



## Artigos/Articles

# Verbal-Visual Mediation: cultural artifacts of power and control for studies of school context in Applied Linguistics research

## *Mediação Verbo-Visual: artefatos culturais de poder e controle para estudos de contexto escolar na pesquisa em Linguística Aplicada*

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### ABSTRACT

*In this article we explore the data and theoretical discussions of a larger research (Tanzi Neto, 2016, 2017) and present one of the analysis tools of the research group NUVYLA-CNPq (Nucleus of Studies and Research of Vygotsky School in Applied Linguistics), created in 2018. In the framework of a dialogue between Vygotsky, Bakhtin and Bernstein, the research group seeks to demonstrate how the dimensions of verbal-visual utterances (artifacts) practiced in school spaces - embedded of multiple languages - mediate the formation of human consciousness. For this discussion, we analyze the verbal-visuality of different exhibitors from two public school contexts in Brazil. In the first one, of social base of more hierarchical discursive relations, that is to say, of verbal-visual utterances more controlled, the school space is not seen, by its participants, as a place to reach new projects of life, neither as a space of belonging or as recognized social positionings. In the second context, of social base of less controlled*

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*relations of power and control, that is, that provides the voice, identity and social position of its participants, we observe a reconfiguration of the dialogical and axiological positions of its participants, creating a school social context of belonging and recognition of its members to achieve future projects.*

**Keywords:** *Verbal-Visual Mediation; Artifacts; Power and Control; Applied Linguistics.*

## RESUMO

*Neste artigo exploramos os dados e discussões teóricas de uma pesquisa maior (Tanzi Neto, 2016, 2017) e apresentamos uma das ferramentas de análise do grupo de pesquisa NUVYLA-CNPq (Núcleo de Estudos e Pesquisas da Escola de Vygotsky em Linguística Aplicada), criado em 2018. Embasados na tessitura de um diálogo entre Vygotsky, Bakhtin e Bernstein o grupo de pesquisa procura demonstrar como as dimensões dos enunciados verbo-visuais (artefatos) praticados nos espaços escolares -, travestidos de múltiplas linguagens, medeiam a formação da consciência humana. Para esta discussão, observamos a verbo-visualidade de diferentes expositores de dois contextos escolares públicos do Brasil. No primeiro, de base social e relações discursivas mais hierárquicas, ou seja, de enunciados verbo-visuais mais controlados o espaço escolar não é visto, pelos seus envolvidos, como ponte para alcançar novos projetos de vida e nem como espaço de pertencimento e de posicionamento sociais reconhecidos. No segundo contexto, de base social e relações de poder menos controlada, ou seja, que propicia a voz, a identidade e o posicionamento social dos seus participantes observamos uma reconfiguração das posições dialógicas e axiológicas dos seus envolvidos gerando um contexto social escolar de pertencimento e reconhecimento dos seus envolvidos para alcançar projetos futuros.*

**Palavras-Chave:** *Mediação Verbo-Visual; Artefatos; Poder e Controle; Linguística Aplicada.*

## Introduction

This article explores data and theoretical discussions reached in a broader research (Tanzi Neto, 2016, 2017), whose objectives included answering the question of how social relations and mediation artifacts

constitute a specific social school architectonic, and thus influence the formation of the consciousness of the members and groups involved.

In the same direction, in one of the research perspective of NUVYLA-CNPq, we seek to raise the relations between semiotic mediation (verbal-visual) and its cultural tools (artifacts) along with the relations of power and control in everyday discourses, from the perspective of Bakhtin (2010 [1924]), Vygotsky (1978, 1981), Daniels (2008, 2015), Gillespie and Zittoun (2010), Wertsch (1981, 2007), Bernstein (2003 [1990], 1993, 2000 [1996]) and Hasan , 2012). The main objective is to understand the “social aspect” of language to develop tools of research in the field of Applied Linguistics, that might enable us to analyze the conversation in the context and the context in the conversation, foreseen in post-Vygotskian studies (Daniels, 2008).

