"TO EACH ONE WHAT SEEMS BEST TO HER/HIM": DEBATE AND CONTROVERSY AROUND THE PARAMETRIC SOCIOLINGUISTICS IN THE HISTORY OF BRAZILIAN LINGUISTICS

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- ABSTRACT: This article analyzes a debate in the Brazilian linguistics of the 1980s, when Fernando Tarallo, José Borges Neto and Ana Lúcia de Paula Müller differed on a parametric sociolinguistics. In the perspective of a study of the Historiography of Linguistics and based on a socio-rhetorical framework of analysis, which defines theoretical and methodological guidelines of this proposal, the text presents (i) considerations about what is understood in this interpretation as rhetoric and (ii) a historiographic analysis of the debate. This analytical view considers for its interpretative perspective discursive elements of the discourses adopted in the debate (that is, the rhetoric assumed by the linguists), and also elements of a social nature, which can circumscribe the discourses in specific groups of researchers (theory groups) in language science in Brazil. It is pointed out that the debate in question, several times referenced when it comes to a history of Brazilian linguistics, maintained its polemical nature, evidencing that the rhetoric of linguists, when assumed by the historiographic view, must be understood from of its social and historical inscription.

- KEYWORDS: Historiography of linguistics. Socio-rhetorical framework. Rhetoric. Brazilian linguistics. Parametric sociolinguistics.

Introduction

This article presents a historical narrative that interprets an episode of the Brazilian linguistics occurred in the 1980s through the analysis of a debate between Fernando Tarallo (1951-1992), José Borges Neto and Ana Lúcia de Paula Müller regarding the position of linguists in research projects and theoretical-methodological proposals. The *corpus* – historical documents – are papers published in journal *DELTA (Documentação em Estudos Linguísticos Teóricos e Aplicados)*.

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Quadro 1 – Material de análise.

AUTORES	ARTIGOS
Tarallo, Fernando	Zelig: um camaleão-linguista. 1986. *DELTA*, 2: 1.127-144.
Borges Neto, José; Müller, Ana Lúcia de Paula	Linguistas ou camaleões? Uma resposta a Tarallo. 1987. *DELTA*, 3: 1.85-95.
Tarallo, Fernando	Uma estória muito mal contada. 1988. *DELTA*, 4: 2.265-272.

Fonte: Author's elaboration.

The texts of the debate are analyzed from the methodological guidelines explained in the first section of this text, in the perspective of the Historiography of Linguistics (ALTMAN; BATISTA, 2012; BASTOS; BATISTA, 2016; BATISTA, 2013a; 2017b; SWIGGERS, 2004, 2012, 2013, 2017; KOERNER, 2014), which can be defined as the systematic, critical and interpretative study of the production, development and repercussion of linguistic ideas (the knowledge elaborated on language and languages), proposed by agents (circumscribed in theory groups[1]), interacting with the production of other agents (with which they are placed in an axis of continuity or discontinuity), situated in social and cultural contexts, in a dialogue also with a horizon of retrospection and with intellectual, cultural, scientific and pedagogical demands of a historical period.

The historiographer of linguistics, when considering his/her object - the history of knowledge produced on language and languages - has the task of constructing an interpretative narrative about ideas and knowledge. For this historiographer, the task is not only to tell what a linguist or a grammarian (among other thinkers) has considered about language in his/her work, but to go beyond the surface of historical documents (the texts produced on language) and reach a problematizing perspective focused on understanding the reason why one has thought about language in a certain way in a specific time.

This analytical perspective considers the following premises:

a) knowledge is not detached from a contextual layer, belonging to a historical period that legitimizes (or not) reflections on discourse and languages; knowledge is limited to argumentative communities, that is, every linguist (or another thinker on language) joins a current of thought pertaining to his/her period or other periods, thus belonging to specialty groups whose members share the same idea about how one should understand language;

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[1] *Agents* are the authors who proposed ideas about language in a historical context. *Theory groups* are communities of researchers that recognize themselves socially and institutionally as members that articulate themselves around specific research projects.

b) linguistic ideas belong to research programs[2] characterized by the general view of what the language (theoretical layer) is and also by the methods and techniques (technical layer) used to describe and analyze linguistic phenomena.

The interest in rescuing the history of knowledge about language has grown, putting linguistics in a dimension of historical reflections, not in a rescue movement by the isolated construction of memories files, without an interpretative connection with the present, but, on the contrary, towards a direction in which contemporary concerns are in dialogue with inquiries and solutions located in other time contexts.

The linguists' rhetoric

Scientific discourses are linguistic manifestations ideologically and socially engaged, whose purpose is to persuade through the rhetoric[3] they adopt when defending or denying ideas and knowledges. Rajagopalan (2004) emphasizes that the arguments adopted in scientific texts are elaborated around specific styles in order to convince, and thus work as acts of speech, in our perspective they are in essence directive, since they intend to lead the other, under the mask of the objective neutrality of scientific explanation, to adhere to a viewpoint[4].

In this sense, the historical dimension of science is emphasized as one considers, as an object of analysis, an intellectual and social practice that is the human action of a researcher or thinker meeting the necessary demands of society and the institutional academic spaces he/she occupies.

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[2]   The term *investigation programs*, created by Pierre Swiggers, refers to traditions and research paradigms that define themselves by the notion of language and by a series of specific methodological procedures.

[3]   The discussion starts from the sense of *rhetoric* ascribed by Murray (1994, p.23) to what he defines as *rhetoric of rupture*: "'Revolutionary rhetoric' refers to claims (by group members) to major discontinuities, not to claims of persecution/rejection at the hands of an establishment. Choice of rhetoric (between a rhetoric of revolution and one of continuity) depends on the relative eliteness, professional age and access to recognition of group participants." There are approaches to *rhetoric*, for example, in Postal (1988, p. 129-137) and Koerner (2014, p. 175-220), used to observe epistemological or historical aspects in linguistic works. In none of these three works, however, is there a particular interest to conceptualize and problematize rhetoric as a category of analysis in historiographical studies. The meaning attributed to *rhetoric* here also relates to the meaning attributed to the term when one thinks of discursive production anchored in processes of persuasion. Thus, *rhetoric* is related to the discourses of scientists and intellectuals who intend to establish a position through the texts they elaborate or utter. It does not distance itself, therefore, from the classical meaning that the word rhetoric assumes as the art of persuasion, as explained, among others, by Reboul (2000) and Plantin (2008). We also use *rhetoric* with the sense of object of study from which one can make an analytical observation of the scientific utterances, as present in the study area understood as "Rhetoric of Science", of which Gross (1990) is one of its representatives (see also Malufe (1992) in the Brazilian context). These considerations allow us to immediately conceptualize our sense of *rhetoric* in a manner close to Plantin's (2008, p. 9) statement: "Any strategic use of a signifying system can legitimately be regarded as a rhetoric".

[4]   "Now, to regard science as an enterprise marked by controversies and constant clashes of opinion amongst researchers with conflicting and competing views is to admit that scientific research is over and above everything else a human affair" (RAJAGOPALAN, 2009, p. 435). See also Swiggers (2006, p. 27): "In short, metahistoriography is there to remind us that linguistic historiography, in its study of history of language study, finally has to delve into what science prefers to eschew, i.e. into what and how we are: Menschliches, Allzumenschliches."

