

# Imaginary formation<sup>1</sup> and discursive ethos<sup>2</sup>: a symbiotic relationship in Discourse Analysis

Formação imaginária e *ethos* discursivo: uma relação simbiótica em Análise do Discurso

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## ABSTRACT

This article deals comparatively with the notions, belonging to the field of action of Discourse Analysis, of imaginary formation and discursive ethos, from the perspective of the internal transformation of how certain principles of language are conceived to the point of changing the conceptual functioning of these analytical operators and how historical determinations remodel them. For this purpose, it deals, from based on certain epistemological instruments, with the similarities and differences between these two notions. As a result of this investigation, it was found that both highlight, according to their respective epistemic contributions, elements of the discursive construction process that are relatively close, so that the distinction between them lies in the emphasis given, by each, to the constitutive mechanisms of the manifestation of the members participants of the discourse.

**Keywords:** imaginary formation; discursive ethos; Discourse Analysis.

## RESUMO

Neste artigo, trata-se comparativamente das noções, pertencentes ao campo de atuação da Análise do Discurso, de formação imaginária e de *ethos* discursivo, sob a ótica da transformação interna de como certos princípios da linguagem são concebidos a ponto de alterar o funcionamento conceitual desses operadores analíticos e de como determinações históricas os remodelam. Para tanto, abordam-se, a partir de certos instrumentos

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<sup>1</sup>There is a natural oscillation between the theoretical treatment and the analytical approach given to the imaginary formation, since in the first case the singular can be used, but in the second the plural is often employed.

<sup>2</sup>In this text, almost every time ethos is mentioned, the syntagma "discursive" is added to differentiate it from the rhetorical ethos, however, as will be seen in figure 2, there is the notion of discursive ethos within the ethos itself, an item that does not prevent the continued use of discursive ethos for the reason already exposed.

epistemológicos, as semelhanças e as diferenças entre essas duas noções. Como resultado desta investigação, verificou-se que ambas destacam, segundo seus respectivos aportes epistêmicos, elementos integrantes do processo de construção discursivo relativamente próximos, de modo que a distinção entre elas reside na ênfase dada, por cada uma, aos mecanismos constitutivos da manifestação dos integrantes do discurso.

**Palavras-chave:** formação imaginária; *ethos* discursivo; Análise do Discurso.

## INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Since its foundation, Discourse Analysis has undergone a series of reformulations in its theoretical and methodological apparatus. Such plastic capacity refers to the effective exercise of both self-criticism and epistemological polysemy, both derived from the multiplicity of investigative objects and their various associated fields of knowledge. This fact ratifies Soares' (2020) thesis, about the inner workings of Discourse Analysis resembling the concept of "event", that "it is the *eventimentalization* of Discourse Analysis and, consequently, its updating that allowed it to gain importance and even become vast and not lose relevance like other projects of its same period of emergence" (Soares, 2020, p. 184-185). From this interpretative viewpoint, it can be said that Discourse Analysis becomes an event, since "For AD, at least in its most common practices of analysis, an event would be considered as such to the extent that it leads to its resumption or its *repetition*"<sup>3</sup> (Possenti, 2009, p. 125, italics by the author).

In this horizon of reconfiguration, Pêcheux (1995b), in 1983, is one of the first exponents of Discourse Analysis to revisit the notions and its contributions to undertake modifications. By demarcating the three epochs of the theory he helped to found, Pêcheux proposes that in a first moment there was an emphasis on the analysis of the discourse production conditions and on the relation between sentences, exploring the ways in which social and institutional structures influence the production and circulation of meanings. In a second moment, Pêcheux highlights the emergence of the notion of "interdiscourse". According to the author, at this moment, discourse analysis starts to recognize that

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<sup>3</sup> Free translation of: "Para a AD, pelo menos em suas práticas mais comuns de análise, um acontecimento seria considerado como tal na medida em que ensejasse sua retomada ou sua *repetição*" (Possenti, 2009, p. 125, itálico do autor).

discourse is not an isolated product but is crossed by other discourses present in the social circuit. According to Pêcheux (1995b), at this moment of development of discourse analysis, the concept of "discursive formation" is introduced to describe the sets of discursive practices that share a common logic and are governed by specific rules.