For Daniels (2015) semiotic mediation (verbal-visual) seeks to understand the ways in which more tacit, less explicit discourses of our daily life, mediate forms of thought and thus lead us to respond to and act in certain situations, in certain ways; In this sense, we seek to understand the world not only as a phenomenon of nature, but also as culture (Daniels, 2015). However, despite advances in Vygotskian theory about how mental actions are culturally, institutionally, and historically situated, little has been discussed about the relationships between cultural tools (artifacts) and power relations and control (Daniels, 2015).

In this sense, we believe that, through the work carried out by our research group, situated in the field of Applied Linguistics, we seek to understand how the dimensions of verbal-visual utterances (artifacts) practiced in school spaces - embedded of multiple languages - mediate the formation of human consciousness.

### **Mediation: from tools and signs to artifacts**

Vygotsky, following the precepts of behaviorism in his time, brings, at the beginning of his career, to the field of historical and cultural psychology, a third factor for the stimulus-response scheme: the mediated stimulus, integrating it to research in the fields of physiology

and behaviorism. This third stimulus is characterized as an artificial symbol, an instrument that mediates the relations between man and nature (Rückriem, 2009).

For Vygotsky (1978), the sign acts as an instrument for psychological activity in the same way as a tool for work. However, relating sign and tool does not create the same identity for both; on the contrary, there are essential differences between sign and tool. Although the term tool is used by some psychologists to refer to the indirect function of an object as an embodiment of an activity, for the author, this is simply “simple metaphors and more colorful ways of expressing the fact that certain objects or operations play an auxiliary role in psychological activity” (Vygotsky, 1978, p.53).

For Vygotsky, the attempt to equate these concepts leads only to a determinism of the area, leaving aside important discussions about the specificities of each. The difference between the concepts lies in the function of mediation that each one exerts: tool derive from Marx’s concept of work tools, of which man makes uses to act on the objects and thus to fulfill with his personal objectives; already the sign is based on the fact that man can affect his behavior or others by means of signs. In both directions we have an indirect function, that is, of mediated activity as the core of the discussion (Vygotsky, 1978). To clarify this thought, the author argues that the essential difference between the two concepts lies in how they guide human behavior. The tool acts as a “the conductor of human influence on the object of activity; it is *externally* oriented; it must lead to changes in objects “(Vygotsky, 1978, p.55); it is in this way that, through external activity, man gains from nature.

The sign, for Vygotsky, is the psychic medium of self-regulation, since it does not have the character to change anything in the object of a psychological operation; the focus is on self-control, through internal activity; the sign is internally oriented. Thus, because of the very distinct nature of each concept, one cannot be taken for the other. However, we must not forget that the domain of nature and the domain of behavior are closely linked, “just as man’s alteration of nature alters man’s own nature” (Vygotsky, 1978, p.55), so we must seek, in the connection between the two concepts (tools and signs), directions to understand the psychological activity.

According to Wertsch (1981), the level of labor activity reflects on the tools that are available at a given moment in history, “new types of instruments are needed to carry out the continually evolving of new forms of labor activity” p.135). Yet, we understand that each new form of work activity provides new ways of understanding and acting on the world. This continuous dialectical process is the key to the discussion of sign systems: “They are constantly changed to deal with the new situations, but they are not passive servants of activity: they exert a strong influence on the present and future forms this activity can take” (Wertsch, 1981, p. 135).

Thus, for the matters of semiotics in Vygotsky’s work, the most important is the similarity between Marx’s conception of activity and the way both the tool mediates human work activity and how semiotically the signs mediate human social processes and thought ; that is, tools and signs are not only used to change the world, but to regulate and transform humans from that process (Wertsch, 1981).