Starting from these accounts, we understand *rhetoric* in the Historiography of Linguistics[5] as *the discursive manifestation of an agent producing or receiving linguistic ideas, limited to a research program and to a theory group*. This enunciative practice is done through a specific genre and speech acts that establish ruptures or continuities in relation to scientific and intellectual paradigms in the field of language studies, belongings or exclusions in specific theory groups that are part of a historical axis of development of ideas and knowledges[6].

This rhetoric, therefore, is of complex configuration and contemplates different elements that must be taken as objects of observation, since: a) rhetoric is built around different argumentative strategies (selection and elaboration of arguments and their modes of exposition) to persuade the receivers of the discourses that they intend to convince about the legitimacy of knowledge, techniques, theories and methodological procedures; in this sense it concerns arguments that support linguistic ideas and that configure the very nature of a theory to be propagated, for example; b) rhetoric is developed in a network of citations and intertextual allusions that seek to validate ideas and knowledges that are propagated by the discursive and textual means employed by an author; in this sense it concerns a wide network of citations and validations of knowledge; c) rhetoric contemplates implicit elements that articulate relations between knowledges in an axis of dialogues between intellectual and scientific traditions; an author situates him/ herself in argumentative communities and in his/her rhetoric takes into account assumptions and implied meanings that are the basis of what he/ she effectively affirms; in this sense, it concerns implicit elements that seek to persuade the receivers of discourses.

Analyzing the role of rhetoric in the legitimation of linguistic ideas is a task to be performed amid procedures of the heuristic and hermeneutic phases (as in SWIGGERS, 2004), considering that the object of analysis will be approached from a *socio-rhetorical framework* through which one tries to analyze the discourses in search of convincing and persuasion of an agent producing and disseminating knowledge within a historical context. This analytical framework understands that the discourses produced in specific situations of verbal interaction around the intellectual and scientific production in the field of language studies show patterns that characterize, in turn, modes of dialogue and their social circumscription. Seen as an analytical resource (or methodological tool) to understand elements of a history of knowledge about language, this framework is interested in tasks such as: a) to understand how the legitimacy of a knowledge is constructed through the discourse adopted by historical agents related to the production and reception of linguistic ideas; b) to analyze linguistic and

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[5] The rhetoric referred to here is the discursive arrangement of an essentially historical nature since it seeks, through different persuasive strategies, the validation of a certain type of knowledge situated in a certain intellectual and social context. About rhetoric in Linguistic Historiography, see Batista (2013b, 2015, 2016, 2017a).

[6] Continuity and discontinuity are not unilateral or excluding movements. Continuity is often related to progress, improvement or addition of ideas to other ideas with which it is placed in conjunction. And discontinuity is localized, for there is no total rupture with all kinds of knowledge; when one rejects a knowledge, this rejection can be related to another tradition, continuity, therefore, in another point of view.

argumentative resources used in the elaboration of rhetorics of rupture or continuity; c) to interpret knowledges, and the discourse that conveys these knowledges, in their historical, social and ideological circumscription.

Regarding methodological procedures in the configuration of the socio-rhetorical framework, the following should be considered as analysis focus: a) historical context and central purposes of argumentative procedures: analysis of the central purpose of the document under observation, with the description and interpretation of the argumentative process undertaken by the author of the document, together with the circumscription in research programs, traditions of thought, theory groups, intellectual and / or academic contexts (consideration of external factors allowing the existence of a document in a historical dynamics); b) public and modes of disclosure: description of the recipients of the document (for whom a certain type of information has been produced and who is to be convinced of an idea and a practice of description and analysis) and the mechanisms whereby it becomes present in a group (discourse genres, types of approach). Reflecting on these aspects allows us to address, for example, the question of the influence argument in historiographic studies;[7] c) *ethos*: analysis of the enunciators of a document and of the elaborated discursive images of the discursive subjects (including the recipients of the text), seeking to highlight strategies employed for the establishment of speech acts in the rhetorics of linguists; d) nature of scientific/ intellectual controversies: the rhetoric that establishes oppositions and discontinuities can be analyzed through categorizations of the type of controversies (discussion, dispute, controversy) that are established among the agents of knowledge; e) polyphony: the discursive voices (in conflict or communion) that are glimpsed in the discourses adopted by agents producing or receiving knowledge, that is, to observe how networks of dialogue and horizons of hindsight aid in the legitimation of linguistic ideas defended in specific rhetorics, since it is considered that the rhetoric in use reflects and recycles different voices that it appropriates, in a dialogue with strategies of argumentation, to achieve legitimacy and validation of a scientific or intellectual position; f) argumentative strategies that support and categorize the rhetoric adopted: use of authority and reference arguments to networks of dialogue; enunciators self-disclosure; confrontation between discursive voices; disqualification of the opponent; selection of argumentative places[8]; use of

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[7] Batista (2015, 2016) points out external elements that may be part of the observation framework of items (a) and (b): the climate of opinion in which research programs are proposed; formation of theory and researchers groups; establishment of dialogue circles; modes of communication and dissemination of knowledge; institutionalization of scientific and intellectual knowledge; the reception of knowledge amidst the process of language studies development; social demands focusing on textual materiality.

[8] Argumentation techniques known since the Classical Western Antiquity are constituted as premises that seek to reinforce adherence to certain values. The term 'place' is used by the Greeks to indicate virtual locations in which speakers could access arguments and place them at their disposal. The places of argumentation defined by classical rhetoric are: place of quantity, place of quality, place of order, place of essence, place of person, place of what exists (PERELMAN; OLBRECHTS-TYTECA, 1996; PLANTIN, 2008). Also, a *rhetorical place* is understood as: "[…] warehouses of arguments, used to establish agreements with the auditorium. The purpose is to indicate broad and general assumptions used to ensure adherence to certain values and thus re-hierarchize the beliefs of the auditorium." (FERREIRA, 2010, p. 69).

different types of examples and/ or data; irony; comparisons, analogies, and use of metaphors; g) textual structure: analysis of linguistic (lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, textual) factors of historical document composition that constitute the textual materiality of rhetoric[9].

Some of these aspects - linguistic and social - will be considered further in this article in relation to our *corpus*, analyzed only in some of the possible themes that it raises for a historiographical observation.

Tarallo *vs.* Borges and Müller: controversies about the parametric sociolinguistics

In 1986, the sociolinguist Fernando Tarallo published an article in which he proposed the intersection of theoretical models - in the name of "a global theory of discourse [that] can and should be constructed" (TARALLO, 1986, p. 127) – for analysis of syntax-related linguistic phenomena. From this stance came the title of his article, "Zelig: a chameleon-linguist", in reference to both a historical episode and a film by the American director Woody Allen.

