within an interlocution field with a temporal dimension. The difference between one

moment and another is not necessarily created in space or distinguished by the very speakers as a change of place. Discourse is a movement in a rather abstract sense. The reality of movement has been thought of in terms of the stream of thought (JAMES, 1952), emergence (MEAD, 1934), duration (BERGSON, 2004) and becoming (DELEUZE, 1994; SIMONDON, 2008). Bakhtin (1968) uses the idea of the nascent, taken from Rabelais' image of the cyclic growing-and-dying, elevating towards soul and forms, and descending into body and decomposition of matter, as a key to understanding a particular chronotope in literature and cultural memory. The image of this idea is the figure of the old women who are pregnant. Bakhtin did not contribute an ontological concept, but an understanding of how moving reality is refracted and assimilated in culture and subjectivity through the discursive articulation of time and space (BAKHTIN, 1981). Here lies the importance of his theory for our question: How is the movement when it is mediated by language? What is the consequence of looking at the ways in which becoming takes place from the point of view of how discourse shapes the becoming of speakers? If we assume a dialogical theory of language, how is dialogicality related to the ontology of speaking living beings?

We propose thinking that the becoming of speakers through time involves a movement characterized by changes in time itself. A conversation, for instance, does not just pass within a lapse of time. This is true regarding changes in one level of analysis of conversations, namely, the dialogal changes of turn-taking and semiotic composition in speech and gestures. But there are other relevant levels. Among the many interactional features, the dialogical level of dialogal and monological interactions seem to us particularly relevant to understanding not the chronological dimension of discourse but rather its *duration*. Along the conversation, changes take place in the relationships between the speakers, the social projects, images and themes involved. At any given time, these relationships form a layered field within which interaction takes place. The field is not the space containing these speakers and their relations, but a history of contextualizing challenges for speakers and the performative changes they provoke in their relations. Interlocution fields are evolving webs of relations, not static physical or social landscapes. Dialogicality means not just double-voicedness; by implication it means that any piece of discourse is a multiplicity; that any single utterance is a layered cross-field of discourses whose temporal scale exceeds the

chronological scale of discourse production. The creeping of interlocution fields occurs on a timescale that is always larger than the immediate situation, usually spanning years. A daily conversation would not be possible if it were not giving continuity to a long past experience that connects actual speakers with past ones, even not known personally or just presumed by hearing, and many everyday discursive practices sink their roots in the immemorial. The timescale of dialogic relations is different to both logical and physical relations. On the one hand, discursive movement is not eternal and timeless, like logical entities such as argumentation forms and numerical relationships; nor even signs considered to be elements of a model of a language system, as described by structural linguistics. Discursive movement is not understandable from a synchronic perspective, because it is irrevocable and non-reversible. On the other hand, discourse processes are not actualities, effectively existing events, perceived signifiers and present states of affairs in the interlocution field. Between the eternal and the actual there is the virtual. Dialogic relations are virtual in the sense that there are connections among speakers and speakers' positions that exceed the existent-at-present. For this reason, evolving fields of interlocution can be, and usually are, resumed (every day we wake up and resume several threads or streams of discursive life) and, conversely, can hardly be terminated (at least it is hard to know for certain that a conversation has been finally concluded). Usually the position of terminating a conversation is a contestable position within the very conversation. This undetermined finish of many open ended conversations is also part of any single reply, always open to be resumed even in far future situations or in unknown places. Words give birth to new worlds beyond imagination. Utterances open hope, because they are the return of the nascent and never the definite determination of a termination. We can never be sure that there will not be a time and a place in which our discourses will be heard. In this sense, utterances introduce a radical indeterminacy to the virtual field of other other utterances, each time taking place as modification of the field, as a shift of speakers, and as a new expansion of possibilities of experience.