Vygotsky postulates in his work that human behavior seeks different artificial signs for the mastery of the mental process. The real importance of these signs lies in knowing what role they play in human behavior and how similar they are to the tools of work. For Vygotsky (1981), these psychological signs have artificial formations and, by their nature, are social, nonorganic or individual. Their purpose is to control or dominate the behavioral processes of someone or the person, that is, to control or dominate human processes.

The psychological signs that we find in our day to day are “language; various systems for counting; mnemonic techniques, algebraic symbol systems; works of art; writing; schemes, diagrams, maps, mechanical drawings” (Vygotsky, 1981, p. 137) etc. - all different models of signs. These signs alter the whole rhythm and structure of mental functions, since they belong to the processes of human behavior. This is because the signs determine the structure and action of a tool, in the same way that a new technical tool can change the way a work operates.

For Vygotsky, what defines forms of behavior between natural and cultural is the mediated form of behavior, that is, the use of tools or signs, which are derived from a culture; culture, in this case, “acts as the social repository of human inventions” (Meshcheryakov, 2007,

p.158) and the internalization of these forms of behavior are directly linked to the mediated psychological activity.

Vygotsky (1978) states that the transformation of an interpersonal process into an intrapersonal process is the result of a series of developmental events, and it may take some time before the former actually becomes intrapersonal. The internalization of forms of behavior, still according to the author, is based on reconstruction of psychological activities through the operation of signs.

However, Cole (1998) argues that the Russian historical cultural school assumes that human psychological development emerges through culturally mediated and historically developed practices that are intimately linked and that in some way imply each other. This is due to the fact that mediation takes place through artifacts. For Luria (1928), “man differs from animals in that he can make and use tool..., the tools used by man not only radically change his conditions of existence, they even react on him in that they effect a change in him and in his psychic condition.” (Luria, 1928, p.493).

For Cole (1998), the idea of a mediation tool by Luria and his group was not only based on the question of “hoes and plates” but also in language as part of this cultural mediation process, the “tools of tools” (Cole, 1998, p.108). In making use of it, we can change it to fulfill a specific role of cultural behavior; this change of cultural behavior in mediated activity is classified by Cole (1998) as artifact. The author also states that

[...] all means of cultural behavior (artifact in my terminology) are social in their essence. They are social, too, in the dynamics of their origin and change, as expressed in what Vygotsky called “the general law of cultural development” (COLE, 1998, p. 110).

Cole (1998) explains that Luria and Vygotsky’s arguments about the differences between man and monkey were strongly based on Engels’s 1883 work on the Dialectic of Nature, which brought to the field of psychology the discussion that to overcome the barriers of a goal we do not use only tools. From this perspective, the great distinction between humans and monkeys is not only the external use of nature, but the changes we make to our needs, that is, how we dominate it; in

this sense, with our ability to use language and symbolic mediations, “tools for the mastery of behavior” (Cole, 1998, p.113), when tools and language come together in an artifact, then historical man emerges, or human development begins.

For Cole (1998), artifact is at the same time language as also a constituent material of a culture; there is no word without its material constitution (movement of hands, sounds, writing, or neurological activity) and there is no tool without its condition imposed by human thought. Cole (1998) understands that artifact is the combination of the properties of tools and signs defined by Vygotsky, that is, they are both material and ideal and coordinate humans with the world and with each other. Artifacts, in this sense, are products of human history.

In this perspective, we use, for the discussions of our research group, the concept of artifact exposed by Cole (1998), which we believe to be of extreme value to applied linguists when analyzing verbal-visual artifacts (implicit and explicit) in a school context. To Fabricio (2006), we need, in Applied Linguistics, to look at the sociohistorical matters of discursive practices, associating them with the conditions of production, circulation and interpretation.