> The twenties of this century in the United States witnessed a challenge to medicine and psychiatry in the figure of Zelig: a human chameleon, a mutant who adapted his physical form and personality to those of other people with whom he was in contact. (TARALLO, 1986, p. 127).[10]

Tarallo infused his text with a rhetoric of rupture with the scientific image of a linguist that, in his interpretation, would be too restricted to a research program, that is, a way of understanding language and establishing its methods of selection and analysis. It is assumed in the passage quoted below that there is a commitment of the researcher with a single research program that often prevents him/her from reaching satisfactory solutions to his/her research problems.

On the other hand, Tarallo proposed a linguistics open to dialogues between theoretical and methodological proposals to increase the analytical power of complex phenomena: "we have to [...] come to a certain disengagement with the model in which we operate and search, in sub-related areas, other possible solutions [...]" (TARALLO, 1986, p. 142). As an argumentative strategy in his text, the selection of a place of quality[11]: that of the linguist used to confluences, taken by the author in his discourse

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[9]   Batista (2015, 2016) indicates a series of linguistic elements that can be taken into account in this analysis: propositional themes and contents; lexical selections, syntactic-semantic constructions, speech acts; sequentialization and referentialization processes that introduce objects of discourse; modalizations; assumptions and implications; writing styles.

[10] "A década de 20 deste século nos Estados Unidos presenciou um desafio à medicina e à psiquiatria na figura de Zelig: um camaleão humano, um mutante que adaptava sua forma física e sua personalidade às de outras pessoas com as quais travava contato." (TARALLO, 1986, p. 127).

[11] "This rhetorical place is very common in advertisements, since it consists in the statement that something imposes itself on the others of its kind for having more quality, because it is unique or rare, original. The value of the unique,

marked by the subjectivity of the first pronominal person and by the selection of adjectives and adverbs.

In Tarallo's view, the linguist restricted to a single research strand could even inhibit scientific progress because of his orthodox stance, little accustomed to the personality of the chameleon, which is then regarded as the linguist open to the dialogue among research programs, not only the complimentary ones (as he seems to indicate in his text when he uses the term "related sub-areas"), but also those who are radically different[12].

In the fragment below it should also be noted that the presence of a *pathos* to motivate the reader, incites an engagement to the proposal of a pluralist linguist, understood, therefore, as the one most suitable to deal with the complexity of the phenomena of human language. Tarallo's proposal, while trying to persuade the reader by the symbolic elaboration of a positive image of this plural linguist, also reinforced Tarallo's own *ethos* as that scientist. The argument was thus placed with an undeniable rhetorical force with appeals to a rhetorical place of quality that established an *ethos* that directly affected the persuasion of a reader who was willing to engage in the new language sciences, as proposed in the article, in relation to the exotic figure of Zelig.

> The central argument of the present work is, in short, a proposal: the same irony that marked Zelig's life should in theory underlie linguistic investigation. That is, the linguist existing in us should be, in reality, more "zeligian" than we intend to be and we are. In other words, a certain dose of "lack" of a strongly theoretical personality may lead the linguist to results more in tune with the facts that he proposes to analyze. (TARALLO, 1986, p. 129).[13]

> The central purpose of the film's argument [the article in question] will therefore be not to invalidate the work already done on the subject in Portuguese, but rather to demonstrate that some of the chameleon disease could save and safeguard the issue.[14] (TARALLO, 1986, p. 131).

In his rhetoric of rupture, one of the scientific practices to confront, seen as negative, was the one put into action by generativist linguists. For Tarallo, these generativist

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of the rare, is exposed by its opposition to the common, the vulgar, the ordinary." (FERREIRA, 2010, p. 71).

[12] This proposal is also in Tarallo (1985). In this text, the linguist indicates the possibility of parametric readings of works that had already been realized in the theoretical-methodological scope of a theory of the variation. (We thank to the anonymous reviewer for this text.)

[13] "O argumento central do presente trabalho é, em síntese, uma proposta: a mesma ironia que marcou a vida de Zelig deveria, em princípio, subjazer à investigação linguística. Isto é, o linguista existente em nós deveria ser, na realidade, mais "zeligiano" que o pretendemos e o fazemos. Em outras palavras, uma certa dosagem de "falta" de personalidade acirradamente teórica poderá levar o linguista a resultados mais condizentes com os fatos que se propõe a analisar." (TARALLO, 1986, p. 129)

[14] "O propósito central do argumento do filme [o artigo em questão] será, portanto, não o de invalidar o trabalho já feito sobre o tópico em português, mas sim demonstrar que um pouco da doença do camaleão poderia salvar e salvaguardar a questão." (TARALLO, 1986, p. 131).

linguists would symbolically represent, in terms of rhetoric, the place of non-quality, which is equivalent to that of theoretical restriction and therefore inappropriate. On the other hand, the chameleon linguist should contemplate this orthodox generativist linguist, who would then dialogue with sociolinguists in search of more satisfactory explanations for the analysis of syntactic phenomena in languages. In a parallel textual structure, opposing generativist linguists and sociolinguists, Tarallo's argumentative force was constructed with the purpose of fixating the image of the plural linguist who would abandon an orthodox view to walk towards a more social linguistics. In the elaboration of the argument, the balance has moved to the side of sociolinguistics, which, undoubtedly, was elevated in rhetoric to a positive dimension, precisely because the possibility of confluence lies in its domains.

> As a starting point for his own reflection, the historian who has the theoretical commitment of any researcher with a certain line of research will fatally condemn him/her [the orthodox linguist] to the condition of non-chameleon. Of these non-chameleons the historian believes that the generativist linguists are the best example.
> ....
> The second character that our historian will encounter is the researcher concerned with the socio-cultural-economic-linguistic reality. It is the researcher who emerged as a consequence of the disenchantment with the generative school. (TARALLO, 1986, p. 131-132).
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> Everything that varies is generally either ignored by the generativist linguists or solved in terms of the nature of the optional rule. In the sociolinguistic model of analysis, however, variation and apparent linguistic "chaos" are considered as the object of study and for the solution of variation problems there is a new equation between heterogeneity and systematicity.[15] (TARALLO, 1986, p. 132-133).

Struggling in the rhetoric taken by the sociolinguist are two research programs that adopted different views of what was understood by language. The theoretical delimitation of each field was also oriented argumentatively, since the discourse

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[15] "Como ponto de partida para sua própria reflexão, o historiador que tem o compromisso teórico de qualquer pesquisador com uma determinada linha de pesquisa fatalmente o [o linguista ortodoxo] condenará à condição de não-camaleão. Destes não-camaleões o historiador acredita serem os gerativistas o melhor exemplo.
....
A segunda personagem com que se deparará nosso historiador é o pesquisador preocupado com a realidade sócio-cultural-econômica-linguística. É o pesquisador que surgiu como consequência do desencanto com a escola gerativa." (TARALLO, 1986, p. 131-132).
"Tudo aquilo que varia é, em geral, ignorado pelos gerativistas ou resolvido em termos de caráter da regra opcional. No modelo sociolinguístico de análise, no entanto, a variação e o aparente "caos" linguístico são assumidos como objeto de estudo e para a solução dos problemas de variação tem-se uma nova equação entre heterogeneidade e sistematicidade." (TARALLO, 1986, p. 132-133).

adopted by Tarallo emphasized the place of quality of a linguistic attentive to language as a social and cultural phenomenon, without neglecting the analysis of systematicity phenomena in languages.

