

**Verbal-Visual Theatrical Protocols: Meaning Production for
University Theatrical Practice / *Protocolos teatrais verbo-visuais:
produção de sentidos para a prática teatral universitária***

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ABSTRACT

This text, which is the result of a postdoctoral research, presents reflections on meaning production from theater classes in higher education, stemming from classroom protocols which were produced by undergraduate students and carried out under a verbal-visibility condition. From the Dialogical Discourse Analysis perspective, based on Bakhtin and the Circle's theoretical contributions, it is possible to look at the students' verbal-visual discourse about their practical classes, establishing a dialogue with the different meanings to which they have pointed.

KEY-WORDS: Theatrical protocols; Verbal-visibility; Meaning Production; Bakhtin and the Circle

RESUMO

Este texto, resultante de uma pesquisa de pós-doutorado, apresenta reflexões sobre a produção de sentidos para as aulas de teatro no ensino superior, a partir de protocolos de aula produzidos por acadêmicos discentes, e realizados sob a condição da verbo-visualidade. A partir da Análise Dialógica do Discurso, pautada nas contribuições teóricas de Bakhtin e o Círculo, é possível olhar para os discursos verbo-visuais dos alunos sobre suas aulas práticas, dialogando com os diferentes sentidos para os quais apontam.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Protocolos teatrais; Verbo-visual; Produção de sentidos; Bakhtin e o Círculo

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Introduction

This article presents some results of my postdoctoral research entitled *Dialogue between theater and Bakhtin: verbal-visibility and meaning production from university theatrical practices*. For some years I have been analyzing university theater education from the Dialogical Discourse Analysis (DDA) perspective, whose main theoretical reference is Bakhtin and the Circle's work. Studies on both theater and language have been accepted and used as research material; however, different research investigations exploring the meaningful contributions one area brings when dialogically encounters the other are still ongoing and necessary.

Another dialogical encounter this work has promoted has to do with university partnerships: I carried out this research during a school term of an undergraduate program in Scenic Production from Universidade Federal do Paraná (Curitiba-Brazil) and I have analyzed the data along with the Graduate Program in Applied Linguistics and Language Studies from Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo.

The main goal of this research is to understand meaning production from theatrical practices under the verbal-visibility perspective. Specifically, it aims at a) analyzing verbal-visual theatrical protocols in order to investigate the voices which are verbally and visually enunciated in dialogues with the meanings to which they point and b) identifying the implications in and the contribution to the relation between the verbal-visual perspective and theatrical practices in university theater education.

This article is divided into two main sections: The first one explains the research and its theoretical-methodological framework, and the second one focuses on corpus analysis.

1 Verbal-Visual Theatrical Protocols

In order to organize this section, three basic questions will be answered throughout the text: What are protocols in theater classes? What can one understand by the DDA's verbal-visual perspective? How does this research methodologically deal with verbal-visual theatrical protocols? As we bring up the discussion related to these questions, the reader and I will be able to have a dialogical look at the research data.

1.1 What Are Protocols in Theater Classes?

Having students write down what they experience in theater classes is a recurrent practice in theater pedagogy. Ingrid Koudela, who first introduced class protocols in theater education in Brazil, asserts that protocol production is a means to enable reflections on class activities (KOUDELA, 2006). As theater students use their bodies to learn art, unlike school practices from different disciplines, they end up not jotting down notes in their notebooks, copying from the board, pasting or doing homework. Thus, protocols, discursive materialities, are used by the teacher as a methodology which enables students to voice their opinions about their classes.

Protocols always refer to the last work session and are presented by their authors in the beginning of each new session. If the teacher wishes, they can also be used as an assessment tool and as a follow-up of the theatrical process. Whenever possible, it is suggested that students bring a copy of their protocols for each member of the group so that all the students can follow the presentations. Teachers are free to use protocols to whichever goals they consider necessary, and that includes academic evaluation. Ricardo Japiassu, in *Metodologia do ensino de teatro (Methodology of Theater Education)*, brings some contributions which allow the understanding of protocols as a fundamental material for theater classes:

At every session, a different student or group is responsible for a protocol related to the discussed subjects, the occurred events and the reflections upon the work done that day [...]. From the very first session, it is necessary that the teacher make clear that this instrument is important to the follow-up and to the assessment of the group's development process. [...] Whenever possible, it is necessary that copies of each protocol be made for every group member. [...]. Students should be told that when they are preparing their protocols, they are allowed to paste, to draw, to use photographs, stickers, etc. (JAPIASSU, 2001, p.60-64)¹.

¹ Text in original: “A cada sessão, um aluno diferente ou um grupo de alunos se responsabiliza pela confecção do protocolo referente aos assuntos discutidos, aos episódios ocorridos e às reflexões sobre os trabalhos daquele dia.[...]Desde a primeira sessão, deve-se esclarecer aos alunos a importância desse instrumento para acompanhamento e avaliação do processo que será desenvolvido no grupo.[...] Quando é possível, cuida-se para que sejam feitas cópias de cada protocolo apresentado em número suficiente para todos os integrantes da turma.[...] Explica-se aos estudantes que podem utilizar colagens, desenhos, fotos, imagens, adesivos, etc. na confecção de seus protocolos”.

In undergraduate theater programs, protocols are also utilized as a work methodology and end up receiving different names usually related to the disciplines in which they are used: Field diary, logbook, class portfolio, class protocols, or other names which may be suggested by the teacher or the students.

