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Numerical expressions in everyday language

Carla Bazzanella. 2011. *Numeri per Parlare. Da 'quattro chiacchiere' a 'grazie mille'*. Roma: Editori Laterza.

"Numeri per parlare. Da quattro chiacchiere a grazie mille" ["Numbers in speech. From a couple of words to a thousand thanks"]

This interesting volume was published by the Laterza in 2011 and is the product of fruitful collaboration between three internationally renowned scholars, each with different research perspectives. They are respectively Carla Bazzanella, who teaches General and Cognitive Linguistics at the University of Turin; Rosa Pugliese, who teaches Italian as a foreign language at the University of Bologna; Erdling Strudsholm, who teaches Italian linguistics at the University of Copenhagen.

Before moving to the strengths of the book, I would like to draw the attention to an aspect of the cover which I consider as misleading. I imagine that the publishing house, albeit recognized of its glorious tradition, may be responsible for that. The cover of the book shows a single author, Carla Bazzanella, who contributed as author and as editor at the same time. Rosa Pugliese and Erdling Strudsholm are mentioned as collaborators. In fact, the volume is truly a product of six hands. Respectively, Bazzanella composed the first and the second chapter, a total of 56 pages; Pugliese wrote the third chapter, 55 pages in length; Strudsholm drafted the fourth chapter, 55 pages. As may be proven by the equal extension of the three sections, it is evident that the three of them are authors which should be recognized by the editor.

Secondly, there are two sections of references respectively called bibliography and sources, which are arranged in reverse order compared to tradition: in fact, the source section should be placed before the bibliography. What may be considered more important is the assignment of the books to them. For example, de Mauro (2006: 8) and Gadda (2008: 437) are quoted in the conclusion (pp. 150-153), but their works, respectively, appear in different sections without explanation.

Finally due to the inaccurate dedication of the publishing house, there are several printing errors that render the text less easy to understand (see for example p. 46 .a crasi combining the two Latin words praeterpropter; p. 42, example 48 is taken from PIXI 1990, 69 indicated as "simplified transcription," but showing an incorrect use of the subjunctive; p. 47 the example in Mandarin Chinese is not numbered among other short comings).

We now turn to the content of the volume. The idea underlying the volume as a whole seems quite convincing: the goal is to analyze the use of numerical expressions in everyday

language. The discussion of the uses shows the complexity of the issues involved: the relationship between different codes, the development of the numerical system, the activation of cognitive processes, the crossing between language and culture among other linguistic aspects. After considering the canonical representation of numbers in a language (i.e. precise description), the book focuses on the approximate use of real numbers; in fact, it concentrates on the pragmatic efficiency of language use. The chance to take advantage of the linguistic system through a wide range of uses adjusted for different contexts is put in place daily; the delivery of information, the structuring of speech, the expression of emotions and thoughts are all opportunities to use the diverse range of numerals. Conversations between friends, proverbs, advertisements and other forms of discourse about the new technologies offer numerous examples of approximation through the use of numbers; the diffusion of expressions relating to numbers, especially in the advertising language, would be a subject worthy of precise case studies, because they are transferred from one context to another. It is possible to compare the approximate use of numerals in the Italian language and customs of other languages; in particular, it is interesting to compare it with Danish language (pp. 117-149).

The core of the book is also reflected in Bazzanella, Pugliese, Strudsholm "Tradurre numeri come quantità indeterminata" ["Translate numbers as undetermined quantity"], an earlier article by the same authors. This paper was delivered during the XLIII International Congress for the Study of the Italian Society of Linguistics (SIL 2009) and was published by Veronesi (ed.) "I luoghi della traduzione. Le interfacce" ["Translation Places. Interfaces"] (2011).