### **Verbal-Visual Mediation: artifacts of a school context**

Throughout Vygotsky’s theoretical production, the concept of mediation was approached in many different ways. In our investigation, we propose an expansion of Wertsch’s (2007) work on implicit and explicit mediation, with a greater focus on implicit mediation, in order to also give relevance to the concept proposed by Vygotsky. In implicit mediation, the focus is on the communicative chain that involves signs and language in communication, specifically on the social role and the internalized discourse in the process of mediation of human consciousness. In this sense, our research group work consists in seeking to understand the tacit forms of mediation that reflect in the minds of others. In the words of Märtsin (2012, p.438),

[...] “It’s only when we understand how culture becomes invisibly transmitted in our ordinary everyday interactions and how our social positions in the world come to impact the ways in which we perceive and act in the world

that we can start to understand how we become meaning-making creatures that can perform certain acts of thinking, feeling and behaving in the world” (Märtsin, 2012, p.438).

In this sense, we observe how the use of verbal-visual resources develops and changes, as a process: a movement between thought and verbal-visual resources, verbal-visual resources and thought.

It is worth pointing out that in social practices, as well as in social spaces in the contemporary world, we are constantly faced with the most different forms of communication, imbued with regularities of structures, or, if we prefer, a “visual grammar” of communication, since the text, even the print, is multimodal. The alphabetic in the text is just a way of transmitting a message (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 1996), the verbal is only one of the ways to construct meanings in the communicative spheres.

We believe that it is important to point out some contributions of the Theory of Multimodality proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2001), Van Leeuwen (2005), among others, who understand that written language is only one of the modes of signification in communicative acts and inquire if understanding only the alphabetic would be sufficient to understand the power role of the discursive manifestations of the world. This thesis is based on Halliday’s (1994) system-based multimodal semiotics and understands that the meaning of language can be achieved in different ways, such as image, sound effects, color, speech, movements and gestures; is the combination of these modes, or some of them, used to give meaning, that is, in communication we make use of different modalities for their meaning. On this ground, we understand that the verbal-visual utterances produced in a school context are multimodal/multisemiotic<sup>2</sup>.

For Halliday (1994), in social interactions, we use a set of semiotic alternatives/modes of representations from a culture. This mode system (multimodality) reflects the social function of a statement as representation, as interaction, as message (Jewitt and Kress, 2002). In this sense, language must be seen as a mode of signification, since,

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2. Due to the scope of this article we will not expand this notion in our analysis.

for Kress and Jewitt, there is a motive for the use of one modality and another not; the chosen representational form and the intentional sense in the production of meanings are never arbitrary.

For Hasan (2012) and Bernstein (2000 [1996]), explicit mediation is by reasoning, by certain technical concepts, and by seeking the relation between a physical phenomenon in which “the world is categorized and classified” (Hasan, 2002, p.152). Tacit mediation, occurs through the disposition of the implicit discourses of our daily life, such as the belief in the world we live in, the tendency to respond to certain situations of certain forms, etc.; that is, tacit semiotic mediation focuses on the phenomena of human nature and our culture.

However, we consider that, despite the considerations proposed in the work of Wertsch (1998, 2007) and Gillespie and Zittoun (2010), they are very close to the questions posed by Hasan (2002) and Bernstein (2000 [1996]) on the use of mediated action as a unit of analysis in sociocultural research. Daniels (2015) criticizes that there is a natural link between action, including “mental action, and the cultural, institutional and historical context in which such actions occur” (Daniels, 2015, p.7); we cannot leave aside the relations between cultural tools, power and control.

Hasan (2002) considers this discussion extremely important, since we are in a pluralistic society divided by interests of gender, race, occupation and socio-economic status; it is necessary to seek to understand the relations between cultural activities and language in order to understand how different socio-cultural-historical activities differentiate their semiosis in mediation and how this mediation influences the development of their participants. For Hasan (2002), if we want to think about an egalitarian education, we must explore the concept of semiotic mediation as the core of the influences for the formation of the human mind and for the different linguistic performances of social groups. From this initial exploration, we may be able to collaborate to create better educational programs. To that end, Bernstein’s conceptions of class relations and the distribution of power are welcome in our research group to think of categories of analysis and modes of interpretation of a school context.