Both at the levels of the interlacing of utterances within discursive fields, and of the creeping of these fields, there is a common type of change: the passage from the given to the new (call it duration, becoming or emergence). This is sometimes associated with changes of actualities in a chronological dimension, but the

chronological composition of signs, syntagmatic forms and sequence of turn-taking moves do not necessarily involve the emergence of something new. Ancient Greeks called *aión* the time as related to the nascent and the forthcoming. The temporal dimension of discourse is *aión*. Not the instant, equal to any other, but the emerging historical positioning of a speaker within an interlocution field (by definition, an utterance), which is unrepeatable. According to Bakhtin (1986a), utterances are unique, ever-new, singular events, because each event enters a different field, in the same sense that, according to Heraclitus, no one ever bathes in the same rivers.

A dynamic theory of discursive or interlocution fields should conceive of these not as forms (not even structures emerging as field effects) but as streams of transformation, for the utterance is the unit of discourse in a rather paradoxical sense: joint, interlacement, transition. We propose conceiving and analysing utterances as transitions from a configuration of speakers – their positioning gestures, the composition of signs that they use to express themselves – to an emergent new one. Utterances are not the states from which speakers jump to arrive at the next utterance, but the very transition of the dialogical relations among speakers towards a future. As such, utterances are not acts or actualities but virtual realities. Even as modifications of the interactional field, utterances are not actual turns but “signs” of change through which speakers wave to each other, pushing their relations in one direction or another. Utterances are units of discourse but not discrete units, as Bakhtin’s discussion of the limits of an utterance suggests; the utterance is the functional unit of the dynamic transformation of interactional spaces, what we have here called articulation.

The time dimension of discourse, however, is not a homogeneous and void form in which dialogic relations take place. Time, as the relevant relation of discursive life, is generated, articulated and modified by discourse, or through discourse, because the latter is precisely the articulation of difference, the ongoing assemblage among different timescales that are relevant to the necessarily multiple voices, positionings, perspectives or discourses that thereby nidificate in a discursive act. This is the act of engendering, of giving birth, to a new voice, positioning or perspective within a temporal field. Each utterance is a new articulation of time. Time (*aión*) changes qualitatively with each link of the communicative chain. Each utterance involves a new nesting of the evolving streams of utterances. Hence our thesis: discourse articulates time at different scales

through embedding discourse into discourse, engendering a new discourse whose emergence was never necessary but contingent.

If the utterance is a transition towards the new, then discourse analysis must follow the novelties that shape the evolving interactional space. In discourse analysis and in daily life interactions, it is indeed important to resist our habit of erasing the nascent meaning of an action with a post hoc meaning according to which that action was necessary – if not absolutely necessary, at least necessary to give rise to the present order of things. Bergson (2004) discussed the illusion of taking the antecedents of a present state as the sources of possibility of that state, a potential that must have been there before the present is actualized. The illusion is due to a particular organization of memory, imagination and action that concentrates on the present and articulates experience with the model of the actual. The counter-movement (or “reflux”) towards the virtual, that is, to the remembered and the imagined, is an integral part of action fields, sinking experience into a condition of non-actuality, for instance, in thinking and dreaming. A similar double movement is found in Bakhtin, in terms of centripetal and centrifugal forces operating from within in the genesis of utterances, the first pushing towards the monologization of utterances and the second towards their polyphonic articulation. Centripetal tendencies within the ongoing utterance production would lead to a unitary, autonomous, single-positioned and definite discourse, if not countered by the centrifugal tendencies that open utterance production to inconclusiveness, heterogeneity and hybridity as the place of creative activity. In discursive life, past words are not organized as determining frames that would be necessary for a given utterance to be expressed or understood (their condition of possibility) but rather signs from which speakers respond with emotional and ideological moves of opposition or alliance. Any single response is always potentially divergent from the past, as much as anticipated dialogic relations re-enter the flux of interaction. Discourse analysis is deepened when taking into account the dynamic articulation of utterances and interlocution fields, not only at the intra-speakers’ level but focally at the inter-speakers’ level of nascent directions of social becoming.

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