In a third moment, according to Pêcheux (1995b), discourse analysis is characterized by the introduction of the subject theory. In this phase, it is considered that the subject is not an individual entity, but a position discursively constructed from several mechanisms that permeate certain discourses and influence how subjects constitute themselves and relate themselves through discourse. In face of this perceptive attitude, invoked in the synthesis of the three phases of discourse analysis constitution, about its own reformulations and incorporations of notions and concepts, it is possible to affirm that one of the characteristics of this interpretative theory of communication processes is precisely a permeability of human knowledge areas, which reflects itself in new arrangements of its conjunctural architecture. Thus, it appears, in times and spaces of performance, full of the same verve of its inaugural moment, ratifying its "acontecimentalization" (Soares, 2020).

As can be seen from the above, discourse analysis does not only have three phases or epochs, but, in addition to these, it has strands and new trends that give it both a high variability of possible objects of examination and a restructuring of its operational instruments of analysis, as is the case of the imaginary formation and the discursive ethos. Both the first and the second are employed in an extensive set of analyses, demonstrating, each in its own way, enormous heuristic potential. Given the objective of this article to treat comparatively both notions, imaginary formation and discursive ethos, from the perspective of the internal transformation of how certain principles of language are conceived and how historical determinations reshape theories, according to the architectural organization of this text, we have the next section, *Imaginal formation and discursive ethos: approximations and detachments*, which addresses, from certain epistemological instruments, the similarities and differences between these two notions.

## IMAGINAL FORMATION AND DISCURSIVE ETHOS: APPROXIMATIONS AND DETACHMENTS

It is essential to highlight the notions of imaginary formation and discursive ethos and, especially, from where they are extracted so that there is no doubt about the direction given to them, even if both are used in discourse analysis texts. The ethos and the imaginary formation have different origins, the first came from rhetoric, the second from psychoanalysis, however, they are closely related to the projection of the subject in the social space through language. To explain the operation of each of these operational concepts for the discourse analysis, it is necessary here to perform a brief inventory of the main foundations on which both the imaginary formation and the discursive ethos are based. However, it is necessary, before any further explanation, the determination of the field in which such notions gain an update: the discourse.

To escape common sense and idealizations, often hermetic, it can be stated that discourse, for Discourse Analysis, is a theoretical and methodological approach that seeks to understand how power manifests itself in full exercise through language. Thus, discourse is considered a dynamic social practice, not only as an individual expression, expressing ideologies, social relations, identities, and structures of domination, so that examining it means describing and interpreting how it is constructed, reproduced, and contested through language in its collective functioning. As can be seen, discourse, from its specific theoretical viewpoint, is to a large extent the very functioning of the social circuit while communication is, as discussed below, a "didactic" simplification of the discursive process of sense-making.

According to Soares (2018), "Human communication is a complex constellation of factors whose Aristotelian formula, 'man is a political animal,'" contained in the work "Politics, can synthesize"<sup>4</sup> (Soares, 2018, p. 13, author's quotation marks). Beyond this anthropological understanding, one must turn to the deeply pertinent features of communication outlined by Mattoso Câmara's (2004) conceptualization as "Mental

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<sup>4</sup>Free translation of: A comunicação humana é uma constelação complexa de fatores cuja fórmula aristotélica, "o homem é um animal político", contida na obra Política, pode sintetizar" (Soares, 2018, p. 13, aspas do autor).

interchange among men made by means of language"<sup>5</sup> (Câmara Jr, 2004, p. 77). Dubois et al. (2006) state that communication is "the verbal exchange between a speaker, who produces an utterance intended for another speaker, the interlocutor, from whom he requests listening and/or an explicit or implicit response (according to the type of utterance)"<sup>6</sup> (Dubois et al. 2006, p. 129). Dubois et al. (2006) further ratifies: "Communication is intersubjective. On a psycholinguistic level, it is the process during which the meaning that a speaker associates with sounds is the same as that which the listener associates with those same sounds"<sup>7</sup> (Dubois et al. 2006, p. 129).