## Mediational power and control artifacts in a school context

Bernstein (2003 [1990]) starts from the principle of class relations to refer to inequalities in the distribution of power. For the author, the principles of control among social groups are given by the creation, distribution, reproduction and legitimation of physical and symbolic values, which are at the heart of the social division of labor. Thus, Bernstein (2003 [1990]) develops the thesis of how

[...] class regulation of the distribution of power and of principles of control generates, distributes, reproduces, and legitimates dominant and dominated principles regulating the relationship within and between social groups and so forms of consciousness” (Bernstein, 2003 [1990], p.13).

For Bernstein (2000 [1996]), different forms of communication shape the formation of members’ consciousness in their groups or classes. This is due to the relations of power and control, which can be translated into forms of communication of their interlocutors, transmitting dominant or dominated codes, through which subjects are differently positioned.

For Shotter (1993) there must be a semiotic positioning, mental processes do not act only systematically or mechanically, since they are reflected and influenced by ethical and rhetorical issues between people. In Bernstein’s work (2003 [1990]), there is a similar assertion that positioning refers to the question of establishing specific relationships with other subjects. However, from a more sociological perspective, Bernstein delves into the more specific question of semiotic positioning when he ponders that class regulation generates codes, which are culturally determined positioning devices that position us ideologically. In Bernstein’s words,

class-regulated codes position subjects with respect to dominant and dominated forms of communication and to the relationships between them. Ideology is constituted through and in such positioning. From this perspective, ideology inheres in and regulates *modes of relation*” (Bernstein, 2003 [1990], p.13).

In Bernstein’s work, codes are defined as regulators of specific linguistic achievements, that is, code is a tacitly acquired regulatory

principle that selects and integrates relevant meanings, forms of linguistic realizations (Bernstein, 2003 [1990]). However, its form of analysis should not be made through an abstract enunciation or through a single and simple context, but rather through the relation between the different contexts in which the speech is inserted. In this perspective, the code is a regulator of the discursive relations between and through the different contexts.

In the Bakhtinian perspective (2010 [1924]), this can be seen as an architectonic form, where the forms of language, the “verbal-visual mass” (Brait and Pistori, 2012, p. 390) private, social and historical life realize. The architectonic form corresponds to the fields of human activity in a specific context.

For Bernstein (2003 [1990], 2000 [1996]), relations of power and control within an institution regulate forms of communication or open spaces for different forms of communication to emerge, thus giving rise to discursive artifacts. It is worth remembering that the models of discursive practices developed in Bernstein’s work go beyond the issues of the transmission of organizational pedagogical practices and discursive school contexts.

Bernstein makes it clear that the pedagogical practice of his theoretical framework must also be seen in the pedagogical relations between doctor and patient, architects and builders, psychiatrists and the so-called “mentally ill”, that is, in his practical pedagogical work, is in the context cultural reproductions and productions (Bernstein, 2000 [1996]). In this context, Bernstein prioritizes strictly the relationships involved in the construction of different pedagogical discourses in different practices. This is due to the fact that Bernstein points out that much research in the sociological field was concerned only with meta-theory, failing to offer tools that could collaborate in describing how discursive forms or models can become part of our consciousness.

On this ground, Bernstein seeks, from the perspective of the distribution of power and control, to understand how dominant and dominated forms of communication are generated, distributed, reproduced and legitimized, as the different principles of communication regulate relations between and within social groups, how these principles of communication produce and distribute forms of pedagogical awareness (Bernstein, 2000 [1996]).

To Bakhtin, the text/utterance should not be seen only by its external, autonomous form alone, but by its “concrete conditions of life, its interdependencies, its relations, its dialogical and evaluative positions” (Brait and Pistori, 2012, p. 378).

