APHORISATION IN THE WRITTEN PRESS IN BRAZIL AND IN FRANCE

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Résumé

Dans cet article, nous examinons la notion de détachement/aphorisation proposée par D. Maingueneau, en vue d'observer comment la presse écrite (magazines spécialisés brésiliens et français) utilise cet outil pour influencer le lecteur, notamment grâce aux altérations que subit ce type d'énoncé dans le processus de mise en évidence.

Mots clés

Détachement, aphorisation, presse écrite, discours, lecteur

Abstract

In this article, we examine the notion of detachment/aphorization, as proposed by D. Maingueneau, with the purpose of observing its use in the press (specialized Brazilian and French magazines) as a resource to influence the reader, especially through the changes that this kind of utterance undergoes in the process of highlighting.

Key words

Detachment, aphorization, press, discourse, reader

Introduction¹

Taking into account the significant role played by the media in society, nowadays they represent a fertile ground of investigation for discourse studies related to current events. In the context of discourse analysis in the French tradition (in a broad sense), many authors have tried to grasp and understand its operation.

Freire, Carvalho (2008:156), for example, consider that at present time the media are one of the most important social instruments in the production of diagrams of significance and interpretation in the world. According to the authors, the media tell us not only what to think, what to feel and how to act, but impose questions, making us believe that these are key issues on which we need to think.

Charaudeau (2005) affirms, independently of criticisms which one can have about the media, they fill a fundamental role within the framework of democracy: inform the population on the facts and the events which take place in the world while circulating explanations on what is necessary to think about these events and by opening a forum for debate. On the other hand, if one considers that citizens always come into contact with the event as it is filtered by the media - since they never have access to the "raw event" -, it is necessary to not lose sight of the fact that the media choose what to reveal (and - we add - that they determine the way in which the "veil" is raised), which leads the author to conclude that "the media informs while deforming," even if it does not always have a real intention to manipulate (Charaudeau, 2005: 213).

An example from the French review *L'Express* (n° 3216) illustrates the "deformed information" Charaudeau (2005) speaks about. Close to the already announced renunciation of Benedict XVI, which took place on February 28th, 2013 and involved the election of a new pope, the article of David Abiker « Quand les cathonautes voteront lors du conclave 2.0 » (p. 98) puts forward, with a subtitle, the following statement: "For 57 million euros, RAI will broadcast the election of the Pope".

As the conclave of the election of a pope is usually held behind closed doors, the assertion that the event will be broadcast by Italian television raises doubts. However, if the reader refers to the article, he will only find one fictional account relating to the succession of Jean-Paul III which, according to the text, will take place in 2043. Admittedly, the title anticipates this futuristic aspect when it mentions the "cathonautes" and "conclave 2.0". But the reader, inattentive or in a hurry - which most of us are - can be easily misled by information taken out of context and reinterpreted.

The media can decide which information will be transmitted, make some "arrangements" (they decide what will be excluded or not, the "voices" which will be heard or on the contrary those which will remain quiet) and give a specific order of events, for example.

In the same way Maingueneau (2012: 20) considers that "contemporary media communication is in general openly lax" when it detaches certain statements from a text to draw the attention of the recipients. These short statements "set up" in the condition of titles,

¹ This article is drawn from our post-doctorate research entitled, "Surassertion and aphorisation in the Brazilian and French media: a comparative study in the light of the analysis of the speech," carried out between August 2012 and July 2013, in Brazil and in France. During our stay in France, supervised by D. Maingueneau, we received a grant from the Training Course Senior of the CAPES (Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior).

subtitles or captions of photos, integrate the phenomenon of aphorisation², as it is defined by the author in his most recent research (see Maingueneau, 2006; 2010; 2012).