Jakobson (2010) stipulated, from Karl Buhler's theory of communication, six constitutive factors of the communication process and associated them to the performances performed by language. The elements of communication, therefore, are: *sender*: who produces the message; *message*: contents or meanings; *receiver*: who receives the message; *channel*: the means for sending the message, which can be spoken, written, imagery or even hybrid; *code*: the language (usually the language), however, depending on the conditions of communication, it can be: gesture or other conventions that produce meanings (such as telegraph codes, Morse code); and *context*: the empirical reality in which communication occurs.

As it is possible to see, communication when thought under the prism of the elements, sender, message, receiver, channel, code and context, structures the production and understanding of the senses in such a way that it seems a mechanical process. It is true that these constituents participate in the communicational act, however, according to the postulates of discourse analysis, there is no supposed planned linearity of the constituents of communication, before there is a series of noises and crossings in the interaction between subjects that also (re)produces meanings and, therefore, must be interpreted. In stark opposition to this perspective, Pêcheux defines discourse as "[...] effect of meaning between points A and B"<sup>8</sup> (Pêcheux, 1995a, p. 81), precisely because it

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<sup>5</sup> Free translation of: "Intercâmbio mental entre os homens feito por meio da linguagem" (Câmara Jr, 2004, p. 77).

<sup>6</sup> Free translation of: "a troca verbal entre um falante, que produz um enunciado destinado a outro falante, o interlocutor, de quem ele solicita a escuta e/ou uma resposta explícita ou implícita (segundo o tipo de enunciado)" (Dubois et al. 2006, p. 129).

<sup>7</sup> Free translation of: "A comunicação é intersubjetiva. No plano psicolinguístico, é o processo em cujo decurso a significação que um locutor associa aos sons é a mesma que a que o ouvinte associa a esses mesmos sons" (Dubois et al. 2006, p. 129).

<sup>8</sup> Free translation of: "[...] efeito de sentido entre os pontos A e B" (Pêcheux, 1995, p. 81).

opposes the "flat schema of information derived from the work of Jakobson according to which a sender produces a message X and sends it to a receiver who, in turn, receives the same X sent"<sup>9</sup> (Soares, 2020, p. 175; our translation).

In view of the synthetic exposition on communication and some of its definitions, it can be stated that the understanding of discourse studies, especially discourse analysis, takes into account the fruitful relationship between communication procedures and the structures on which the social circuit is built and, therefore, develops its own analytical "toolkit" of which both the imaginary formation and the discursive ethos are part. The imaginary formation is a term used in social and cultural theory, especially associated with the works of Freud and Lacan. Roughly speaking, they used this concept to refer to the way individuals construct their understanding of the world through symbols and images shared in a culture or society. In this direction, imaginal formation involves the construction of identities, desires, and perceptions through symbolic representations, such as myths, narratives, images, and ideologies (Soares, 2022). These symbolic representations shape individuals' worldviews and influence the way they relate to others and the reality around them.

When the imaginary formation is incorporated into Discourse Analysis, part of its use in other areas is maintained, as it is possible to verify, since it is, according to Soares (2020), "From the imaginary formation, arises what Pêcheux calls anticipation. A kind of calculation according to which the imaginary formation is able to recognize its mirror"<sup>10</sup> (Soares, 2020, p. 176; our translation). In other words, a certain argumentative position generates its opposite, in a dialectical effect, practically every time it is uttered. Thus, as Soares (2020) states, "the imaginary formations can serve as anticipation of the enunciative project set in motion in the discourse"<sup>11</sup> (Soares, 2020, p. 176; our translation). However, it is worth mentioning the moment of insertion of the imaginary formation in Discourse Analysis, because, as Pêcheux (1995b) himself considers, it was a phase in which this interpretative theory of communication processes was focused,

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<sup>9</sup> Free translation of: "chapado esquema da informação derivado dos trabalhos de Jakobson segundo o qual um emissor produz uma mensagem X e a envia a um receptor que, por sua vez, recebe o mesmo X enviado" (Soares, 2020, p. 175).