Blommaert (2015) also contributes, affirming that the language is ideologically loaded with semiotic characteristics; its implicit values of identity and power are called “culture,” but to understand a context, we need to look at the interactions of social life in their historicities, seeking local interpretations based on a translocal vision, that is, “historically configured ascriptions of genre, key, footing and identity” (Blommaert, 2015, p.5). In this respect, a situated activity, such as speech in the classroom, not only contributes to learning, but also to the inclusion of its participants in a given social class. For Silverstein (1985) and Blommaert (2015), interactions, or a semiotic event, are an unstable exchange of forms of signs mediated by an ideological culture of contextualized situations of human interest.

In our research group we broadened the theoretical conceptions for the Vygotskyan work through Bernstein’s contributions on what is involved in implicit and explicit semiotic mediation, all starting from a sociological perspective of mediation that is based on the process of culturally meaningful acquisition produced, which we believe to be extremely valuable for understanding a specific school social context.

For Daniels (2015), if we really want to understand or better know our stories and clearly ourselves, we need to develop better tools for analyzing what otherwise will remain implicit (Daniels, 2015). Shotter still ponders that

[...] If we were to treat social relationships ethically rather than casually (which we do not at the moment do in social theory), this would change their character entirely. They would have to be seen as involving in their proper conduct, a socially negotiated or negotiable, dialogically structured process of formation. A process which, in its moment by moment conduct or ‘management’, must be morally sensitive to the social being of the other people involved in it. In other words, those involved in it, in assessing their continually changing ‘semiotic positions’ within the process, must be aware of what, morally, their positions allow or permit” (Shotter, 1993, p.65).

However, we believe that few studies in the field of Applied Linguistics seek to understand which semiotic positions are morally allowed or authorized in school social contexts. Even though we know from Blommaert's perspective (2015) that in semiotic events there is a stable exchange of signs, mediated by an ideological culture of human interest, and that we clearly perceive that we are not morally sensitive to the social being of other people involved, but imbued in mediational power and control artifacts from a certain social position.

### Verbal-Visual Mediation of two public schools' contexts in Brazil

For our analyses, we present data from a major research (Tanzi Neto, 2016, 2017), as we mentioned before, in order to contextualize the theoretical discussions of our research group presented in this article. In school context I, we initially observed the verbal-visual rules present in the different spaces of the school, we observed that the focus of the verbal-visual messages is more for teachers than for students (see Figure 1). Some posters may be interpreted as expected social behaviors in school context, but they are not student products. Other rules are also clearly observed by the locking of spaces, grids (physical) and the hierarchical division that was observed in the physical spaces: teachers' rooms, classroom, court, coordination room, etc.

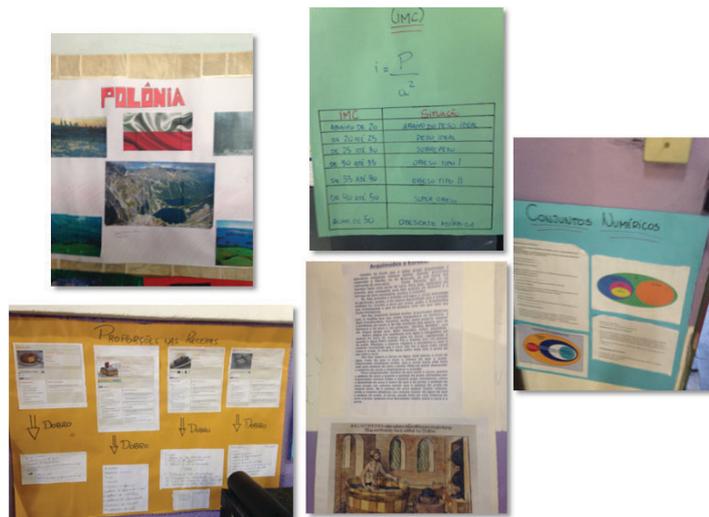
**Figure 1** – School Context I – verbal-visual utterances of the school context.