For the author, it is impossible to determine if these "short phrases" are such because the speakers wanted them to be detachable, destined to be repeated by the media, or if the journalists qualify them to legitimize their statement (Maingueneau, 2006: 80). In other words, professionals of the media would manufacture them in function with their reuse in anticipation of the modes of reception. Maingueneau (2006: 86) still notes that the comparison between the detached statements and their counterparts (the text from which they are extracted) show that, in the majority of the cases, the statement undergoes a more or less important deterioration (Maingueneau, 2006: 86).

In accord with the perspectives of the quoted authors, we propose to consider the phenomenon of aphorisation such as it appears in the written press and more singularly in Brazilian and French magazines of important diffusion. For this, we selected three types of magazines: feminine, people and information, and we turned our attention towards a set of discursive genres in which, first of all, were more interesting to question aphorisation, namely interviews, chronicles, leading articles and reports which offer testimonies or opinions of specialists or celebrities.

We leave the assumption that the use of aphorisation in the written press (represented here by magazines) is a tool to influence readers, insofar as the "aphoriseurs-journalists", can change (remove, add, substitute, etc...) what was effectively said. This resource thus contributes to arouse the curiosity or the interest of the readers, while obeying in this case, a "logic of market" where the success of a publication is measured by the number of its sales.

Our objective is thus to comprehend the various forms of alteration carried out during the process of detachment (aphorisation) in the magazines we selected in order to answer the following questions: 1) To which strategies does the written press resort to report a speech? 2) Are there recurring strategies that exist more than others? 3) What are the new effects of meanings which result from the passage to aphorisation? We will also seek (without however, being exhaustive) to underline some similarities/differences observed in major research (see note 1) between Brazil and France and the various types of publication.

The reflection on these questions which concern the use of aphorisation in the written press will be able to, in our opinion, contribute to reveal the paradox summarized by Charaudeau (1997: 73) as follows: "to be as credible as possible while attracting the greatest possible number of receivers."

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² In order to clarify this term, Maingueneau (2012) admits to being inspired by the contemporary use, for which aphorism returns to a sententious sentence which summarizes a fundamental truth, with the following reserve: that the aphorisation exceeds the sententious statements and applies to the whole of the sentences without text.

APHORISATION UNDER THE MAGNIFYING GLASS³

Aphorisation can be defined as a sentence without text, which means "that it is neither preceded nor is it followed by other sentences with which it is bound by relations of cohesion, in order to form a textual totality concerned with a certain kind of speech" (Maingueneau, 2012 : 25). Not respecting the logic of the text and the kind of speech is thus what characterizes aphorisation. That does not imply, on the other hand, that it is isolated from any context: when aphorisations are cut from a text⁴, they are taken in two effective contexts - a context source and a context of reception, the distance between these two contexts being in general responsible for alterations to which the context of reception the detached statement is subjected by activating moreover semantic potentialities different from those present in the context of origin: the context of the source text (Maingueneau, 2012 : 25-27).

This situation could lead to a discord between the speaker of origin, who is responsible for what is said, and this same speaker taken as an aphoriser of a statement which was detached by a third person (in our case, by the media authority). Thus many speakers become aphorisers. As the author affirm, it is a question of aphorisers produced by work of quotation (which therefore do not coincide with the speakers of the text of origin). It is a recurring phenomenon in the contemporary written press, in France as in Brazil. It is what we seek to show in the next section.

In this article, we center our attention on aphorisations (secondary) with weak detachment. Since our objective is to check alterations of the statements in their process of detachment (aphorisation), the proximity of the source text enormously facilitates interpretative work, as opposed to what one could hope for aphorisation with strong detachment, taking into account the absence of the text of origin. Moreover, we seek to establish a dialog between the French analysis of the speech and the pragmatic one, because we consider that the passage of a fragment of text to the aphorisation deeply amends its pragmatic status and thus its interpretation, by activating unexpected semantic potentialities.