The vagueness of the language, which has an impact on the issue of translation, is a related topic. The most recent developments of translation theory, which consider it from different perspectives (namely, Becker 2000, Baker 2006 a-b, House 2006, Cucchi-Ulrych 2008), analyze in depth and discuss some of the issues related to the environment and other pragmatic aspects, favoring in particular the functional perspective, which tends to preserve the meaning intended by the speaker, when there is a complete match between L1 and L2 literal meanings. Since the late 90s discourse markers and mathematics are both among the research interests of the author. The so-called second axiom of Herslund (2000, 11) refers to translation equivalences, which do not necessarily have the same meaning from the perspective of linguistic intension; indeed, even in closely related languages, there is rarely a close match. The paper aims to consider the intersemiotic translation of a particular aspect of linguistic indeterminacy, one that apparently seems paradoxical. It is the use of cardinal numbers as an undetermined amount, an approximate equivalent, of which a translation is not possible. In fact, there are numerous cases in which certain numbers do not indicate a precise amount. They intend to refer to a generic quantity and are used both to attenuate and

to strengthen statements according to a scale of intensity. Elsewhere the translation problems between two languages are discussed and are treated as cases of "interference" or "negative transfer" (cfr. Crystal 1992) when they have a role in the transcription of numbers. The most interesting aspect of the chapters by Bazzanella is her attempt to taxonomize the proper and improper use of numerals. Their use is analyzed in the first part and it is marked by linguistic indicators that favor a precise interpretation of the number: they are expressions aiming to explicitly indicate that the number has to be understood in the proper sense; in the second part indicators of approximation in the use of numerals are treated. These indicators are divided by the author into three different types: the first one is when you add a modifier (the examples given are taken from different languages, such as Italian, English, French, Spanish, and Latin); the second type is called "lexical resource" and consists of a lexeme able to indicate an undetermined quantity but close to exact cardinality; the third type of approximation indicators refers to lexemes that do not contain any numeric reference, generally indicating a small or large amount. Unfortunately, this last point is not as thorough as I had expected from this book.

The most interesting aspect of the chapter by Pugliese lies in the analysis of the pragmatic uses of numerals, which is based on a very wide range of sources. By taking examples from dictionaries, literary works, novels, electronic databases, smartphone text messages, blogs, and Facebook, the author shows the idiomatic forms of inaccurate numbers, sedimented in the use or pervasive neo-formations. Pugliese argues that a division into four groups is possible: 1) from 1 to 10, starting from zero; 2) some numbers between 10 and 100, which include pragmatic uses in cultural and intercultural perspectives; 3) 100, 1000, millions, billions; 4) unspecified big numbers that are different from the previous two groups. The number zero has an idiomatic value, sign of indeterminacy in a range of shades of meaning that can be recognized thanks to the linguistic and extra-linguistic context. Zero may be a component of an adverbial phrase, a noun or an element in symmetrical correspondence with another one. It can soften to the point of becoming a neutral synonym for the verb criticize, thus creating an effect of circular semantics. In an adversative way zero can point out the direction of a digital readout just used, not to be interpreted as a generic quantity; or, with a paradoxical expression from the mathematical point of view, it can strengthen the disappointment due to the discrepancy between expectation and an event created. Some numbers are approximations used in a common way, related to a historical, political, or religious event or a quote from a famous person. In such cases, the meaning of the figurative expression is understandable only if its genesis is shared and if the expression is based on an accurate interpretation of a quantity. Large amounts with undetermined values are often

opposed to small ones; this opposition may occur when comparing a precise amount to another that has been increased to an indeterminate amount.

The polyphonic repetitions (Bazzanella 2005: 241), i.e. the formulations that reflect fixed phrases based on movies, literary titles, quotes from books, proverbs, stereotypes, slogans, and songs, are particularly highlighted. Numbers are subject to the same linguistic phenomena that typically occur with words: numbers act in a polyphonic way and are an integral part of expression; the source of their allusive meanings is found in the ample cultural repertory of a community. This mechanism includes not only specific communicative events, but also religious oratory, slogans, and proverbs.

