

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND THE FUNCTIONAL BASES OF LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT: This study seeks to illustrate in what way congruence in theoretical approaches allows for the study of transitive processes, interactional processes as well as grammatical and lexico-semantic elements that stand out in discourse as a social practice. In light of this, a brief overview will be given of three inter-related language systems given that the study seeks to establish a dialogue between the functional bases of language and a critical discourse analysis model. Based upon an empirical analysis, considerations will be made as to what extent discursive-linguistic structures identify within a given text, in accordance with Halliday's proposal, categories related to embedded clauses as processes, speech acts or as messages. This also reflects actional, representational and identificational meanings as suggested in Fairclough's Social Theory of Discourse.

1. Introduction

This work seeks to examine in what way congruence in theoretical approaches allows for the study of transitive processes, interactional processes as well as grammatical and lexico-semantic elements that stand out in discourse as social practice. On the one hand, it is known that transitivity is a standard universal process in human languages. On the other hand, the construction of functional plurality is seen in the discursive-linguistic structure as the basis for lexical and grammatical organisation (semantic and syntactic). In light of this, the objective here is to understand the dialogical relation between the functional bases of language in accordance with Halliday (1973, 1978, 1994), Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and the Critical Discourse Analysis model developed by Fairclough (1992, 2003).

In defending the notion that function constitutes a major property of language, Halliday leads us to identify through the ideational macro-function that transitivity processes integrate discourse and grammar. This is so as syntax makes access to the discursive moment possible through an analysis of the organization of the language in use. According to Halliday (1973), speakers make their "selections" based upon social circumstances. Thus, formal options in linguistic structures

have contrasting meanings whilst selections of form are always significant at the discourse level.

The proposals in question here entail a linguistic theory that is not only extrinsic but also intrinsic since a study of the internal nature of linguistic structure indicates the reasons for which language serves the external structure. Based upon an empirical analysis, reflections are developed as to what extent linguistic-discursive structures identify within a given text categories related to embedded clauses as processes (ideational functional), speech acts (interpersonal function) and as messages (textual functions). This reflects in turn actional, representational and identificational meanings as suggested in Fairclough's Social Theory of Discourse. This work also focuses upon how certain linguistic structures indicate processes that can be represented metaphorically, a notion focused upon in Fairclough's Social Theory of Discourse (1992, 2003), in which metaphors structure not only the way in which we think and act but also our knowledge and belief systems. In essence, the main point of reference for critical textual analysis is becoming more and more upon Systemic Functional Linguistics, especially work by Halliday (1994), Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) concerning the relation between transitivity processes in languages and other elements and aspects of social life. Some studies prior to the aforementioned point of reference are considered below.

2. The three linguistic systems in articulation with language functions

Firstly, it must be pointed out that focusing on discourse as a social practice implies investigating the processes that a language undergoes as it moulds as well as is moulded by reality. In this sense, a linguistic system is not neutral, given that the discourses conveyed through this system may reflect in some way ideological positions and customs. Even the specific grammar system of a language is intrinsically related to the personal and social demands made on language and this is reflected in the speaker's creativity. Hence the need to establish a link between studies of form and function with a view to studying process, even though it is not possible, at least within the context of this study, to find a balance between internal and external aspects in the creativity of linguistic-discursive actions performed by any speaker of a natural language¹.

According to Franchi (1976, *apud* Castilho, 1994), a language includes three systems articulated by the lexicon. These systems are merely associated since they should be considered as being autonomous at the same time. Franchi's affirmation is based upon the following points:

- the semantic, conceptual or notional system includes two sub-systems: the descriptive-predicate and the deitic-referential;
- the syntactic system includes classifiers, argumentative sub-systems as well as grammatical relations, processes and transformations and syntactic case among others;
- the discursive system includes inter-subject negotiations that make language a social contract.

A parallel can be established between Franchi's proposal (1976) and Halliday's focus (1975). Nevertheless, it is a contrasting parallel given that for Halliday there is a deep co-relation between the three aforementioned points for in his viewpoint, a linguistic system can only be explained through a study of its functions. From Halliday's perspective (1975: 147):

(...) the specific form that the grammar system of language takes on is intimately linked to the personal and social demands that language must meet; however, to prove this, it is essential to consider the language system and its functions at the same time; to do the contrary would require an entire theoretical base to make generalisations as to how language is used.