Our research privileges the qualitative aspect, insofar as, for the analysis of the speech, the most important aspect does not reside in the figures (even if one can resort to it), but in the interpretation of the data collected (of the linguistico-discursive facts, in this case) by seeking the comprehension of a given phenomenon (in our case, the secondary aphorisation by weak detachment), which implies a search for the empirico-deductive type. Moreover, as the data of the selected magazines were collected for eight months (as explained below), we have a very sizeable corpus, which makes a quantitative approach impractical in the space (limited) of an article. We believe, however, that the examples presented in the following section will give to the reader an overall picture of the aphorisations.

³ Knowing that the concept of aphorisation was proposed and developed by D. Maingueneau, we will limit ourselves to this author to tackle the question by leaving aside other contributions to the "short phrase" - as is the case of A. Krieg-Hides (2003) with his "discursive formulas" - which, although important, go in another direction.

⁴ In this case, it is about what Maingueneau (2012, p. 23) calls "secondary aphorisation," in opposition to the "primary aphorisation," i.e. an aphorisation deprived of source text, as is the case of the maxims and the proverbs in which we do not concern ourselves here.

APHORISATION: SOME EXAMPLES

This section is devoted to the analysis of some cases of aphorisation collected in Brazilian and French magazines from our corpus of research, in order to understand, thanks to the comparison between the statement of origin and the detached statement, the modifications carried out by the media authority and the new effects of direction resulting from these deteriorations.

In this corpus, we examined for four months (from September to December 2012, in Brazil, and from February to May 2014, in France) four feminine magazines (two Brazilian - Claudia et Nova - and two French - Femme Actuelle and Version Féminine), four informational magazines (Brazilian Veja and Carta Capital and French Le Nouvel Observateur and L'Express) as well as four people magazines (Caras and Conta Mais, in Brazil, and France Dimanche and Voici, in France), table 1⁵:

Table 1

Magazine	Catégo	Country	Éditor
	ry		
Version Fémina	MF	France	Hachette
Femme Actuelle	MF	France	Prisma
France Dimanche	MP	France	Hachette
Voici	MP	France	Prisma
L'Express	MI	France	Express-Roularta
Le Nouvel Observateur	MI	France	Perdriel
Claudia	MF	Brésil	Abril
Nova	MF	Brésil	Abril
Caras	MP	Brésil	Abril
Conta Mais	MP	Brésil	Escala
Veja	MI	Brésil	Abril
Carta Capital	MI	Brésil	Confiança

MF = feminine magazines; MP = people magazines; MI = news magazines

Though the feminine written press (French and Brazilian) seems low in aphorisation, our first example is taken from the Brazilian magazine *Claudia*. The report "Back to work" ["Of Volta ao trabalho"] (n° 10, year 51, October 2012, p. 226-227) offers the testimony of the CEO, Patrícia Franzini: "The lesson which I do not want to forget: being a CEO is only a job." [«"A lição que não quero esquecer: ser executiva é apenas um cargo". »]. However in the source text, the statement does not appear completely in the same form. Thus it is brought back: "Another lesson which I do not want to forget: being a CEO is only a job." ["Mais uma lição que não quero esquecer: ser executiva é apenas um cargo."]. This "small" modification, apparently insignificant (the substitution of "another" lesson by "the" lesson), removes however, a significant component: the expression "another" which functions as a marker of a presupposition indicating that the lesson in mention is not single - which suggests the statement detached by the means of the definite article.

In other words, the implicit contents (presupposed) which imply that there are other lessons that the CEO does not want to forget are systematically put aside. Even if it is deteriorated,

⁵ We based our selection criteria of these magazines on the considerations of Charon (2008).

the aphorisation is put between quotation marks simulating a reported speech in a direct style. How can one not notice the dissonance pointed out by Maingueneau (2012) between the speaker of origin, who is responsible for what is said, and this same speaker taken as an aphoriser of a detached statement - and, we add, of a transformed statement - by a third person (in our case, as everything seems to indicate, by the media authority)?