In a note written at the end of his text, Tarallo reported that his ideas had been presented at an international event two years earlier, highlighting the names of recognized linguists (Gillian Sankoff, Eleonora da Motta Maia and Mary Kato) who read and commented on his text. A rhetorical strategy that put his ideas into a space of legitimation by the use of the authority argument.

In general, the sociolinguist's rhetoric was elaborated through strategies such as the use of: a) disqualification of a linguistic limited to the sentential or textual level: "our previous disease was explained precisely by the sentential character of our grammatical models. The so-called cure - from the sentential grammar to the textual one - has made us 'sicker' "; b) questions, since a comprehensive and plural proposal would be more appropriate for a linguistic analysis; c) comparisons, highlighting what would be positive and what would, on the contrary, be negative; d) positive qualification of the subject who enunciates from the place of quality assumed by the sociolinguist.

Tarallo's (1986) stance must be understood from a perspective that anchors the linguist in a complex research program - that of sociolinguistics in dialogue with the generative grammar - and in a theory group - that of the sociolinguists and generativist linguists who deemed valid the theoretical-methodological articulation between the theory of variation and change and the theory of principles and parameters. A bold research program was under way in Brazilian linguistics in the 1980s: parametric sociolinguistics or parametric variation. This was a proposal considered by many, not without motivating the emergence of negative criticism[16], as one of the rare moments in which Brazilian linguistics showed signs of vitality[17] and ceased to be just a science of reception (echoing Eugenio Coseriu's (1980) well-known assessment of Latin American linguistics).

This parametric sociolinguistics followed in a way an idea from Weinreich, Labov and Herzog, which was exposed in the text "Empirical Foundations for a Theory of Language Change", of 1968. In this text, the linguists defended the introduction of a theoretical perspective (capable of analyzing the structural and systematic elements of language) coupled with studies of change.

At the forefront of this proposal in Brazil, two intellectual leaders, Fernando Tarallo (sociolinguist) and Mary Kato (generativist linguist), who assumed opposite places in Tarallo's rhetoric of rupture, but later reconciled in theoretical-methodological confluence, fulfilling the objective of the proposal: a joint program between

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[16] "Criticism to Parametric Sociolinguistics emerged, pointing to the simultaneous use of two opposing theoretical currents - see, for example, the essays by Borges Neto (2004)." (SILVA, 2013, p. 48).

[17] "[...] Marcelo Módolo and Henrique Braga talk about some of the linguistic theories developed by Brazilian researchers in our geography in recent years. They highlight [...] as 'proposals already structured in Brazilian ground *Gramática construtural da língua portuguesa*, by Back and Mattos (1972), *Sociolinguística paramétrica* by Kato and Tarallo (1989), *Semântica de contextos e cenários* by Ferrarezi Jr. (2010) and *Abordagem multissistêmica* by Ataliba Teixeira de Castilho'." (BARONAS, 2012).

sociolinguistics and generative grammar aligned with principles and parameters, presented programmatically in 1989 with an air of novelty and rupture in relation to a scientific behavior that rejected unsuspected dialogues: "[…] the act of polarizing a linguistic of rules [...], and a science of probabilities [...], has been present in all sub-areas of linguistic research for far too long... not only has this polarization been seen before, but it has already worn us all out"[18] (TARALLO; KATO, 1989)[19].

A proposal that, according to Murray's analytical framework (1994), had favorable winds, since Tarallo and Mary Kato belonged to institutionalized areas (sociolinguistics and generative grammar), and both had good resonance at the time. The proposal was mostly confined, as a diffuser core, to a knowledge production center that was legitimized as such, the State University of Campinas (Unicamp), one of the first centers of linguistic production in Brazil (ALTAMAN, 1998). Thus, the proposal was created in a privileged social and academic spot of the linguistic research in Brazil, and, in fact, it did reverberate, since different researches were later carried out in the scope of what this parametric sociolinguistics proposed (PARREIRA, 2015; SILVA, 2013).

The sociolinguist Maria Eugênia Duarte, from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, evaluated the role of Tarallo in this context, reinforcing in her view, 29 years after the chameleon linguist, a role of intellectual leader for the sociolinguist, considered as proposer of a new research project, far from what had hitherto been seen for explanation of changing syntactic phenomena in Brazilian Portuguese:

> The arrival of Fernando Tarallo in Brazil, after his doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia), in 1983, bringing with him, along with the results of his thesis, the desire to apply the variationist model to the analysis of syntactic phenomena suggesting ongoing changes in Brazilian Portuguese (PB) within the context of the Romance languages, led him inevitably to search for a theory that allowed him to diagnose, in the varying phenomena in PB, reflections of what characterized the parameters proposed in the scope of the generative theory. Tarallo knew very well that in order to understand the syntactic changes attested in his 1983 thesis and in different studies that he and his students would develop, he could not do without a linguistic theory that offered him a means of interpreting superficial changes

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[18] "[...] polarizar uma linguística de regras [...], e uma ciência das probabilidades [...], tem marcado presença em todas as sub-áreas de investigação linguística há tempo até demais [...] essa polarização não só não é recente, como já nos estafou a todos." (TARALLO; KATO, 1989).

[19] "Tarallo and Kato, in 1989, are the first scholars to present the idea of Chomsky as a possible way of rescuing the compatibility between the parametric properties of generativism and the probabilities of the theory of variation. The attempt, in their work, is to prove its reflex or realign both the generative and the variationist model. [...] the authors propose Parametric Sociolinguistics as a possibility of empirical study of Portuguese - a source of subsidies for a trans-systemic linguistics, starting from the typology of the VS phenomenon found in each language studied, a data provider - aiming the productivity of the phenomenon in each language." (PARREIRA, 2015, p. 352-353).

and associating them to a more comprehensive underlying change.[20] (DUARTE, 2015, p. 88).

When reviewing the presence of parametric sociolinguistics in Brazilian linguistics, Duarte reinforces the "fruits" that the proposal would have produced, given the number of works resulting from the union of the theory of variation and change with the Chomskian theory of principles and parameters.

> The marriage, formalized between Tarallo and Kato (1989), would generate results from analyzes that would allow the interpretation of ongoing changing processes in PB, including changes related to the pronominal framework and the fixation of VS order, gathered in Tarallo (1989; 1993) and in Kato and Tarallo (2003); (Kato and Tarallo, 1986; Duarte, 1993, 1995), as well as numerous synchronic and diachronic studies that would be developed under Tarallo's and, later on, Kato's guidance or inspiration (see articles in Roberts and Kato (1993) and Kato and Negrao (2000).[21] (DUARTE, 2015, p. 89).

Against what Tarallo had written in 1986, Borges Neto and Müller, in the following year, wrote, in the same journal, the text "Linguists or chameleon: a response to Tarallo". In a tone of discord, the authors argued (based on Imre Lakatos and the incommensurability) that the union of sociolinguistic and generative grammar programs could jeopardize the scientific practice itself. The authors established another place of quality: that of epistemology and that of the philosopher of science. It was an appeal to a long and legitimate tradition of knowledge, with a view to deconstructing and denying the legitimacy of what Tarallo proposed in his text.