The strong point of the chapter by Strudsholm is the comparison between the numerical system of the Danish and Italian language. The comparison highlights the differences and similarities, which stem from the fact that the Danish language has preserved the vigesimal system, unlike the Norwegian and Swedish language, which use a decimal system (called 'Northern numeral system'). In the Danish language, in addition to the vigesimal system, there also exists an older duodecimal system, which is closely related to the units of measurement. In Denmark, in 1964, the Ministry of Education attempted to recommend the use of the 'Northern numeral system' in place of the traditional numerals, but this attempt was not successful. In fact, in the perspective of the Ministry the use of the 'Northern numeral system' promotes the internationalization of the banking world. However, despite their inconvenience, both the vigesimal numeric system and the old duodecimal system of the Danish language continue to be used, even though the decimal metric system was introduced in 1907. Though the Danish and Italian language are not typologically correlated – as the first is a Germanic language and the second a Romance one – they basically follow the same numerical system. There is complete correspondence in the canonical use of numerals, but, in those cases where the direct translation is not functional, some differences related to the context, the situation, and the culture are shown. In approximated contexts the translator must take into account various strategies when aiming not only to represent the content but to integrate as much shade of meaning as possible in order to communicate both, the semantic value and the pragmatic function of the text.

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Mauro Giuffrè: Review on *Numeri per Parlare. Da 'quattro chiacchiere' a 'grazie mille'*. 2011. In PRAGMATICS.REVIEWS 2016.4.1

Praxeological foundations, sequential intertwining and the search for adequate research designs – Membership Categorisation Analysis with and after Sacks

Richard Fitzgerald, William Housley. 2015. *Advances in Membership Categorisation Analysis*. London: Sage.

Since Harvey Sacks' foundation of Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA) as an ethnomethodological (EM) approach to "culture-in-action" (Hester/Eglin 1997), the analysis of the categorical organisation of knowledge, as well as the practical reasoning in interaction, has shown a paradoxical development. While little attention has been paid to the development of MCA compared to the increasing importance of its 'neighbouring' fields of sequential analysis or Conversation Analysis (CA) and EM in general, the continuous work of a steadily growing number of researchers with and on Sacks' basic ideas on categorisation lead to a profound stock of knowledge that signals its importance. The collection at hand "Advances in Membership Categorisation Analysis" documents the fine-grained analysis of knowledge-in-action and certainly will serve as a standard reference. The book brings together features of a comprehensive introductory monograph, as well as a loose state-of-the-art collection in an exciting way due to two tendencies: On the one hand, each of the seven chapters aims at introducing, discussing, applying and advancing another key principle or concept of the wide range of analytic tools developed in the course of Sacks' foundation of categorical and sequential analysis as well as subsequent work. On the other hand, all of the chapters (explicitly or implicitly) contribute to strands of discussion that constitute the field's search for self-conception and positioning.

The introductory chapter by William Housley and Richard Fitzgerald starts with positioning MCA within the multidisciplinary discussion about identity, whilst remarking that it is "more than the study of identities and identity work-in-action but [...] a convenient place to begin with" (p. 1). Recapturing Sacks' initial interest in membership categorisation as a situated practice that comes along with the ethnomethodological perspective of taking members' own understanding of society seriously, the authors present a pointed description of MCA as both an interest in „peoples' routine methods of social categorisation and local reasoning practices as a display and accomplishment of „doing“ society“ (p. 4) as well as „not so much a method of analysis but rather a collection of observations and an analytic mentality towards observing the ways and methods people orient, invoke and negotiate social category based knowledge when engaged in social action“ (p. 6). In the course of presenting Sacks' central concepts, Housley and Fitzgerald address two important points which play a crucial role in

the discussion about advancing MCA. On the one hand, they problematize Sacks' rhetoric surrounding, and tendency toward a decontextualized model that infiltrates his own praxeological standpoint, claiming that subsequent research in MCA clearly directs to the "contextualised underpinning of in situ occasionality" (p. 10). On the other hand, the authors elaborate MCA's foundational problem of the connection between categorisation work and sequential analysis that has been suffering from a more parallel than intertwined development. Thus they promote the idea of a multidimensional flow of interaction, "treating category work as flowing through the interaction as sequential and topical relevancies emerge and recede through various tasks" (p. 10). Finally, the chapter offers an overview of advances in the field that go beyond questions of categorisation and identity, e.g. focussing on geographical or non-personal categories and a mundane visual order, as well as studies that focus on specific communication formats such as social media and different audio and video technologies.