<sup>10</sup> Free translation of: "A partir da formação imaginária, surge o que Pêcheux chama de antecipação. Uma espécie de cálculo segundo o qual a formação imaginária é capaz de reconhecer o seu espelho" (Soares, 2020, p. 176).

<sup>11</sup> Free translation of: "as formações imaginárias podem servir de antecipação do projeto enunciativo posto em marcha no discurso" (Soares, 2020, p. 176).

above all, on the conditions of production and the link that these had with the elaboration of the network of sentences. Below is a table developed by Pêcheux (1995a) to demonstrate the functioning of the imaginary formation, which, in turn, always presupposes others and, therefore, is in the plural when it is used interpretatively.

Figure 1: Imaginary Formations.

EXPRESSÃO QUE DESIGNA AS FORMAÇÕES IMAGINÁRIAS	SIGNIFICAÇÃO DA EXPRESSÃO	QUESTÃO IMPLÍCITA CUJA "RESPOSTA" SUBENTENDE A FORMAÇÃO IMAGINÁRIA CORRESPONDENTE	
A {	$I_A(A)$	Imagem do lugar de A para o sujeito colocado em A	"Quem sou eu para lhe falar assim?"
	$I_A(B)$	Imagem do lugar de B para o sujeito colocado em A	"Quem é ele para que eu lhe fale assim?"
B {	$I_B(B)$	Imagem do lugar de B para o sujeito colocado em B	"Quem sou eu para que ele me fale assim?"
	$I_B(A)$	Imagem do lugar de A para o sujeito colocado em B	"Quem é ele para que me fale assim?"

Source: Pêcheux (1995a, p. 82).

Above, there is a drawing of part of the functioning of the discourse in which the points A and B, the interlocutors, project the respective images of the places occupied by each in relation to the other and by each other in relation to itself in a given interaction. In this way, the meaning of the expression, in the framework developed by Pêcheux (1995a), refers to the description of the varied places assumed by the participants of the communicative process which, in turn, triggers, as pointed out in the last column, the imaginary formation corresponding to the question "who is" manifested as an image by the mirroring of points A and B. According to such a perspective, Soares (2018) states that "Imaginal formations are images that each of the participants of a verbal interaction makes of themselves and the other in the projection of such images as effects in discourse"<sup>12</sup> (Soares, 2018, p. 116; our translation). The practical consequence of the operation of imaginary formations is given, for example, to the student writing a course completion paper, because he/she needs to bring to his text the knowledge acquired throughout his/her course. This is an imaginary formation that an evaluating professor

<sup>12</sup> Free translation of: "As formações imaginárias são imagens que cada um dos participantes de uma interação verbal faz de si e do outro na projeção de tais imagens como efeitos no discurso" (Soares, 2018, p. 116).

has of his student, responding to it, the professor will have to make the necessary corrections in the text. The student, in turn, in possession of the image of the correcting teacher, will try not to incur in inadequacies to satisfy the image referring to the teacher, while the person responsible for the evaluation maintains his own image of a corrector when performing such an activity. Thus, as it is possible to see, the game of mirrors, played by the imaginary formations, discursivizes both the social roles and the function they perform in the collective circuit.

Given this exposure, it can be said that the imaginary formations operate in a way to shape the representations of those involved in the communicational process and, therefore, structure the discourses that circulate in society. In other words, they provide frames of reference and systems of meaning that impact the procedures by which subjects perceive and interpret reality. Along these lines, the theorization of imaginary formations emphasized, as it was possible to see, that this notion does not merely refer to abstract ideas, but to the set of images rooted in social structures and power relations. Within Discourse Analysis, especially in the so-called first phase (Pêcheux, 1995b), imaginary formations are considered as an integral part of discursive practices and are examined in relation to the historical and ideological conditions in which they emerge. Therefore, the study of imaginary formations in concrete situations allows us to understand how ideologies are constructed, disseminated and internalized by subjects to influence their perceptions and actions in the social circuit in which they find themselves.