The French magazine *Femme Actuelle* (n° 1482 - p. 62-63), directed towards women, published an interview with the actor and producer Michael Youn about the movie *Vive la France*. The aphorisation which appears in the form of a title is the following one: "I am above all a travelling acrobat." However, the answer of the producer/actor to the question of the interviewer is this one: "I wanted to recall that I am only one travelling acrobat." In addition to the disappearance of the first segment of the sentence ("I wanted to recall that") which, from the syntactic point of view, functions as a main clause which anchors what follows it in a specific context, one sees clearly that negative construction ("I am only") becomes affirmative ("I am"), an affirmation confirmed by the addition of "above all," absent from the original statement. In this case (to be) a travelling acrobat - in other words, a popular artist - is the single possibility which is not in dissonance with the being of the speaker (excluding of course other possibilities).

However, if all this reformulation obeys a "synthetic aiming" specific to the title (which, in general, must be short), one should not lose sight of the effect of doubly assertive direction that the modifications print with the statement. The sequence appears nevertheless between quotation marks to simulate fidelity with the source text. In the last analysis, it is a question of an aphoriser produced by the work of quotation; a quotation which does not coincide with the speaker of origin, exactly as in the aphorisation analyzed previously (extracted from the Brazilian magazine *Claudia*).

Contrary to the feminine publications, the people magazines like the Brazilian *Caras* and the French *France Dimanche* include a profusion of examples of aphorisation with a probable aim to insert the readers into the "universe of the stars". *Caras* misuses it moreover: practically all of the articles present one or more detached statements which generally expose the opinions of the celebrities on the most varied subjects, which creates an effect of direction of intimacy between the public and the celebrity in question: an actor or an actress, a personality of the political world, a chief of a successful company, among other categories. We drew our third example from this review. It results in a report entitled "The VIPs seek innovations for the Living Room of the Habitat" [« VIPs buscam novidades para o Lar em Mostra »] (*Caras*, ED. 994, year 19, n° 47, of 11/23/2012). The opinion of a series of famous characters is revealed concerning the fourth Living Room Artefact Beach & Country, an event carried out in São Paulo which brings together a large number of famous decorators.

One of the comments is the following: "I like decoration. If I were not an actress, I would be an architect." [« "Amo decoração. Se não fosse atriz, seria arquiteta". »] (Deborah Secco). However if one seeks the same statement in the contiguous text, one will only find: "If I were not an actress, I would be an architect. I adore transforming the house, reforming it. I am the kind of woman whose husband wants to kill her", jokes Deborah. [« "Se não fosse atriz, seria arquiteta. Adoro mudar a casa, fazer obra. Sou aquele tipo que os maridos querem matar', ri Deborah. »].

We will be able to object that the omissions, especially those of the last part of the actress' speech, were carried out "to refine" the statement taking into account the limitations of space

of the magazine. It will be agreed however that "liking decorating" and "adoring transforming the house, reforming it" are equivalents only in these media "jugglings" where the construction of the direction matters less than the fact of underlining the opinion of a celebrity. Intentional or not, it is a question of another "deformed information" (Charaudeau, 2005).

In this same number of the magazine *Caras*, the report on the singer Caetano Veloso appears: "Caetano receives Latino Grammy and a kiss of Sônia Braga" [« Caetano ganha Grammy Latino e beijo de Sonia Braga »]. The detached statement, given in the shape of a subtitle, "I appeared timid and humble at this festival." [« "Eu me apresentei tímida e modestamente nesta festa." »] (Caetano Veloso) does not appear in the source text, which compels us to agree with Maingueneau (2012) when he notes the openly "lax" character of the contemporary media communication, which builds certain statements and places them all the same between quotation marks as if they had actually been included in the text.

A curious example which drew our attention is that of substitution between terms we can observe in the report "He wants to save the Montsouris farm", which refers to the actor Loránt Deutsch who wants to prevent the demolition of the farm, erected up in the 19th century (*France Dimanche*, n° 3475, p. 24). The statement subtitled "During the Occupation, we still found milk there, he protests" is practically identical to its correspondent in the source text, except for a seemingly slight modification (perhaps made by concern of gaining space): the substitution of "the last war", which appears in the original statement, by "the Occupation".