Source: Tanzi Neto (2016, 2017).

The productions exhibited by the students in the school spaces, most refer to works of school subjects (results achieved) (see Figure 2).

**Figura 2** – School Context I – verbal-visual utterances of the school context



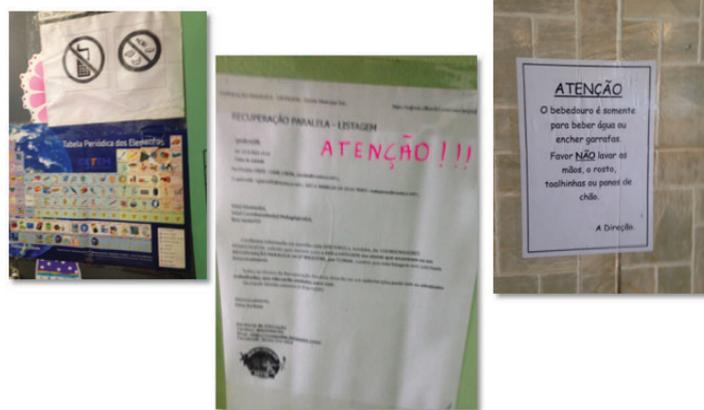
Source: Tanzi Neto (2016, 2017).

The work retakes contents learned in the school daily environment, privileging only the writing, with little use of metalanguage or linguistic resources on the part of the participants. We also note that the student's voice, his/her social positioning, his/her expression plan is not contemplated in the exhibitors of the school. However, we could find some posters that discuss issues relevant to global values of society such as *Smoking*, *War*, *Peace*, *Racism*, but did not address the local needs of the community and its environment (see Figure 3). Other works, as already mentioned, show learning results.

**Figura 3** – School Context I - verbal-visual utterances of the school context

Source: Tanzi Neto (2016, 2017).

Bernstein (2000 [1996]) postulates that when a school context does not bring into the space external values of those involved, such as images, voices, cultural artifacts, it becomes difficult for the student to recognize himself as part of that context. In this view, the school context I privileges the canonical of the traditional verbal-visual communication, that is, only the writing, making little use of linguistic resources of the students' daily life and with little participation/presence of other members of the context (see Figure 4).

**Figura 4** – School Context I - verbal-visual utterances of the school context

Source: Tanzi Neto (2016, 2017).

In a few words, we can understand that in the school context I there is a deletion of the student's voice in the verbal-visual utterances exposed in the different spaces, even in the scholarly works that discussed contents learned. In this perspective, we can infer that the school context contemplates only the semiotic/ethical character of the positions of the people with a higher hierarchical role in the social space, of selection of lexical, phraseological and grammatical resources of the individuality of only a group of speakers, in that context, teachers, principals and coordinators and students as producers of results.

For the analysis of the same verbal-visual utterances in a second school context, context II, when we observe the verbal-visual rules in the different spaces, we find some norms related to the expected social behavior, reflected on the notice boards, on the exhibitors or on the walls of the school (Figure 5). These rules were created not only by the school secretary, but also by projects with the students.

**Figura 5** – School Context II - verbal-visual utterances of the school context

Source: Tanzi Neto (2016, 2017).

There is, therefore, more discussion of the expected than just fixed rules of social behavior. For the organization of the classroom, there is indication of autonomy in the expected behavior of the student: teachers and students can use space and are responsible for the disconnection of electrical items and closure of space (Figure 5). Thus, we understand that a certain autonomy is given to the student for the expected social behavior in the school space, without keys, locks, etc.

Regarding the pupils' productions, exposed in the spaces of context II, we observe that throughout the school space, the works focus on different issues, such as life project (our dreams) and art (Figure 6), rather than content learning outcomes. To do so, they use different linguistic resources such as images, colors, abstract works, etc. In some exhibitors, we find the reproduction of specific school contents, but, nevertheless, with the use of images of representation, colors, forms etc., that is, modes of communication that approach the contemporary reality of those involved.