Whilst Halliday considers language as an integrated system related specifically to social structure, Franchi (2000) defends the idea that language cannot be limited to a social tool or to a study of its external dimension. All the same, both converge on one theoretical point: the creativity of language. The two theorists acknowledge the existence of a creative process that allows us to elaborate and verbalise our personal and social demands, in other words, our experiences.

The parallel continues between Franchi and Halliday. For instance, in the principles underlying a "functional perspective of the sentence", Halliday (1974: 46) draws upon ideas from Daneš so as to explain that within the syntax there are three levels:

1. the semantic structure of the sentence
2. the grammatical structure of the sentence
3. the organisation of the sentence

Halliday also bases his thinking on Svoboda's ideas, another theorist from the Prague School who points to the existence of three systems: semantic, grammatical, and functional, each having its own syntactic elements and relations. What stands out in the borders of Svoboda's thinking, is the proximity between Halliday's and Franchi's concepts.

Although the levels outlined by Halliday hold a similar relation to the independent systems proposed by Franchi, this similarity falls apart when Halliday affirms that these three systems constitute important and fundamental categories and are not merely co-existing systems or levels of independent structures. They are functional components of grammar. According to Halliday, there are always categories of expression within the linguistic system of language functions in the general sense in which the term would have been used in vanguard work by Karl Bühler. It is precisely in reference to this point that Bühler's categories are represented in Daneš-Svoboda's macro-theoretical framework.

From this perspective, Halliday (1974) suggests two components in the linguistic system, emphasizing that each has two connotations: semantic and lexico-grammatical. Hence the two components:

1. the experiential (*representative* for Bühler and *semantic* for Daneš)
2. the interpersonal (*connotative and expressive* for Bühler and *grammatical* for Daneš)

There is at the same time a third component without which it would not be possible to identify the others. It is the textual component that gives to language its operational sense. As Halliday points out, this function does not exist in Bühler's scheme, but it can be noted in Daneš proposal, precisely at the level of utterance organisation, whose elements Svoboda considers as "communicative units". The functional perspective of a sentence can be linked to the textual component in its grammar. Nonetheless, what is more significant to highlight in Halliday's comments is the fact that it is a component that differs from the other

two in that it is directly related to language in use, the focus of this study.

Halliday's question as well as an outline proposed by him must be highlighted so as to synthesise some aspects that illustrate the functional basis of language. At the end of this study, an answer will be proposed for the following question: *Is the social functioning of language reflected in the linguistic structure, that is, in the internal organisation of language as a system?*

It can be noted that the outline below synthesises the language functions proposed by Halliday (1975, 1978) as well as indicates what underlies the sentence. Indeed, in my view, the organisation of a sentence concentrates part of the semantic load on what Fairclough calls (trad. 2001) "the force of utterances". To follow is an outline of language functions:

- ideational function, an expression of contents, the speaker's experience in relation to the real world (including notions of time and space) and to the inner world of his very conscience - > implying transitivity (the sentence as process – material, mental, relational, verbal) given that language structures experience and contribute to determining our vision of the world;
- interpersonal function that involves the interaction between the expression of social roles, the development of the speaker's personality and the interlocutor's expectations – > this refers to the mood/modality (the sentence as speech act), thus serving to express both our inner world as well as our outer world;
- textual function that entails textual construction and organisation -> it involves a theme and information (the sentence as message); this allows the listener/reader to differentiate between a text from a random grouping of sentences because the text holds cohesive elements and links to situational contexts.

As can be noted, the function constitutes a fundamental property in language, grammar can be understood as a "system of options available in language", given that the "speaker or writer makes choices within the system, not in a vacuum, but in a context of speech situations"

(Halliday, 1975: 147). Further, according to Halliday, texts represent simultaneously aspects of the physical, social and mental world. In this sense, it is Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) that most fits in with a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective, since it takes into account linguistic and social components within the theoretical scope of language studies.

3. The Social Theory of Discourse

In his initial theoretical proposal, Fairclough (1992) suggests an analytical trajectory that involves approaching discourse from a three-fold perspective: linguistic practice, discursive practice and social practiceⁱⁱ. From a textual dimension, analysis covers four categories, the main ones being: grammar, vocabulary, cohesive devices and text structure. In discursive practice, text production, distribution and consumption processes as well as intertextuality, the power of utterances and coherence are studied. It is essential to point out here one relevant aspect brought up by Fairclough (1992: 65), and which refers to the notion that discursive practice reproduces society as well as transforms it in a dialectical process in which discourse and social structure come together in a dynamic interaction. The third dimension of analysis refers to an examination of social practice that involves social and linguistic action in a sociohistoric context. This dimension implies analysing the linguistic object in the immediate context, the institutional context as well as in the global context of society. It is fitting to note that the division between these three dimensions only meets analytical purposes since text, discursive practice and social practice are interconnected and so, the aforementioned order need not be strictly adhered to during the analytical process.