Of a relatively similar nature to the imaginary formation, the discursive ethos, as a conceptual construct and instrument of analysis of processes involved in the production of meanings, turns to the interlocutor. According to Charaudeau and Maingueneau (2008), ethos is the "Term borrowed from ancient rhetoric and designates the self-image that the speaker constructs in his discourse to exert influence on his addressee"<sup>13</sup> (Charaudeau; Maingueneau, 2008, p. 220; our translation)<sup>14</sup>. The authors further state that "it [ethos] is

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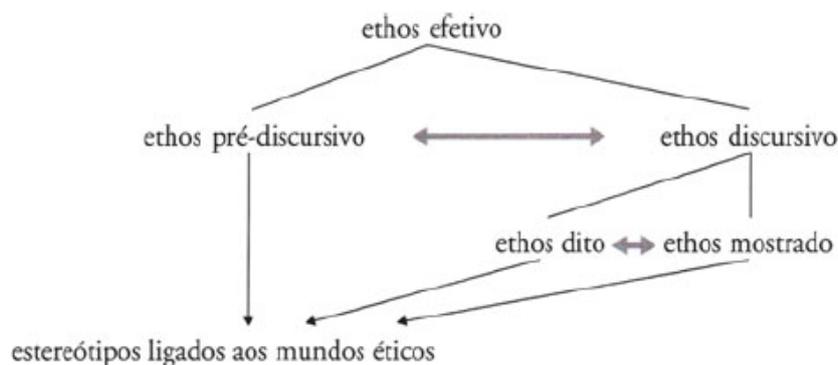
<sup>13</sup> Free translation of: "Termo emprestado da retórica antiga e designa a imagem de si que o locutor constrói em seu discurso para exercer influência sobre seu alocutário" (Charaudeau; Maingueneau, 2008, p. 220).

<sup>14</sup> Thus, the main difference between the discursive ethos of Maingueneau and Charaudeau and the rhetorical ethos of Aristotle is that the former focuses on the identity constructed by the discourse and its relation to the social context, while the latter focuses on the specific credibility and reputation of the speaker. as part of the rhetorical persuasion process. Both concepts are linked to the construction of a persuasive image, but the theoretical approaches and elements considered in the construction of this ethos can vary significantly.

not only manifested as a role and a status, it is also perceived as a voice and a body. The ethos is also translated into the tone, which relates both to the written and spoken<sup>15</sup> (Charaudeau; Maingueneau, 2008, p. 220).

The "discursive ethos" is then related to ethics and character of a subject, or rather, the projection of ethics and character in the discourse. Thus, ethos refers to the image or identity that a speaker constructs of himself through his words, speech style, argumentation and rhetorical strategies, and other communicational processes involved. In this image production horizon, it can be stated that the discursive ethos is closely linked to the credibility, trust, and authority perceived in a speaker, and, for this very reason, influences the persuasion and effectiveness of his discourse. According to Maingueneau (2008a), a well-established discursive ethos can increase a speaker's chances of persuasion and, consequently, expand the likelihood that his or her speech will be accepted by the audience. To illustrate the functioning of discursive ethos and its integral elements, below is a scheme developed by Maingueneau (2008a).

Figure 2: Discursive ethos.



Source: Maingueneau (2008a, p. 25).

It is possible to see through the figure above the composition of the discursive ethos as dependent on external and internal factors to the immediate communicational processes. In this direction, we have the following items in the formatting of this notion: pre-discursive ethos, discursive ethos, ethos said, ethos shown, and the stereotypes

<sup>15</sup> Free translation of: "ele [ethos] não se manifesta somente como um papel e um estatuto, ele se deixa apreender também como uma voz e um corpo. O ethos se traduz também no tom, que se relaciona tanto ao escrito quanto ao falado (Charaudeau; Maingueneau, 2008, p. 220).

circulating in society. The pre-discursive ethos is, according to Maingueneau (2008a), the projection of the enunciator's self by imagining the public's previous image of him. The discursive ethos (Maingueneau, 2008a) is linked to the enunciator's speech in the construction of the self-image presented in the saying. In turn, according to Maingueneau (2008a), the ethos said is what the enunciator says about himself, what he wants to be seen. On the other hand, the ethos shown is that which, despite not saying it, the enunciator shows, either with his actions, gestures, lexical choices, tone, etc. Finally, the effective ethos is the perception of the result of the various interactions between these four interconnected instances in the architecture of ethos.