**Figura 6** – School Context II - verbal-visual utterances of the school context

Source: Tanzi Neto (2016, 2017).

Through the verbal-visuality present in this school space the production of cultural artifacts, we observed that the works exhibited throughout the school space were oriented towards the construction of local and global cultural repertoire, through art, with production of paintings, such as the *Troy Horse Project* (see Figure 7) or the *Calendar of the Environment*. We noticed that the student's work sought to present themes about the local and global needs of those involved (Figure 8).

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**Figura 7** – School Context II - verbal-visual utterances of the school context



Source: Tanzi Neto (2016, 2017).

We could also observe that the verbal-visual interaction in the exhibitors analyzed was made through different linguistic resources, products of students' everyday life, using images, color, emoticons, photos, drawings (see Figure 8).

**Figure 8** – School Context II - verbal-visual statements of the school context



Source: Tanzi Neto (2016, 2017).

To summarize, we understand that the exhibitors of the school context II are configured in an exchange of the different voices that produce the school's social space; the social positions of the teachers, principals and coordination and of the students are present in the verbal-visual utterances, since there is an exchange in search of a context that contemplates all voices. Different ideological, ethical and cultural positions are clear in the works that are institutional and in the students' work, as an image about *My Dream* (see Figure 6), on the study of mathematics (see Figure 8), and on the rules of space, created by the two groups (Figure 5).

As we have already pointed out, our concern with the school context is that social and historical forces of all participants should permeate school spaces. We cannot forget that the cultural artifacts that mediate us also place us semiotically in relation to each other and to those around us, and, these processes essentially reflect the rhetorical and ethical considerations that are influenced by the manifestations between people and the world. We must think of verbal-visual utterances produced in school social spaces, arising from the social, historical and institutional tensions of all voices, teachers, coordinators, directors, secretaries and students.

Our reflection from the contributions of Bernstein (2000 [1996]) and the relations of power and control comes from the forms of communication of its interlocutors. As we have already mentioned in our theoretical discussion, such forms of communication transmit codes by which subjects are differently positioned.

In order to reflect on the issues discussed so far and its intrinsic relationship with the social formation of the mind, we asked students in each school context to write: "Do you think the school, your parents, society or your friends can help you realize your dream of the future?". In the school context I, in which we observed in the exhibitors little voice of the students, of hierarchical relation of participation and vertical social positioning (more hierarchical relations of power and control), we observed from the essays that question of the role of the school, parents, society or their friends to realize the dream of future, the word 'friends' emerged more frequently, followed by 'parents' as tools to aid in these achievements (see Figure 9).



For context II, the role of 'school' appears as essential in the formative process of those involved, followed by 'study', 'teachers' and 'parents'.

As we seek to understand how the dimensions of verbal-visual utterances (artifacts) practiced in school contexts - embedded of multiple languages - mediate the formation of human consciousness, we observe that, it is possible to break the boundaries of power and control. Context II, for example, manages to break with the invisible barriers of power and control to offer a context of more horizontal social positions, exchange, identities and voices of its participants, which we believe to be the generator of a school social context for students' dream life projects.

### Final Considerations

In the perspective presented here, we understand that the verbal-visuality present in school contexts is replete with mediating artifacts, verbal-visual productions, that can be directed to influence the mind and behavior of ourselves and others. In this way, speeches are held highlighting internal values that include socio-historical issues, more human social practices, which privilege subjects, their forms of interaction, their voices, their social positions and their identities.

Last but not least, we must point out the importance of analyzing and discussing school social contexts, since the forms and habits that surround our young people in school guide them, instruct them, shape them. Schools must sought to offer a social space of verbal-visual artifacts that privileges voices, multifaceted identities, social positions and diverse contexts: peripheral and community.

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