This has to do with a three dimensional concept of discourse analysis which involves three main spheres in a critical theoretical framework geared towards the social side of language, especially political implications that can turn language into an ideological banner. Fairclough states that these three spheres allow for assessing relations between discursive change and social change with a view to relating such changes to textual instances. From this perspective, what is sought is the linking of textual and linguistic analysis to a macro-sociological tradition of analysing social practice and to a microsociological tradition of conceiving social practice as actively created by people, which allows for social practice to be considered as shared knowledge. As Fairclough observes, in the procedures underlying shared knowledge, there are

political and ideological issues, which are in many instances contradictory and heterogeneous.

In my view, it is essential to note that the significance of the social theory of discourse for linguistic research lies in its three dimensional vision that allows for considering grammar in the architecture of the text. Grammar thus becomes associated with a critical spotlight on linguistic practices, which under the right conditions can lead to discursive and social changes. Further, the notion of integrating linguistic analysis with social theory is also based upon a sociohistoric sense of discourse tied into the meaning of interaction, factors that make language a social contract.

4. Systemic Functional Linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis in dialogue

Given that SFL relates the social to the linguistic, its operation becomes transdisciplinary and so it can be appropriated to other theories. In the case of CDA, based upon the theoretical framework proposed by Fairclough (1992, 2003), a text not only simultaneously involves ideational, interpersonal (identity and relational) and textual functions, but its meanings can be seen from three dimensions: action, representation and identification. In fact, Fairclough (2003:27) states that he prefers to discuss these three major meaning types in semiosis rather than functions. He explains the following:

Representation corresponds to Halliday's 'ideational' function; Action is closest to his 'interpersonal' function, though it puts more emphasis on text as a way of (inter)acting in social events, and it can be seen as incorporating Relation (enacting social relations); Halliday does not differentiate a separate function to do with identification – most of what I include in Identification is in his 'interpersonal' function. I do not distinguish a separate 'textual' function, rather I incorporate it within action.

In considering the ideas presented above, we are led to take up Halliday's position (1975) for whom the textual element is distinct from the other two (experiential and interpersonal) precisely because it is directly related to language in use. In this sense, Fairclough's decision to incorporate the textual function with actional meaning is understandable. At the same time, the identity function suggested

involves a link with modes through which social identities are established, whilst the relational function implies the manner in which social relations among discourse participants are negotiated and represented. Fairclough explains that identities in society indicate their operation in terms of power relations, reproduction and social change. For Fairclough, separating Halliday's 'interpersonal' function is necessary given that it allows for proving the importance of discourse in constituting, reproducing, contesting and restructuring identities.

As can be perceived, Fairclough (2003) considers texts as multifunctional, differently however from Halliday, that is, based upon the distinction between genre, discourse and style. According to the former's explanation, genres, discourses and styles are relatively stable modes of acting, representing and signifying. They are also responsible for linking the text to other social elements as well as for linking internal text relations to external ones. In terms of the three meaning types, actional meaning, linked to genre, propitiates the perception of the text as a mode of inter(action) in social events. Representational meaning, associated with discourse entails representing aspects of the world (physical, mental and social) in texts, whilst identificational meaning, related to style, involves constructing and negotiating identities in discourse. From this perspective, embedded in all discourse orders are characteristic discursive genres that articulate styles and discourses in a relatively stable manner in a specific sociohistoric and cultural context.

Thus, in reformulating his theoretical proposal for discourse analysis (critical), particularly textual analysis geared towards social research, Fairclough (2003) acknowledges, based upon Halliday's proposal, that each utterance is multifunctional and hence the reason why he suggests a combination of meanings that come together with ideational, interpersonal (identity and relational) and textual functions. In light of this, as pointed out by Ramalho (2005: 34), each utterance in a given text can be seen as a semiotic production (textual function) that constructs the world (ideational function) and establishes social relations among its producers as well as among other participants that occupy this world (relational function) so that the social thread is tied into to the grammatical fabric of language. This implies the internalisation of language in other moments of social practice.