Borges Neto and Müller disqualified what Tarallo had written in 1986. In the fragments below, words such as "disagree", "recommend", "disengagement", "illness", "problems" and "suggestion" stand out for their negative connotation. Lexical items that highlight the tone adopted in the response to the proposal of a parametric sociolinguistics. Likewise, denying the validity of another person's argument constitutes the main starting

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[20]   "A chegada de Fernando Tarallo ao Brasil, após seu doutorado na universidade da Pennsylvania (Philadelphia), em 1983, trazendo em sua bagagem, junto com os resultados de sua tese, o desejo de aplicar o modelo variacionista à análise de fenômenos sintáticos sugerindo mudança em curso no português brasileiro (PB) dentro do contexto das línguas românicas, levou-o inevitavelmente à busca de uma teoria que permitisse diagnosticar, nos fenômenos em variação no PB, reflexos do que caracterizava os parâmetros propostos no âmbito da teoria gerativa. Tarallo sabia muito bem que, para entender as mudanças sintáticas atestadas na sua tese de 1983 e em diferentes estudos que ele e seus alunos viriam a desenvolver, não podia prescindir de uma teoria linguística que lhe oferecesse um meio de interpretar mudanças superficiais e associá-las a uma mudança subjacente mais abrangente." (DUARTE, 2015, p. 88).

[21]   "O casamento, formalizado entre Tarallo e Kato (1989), viria a produzir frutos a partir de análises que permitiriam interpretar processos de mudança em curso no PB, entre os quais mudanças relacionadas ao quadro pronominal e à fixação da ordem SV, reunidas em Tarallo (1989; 1993) e em Kato e Tarallo (2003); efeitos da mudança na remarcação (parcial) do valor do Parâmetro do Sujeito nulo (Kato e Tarallo, 1986; Duarte, 1993, 1995), além de inúmeros estudos sincrônicos e diacrônicos que viriam a ser desenvolvidos sob a orientação ou inspiração de Tarallo e, posteriormente, de Kato (ver artigos em Roberts e Kato (1993) e Kato e Negrão (2000)." (DUARTE, 2015, p. 89).

point of controversy. This aspect outlined a rhetoric that established not a debate as a space for the exchange of ideas, but a real controversial interaction that could not be solved, since both sides would undervalue the opposing argument, exactly in the way described by Amossy (2017) as the rhetoric of *dissent*[22]. This rhetoric is constructed and established in an interaction that cannot have a peaceful resolution in terms of agreement on the positions and points of view adopted by certain speakers of a discourse.

> The purpose of Tarallo's work is to recommend a certain disengagement of the linguist with the model in which he/she acts, since a certain amount of illness is desirable in linguistic research in order for it to become sane. (BORGES NETO; MÜLLER, 1987, p. 86).

> However, in order to adopt the same analysis for Portuguese data, problems appear [...] (BORGES NETO; MÜLLER, 1987, p. 86).

> For Tarallo, these difficulties appear to the extent that, by adopting the perspective of discourse, syntactic facts are forgotten; or to the extent that the discursive facts are forgotten when a purely syntactic perspective is adopted for the analysis of the data.
> ....
> The central point of Tarallo's argument, then, is the suggestion that a purely syntactic analysis, as well as a purely discursive analysis, will not constitute satisfactory analyzes of the facts involved in TOP and DESL.
> ....
> In other words, the only way out is for us all to become chameleons.
> ....
> [...] apparently Tarallo's chameleon is eclectic, and we would like to disagree with this chameleon.[23] (BORGES NETO; MÜLLER, 1987, p. 87-88).

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[22] "[...] public controversy is inextricably linked to disagreement. That is why it shares the discredit that weighs on our societies under the multiple forms of dissent." (AMOSSY, 2017, p. 17).

[23] "O trabalho de Tarallo tem como objetivo recomendar um certo descomprometimento do linguista com o modelo em que atua, uma vez que é desejável uma certa quantidade de *doença* na pesquisa linguística para que esta se torne sã. (BORGES NETO; MÜLLER, 1987, p. 86).
Na medida, porém, em que se pretende adotar a mesma análise para os dados do português, aparecem problemas [...]" (BORGES NETO; MÜLLER, 1987, p. 86).
"Para Tarallo, estas dificuldades aparecem na medida em que, adotando a perspectiva do discurso, esquece-se dos fatos sintáticos; ou na medida em que se esqueçam os fatos discursivos quando adotada uma perspectiva puramente sintática para a análise dos dados.
....
O ponto central da argumentação de Tarallo, então, consiste na sugestão de que uma análise puramente sintática, bem como uma análise puramente discursiva, não se constituirão em análises satisfatórias dos fatos envolvidos em TOP e DESL.
....
Em outras palavras, a única saída é nos tornarmos, todos, camaleões.
....

The fragments below show us that the elaboration of rhetoric relied on authority arguments selected by Borges Neto and Müller. The use of the lexicon and syntactic-semantic constructions such as is worthy of note: the use of a contrajunction argumentative operator in "verify, but does not understand"; the disqualification of the other's opinion in the lexical selection "it lacks foundation"; the reiteration of considering the other as misguided by using the adverb "mistaken again".

In the fragments, one can also note, in particular, the tone of the unresolved controversy when Tarallo's possible lack of ability is pointed out, which, in turn, results, as it may be inferred, from a failure in his sociolinguist's intellectual background: the *ethos* of the competent and well-formed scientist is denied, and also denied, consequently, is the validity of any argument that has been exposed in proposing a new research program in linguistics. As the analysis presented in Tarallo's first text (note that it is the linguist's competence that is questioned) is denied, the reader is rhetorically (as an effect of the discourse) targeted with passions intended to provoke, or not, his/her adherence to what Borges and Müller defend.

> Tarallo notes, but does not understand why perhaps he lacks an epistemological foundation, the non-chameleon posture of the generativist linguist.
>
> ....
>
> Mistaken again by a false image of science, Tarallo will seek in the individual attitudes of scientists the reasons for this apparent contempt of the generativist linguists for the empiricists' "facts".
>
> ....
>
> Assuming that Tarallo's analysis of the issue of TOPs and DESLs in Portuguese is correct, we would have demonstrated the inadequacy of both programs (generativism and pragmatic-discursive) for the treatment of these data in Portuguese. Hence it does not necessarily follow that programs must be abandoned [...], nor the postulation of a greater disregard for the models, as Tarallo suggests.[24] (BORGES NETO; MÜLLER, 1987, p. 91-92).

[...] aparentemente, o camaleão de Tarallo é eclético, e é deste camaleão que gostaríamos de discordar." (BORGES NETO; MÜLLER, 1987, p. 87-88).

[24] "Tarallo constata, mas não compreende porque talvez lhe falte uma fundamentação epistemológica, a postura não-camaleão do gerativista.

....

Enganado novamente por uma falsa imagem da ciência, Tarallo vai buscar nas atitudes individuais dos cientistas as razões para esse aparente desprezo dos gerativistas pelos "fatos" dos empiristas.