To exemplify pre-discursive ethos, we have the following speech of a UFPB employee: "At the time I worked in the coordination and course department, I felt that some teachers thought that we (technical) were their private secretary, but I always made it clear what my obligations were"<sup>16</sup> (Silva, 2021, p. 34; our translation). Illustrating the discursive ethos: "It is interesting to notice the perception that professors have in relation to administrative technicians that they are there to meet their needs and that's it, but as a sector of analysis and approval of requests we always imposed the legal"<sup>17</sup> (Silva, 2021, p. 34; our translation). To demonstrate the ethos said, follows the statement made by the same employee: "I always answer that I want to be a professor at UFPB, but I will not take any contest, I will do what I like, because I already have stability and love what I do. Besides, I keep teaching in internal private institutions"<sup>18</sup> (Silva, 2021, p. 34; our translation). To perform the textual illustration of the ethos shown, there is the saying: "The professors already see me in a different way, as a possible UFPB professor and I really intend to take the contest to be a UFPB professor, but in the meantime, I continue to play my role as a technician in the best possible way"<sup>19</sup> (Silva, 2021, p. 34-35; our translation).

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<sup>16</sup> Free translation of: "Na época em que trabalhei na coordenação e departamento de curso, sentia que alguns docentes achavam que a gente (técnico) era secretaria particular deles, mas sempre deixei claro quais eram minhas obrigações" (SILVA, 2021, p. 34).

<sup>17</sup> Free translation of: "Interessante perceber a percepção que os docentes têm com relação aos técnicos administrativos de que estão ali para atender suas necessidades e pronto, mas como um setor de análise e aprovação de solicitações sempre impusemos o legal" (Silva, 2021, p. 34).

<sup>18</sup> Free translation of: "Sempre respondo que quero ser docente da UFPB, mas não vou fazer qualquer concurso, vou fazer para o que eu gosto, até porque já tenho estabilidade e amo o que faço. Além disso, continuo ensinando em instituições privadas internas" (Silva, 2021, p. 34).

<sup>19</sup> Free translation of: "Os docentes já me veem de maneira diferente, como possível docente da UFPB e realmente pretendo fazer concurso para ser professora da UFPB, mas, enquanto isso, continuo desempenhando da melhor maneira possível o meu papel de técnica" (Silva, 2021, p. 34-35).

In view of the above exposure of the speeches of the university servant, it is possible to enunciate, according to Maingueneau (2008a), the construction of the effective ethos of credibility and trust, because it portrays the technique as someone both competent and able to perform their duties properly as a person sure of their duties and their role in the collective circuit in which it is. In this sense, according to the description of ethos and its components, there is a linearization of the theory that initially emerges in ancient rhetoric and is transformed into studies of the dynamic functioning of discourse, allowing the understanding of the instrumentalization of the notion within research developed under the aegis of discourse analysis. And, in view of this reconsideration of both the imaginary formation and the discursive ethos, here is the opportunity to compare, or at least to make qualified approximations and distances, such notions. However, this undertaking lacks, to achieve its goal, the elucidation of the three praxeological principles of language according to Charaudeau (2017), namely: principle of otherness, principle of influence, and principle of regulation.

The alterity principle, according to Charaudeau (2017), is grounded in the understanding that discursive practices are spaces of social interaction in which different subjects and perspectives are involved. In this horizon, such a principle challenges the idea that discourse is a solely individual and subjective expression, emphasizing that the voices and positions of other subjects are also present, inoculated in virtually every act of language. In other words, the principle of alterity in the use of language presupposes the other subject within the interlocutive circuit which, in turn, engenders the principle of influence. Derived from this principle, we find the use of rhetorical strategies, "convincing" arguments, resources and techniques of persuasion to influence attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of the receivers.