5. In search of a functional and critical analysis: “Admirável chip novo”

This section is a critical linguistic-discursive study based upon the lyrics of a new song, “Admirável Chip novo” *Brave new chip*, composed by Pitty, a young Brazilian singer. The song transmits intertextuality from the onset. It internalizes other traces of discursive and social practices that can be identified through a study of the grammar in each utterance as well as in lexical choices, cohesive aspects and the textual structure. See below.

ADMIRÁVEL CHIP NOVO	Brave new chip
Pane no sistema alguém me desconfigurou	A breakdown in the system, someone disconfigured me
Aonde estão meus olhos de robô?	Where are my robot eyes?
Eu não sabia que tinha percebido	
Eu sempre achei que era vivo	I didn't know that you had noticed
parafuso e fluido em lugar de articulação	
Até achava que batia um coração	I always thought that I was alive
Nada é orgânico, é tudo programado	Screws and fluid instead of articulation
e eu achando que tinha me libertado	I even thought that my heart used to beat
Mas lá vem eles novamente e eu sei o que vou fazer:	Nothing is organic, all is programmed
Reinstalar o sistema	And me thinking that I had freed myself
Pense, fale, compre, beba	But here they come again and I know what I'm going to do:

Leia, vote não se esqueça	know what I'm going to do:
Use, seja , ouça, diga	Reinstall the system
Tenha, more, gaste e viva	
	Think, talk, buy, drink,
Não sinhô, sim sinhô,	Read, vote, don't forget,
Não sinhô, sim sinhô.	Use, be, listen, tell,
	Have, live, spend and live
	No sir, yes sir,
	No sir, yes sir.

The title of the song as well as the words “chip”, “system”, “disconfigured”, “robot” and “programmed” contribute not only to textual cohesion in that they are expressions from the same semantic field but also allow for identifying the song’s intertextuality with the book called *Brave New World*, written by Aldous Huxley in 1931, a portrait of an imagined society in which the story of a young girl takes place. This story parallels or even contrasts with song writer’s life. According to Max Cancilieri’s review, the Huxley protagonist “...lives in a society in which people are genetically and psychologically pre-programmed to fulfil a social role and like it without questioning it or desiring to do so...”ⁱⁱⁱ For Cancilieri, it is a form of criticising the replacement of people by machines in a distinct way, that is, through the replacement of the human side, linked to feelings and emotions, by pre-programmed sensations. In short, whilst the protagonists in Huxley’s book represent a juxtaposition between the old and new society, Pitty portrays, at least in the context of the song, an identity crisis in today’s society, which seems typical of the “digital generation”.^{iv}

It must be pointed out moreover that in today’s world contact with automated tasks has become so widespread and banalised that we have not even perceived this. All the same, relatively common actions such as using a credit card, talking by mobile phone or listening to music on

CD would not be possible without progress in science and technology. What can be affirmed is that what makes the “net generation” different is that it is coming of age and increasing simultaneously with technological advances so that the very identity of this generation is marked by this process, in a strangely familiar way as noted in the context out of which Pitty’s song originates. It must be remembered that the main characteristic of the young digital generation is that they have frequent and ongoing access to interactive media, available through the Internet or even by mobile phone. It would seem that this constant contact with these media forms has been influencing this generation’s behaviour; it is as if there is a sort of symbiosis occurring. It is as if the computer has brought to humans a new sense, in addition to smell, hearing, sight, taste, and touch, given the space it occupies in our lives (Santos & Silva, 2006).

Based upon Halliday’s and Matthiessen’s ‘grammar of experience’ (2004: 172), together with Fairclough’s proposal (2003) a variety of verbal processes can be identified in the song’s lyrics, as well as an identity fragmented by technology, conveyed metaphorically. See the following example.

<p><i>Pane no sistema alguém me desconfigurou,</i></p> <p><i>Aonde estão meus olhos de robô?</i></p>	<p>A breakdown in the system, someone disconfigured me</p> <p>Where are my robot eyes?</p>
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The segment in bold indicates a grammatical metaphor. As Halliday explains (1994: 35), the processes and properties (conveyed through verbal action and adjectives) are expressed metaphorically as nouns. Instead of operating as process or attribute, they work as “thing” (*breakdown*). This highlights nominalization as a powerful metaphorical resource of which the song’s composer takes advantage. A breakdown, in the literal sense, is equivalent to a breakdown in an engine’s fuel system. Here however, breakdown refers to a defect in the computer system that throws the user out of sync, hence the question: Where are my robot eyes?