Chapter 2 by Rod Watson takes up reification – that is, "the analyst's attribution of a false substantiality of a social phenomenon" (p. 23) – as one misleading way in the analysis of membership categorisation. A "structuralist residue" (p. 24) in the work of Sacks (and EM in general), namely the influence of Componential Analysis, on the one hand served for the adaptation of central ideas such as EM's "competence model of membership" (p. 26) or the emphasis of the "situational" and "systematic nature of actions" (p. 27), but on the other hand brought along the tendency toward analytic essentialism. In contrast, adopting Sacks' praxeological stance means that "categorisation practices [are] both contextualised and contextualising" (p. 31), which brings Watson to discuss the relationship of sequential and categorical phenomena. Instead of treating categorisation as a separate domain, he argues for a praxeological solution that treats "turn-formed categories" and "category-formed turns" as "two sides of the coin" (p. 34). This view suggests more than an analysis of person-description or person-reference, namely a broader analysis of participation frameworks, recipient design and the reflexive determination of categories and context. Watson demonstrates that this could be especially fruitful in the context of worksite studies that have so far failed to take into consideration the categorical organisation of tasks in work contexts; this praxeological view would help „to explicate the division of labour as common-sense, *intersubjective* accomplishment“ (p. 36, emphasis in the original). In general, he proposes "a ‚family resemblance‘ model", which aims at escaping the fallacy of reification by considering that "categorisations show a criss-crossing network of similarities, overlaps and differences from case to case, from one ‚another first time‘ to the next, without ever being conterminous" (p. 38s.). Closing the chapter with methodological remarks, he emphasises that the 'status' not as a research method, but as an "analytic mentality" (Schenkein 1978)

whose flexibility towards phenomena reflects the vagueness of the phenomena, could best be yielded within the context of ethnomethodological ethnography. That is, a “single instance, or, at least, instance-by-instance analysis” (p. 46) leading to a “logical grammar” that differs from Sacks’ idea of a somehow reifying grammar of membership categorisation practices as it focusses on “practices in a given contexture” (p. 48).

In chapter 3, Elizabeth Stokoe and Frederick Attenborough introduce the concept of prospective and retrospective categorisation as “a key mechanism for the practical negotiation of th[e] search for ,right-ness” (p. 53) when it comes to selecting categories. In line with the main tenet of the collection, they attack the “artificial division of labour” (p. 52) of sequential and categorisation analysis, opting for a praxeological and sequential approach to MCA. Such a view makes necessary the specification of at least two points: On the one hand, Sacks’ observation of the inference-richness of categories should not be understood as categories literally storing knowledge, but rather as serving for a members’ resource for implicative work. On the other hand, analysts should not undermine the “defeasibility” of language by being “more specific about categorisation practices [...] than members themselves are” (p. 54). In the analysis of Facebook chats and neighbour dispute mediations, the authors show how members either work forwards or backwards from categories to (predicated) activities of that category, and how the going together “is achieved and is to be found in the local specifics of categorisation as an activity” (Hester and Eglin 1997: 46). A sensibility for proposition, development, rejection and negotiation of categories thus leads to the possibility of identifying recurrent practices “through which one speaker’s descriptions are turned into a membership category by another; how speakers move between description and categorisation, and how recipients may proffer categories as a way of proposing intersubjectivity” (p. 58). Stokoe and Attenborough then deploy this concept to the analysis of categories as resources in breaking and rolling news in the course of the 2011 Norway attacks. They show how prospective and retrospective categorisation in the course of the identification, redefinition, refinement and recasting of ‘what is happening’ forms a “trajectory of rolling news” (p. 68). The analysis of live broadcasting and newspaper articles provides an impressive example of how categorisation analysis can give insights into the emergence, negotiation and stabilisation of media discourses, as well as the production of ‘facts’. Finally, the authors propose “a ,categorial systematics’ approach to MCA [...] with the aim of uncovering the systematic centrality of categories and categorial practices to action” (p. 70). Such an approach questions the common view of the “disorderliness of category relevancies” (p. 52) whilst focussing on the comparability of categorial ordering work across settings.