....

Admitindo-se que a análise de Tarallo sobre a questão dos TOPs e DESLs em português seja correta, teríamos demonstrada a inadequação de ambos os programas (o gerativismo e a pragmática-discursiva) para o tratamento destes dados em português. Daí não decorre necessariamente que os programas devem ser abandonados [...], nem decorre a postulação de um maior desprendimento em relação aos modelos, como Tarallo faz crer." (BORGES NETO; MÜLLER, 1987, p. 91-92).

The opposition rhetoric that established not a real debate but a controversy (based on the rhetoric of dissent, of a dispute without possibility of solution, since one unquestionably assumed his/her space and discursive position in clash with the other), there was also a negative characterization of a supposed Brazilian cultural aspect, fond of eclecticism, according to Borges Neto and Müller, and little inclined, by what can be implicitly understood, to the rigidity of scientific formulations.

> In addition to not being justified from an epistemological point of view, Tarallo's recommendation has the defect of stirring up the false nature of Brazilian cultural life. In this sense, the recommendation is doubly damaging.
>
> ....
>
> [...] The Brazilian feels justified in changing his ideology as changing clothes. It can simultaneously accept opposing ideologies, disrespecting them in their original coherence.
>
> ....
>
> [...] if we understand that the scientist is worth his real contribution to the understanding of a certain area of knowledge and not for his erudition, for his mastery of several theories, we must say NO to the chameleon linguist because he does not understand the more general needs of his science and culture.[25] (BORGES NETO; MÜLLER, 1987, p. 93-94).

The rhetoric of Borges Neto and Müller is essentially linked to a possible theory group not yet institutionalized in Brazilian linguistics in the 1980s, since little was said and produced in Brazil regarding philosophy of linguistics, articulated to a philosophy of science, or epistemology of linguistics.

Years later, the sociolinguists who continued as parametric sociolinguistics referred to the opposition to the chameleon linguist by Borges Neto and Müller in different texts:

> The most vehement criticism came from Borges Neto in 1988 and published in 2004 on the incommensurability of the two theoretical models - the theory of Variation and Change - whose basic assumption was the inherent variation in the system, interested in real data, and the generative theory - interested in what was invariable in the system and

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[25] "Além de não se justificar de um ponto de vista epistemológico, a recomendação de Tarallo tem o defeito de acirrar o caráter postiço da vida cultural brasileira. Neste sentido, a recomendação é duplamente danosa.

....

[...] O brasileiro sente-se justificado a trocar de ideologia como quem troca de roupa. Ele pode aceitar simultaneamente ideologias contrárias, desrespeitando-as em sua coerência original.

....

[...] se entendemos que o cientista vale por sua real contruibuição à compreensão de uma certa área do conhecimento e não por sua erudição, por seu domínio de várias teorias, é preciso que digamos NÃO ao linguista-camaleão porque ele não compreende as necessidades mais gerais de sua ciência e de sua cultura." (BORGES NETO; MÜLLER, 1987, p. 93-94).

centered on the speaker's knowledge, had its existence justified to a certain degree: it really seemed heresy! How to reconcile theories with objects of interest and theoretical assumptions so different? Empirical data on one side and the search for the architecture of universal grammar in another![26] (DUARTE, 2015, p. 89).

Faced with the opposition rhetoric of Borges Neto and Müller in 1987, Tarallo published a rejoinder in 1988 entitled "A Story Badly Told". In the confrontation, there were ways of understanding the scientific practice, among methodological and epistemological questions and the very understanding of the practice of research.

These issues, however, in the historical evaluation that can be made today about the debate, were not carried forward, since both the reply and the rejoinder were permeated by speeches which markedly legitimated only their own words, without thereby leaving open space for the debate, contrary to what the section of the journal so named could suppose as a discussion of ideas of scientific nature. Instead of a debate, there was in fact a controversy without solution.

With belligerent voice and tone that did not disguise the discontent caused by the reply to his text, Tarallo, in 1988, definitively altered the course of what could be expected from a debate, changing it into a controversy that abandoned space for discussion of ideas, as it seemed to be the proposal of the negative evaluation made by Borges Neto and Müller in 1987, although such proposal was not based on strategies that privileged the discussion of ideas, since it was, considering the concept of Amossy (2017), essentially built around the questioning of the validity of the other's positioning, establishing what we have already called the dissent rhetoric.

The sociolinguist, this time, assumed a rhetoric that essentially consisted in disqualifying the other as an argumentative strategy. Tarallo, giving discursive voice to the *ethos* of the attacked individual, made use of adjectives with negative connotation, characterizing the text as some arm wrestling match, even though he mentioned in his text that he would not like to waste paper and ink on an issue that seemed irrelevant to him: "[…] At first, I did not consider sacrificing paper and ink to discuss questions so frugal as those raised in the reply." (TARALLO, 1988, p. 266).

> [...] not a rejoinder to Borges Neto & Müller for, as I shall report, there is nothing substantial in the reply that merits a rejoinder. Therefore, I am only using a simple letter addressed to readers, in which I undo the reading misconceptions committed by the authors of the reply. (TARALLO, 1988, p.266).

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[26] "A crítica mais veemente veio de Borges Neto, em 1988 e publicada em 2004, sobre a incomensurabilidade dos dois modelos teóricos – a teoria da Variação e Mudança – cujo pressuposto básico era a variação inerente ao sistema, interessada nos dados reais, e a teoria gerativa – interessada no que era invariável no sistema e centrada no conhecimento do falante, tinha certa razão de ser: parecia mesmo uma heresia! Como compatibilizar teorias com objetos de interesse e pressupostos teóricos tão distintos? Dados empíricos de um lado e a busca da arquitetura da gramática universal de outro!" (DUARTE, 2015, p. 89).

> [...] undoing the misconceptions, with two specific goals in mind:
> 1. that the 1986 text on the longevity of Zelig, i.e. the chameleon-linguist, is unquestionable, and
> 2. that the 1987 reply, which was so innocuous at the outset, not even should have been written.[27] (TARALLO, 1988, p. 267).

Textual marks of a rhetoric that denies the validity of Borges Neto and Müller's text can be seen as an inverted mirror of the authors' own rhetoric, who also denied, in another perspective, the validity of what Tarallo wrote in 1986. The lexical selection and Tarallo's marked subjectivity showed that the issue was far from the space of the exchange of ideas. In this sense, it stands out words and expressions like "arrogant", "personally aggressive", "highly pretentious", "fight and shout for epistemological purity". The use of irony to de-characterize the validity and theoretical consistency of Borges Neto and Müller's article (1987) is also worthy of note: "there!, for 'the rationality of science'".

> [...] the journal D.E.L.T.A. published, in its section DEBATE an arrogant, personally aggressive, and pretentious text, signed by José Borges Neto and Ana Lúcia de Paula Müller [...] (TARALLO, 1988, p. 266).

> [...] my Zelig appears as a despicable piece of gear in the midst of which Borges Neto & Müller desperately struggle and shout for epistemological purity, and, there!, for 'the rationality of science''.[28] (TARALLO, 1988, p.268).