The principle of regulation operates as a synthesis of the previous ones, because it plays the role of censor so that the communicational goal is obtained. Therefore, the principle of regulation, according to Charaudeau (2017), involves the understanding of social control mechanisms present in the discourse, such as censorship, exclusion of dissenting voices or the promotion of stereotypes and prejudices, among others. In the direction of the axiological principles of language (Charaudeau, 2017), there is the entrance configuration for the application of the notions of imaginary formation and ethos, "Thus it can be said that every act of language is linked to action through the

relations of force that the subjects maintain among themselves, relations of force that simultaneously construct the social bond"<sup>20</sup> (Charaudeau, 2017, p. 17; our translation), as well as the imaginary formations and the discursive ethos structure the discursive processes. Both are governed by the same principles, of otherness; of influence; and of regulation.

The imaginary formations and the discursive ethos participate, each from its own and relatively similar descriptive expedients, in the realization of the principles mentioned above, so that it is possible to state that both belong to the same root, that is, they derive from the organic praxeological functioning of language. While the imaginary formations are related to the symbolic constructions - unconscious because they are not thought or reflected in the immediacy of the moment of their construction - present in the discourse, the discursive ethos concerns the image and position assumed by the speaking subject in the speech act. While the imaginary formations have a broader dimension and are related to ideology and the unconscious, the discursive ethos is more specific and concerns the construction of the discursive identity of the subject. Both concepts are covered by epistemological matrices that cut discourse analysis according to certain perspectives of occurrence of discursive phenomena.

Unlike the discursive ethos that, roughly speaking, demands scenes of enunciation (Maingueneau, 2008b), the imaginary formations claim the conditions of production referring to contextual, sociopolitical, historical, and cultural elements that influence the production and interpretation of the discourses circulating in society. By virtue of this conception about the historized functioning in language practices, the imaginary formations shape, according to this view, the linguistic choices, the discursive strategies and the meanings constructed by the agents of discursive making, providing the conjuncture for the examination of both the meanings and the subjects within the collective circuit, since, as Orlandi (2012) elucidates the connection between these two integrants of discourse, "subject and meaning are constituted at the same time"<sup>21</sup> (Orlandi, 2012, p. 47; our translation).

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<sup>20</sup> Free translation of: "Assim pode-se dizer que todo ato de linguagem está ligado à ação mediante as relações de força que os sujeitos mantêm entre si, relações de força que constroem simultaneamente o vínculo social" (Charaudeau, 2017, p. 17).

<sup>21</sup> Free translation of: "sujeito e sentido se constituem ao mesmo tempo" (Orlandi, 2012, p. 47).

The scenes of enunciation, on the other hand, in which the discursive ethos is often interpreted, to use the term employed by Charaudeau (2017), theatricalize life in society through the various modalities of texts (Maingueneau, 2008b). The scenes of enunciation are, according to Maingueneau (2008b), the discursive context in which an act of enunciation occurs. In this configuration, they encompass the institutional space, the discursive space, and the space of physical interaction, and consequently play a key role in the production, interpretation of discourse effects. Therefore, the ethos, as can be understood, is located in scenes immediate to the communication, on the contrary, the imaginary formations are not limited to the moment of its production but take up the historicity present in the very relations involved in the discursive processes. Now, if both notions start from the three praxeological principles of language (Charaudeau, 2017), alterity, influence, and regulation, what is the effective distinction between them?

Beyond the indumentary invested in each of the notions perform significant changes in the interpretive performance that each one has, it is relevant to highlight that there is a discrepant epistemic assumption, underlying the architecture of both the imaginary formations and the discursive ethos, capable of resolving any doubts about the purpose of each of these operators of analysis. To wit, such item of the logic of the inner workings of these concepts, which distinguishes them, resides mainly in the immediate causes, for the construction of the discursive ethos, and, especially, in the antecedent causes (in historical scope) of the constitution of the imaginary formations. Being both perceptive and investigative instruments whose reach unfolds the projection of subjects in discourse, each one focuses, from its theoretical and methodological matrix - outlined under the aegis of the praxeological materialism of communication -, either on the immediate causes, in the process of ethos description, or on the antecedent causes, in the process of imaginary formations description.