In the same vein, Christian Licoppe elaborates in the 4th chapter on the idea of a “categorical flow” (p. 71) as one layer of interaction by showing how MCA can be dealt with not only as a resource, but also as a topic within question and answer sequences. In the example of a judicial setting, precisely “the proceedings of a pre-parole judicial commission that hears long-term inmates in order to assess their dangerousness” (p. 71), he furthermore demonstrates how matters of categorisation are part of our deepest common-sense reasoning. Failing in categorisation work – in the context of questions that are produced to evoke categorically organised knowledge – is recognized in the example as being an incompetent conversationalist. Licoppe shows that descriptions about the inmate – such as “weak cognitive capacities” and “mental retardation” – are directly derived from the inmates’ conversational behaviour. The “foundational character of categorisation work” (p. 94) is strikingly visible as the inmates’ failing shows effects similar to Garfinkel’s ‘breaching experiments’ – “being found structurally incompetent with respect to MCA warrants being pronounced incompetent in nearly every domain of social life” (p. 96), which in this setting yield consequences that are serious for the inmates’ treatment.

Chapter 5 by Edward Reynolds and Richard Fitzgerald presents the aim of “developing levels of sophistication to understanding the relationship between membership categories and locally invoked associated features” (p. 99). Therefore, the authors discuss Sacks’ concept of category-bound activities and Watson’s elaboration as category-bound predicates, and conclude that these “catch-all terms” provide new insights, but lack analytic selectivity. They suggest “taking ‘tied’ to be the weakest, ‘most constructed’ relationship, ‘bound’ to be related in a more ‘permanent’ way and ‘predicated’ to be an implied relationship” (p. 105). By doing so, a systematic and “scalar descriptive adequacy in representing the different ‘strengths’ of relationship between categories and their features” (p. 105) could be achieved. To demonstrate the fruitfulness of this differentiation, they present a video-based analysis of instances of the interactive practice “enticing a challengeable” (p. 100) from varying conflict talk settings, showing the strong connection of sequence organisation, challenging practices and the categorical organisation of normativity accounts. Edwards and Fitzgerald remind us to take seriously “the consequential differences between subtle and nuanced relationships which participants may employ” (p. 121) when it comes to relating categories and features such as norms, and how an adequate elaboration of established concepts may help to develop MCA as a sensitive approach to (moral) reasoning.

In the 6th chapter, the concept of omnirelevance is discussed. Sean Rintel shows “participants invoking categories that reflexively treat the understanding of particular interactional movements as controlled by the context of the current activity” (p. 123) – along

with an application in the setting of technologized interaction, namely computer-mediated video calls. MCA is neither interested in the search for a given context, nor maxims to define the relevance of a context from the analyst's perspective, but in "member's own deployment and analysis of categorical devices as organisationally defining an interaction as of an overall kind or context" (p. 124). Omnirelevance, then, describes a device that may be invoked and thus be made organisationally relevant at any point in the conversation "by drawing attention to who-we-are-and-what-we-are-doing" (p. 125). Rintel further shows that the concept can be gainfully applied to the analysis of repair in technologized interaction, as on the one hand MCA should be interested in how technology and its organisational problems are treated as an interactional resource and concern; on the other hand, omnirelevant devices can be used "to resolve interactional ambiguities, such as the need for and manner of a repair" (p. 133) and to re-establish conversational continuity. Based on the analysis of instances of distortion in couples' video calls, he convincingly shows how two different omnirelevant devices, namely technology and relationship, are treated as "organisational counterpoints – if one is at issue the other is not – but also counterparts – they must both be relevant for one to be foregrounded while the other is backgrounded" (p. 137f.). Furthermore, the examples show how different trouble sources (video or video/audio) are matched with different methods "with respect to the *expressive* needs of the couples' talk" (p. 138, emphasis in the original), and how repair and the employment of omnirelevant devices can be used as a resource for intimacy-raising practises such as "teasing".