The noun phrase, *breakdown in the system* is followed by an utterance whose nucleus is a material process. It is a verbal form *disconfigure*,

followed by two participants: on the one hand an actor, an unknown agent directly involved in the process, represented by the indefinite pronoun *someone* and, on the other hand, the person affected, represented in the indirect object pronoun, *me*, in this case the song's composer. The song's lyrics constantly suggest a dependence on the relation with the computer. In Pitty's words:

<i>Eu não sabia que tinha percebido</i>	I didn't know that you had noticed
<i>Eu sempre achei que era vivo</i>	
<i>Parafuso e fluido em lugar de articulação</i>	I always thought that I was alive
<i>Até achava que batia um coração.</i>	Screws and fluid instead of articulation
	I even thought that my heart used to beat

Notice that in the initial segment there are main clauses with mental process verbs – *eu não sabia* (*I never knew*); *eu sempre achei* (*I always thought*); *até achava* (*I even thought*) (judged) that in turn project clauses involving respectively mental processes [*que tinha percebido* I had realised], relational [*que era vivo* that I was alive] and material [*que batia um coração* that my heart used to beat]. It can be stated that the predominance of mental process verbs in this part of the music, establishes a sort of framework involving a nominal phrase: 'Screws and fluid instead of articulation' in that it highlights the coming out of sync - the evident disarticulation between 'machine' and 'thought', concrete and abstract nouns in a metonymical process are represented respectively through *screws* and *fluid*. It can also be noted that mental reactions are presented through verbs in the imperfect and in the present perfect, implying a focus on a "narrated world" in contrast to a "commented world" (Weinrich, 1973).

In the case of the segment analysed, the choice in verb tenses in the narrated world indicates the composer's attitude of reflection in relation to the utterance produced. At the same time, as the song's lyrics

describe, in an analogy to the computer, there can be a failure (pane-breakdown) in the system (resulting from the “symbiosis” between machine + mind), thus generating a disconfiguration (*parafuso e fluido em lugar de articulação*/ Screws and liquid instead of articulation), responsible for a kind of rupture. This brings about a personal identity crisis, already triggered through the implications of the interaction between technology and the forming of human consciousness.

We will now look briefly at actional, representational and identificational meanings. It is evident that the very genre of the lyrics, linked to a particular style, different from the conventions of academic poetry, allows for envisaging the potential of actional meaning through the inter(action) in musical events in which the composer’s discourse represents the “voice” of a young society.^v Representational meaning is associated with the composer’s discourse that expresses through the music the representation of aspects relative to her inner world (mental) and her external context (physical and social), probably echoed among young people of her generation. In order to comment upon the identificational meaning in the text under study, it is necessary to point to an aspect considered by Fairclough (2003) and which refers to identities in a society whose functioning implies among other factors, forms of reproduction as illustrated in the following excerpt from the song:

<i>Nada é orgânico, é tudo programado</i>	Nothing is organic, all is programmed
<i>E eu achando que tinha me libertado</i>	And me thinking that I had freed myself
<i>Mas lá vêm eles novamente e eu sei o que vou fazer:</i>	But here they come again and I know what I’m going to do:
<i>Reinstalar o sistema.</i>	Reinstall the system

By indicating a form of reproduction, the first verse in the segment above is made up of two clauses that have as their nucleus the verb ‘to be’, which semantically indicates a permanent state. They are two independent clauses, both indicating an attributive relational process

through two terms ‘characteristic’ and ‘value’ (Eggs, 2004:239). The indefinite pronouns represent in a contrasting parallel the terms being defined, whilst the adjectives – *organic* and *programmed* – constitute value terms within a logic in which *nothing* implies exclusion in relation to *organic* and *all* signifies inclusion in terms of *programmed*, thus indicating a situation of domination.

Nevertheless, it is in the second verse that an interesting grammatical element constitutes, in my opinion, a deviation. In Halliday’s view, an unmarked tense in a mental verbal process is the present tense, whilst the present continuous is a typically unmarked form for a material process. As Eggs observes (2004: 226), “this does not mean that the mental process never occurs in the present continuous or the material process in the simple process. However, there is a clear unmarked co-relation that differentiates two types of processes; this is why the choice of the present continuous in a mental process verb implies an extra dimension to meaning”. This seems to be the case with the second verse:

<i>E eu achando /que tinha me libertado.</i>	And me thinking that I had freed myself.
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It can be noted that the projecting clause uses the verb in gerund form, this serves to semantically intensify the act of thinking, used in the sense of assessing or judging. In terms of the projecting clause, it refers to what Halliday calls a phenomenon-fact, in this case, a fact that did not occur: the achievement of freedom. It must be remembered here that liberty is associated with what is natural, in consonance therefore with the organic but incompatible with the programmed. Hence the following verses predominantly with material verb processes (*come, I’m going to do, reinstall*) reinforce the idea of antagonism in action and rebellion: *But here they come again and I know what I’m going to do: Reinstall the system.*

Indeed, in rebelling against a form of reproduction generated by technology and in face of the risk of submitting to automation triggered by the computer, in which *nothing* is organic and *all is programmed*, Pitty indicates the need to restructure identity. Hence the reason why she alerts Internet users through a sequence of imperative mode verbs, thereby also illustrating language’s interpersonal function, expressed in actional meanings.

<i>Pense, fale, compre, beba</i>	Think, talk, buy, drink,
<i>Leia, vote não se esqueça</i>	Read, vote, don't forget,
<i>Use, seja, ouça, diga</i>	Use, be, listen, tell,
<i>Tenha, more, gaste e viva</i>	Have, live, spend and live

On the one hand, it is a matter of a modalised discourse, a type of exhortation vis à vis the possible risk of humanity's automation. Both the imperative verbs as well as the song writer's attitude indicate a warning vis à vis an automation that is eminent. On the other hand, a possible political reaction referring to a need for social change can be noted. This can be seen through the call to capitalist values - *compre* (buy), *beba* (drink), *leia* (read), *vote* (vote), *tenha* (have) and *gaste* (spend), expressed in material verb processes, linked to the external world. According to Mey (2001), discourse is a political notion and the operation of society's 'voice' in discourse is a political activity.

Thus the sequence of phrases with imperative verb forms reiterates a warning to the digital generation that may be at the mercy of automation. Not heeding this warning implies continued submission to the computer as the end of the song indicates.

<i>Não sinhô, sim sinhô</i>	No sir, yes sir,
<i>Não sinhô, sim sinhô</i>	No sir, yes sir.

It can be noted that the refrain in focus not only alludes to computer commands ('no' and 'yes'), but also evokes the notion of the individual subject to technology or the Internet, a passport to programmes that can influence the mind and even human actions, as for example, the protagonists in the book *Brave new world*, all pre-programmed people.

6. Final considerations

This study sought to provide a brief overview of the three linguistic systems articulated to language functions so as to establish a dialogical relation between Halliday's systemic-functional grammar and Fairclough's theoretical proposal in relation to critical discourse analysis. Examining a text (oral or written) from this perspective implies conducting a study that entails a description and interpretation not merely of form and function but above all, of the process that allows for identifying the creativity of language in the composer's choices regarding linguistic-discursive actions.

The text analysed "Admirável chip novo" (*A brave new chip*) offers the opportunity to find some answers to Halliday's question given that it was possible to prove empirically how the social dimension is reflected in the song's lyrics. Hence Fairclough (1992) can be paraphrased in that discourse both moulds as well as is moulded by reality through on-going linguistic-discursive exchanges. Thus, it can be stated that discourse moulds as well as is moulded by grammar. It is precisely the fact that grammar constitutes a cognitive structure, which makes it sensitive to social reality that moulds as well as is moulded by grammar (*cf.* Silva, 2005: 45).

In conclusion, I draw upon Mey's thinking (2001) for whom discourse is a political notion and as such is neither something that language merely does nor is it a simple language function. In essence, discourse, generally speaking, is the condition upon which language as structure or system exists.

NOTES

ⁱ The focus upon three articulated systems in language and the parallel traced between Franchi and Halliday can also be seen in Silva (2003).

ⁱⁱ Practices are habitual modes in specific times and spaces in which people use resources (material and symbolic) to act together in the world. They are points of connection between abstract structures (and their mechanisms) and concrete events; between 'society' and people living their lives (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999:21).

iii <http://www.odialetico.hpg.ig.com.br/literatura/mundonovo.htm>> Accessed on 02/06/06.

iv The term “digital generation” as well as the term “net generation” were coined by the Canadian political scientist Don Tapscott (1999) in his best-seller *Digital Generation* in his characterisation of the new generation of young people, influenced by digital technology.

v As Mey points out (2001:239), “a specific discourse is always built in to what I call ‘voice’, implying a social protagonist who represents some function and some interest in the community.”

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