Tarallo's rhetoric established an opposition in an angry tone of controversies and discussions that do not intend to advance into a debate, but it denies the other a place of quality from where a possible discourse would be validated. It is worth noting the position that implicitly also denied intellectual values to Borges and Müller, since Tarallo saw both of them as incapable of reading his text. Once again, the space that was created in the linguists' rhetoric was that of the controversy built mainly in denying the value of the other.

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[27] "[...] não uma tréplica a Borges Neto & Müller pois, conforme relatarei, nada de substancial existe na réplica que mereça uma tréplica. Assim sendo, valho-me tão e unicamente de uma simples carta endereçada aos leitores, na qual desfaço os equívocos de leitura cometidos pelos autores da réplica." (TARALLO, 1988, p. 266).

"[...] desfazendo os mal-entendidos, com duas metas específicas em mente:
1. a de que o texto de 1986 sobre a longevidade do Zelig, isto é: do camaleão-linguista, é inquestionável, e
2. a de que a réplica de 1987, de tão inócua em propositura, nem mesmo escrita deveria ter sido." (TARALLO, 1988, p. 267).

[28] "[...] a revista D.E.L.T.A. publicou, em sua seção DEBATE um texto arrogante, pessoalmente agressivo, e altamente pretensioso, assinado por José Borges Neto e Ana Lúcia de Paula Müller [...]" (TARALLO, 1988, p. 266).
"[...] meu Zelig aparece como uma peça desprezível de uma engrenagem no meio da qual Borges Neto & Müller desesperadamente lutam e gritam pela pureza epistemológica, e, ahá!, pela 'racionalidade da ciência'." (TARALLO, 1988, p. 268).

By not having understood a simple metaphor such as Zelig [...], that [...] is perfectly explained from the point of view of the evolution of the theory of variation (the two authors are not aware of the theory of variation, its evolution nor its approximation in recent years to the generative model) the authors fell into an even greater joke: the apology of blind orthodoxy, that is, dogmatism. This is reflected in all the arbitrary decisions that the two authors make throughout the text. (TARALLO, 1988, p. 269).

[...] ignore the analysis of the data, even supposing (and I would say, accepting) that it is correct (p. 92), exactly the analysis that demonstrates that being dogmatic within science (in this case the theory of variation) is scientifically incorrect. [...] In fact, if the two authors had taken care to read the variationist literature, they would have found in Braga (1986) and in the results that the author projects there for the same constructions, a statement for the reservations that I myself had raised in my 1986 text.[29] (TARALLO, 1988, p. 269).

As in the 1986 text, Tarallo resorted to arguments of authority, in search of the validation of his proposal, which he considered misunderstood and mistakenly evaluated, as can be inferred by the sociolinguist's rhetoric. Besides, the search for association with the great name of sociolinguistics, Tarallo once again advocated for himself the place of quality, shaped by the dialogue between the ideas of Labov and those of the Brazilian linguist.

The great irony of all this will now be apparent when, through a recent text by Labov (1987), the creator of the variationist model, my 1986 comments are confirmed. That is, even without knowing it, I anticipated it in Zelig (1986), in another text of 1986 [...], and also in Tarallo (1987), besides Kato and Tarallo (1987, 1988), everything that Labov himself would assume in relation to the intra-model change occurred in the theory of variation, a fact that, from the point of view of Borges Neto & Müller, deserves any and all positive appreciation (refer to

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[29] "Ao não haverem entendido uma simples metáfora como o Zelig [...], que, [...], se explica perfeitamente do ponto-de-vista da evolução da teoria da variação (os dois autores desconhecem a teoria da variação, sua evolução, e nem tampouco sua aproximação, em anos recentes, ao modelo gerativo) caíram em uma piada ainda maior: a apologia da ortodoxia cega, isto é: o dogmatismo. Isto se reflete em todas as decisões arbitrárias que os dois autores tomam ao longo do texto." (TARALLO, 1988, p. 269).
"[...] ignoram a análise dos dados, mesmo supondo (e eu diria, aceitando) que ela esteja correta (p. 92), exatamente a análise que demonstra que ser dogmático dentro da ciência (no caso específico, da teoria da variação) é uma atitude cientificamente incorreta. [...] Aliás, se os dois autores tivessem tido o cuidado de ler a literatura variacionista, teriam encontrado em Braga (1986) e nos resultados que a autora ali projeta para as mesmas construções, confirmação para as ressalvas que eu próprio havia levantado em meu texto de 1986." (TARALLO, 1988, p. 269).

the TGC (Transformational Generative Grammar) [...].[30] (TARALLO, 1988, p. 270).

The tone of Tarallo's rejoinder privileged some argumentative strategies for the elaboration of his rhetoric of opposition and denial regarding the validity of the 1987 reply: a) disqualification of the other (through the use of negative adjectives and characterization; use of argument of authority; c) revaluation of the place of quality; c) citation of an intertextual network to elaborate a horizon of quality retrospection; d) irony and metaphor; e) proximity with the reader.

> And with this long quotation from Labov (1987) I take leave of you, dear readers. At this promising moment in linguistics in which Chomsky's rationalism and Labbovian empiricism seem to be getting closer and closer, Zelig's longevity is unquestionable. I remain at your disposal for any further clarification, and I will continue to enjoy such a healthy debate as long as we do not waste so much time on ideologies and focus more and more on real and true academic research on language. A big hug from Zelig.[31] (TARALLO, 1988, p. 271).

As the debate became a clash of forces, the submission of the rejoinder acquired excessively personal and aggressive aspects when denying the other's view, closing the series of publications without any manifestation or reply on the part of the authors who penned the text of 1987, in that context.

After Tarallo's rejoinder in 1988, Borges Neto and Müller did not manifest themselves again in the pages of DELTA. Nevertheless, one year after the rejoinder, Borges Neto, without Müller's company, resumed the discussion and submitted it to another journal, associated with the Federal University of Paraná, an institution in which Borges Neto was then active. This 1989[32] text reaffirmed the negative assessment of parametric sociolinguistics, in a rhetorical position that absolutely and again denied the combination of theories: "[…] it is clear, then, that any proposal to 'approach' different

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[30] "A grande ironia disso tudo transparecerá agora quando, através de um texto recente de Labov (1987), do criador do modelo variacionista, se fizerem confirmar aquelas minhas colocações de 1986. Ou seja: mesmo sem o saber, eu antecipava no Zelig (1986), em um outro texto de 1986 [...], e ainda em Tarallo (1987), além de Kato e Tarallo (1987, 1988), tudo aquilo que o próprio Labov assumiria em relação à mudança intra-modelo sofrida pela teoria da variação, fato que, do ponto-de-vista de Borges Neto & Müller, merece toda e qualquer apreciação positiva (referindo-se à CGT (Gramática Gerativa Transformacional) [...]." (TARALLO, 1988, p. 270).

