

Oriented, creative and misleading semioses as categories for the study of the development of the interpretation processes of deaf and hearing children

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Semioses orientadas, criativas e enganosas como categorias para o estudo do desenvolvimento dos processos de interpretação de crianças surdas e ouvintes

In my latest text published on this network, I presented some theories and principles of Peirce's Semiotics, which I consider fundamental for a broader study of deafness. Peirce's semiotic theories allow us to observe the construction, the functioning, the representation and interpretation of languages from different perspectives.

Peirce's principles of semiotics reveal and demonstrate the construction and use of languages.

In a world in which hand signals — signs created from gestural movements used by deaf communities in different countries — present a meaning dimension that emerges from the communicative potential of the human body, that is, from the innate capacity of gestural communication inherent to the species, from a body that holds a position in space, gesticulating in movements as in a dance whose discreet units evolve towards the formation of meaning and whose facial expressions add a prosodic dimension of representation, it is evident that only a semiotic theory, such as that developed by Peirce, whose bases are in phenomenology (*phaneroscopy*), can offer grounds for the understanding of the meaning dimensions that emerge from a language whose complexity goes far beyond its syntax, but rather lies in its significant, representative and interpretive constitution that characterizes its language dynamics and its constitution as a language.

Such constitution demonstrates the expressive, representative and semantic levels of sign languages as symbolic systems.

If syntax organizes the manual signs of a sign language, and this is undeniable, given that we are talking about "languages", on the other hand, it is the representative dimension of hand signals and facial expressions in question in the linguistic communication process which demonstrates the communicative potential of the body, the strategies for the generation of meanings and the paths of representation.

In the universe of deafness, the body "speaks", the body seeks ways of expression and communication, and the acquisition of a sign language is fundamental for communication and the possibilities of

representation and interpretation can occur, without causing damage or cognitive deficits to the deaf. On this issue, Fernandes and Correia (2005, p. 18-19) are emphatic:

(...) *providing the deaf person with exposure to a language as early as possible, obeying the natural phases of its acquisition is fundamental to his/her development. To deprive him/her of that right, under any allegation, is to disrespect his/ her integrity.*

The acquisition of a language, that is, a system of signs, is fundamental for the preservation of the cognitive and communicative potential of the deaf person. Languages (as systems) are means of communication constituted by signs and, consequently, they represent and are interpreted. Santaella (1995, p. 19) states that “any thought is processed by means of signs.

Any thought is the continuation of another, to follow on to another. Thought is dialogue”. Based on this statement, Santaella (1995) presents us the essential importance of signs for language and cognition.

Therefore, for this reason, that is for the importance of the relationships between language, signs and cognition I have chosen to resume a subject that is very familiar to me: Nöth’s theory of *oriented and creative semiosis* (1995). I have studied and applied these theories in the study of linguistic and cognitive development because of their elegance and organization that present enormous potential for application.

I have no doubt that Nöth’s (1995) *theories of oriented and creative semiosis* are classifications that can help us understand the complexity of interpretation paths, demonstrating the existence of cognitive profiles. Researches using Nöth’s theory of *oriented and creative semiosis* (1995) were applied (CORREIA 2001, 2015) and also published in Correia (2012).

I consider the classifications that emerge from Nöth’s (1995) *theory of oriented and creative semiosis* to be extremely relevant principles for the study of linguistic and cognitive development, and also for the foundations of a cognitive semiotics whose focus is on language acquisition and development. These classifications can be used to obtain cognitive profiles that can help the teaching and learning processes in the area of deafness, as well as in the development of inclusive teaching materials.

I will present a brief summary of classifications from Winfried Nöth’s semioses (1995) that demonstrate how potent and applicable these theories are in the observation of interpretation processes.

The interpretation process presupposes the constant search for signs that can offer directions for the complexity of the paths of representation. Nöth (1995, p. 107) presents the concept of *guiding sign*, as a sign interpreted “successfully based on a valid code, and the result of this semiosis is in accordance with the expectations of the interpreter”. The guiding sign generates *oriented semioses*, which emerge from the underlying knowledge of the language system under interpretation.

In real and concrete situations of interpretation, individuals find not only signs of orientation in the process of interpreting language systems, but also signs of disorientation in the interpretation of language systems. Nöth (1995, p. 108) classifies these semiotic events as “incomplete and transformed semiosis” in a way that the “interpreter becomes disoriented because one of the correlates of the sign cannot be identified”. Nöth (1995, p. 108) classifies the semioses that emerge from incomplete and transformed semioses as “misleading” or “creative”. According to Nöth (1995, p. 108):

In incomplete semiosis, the interpreter becomes disoriented because one of the correlates of the sign cannot be identified. (...) in misleading semiosis, the sign creates semiotic expectations that do not come true; in creative semiosis, signs are used both in exploring unexpected potentialities of an existing code, and on the basis of a new code.