However, from the point of view of the French cognitivo-discursive memory, the term "Occupation" is much more eloquent than the less-marked expression "the last war", because it points out the cruel crimes committed by the Nazis when they invaded and occupied France during the Second World War; it also points out the general indigence the population was in, which reinforces the importance of the farm in this context and all the more justifies its safeguarding (especially from the historical point of view).

We then agree with Moirand (2007) that Occupation is a "word-event" which functions as a sort of "release of remembering." The author supports that the categorizations carried out by the media in the acts of appointment of the events or the actors of these events "raise cognitivo-linguistic operations which are based at the same time upon experiments and knowledge as well as on the speeches which organize them and formulate them" (Moirand, 2007, p. 5). It is therefore a question of a cognitivo-discursive memory, as postulated in the preceding paragraph.

The modifications identified up to now considered detached aphorisations from feminine and people magazines. We could think that the magazines of information and topicality (the informative journalism of reference) are more faithful to the source text, taking into account their main aim which is to inform the population about what occurs in the world that surrounds it. This idea is quickly weakened when we consider this kind of publication, even superficially. If we observe aphorisations identical to statements of origin (what we also observe in the feminine and people magazines), the cases where the statements are altered in their passage to aphorisation are more frequent.

Concerning the informational magazines, we note that the Brazilian magazine *Carta Capital* (considered as a rather critical left-leaning publication) and the French *L'Express* (a

publication perceived as being objective and having tendancy to lean to the right⁶) are rife with aphorisations. This raises an important matter: the relation we could establish between objectivity and criticality, on a side, and the aphorisation, on the other side, is not the same in Brazil as in France. The aphorisations which we analyze in the next paragraphs come from these last two magazines.

From the chronicle entitled «La vie et l'histoire» [« A vida e a história »], written by Fernando Lira and published in Carta Capital (Year XVIII, n° 724, p. 38), we drew the example from the following detached statement being used for the caption of a caricature of the author's face: "What makes a historical character, it is the virtue combined with the circumstances. Coincidence combined with the dialog." [«O que torna um personagem histórico é a virtude combinada às circunstâncias. A coincidência aliada à conversa. »]. The original statement is however quite different: "What makes a historical character important; it is the combination of his qualities with the challenges. It is virtue articulated with the circumstances, as Machiavelli in the 15th century affirmed. Coincidence combined with the dialog." [« O que torna grande um personagem histórico é a combinação das suas qualidades com os desafios que a política e a vida colocam em seu caminho. É a virtude articulada às circunstâncias, como afirmava o polêmico Maquiavel no século XV. É a coincidência aliada à conversa. »1.

It is obvious that such a long statement requires some cuts when it is promoted in the condition of aphorisation, which is, in theory, a "short phrase" - even if, according to Maingueneau (2012: 49), the "short phrase" is not necessarily "a sentence of small size." What, however, draws attention is the way in which these cuts and these "collages" were carried out. We noted that these cuts and seams deeply modify the pragmatic status of the hanging statement and affect its interpretation.

An important point brings the news magazines of the two analyzed countries closer together and distinguishes them from the other types of publication. It is in the way of detaching the statements, because if in the feminine and people magazines, the aphorisation in general takes over the remarks made by a celebrity or an expert specialized in an unspecified field (often between quotation marks, even if the latter are not the guarantors of an unconditional fidelity, as we could see it previously), in the reports, leading articles, chronicles of the news magazines, we observe on the contrary two types of aphorisations: on the one hand, those which repeat the words of a speaker-other (celebrity, specialist, witness, etc) and which appear in this case between quotation marks; in addition, those which reproduce the words of the speaker-journalist (the one who signs the article) and which is detached in another manner - by the size and/or the color of the font.