The last chapter by William Housley and Robin James Smith is well placed at the end of the collection, as it connects MCA with a broader discussion about an 'epistemic reflexivity'. The authors identify an increasing interest in the (ethnomethodological) analysis of social scientific practice that – reinforced by the reflexive turn in contemporary social science which seeks to clarify the conditions of scientific reasoning – finds its most ambitious form in the "social life of methods" approach. Noticing that there are relatively few studies that deal with the production of interpretable and code-worthy data, as well as "the actualities and specificities involved in the practical interactional business of realising social science method and measurement" (p. 153), they want to show that "the social life of methods is routinely built on the situated, practically occasioned and accomplished social life of membership categorisation and related practices" (p. 153). Therefore, Housley and Smith demonstrate how the important scientific practice of coding as an act of discovery rather than construction in the setting of a research team meeting – a setting which "renders visible many of the practices of coding which are usually ,black boxed"" (p. 155) – involves the tasks to "accomplish a 'shared perspective'" in relation to the chosen method in action as well as the achievement of a "coding perspective" (p. 154) through conversational mechanisms that

marks a difference to their everyday use. The difference then is achieved by a correspondence test according to what Housley and Smith call the “coder’s maxime,” which builds on “frequency as a principle” (p. 170) and thus forms the basis of consistency. Finally, taking a methodological stance, Housley and Smith argue for a “cumulative paradigm of empirical research” (p. 155) that brings highly granular “methodographic” (p. 155) analyses – that is, the comparative analysis of specific methods and features – and local case studies from different settings together, framing future studies in the field.

To conclude with some general impressions, it is worth emphasising that all contributions argue for carefully paying attention to the links of membership categorisation and sequential analysis, pointing out what has been called the foundational character of membership categorisation. Furthermore, under the auspices of a praxeological understanding of MCA, the authors share a consensus of avoiding decontextualizing analyses, which goes hand in hand with a shared but differently weighted accentuation of the ethnomethodological and consequently sociological roots. The identification of MCA as, above all, an analytic mentality comes along with varying strategies to combine this attitude with research designs that focus on single practices (“methodographic”) in specific contexts (“logical grammar”), or across contexts (“categorical systematics”) that may or may not constitute a “cumulative” or “comparative paradigm”. All of these efforts demonstrate the crucial relationship to the foundations of Harvey Sacks – while his work still serves as an inexhaustible resource, the book clearly shows the demand for highlighting the elaborations and developments of established as well as new concepts and principles. One of the strengths of the collection lies in the numerous fine-grained analyses of (non-) interactional data, including a variety of settings, participation frameworks and media. All these examples prove that taking categorisation practices into account should be of interest for not only CA, but a variety of research domains, e.g. discourse analysis. Finally, as the book claims to present advances in the field, it enables thinking about what the analysis of membership categorisation still lacks. Two points may be outlined here: On the one hand, MCA still primarily concentrates on membership – that is, social categorisation. Comparatively few studies focus on spatial categorisation, and hardly any studies deal with temporal categorisation. Especially the intertwining of these three dimensions could be a topic of future inquiry. On the other hand, it is astonishing that debates about categorisation respectively classification in other domains of the humanities and even sociology have to this date received little attention within MCA. As especially the work of Sacks serves as an inspiration in broader discussions about societies’ categorical foundation (e.g. Bowker and Star 1999), it is likely that MCA vice versa may benefit from approaches to categorisation and classification that seem to be rather incompatible with an ethnomethodological perspective.

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An overlooked book in French about discourse analysis and social demand

Frédéric Pugnière-Saavedra, Frédérique Sitri, Marie Veinard. 2012. *L'Analyse du discours dans la société. Engagement du chercheur et demande sociale*. Paris: Honoré Champion.

No matter what a scholar does in almost every domain of the social sciences, discourse analysis often constitutes a fundamental tool for research, measurement, and validation. This book about discourse analysis and social demand gathers 26 chapters by an international array of scholars (from Portugal, Greece, Romania, Canada), all written in French. The three co-editors organised their book into three separate parts about (1) the role and position of the researcher, (2) possible interdisciplinary intersections for discourse analysis, and (3) the dynamics of ideologies and the social construction of collective identities in European countries. These three parts are themselves subdivided into unnumbered sections.