As a criticism, it is said about the imaginary formations that there is an interpretational psychologism in the projection of the subjects in the discourse, however, it is ignored that the psychologism is precisely in the foundation of the three praxeological principles of language (Charaudeau, 2017), not in its methodological application, because the imaginary formations, as outlined within Discourse Analysis by Pêcheux (1995) are ultimately subordinated to the unfolding of the principles of alterity, influence and regulation, as it was possible to identify. Even though this pointing has been considered

by Pêcheux (1995b) and many of his collaborators, the ethos seems to revive the discursive formations. However, the same judgment turned to the discursive ethos, coated with the psychologism inherent in the operation of praxeological principles, does not obstruct the employment of the concept, as Maingueneau (2013) states in this regard: "In fact, the traditional notion of ethos covers not only the vocal dimension, but also the set of physical and psychic determinations attributed by collective representations to the speaker's character"<sup>22</sup> (Maingueneau, 2013, p. 108; our translation).

Therefore, it can be said that the imaginary formations and the discursive ethos compose phases, with dissimilar objectives, of discourse analysis that have always observed the projection of the subjects in the discourse. Possibly, because of the origin of the first notion, it was considered, by many, a passive model of subjective expression of those involved in the communication process, on the contrary, the second, from what was seen, seems to bring greater action in the construction of the mechanisms of manifestation of the subject in discourse. Finally, while the imaginary formations have a broader dimension of operation related to ideology, the discursive ethos is more specific, dramatizing the construction of the discursive identity of the subject. Both concepts, as verified here, have a symbiotic association within discourse analysis, but address different aspects of the discursive phenomenon.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

With the central objective of comparatively treat the notions of imaginary formation and discursive ethos, from the perspective of internal transformation of how certain principles of language are conceived to the point of changing the conceptual operation of these analytical operators and how historical determinations remodel them, it was found that both highlight, according to their respective epistemic contributions, integral elements of the discursive construction process relatively close, as the projection of the subject in the virtual circuit of communication. But the distinction between them, as it was possible to identify, lies in the emphasis given, by each, to the constitutive

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<sup>22</sup> Free translation of "De fato, a noção tradicional de ethos recobre não somente a dimensão vocal, mas também o conjunto das determinações físicas e psíquicas atribuídas pelas representações coletivas à personagem do orador" (Maingueneau, 2013, p. 108).

mechanisms of the manifestation of the members of the discourse, since the immediate causes, at the moment of discursive production, constitute for the construction of the discursive ethos the realization of the attributes of the subject, unlike the antecedent causes (in historical scope) of constitution of the imaginary formations that presuppose power relations and their syntagmatized structures in the use of language.

In view of the analytical operation enabled by each of the notions addressed in this article, it was found that, even in the face of the criticism of psychologism suffered by both, there is a symbiotic bond, arising from the three praxeological principles of language (Charaudeau, 2017) – principle of otherness, principle of influence, and principle of regulation – between them that underlies the edifice on which they are structured. Moreover, but without leaving aside this observation, we witnessed the perspective of effectiveness of the employment of imaginary formations and discourse ethos in the same object of analysis, since the differences perceived between such operators of discursive examination not only allow, but also demonstrate a certain organic permeability between their apparatuses of investigation of the projections of the subject in the discourse, guarding the due relations between their theoretical assumptions. In this complementary horizon, the practical relationship of these concepts can be taken as part of the *acontecimentalization* of discourse analysis (Soares, 2020).

Having made these considerations about the result found in this scanning, it is possible to state that this article contributes, adjacent to its objective, to the informative valorization of both the imaginary formations and the discursive ethos, as well as the didactic exposition of discourse analysis itself through two relevant concepts of its scrutinizing framework. In this elucidative configuration, by turning to the concern of the teaching and transmission of discourse analysis and, consequently, of elements of its working tools, such as the imaginary formations and the discursive ethos, this article ratifies the commitment to draw the sharpest forms and fill them with the contents most appropriate to the demands of those who need and want to learn the principles and procedures capable of allowing the analysis of the architecture of the discursive mechanisms of (re)production of meanings within the social circuit.

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