This suggests two types of aphorisation: the hetero-aphorisation, which repeats the words of others as in the first five examples analyzed in this section, and the auto-ones, such that of the last example (borrowed from the Brazilian magazine Carta Capital) and of the following example, borrowed from the French magazine L'Express. It should be said that in the autoaphorisation, the speaker-journalist quoting himself presents the quotation like a memorable word, like a statement dedicated to being repeated again, in the manner of aphorisations allotted to famous individuals (hetero-aphorisations). In both cases, to give somebody the

⁶ On the site of the review (<u>http://www.cartacapital.com.br/)</u>, we can read that *Carta Capital* is "a magazine which does not cultivate scandal and does not hide behind an alleged impartiality", by exposing "clearly its opinions on all the subjects". In France, Nouvel Observateur is, according to Maingueneau (2008), the magazine whose point of view is anchored the most on the left when it is compared to other informative publications like, for example, L'Express

statute of aphoriser detaches it from crowd and makes his speech a speech of authority, even fugacious.

We drew our last example from the chronicle « Le CAC ne fait pas plus la France qu'une hirondelle ne fait le printemps », signed by Christiane Kerdellant (n° 3227, p. 68). The statement "France cannot base its industrial policy on the interests of Danone or Total," detached in the form of a subtitle, presents no quotation marks, but appears in bold text larger than the rest, which indicates that it is the "speech" of the journalist responsible for the article - and not that of someone else (a celebrity, an expert, etc...) -, a phenomenon which we baptize "auto-aphorisation". The absence of quotation marks seems to state explicitly that the review does reproduce the original statement accurately, unlike what the presence of quotation marks would suggest (although there is no guarantee going in this direction, as we already underlined).

In fact, the statement taken again out of the body of the text is the following: "We don't base an industrial policy - much less an Employment Policy - on the interests of Danone or Total". It is seen that the generic "we" is made conspicuous in the aphorisation: it becomes "France." Moreover, the fragment between indents is simply eliminated, deluding the reader into believing that the proposal relates only to the industrial policy, whereas it also implies the Employment Policy. Of course, the original statement was modified, even if the speaker (the magazine or the journalist) can allege that he did not place the aphorisation between quotation marks as a way to indicate his not-fidelity to the source text.

Final Considerations

In order to answer the questions which we formulate in the introduction of this article, we could say that the most frequent type of alteration that a statement goes through in its process of detachment (aphorisation) is the omission which is often justified by the constraints of space of the publication and whose extension varies according to whether the aphorisation takes the shape of a title, a subtitle or a caption of a photograph. Within this framework, the titles tend to undergo major omissions and to approach much more of the prototypical aphorisations (composed of only one unit of phrase structure), unlike subtitles for which the requirement of synthesis is less, some of them being able to be made up two, three, even four periods. In this last case, they are assimilated rather to summaries of segments of the text and can at most be regarded as "peripheral" aphorisations.

This report approaches the point of view of Maingueneau (2012: 49) according to which "nothing is used to determine what are the necessary and sufficient requirements for sequence to play a part in aphorisation." In other words, the pure aphorisation does not exist, which "obliges us to reason in terms of more or less prototypic aphorisations."

In addition to the omissions (of which the extent varies), there are the additions and substitutions which, as we observed, profoundly interfere in interpretation that one can carry out of the detached statement compared to its correspondent in the text of origin. In a way or another, in the analyzed examples, the changes seem to obey a logic: to make the detached statement more "striking" in order to capture the attention of the reader.

If so many elements bring the Brazilian and French publications closer (like the more discrete presence of aphorisations in the feminine magazines), other elements tend to distinguish them

(like the objectivity/criticality/more typical aphorisation relation of informative publications). What is important to underline, is that the examples presented and discussed in the former section speak about themselves and show that the misunderstandings, the slips and the deformations of direction are recurring phenomena in the contemporary written press, independently of the country or the type of publication - and even if, in the case of the magazine, it is a question of a publication based on a slower rhythm compared to the faster rhythm of other media (like the newspaper or the Web). These observations come to prove our assumption that aphorisation is, indeed, a tool to act upon the reader by affecting his interpretation of the facts.

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