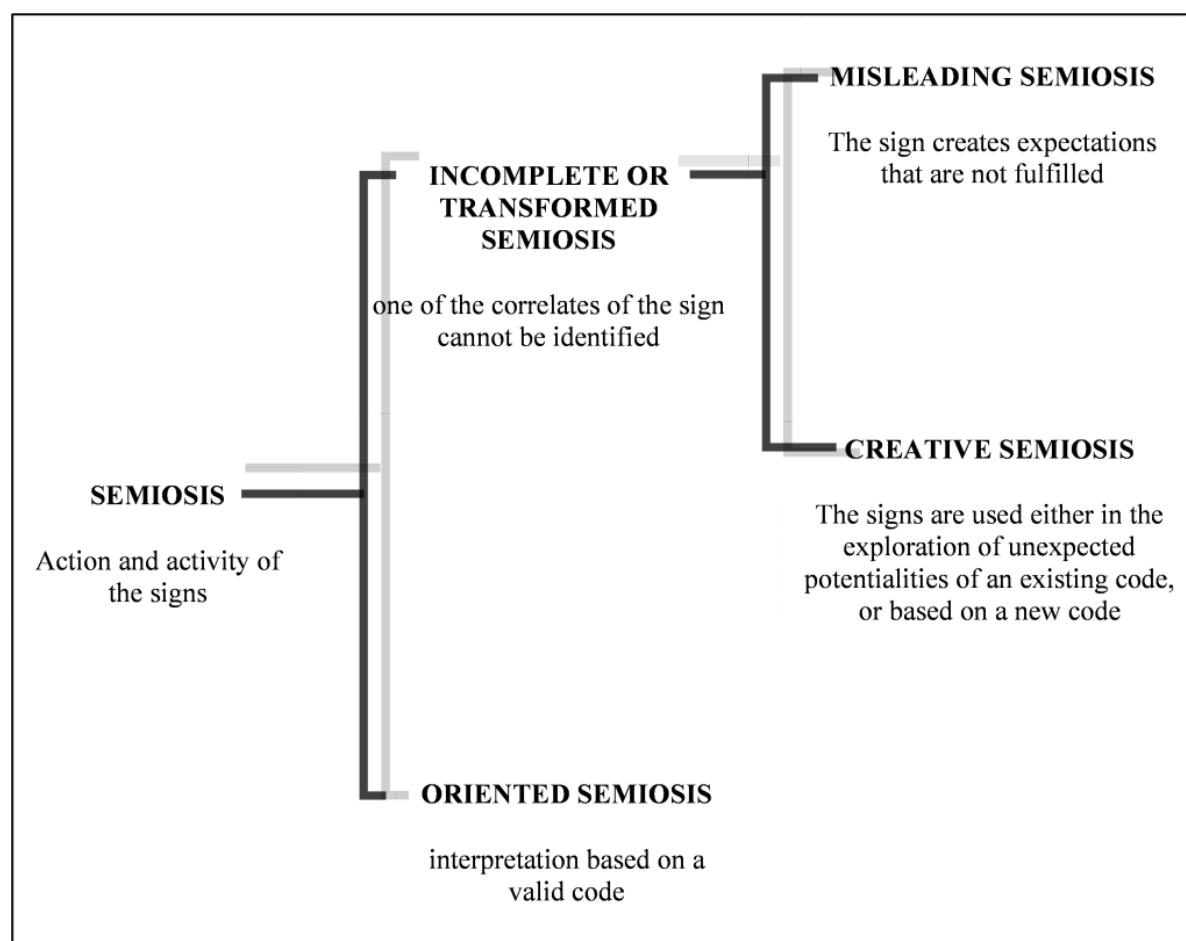


FIGURE 1 – Classification of Semioses

There are forms of *misleading semiosis* in real situations of interpretation. In the field of deafness, misleading semioses can be clearly observed when the deaf child has some deficit in language acquisition. Faced with the language system that must be interpreted, without knowledge of the manual signs of the sign language used by the deaf community, linguistic signs that allow the representation of the universe of experience and the expression of thought, the communication of interpretation does not take place; in other words, the semiotic expectations of interpretation about a given language system do not come true.

In the perspective previously adopted (CORREIA, 2001) there was no recognition of the category of *misleading semiosis* in the investigated interpretation processes. With the new research, there was a need to review these concepts and the understanding that misleading semiosis can occur in situations where language acquisition is poor. What I am trying to demonstrate is that if language acquisition is poor, even with the recognition of guiding signs, the child will not be able to express what is being interpreted, considering that he/she does not have linguistic instruments, that is, a system of signs to develop simple sentences, with a basic level of complexity that allows the understanding of linguistic communication.

Nöth (1995, p. 108) classifies semiosis as: *incomplete and transformed*, and *creative*. *Incomplete and transformed* semiosis presupposes the existence of sign transformations denominated *misleading or*

creative. When studying the interpretation processes of deaf children with a deficit in the acquisition of sign language, it is possible to identify the existence of *misleading semioses*.

I can conclude and attest that the classifications developed by Nöth (1995) are correct. they are highly organized and applicable to real situations of interpretation and are presented as fundamental theories for research whose objective is the study of the linguistic and cognitive development of deaf and hearing children.

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