[31] "E com essa longa citação de Labov (1987) despeço-me de vocês, caros leitores. Nesse momento tão promissor da linguística em que o racionalismo chomskiano e o empirismo laboviano parecem se aproximar cada vez mais, a longevidade do Zelig é inquestionável. Coloco-me à disposição para quaisquer esclarecimentos e continuarei, com o maior prazer, esse debate tão saudável desde que não percamos tanto tempo com ideologias e nos concentremos cada vez mais na real e verdadeira pesquisa acadêmica sobre a linguagem. Um grande abraço do Zelig." (TARALLO, 1988, p. 271).

[32] The text of 1989 was republished in a collection of texts by Borges Neto in 2004. It is from this last edition that we make the references.

theories either takes up the neopositivist postulates or finds in the incommensurability a formidable barrier […]"[33] (BORGES NETO, 2004, p. 199).

Apparently, the debate between Tarallo and Borges & Müller characterizes itself as a controversial interaction whose objective is a clash over a clearly defined topic. There was indication of conceptual or methodological problems in a theory, for example, through evidence built on proofs that supports ruptures. A controversial exchange with no possibility of solution, revealing deep differences. Clashes over ideas are not considered as only a matter of mistakes to be corrected, since the contenders have accumulated arguments that were believed to be able to increase the value of their positions before the objections made by the opponents. This characterization of the debate is possible because both Tarallo and Borges & Müller adopted the devaluation of the other, with indications of mistakes, misconceptions, misunderstandings, without failing to identify problematic arguments and even the lack of basic knowledge in some areas that seemed pertinent to them in the defense of their rhetoric. At the same time, the stances in some moments of the debate became broadened to the approach of other subjects in some way related to the established controversy.

Being members of distinct theory groups contributed, in this sense, for the opposition to be more direct, and often more aggressive, because, along with an interest in establishing academic and intellectual spaces, there was also the need to belong to argumentative communities that sustained the legitimacy of groups.

Tarallo, Borges and Müller each spoke of the space that seemed to them legitimated at that moment, which allowed them to formulate a rhetoric that circulated not only as journal articles, but as key elements to identify the sense of belongingness and exclusion (to/of research groups and centers for teaching and scientific production) in the plural and receptive configuration of the Brazilian linguistics at the time.

"To each one what seems best to her/ him" – *Aliud alios decere* – is an expression used by the Roman Quintilian (35d.C.-100d.C.), to refer to the wiles of personal relativism and the clash of ideas that seek reason in themselves. The Latin words seem to meet the relative positions assumed in the debate here reviewed. Positions that evidence the human aspect of science. Each person seemed to find something not only convenient in the debate, for words also served as weapons in the search for validation of ideas. Perhaps another expression is even more appropriate to this episode: "Weapons are repelled with weapons" – *Arma armis propulsantur* –; an expression used among others by the Greek cardinal Besarion (in the fifteenth century) and by Marco Ofarris (in the eighteenth century), in a guidebook for soldiers in 1773 in Italy.

In the debate, in addition to ideas, opposing forces were evident in the rhetoric at work on the pages of the journal DELTA in the late 1980s. In this way, it is possible to associate the notion of rhetoric of rupture adopted here with the notion of rhetoric of *dissent* discussed by Amossy (2017). This rhetoric of *dissent* establishes controversial

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[33] "[...] fica claro, então, que qualquer proposta de 'aproximação' de teorias distintas ou retoma os postulados neopositivistas ou encontra na questão da incomensuralibilidade uma barreira formidável [...]" (BORGES NETO, 2004, p. 199).

discourses that are characterized not by the possibility of debate and of a possible conciliatory dialogue, but by the discursive closure, in the sense that the arguments established in a debate are of a highly exclusive nature, based on the argumentative devaluation of the other, which becomes the place par excellence to fight and not with whom to temporize.

A controversy, such as the one seen in the historically reviewed debate, which has its social function in a public space (in the spirit of AMOSSY's evaluation, 2017[34]), because in the rhetoric of linguists, as we have pointed out, there were echoing voices that belonged to specific groups and to academic, consequently social, legitimations.

Accepting linguistic ideas is also accepting that positions in research and teaching are validated, as well as assuming arguments as the most appropriate in a given social and temporal context is to configure, even if we are only aware of it retrospectively, a panorama of scientific action in a society. In this sense, part of what is understood as the Brazilian linguistics today was also inherited from moments like the controversy here reviewed. It is not by chance that Altman (1998), in his historical evaluation of the first moments of linguistics in Brazil, points to movements of unification and diversification. Alongside these movements in the scientific practice, our perspective is that the rhetoric highly contributed to ensured or not academic spaces for those who best knew how to assert their word.

Conclusion

Reviewing history is an interpretation of the past, projecting in the coming and going of the times our own view regarding a series of elements that allow recognition and opposition. A dynamic process that makes historiography, the act of narrating and interpreting history, more than a simple collection of documents and descriptions, but in fact a construction of memory and symbolic images.

Memory, and the identity deriving from it, can be understood as a significant reconstruction of a past. In this sense, the question for the historiographer is not so much what he/she finds in a document, but how he/she creates plausible explanations for what the document offers as evidence.

Considering the limitation of this paper, we cannot make further interpretations, but it is important to consider that in the debate occurred in the late 1980s there was, beyond rhetoric, a more complex question: the identity that Brazilian linguistics would define for itself, amid the plurality and the reception of ideas that have always been its most striking characteristics.

In addition to dealing with the conjunction of research programs, the discussion among linguists placed in the substratum of their words the directions that a science

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[34] "[...] *the controversy fills important social functions, precisely because of what is generally criticized in it: a verbal management of the conflict carried out under the mode of dissension.*" (AMOSSY, 2017, p. 12, author's emphasis).

of language produced in Brazil could take, with all the variables that characterize the construction of identities in a field made of legitimacy and personalisms when it comes to the validation and acceptance of scientific research practices.

Acknowledgments

BATISTA, R. "A cada um convém uma coisa": debate e polêmica em torno da sociolinguística paramétrica na história da linguística brasileira. **Alfa**, São Paulo, v.62, n.2, p.243-244, 2018.

- *RESUMO: Este artigo analisa um debate na linguística brasileira da década de 1980, quando Fernando Tarallo, José Borges Neto e Ana Lúcia de Paula Müller divergiram sobre a sociolinguística paramétrica. Na perspectiva de estudo da Historiografia da Linguística e a partir de um quadro sociorretórico de análise, que define diretrizes teórico-metodológicas desta proposta, o texto apresenta (i) considerações sobre o que se compreende nesta interpretação como retórica e (ii) uma análise historiográfica do debate. Esse olhar analítico considera para sua perspectiva interpretativa elementos discursivos dos discursos adotados no debate (ou seja, a retórica assumida pelos linguistas) e também elementos de natureza social, que podem circunscrever esses discursos em grupos específicos de pesquisadores em ciência da linguagem no Brasil. Aponta-se para o fato de que o debate em questão, diversas vezes referenciado quando se trata de uma história da linguística brasileira, manteve a sua natureza polêmica, evidenciando que a retórica dos linguistas, quando considerada pelo olhar historiográfico, deve ser compreendida a partir da sua inscrição social e histórica.*

- *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Historiografia da linguística. Quadro sociorretórico. Retórica. Linguística brasileira. Sociolinguística parametrica.*

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