After the co-editors' prologue, the opening section deals with epistemological issues and proposes conceptual discussions on concepts such as social demand and sociolinguistics. However, most essays in this first section are rather disappointing as they sometimes elaborate a complex framework that only leads to a thin conclusion; this is particularly true with the opening chapter on the use of majuscule in 19th century France and chapter 2 about globalisation as an ideology in Brazil. Perhaps the most rewarding of this portion, the following chapter draws from the Critical Discourse Analysis approach (which is relatively uncommon in France) and aptly situates this approach; this contribution by Adèle Petitclerc is clear and vivid, even in her numerous definitions and useful articulations between "discourse" and "ideology"; following Louis Althusser's framework, Adèle Petitclerc reminds the reader "the discourse is the place where ideology manifests itself" (p. 68).

Within the second section of the first part, some chapters are interesting discussions about paradigms (and how they are imposed) within the French academia in mid-20th century, like Josiane Boutet's text centered on sociolinguist Marcel Cohen (1884-1974), who was more or less left behind by his colleagues despite his vast culture and knowledge; maybe because he was just a French communist at the worst moment (at the end of Stalinism, p. 111). As Josiane Boutet demonstrates in her fascinating text (perhaps the most vivid in this collection), Marcel Cohen could have been the leading voice in French sociolinguistics, but the community preferred to elect and praise his rival Émile Benveniste, who ranked himself in a totally different background (p. 111).

In the following section, another chapter (by Rui Ramos, Paula Cristina Martins, Sara Pereira, and Madalena Oliveira) presents a detailed and rigorous discourse analysis about a

recurrent theme, endangered children, as represented in the Portuguese media, with selected keywords and a solid theoretical framework applied to Portuguese culture and highlighting how some subjective journalists often try to “dramatise” and “amplify” events (p. 197) and then, after setting the background, “let events speak for themselves” (p. 205). Here, language in the Portuguese media is reaffirmed as “framing” (“un système modélisant primaire”, p. 196). Undoubtedly the most original essay in this subgroup, we find a discourse analysis comparing various letters of application using similar formulations (such as “I would like to apply” or “I would like to present my candidacy”, p. 257); interestingly, the authors compare as well the degree of politeness in these letters, especially in the last sentence and signature (p. 261).

Some chapters are not just case studies, but rather interesting and broader discussions about discourse analysis and other related dimensions, especially in the last part which discusses a wide array of issues related politicisation, gender, and social representations in the public sphere. Among the most representative essays included here, one finds in the third part, Thierry Guilbert’s excellent chapter centred on social demand and the media. It begins with a strong distinction between interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinary, and transdisciplinarity, that latter being “a global and integrated vision that organises knowledge from various disciplines into the comprehension of complex issues” (p. 390). Then, these three approaches are being triangulated in an interesting way in order to apprehend ideological discourses and their fundamental dynamics of legitimisation in the media, making things and ideas appear as rational and evident (p. 392). Finally, this book ends with Patricia von Münchow’s chapter which prolongs her noted book (von Münchow 2011) comparing books for parents published in France and Germany, an effort which was praised by many critics (Laberge 2013).

As so many collective efforts, this *L'Analyse du Discours dans la société* goes in (too) many directions; the result is neither a guide nor a comprehensive overview of the discipline. Perhaps my (too) high expectations were ignited by the book’s title, which seems broad and systematic, even though the co-editors never pretended to be comprehensive. There is no thread or clear direction except for displaying various examples of discourse analysis in a diversity of countries, but the book’s title does not reflect this diversity of national cases. Of course, most scholars in sociolinguistics might feel familiar with the general contributions included here while graduate students would probably only select a few texts in narrower niches or centred on specific countries. From my experience, reading it from one cover to the last confirms this kind of collection of essays is not made to be read in its entirety. This is not to say these essays are pointless; to the contrary, most of them are coherent and rigorous, well written and aptly documented. Only a few typos remain (“disiplinarisation”, p. 56). Of

course, potential readers ought to have a superior understanding of French to take advantage of these sometimes dense contributions. Since this collection of essays is not likely to be translated in other languages, non-Francophone scholars might ask whether they should try to read it; in my view, I have to say there are some more accurate readings that should come first in this field if someone has only one book in French to read in sociolinguistics. Nevertheless, most of the contributions mentioned above can undoubtedly be seen as cutting edge research in their specific subfields of sociolinguistics.

References

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