This research was carried out with the use of protocols which were named *verbal-visual theatrical protocols* throughout the school term. Before discussing them further, however, it becomes necessary to reflect upon verbal-visuality as a fundamental concept of the Dialogical Discourse Analysis.

1.2 What Can One Understand by the DDA's Verbal-Visual Perspective?

The broad variety of themes in Bakhtin and the Circle's work is the result of the "heuristic role their thinkers gave language in their discussions" (CASTRO; PICANÇO, 2008, p.57)². Connected to that, it is their attitude toward the world and language, which "articulates esthetics, ethics, different philosophical presuppositions and does not allow their reflections upon meaning to be systematized solely on one linguistic or even linguistic-literary perspective" (BRAIT, 2007, p.63)³. Thus, a presupposition well-known by anyone who studies the Dialogical Discourse Analysis perspective justifies this research: Bakhtin's interest lies on dialogical relations, seen as constituents of the subjects who live and act in the world, regardless of the sphere of human activity in which they occur.

In *Discourse in the Novel* (BAKHTIN, 1981 [1934-1935]), the notion of language is discussed from the concept of language as a living and concrete means in which the consciousness of the speaker resides. The Russian author reminds his readers that the living social life creates possibilities for a plurality of worlds and perspectives, which are always ideological and social.

As the world of meanings echoes these possibilities from different perspectives, it is given its right place. Thus, the specific case of language is multiplied and unfolded in other webs of possibilities. It is the living language, the language in use, the one

² Text in original: "papel heurístico que seus pensadores deram à linguagem nas suas discussões".

³ Text in original: "articula estética, ética, diferentes pressupostos filosóficos, não permitindo que suas reflexões sobre o sentido sejam sistematizadas unicamente sob uma perspectiva linguística ou mesmo linguístico-literária".

which cannot be apprehended as a unique and closed system, the core interest of the Bakhtinian perspective. Thus, the place of meanings becomes the place of a plurality of voices which are intensified in heteroglossia as constitutive of the very utterance. There is no subject and his/her autonomous text; to the contrary, there is a border between subjects, texts, discourses, which are part of a communication chain.

As texts are composed of discourses, they are repeatable (through language). When one updates a text, one produces another utterance, which implies that thinking of the unrepeatable is the core of the Bakhtinian thought. What really matters for this research is to understand that the protocols to be analyzed are composed of verbal-visual utterances about a theatrical practice done by different students. When talking about this practice, each and every one of them produced other utterances which are always unfinished and different, for the way each subject relates with the practice is unique and singular and, at the same time, it is related with all the other participants of the theatrical event. This is the way Barros (2011) explains what utterance is to Bakhtin:

His definition of utterance is close to the current concept of text. Today a text is understood both as a meaning object, that is, as an organized and structured “fabric,” and as a communication object, or better said, as a culture object whose meaning depends in short on the social and historical context. In this concept of text and in Bakhtin’s idea of utterance, external and internal approaches to language come together. The text-utterance recovers a complete status of a discursive, social and historical object (BARROS, 2011, p.1)⁴.

In this project, the utterance is an utterance about the artistic world and is also materialized in artistic form: It is a verbal-visual utterance, the one which dialogues with Bakhtin’s proposed concept exactly at his “vision of a compound of texts” (BARROS, 2011, p.1). Thus, in this theoretical perspective, dialogue becomes language and discourse living condition, which implies that any research based upon the Dialogical Discourse Analysis premises has to compulsorily look at the utterance in its entirety, as it is proposed by the Circle.

⁴ Text in original: “Sua definição de enunciado aproxima-se da concepção atual de texto. O texto é considerado hoje tanto como objeto de significação, ou seja, como um “tecido” organizado e estruturado, quanto como objeto de comunicação, ou melhor, objeto de uma cultura, cujo sentido depende, em suma, do contexto sócio-histórico. Conciliam-se, nessa concepção de texto ou na idéia de enunciado em Bakhtin, abordagens externas e internas da linguagem. O texto-enunciado recupera estatuto pleno de objeto discursivo, social e histórico”.

In this investigation, the understanding of a verbal-visual utterance is possible if one turns to the studies of Brait, to whom

The word ‘verbal’ is understood in its oral and written dimensions and it also comprehends both the static nature of paintings, photographs, written press and the dynamic nature of movies, audiovisuals, televised news broadcast, etc. In this sense, what is enhanced here is the semiotic-ideological concept of text which goes beyond the exclusively verbal dimension and recognizes whatever is verbal, verbal-visual, graphic and/or scenic as part of the constitution of a concrete utterance. Thus conceived, the text has to be analyzed, interpreted and recognized from the dialogic mechanisms which constitute it, from the clashes and tensions which are inherent in it, from the specificities of the nature of its plan of expression, from the spheres in which it circulates and from the fact that it necessarily displays the subject signature, whether individual or collective, constituted by historical, social and cultural discourses even in extreme cases such as when the author is absent, undefined or simulated (BRAIT, 2012, p. 88, 89)⁵.

In this research, the verbal-visual dimension is the core of the analysis. As a researcher, I direct my look to verbal-visual utterances which result from theater classes, and by using this theoretical framework, the dialogue with the data takes place, therefore, from the moment the undergraduate students are invited to materialize their experiences in class until the protocol analysis *per se*.

According to Brait (2009a, 2011), the term verbal-visuality necessarily implies a concrete utterance in which the verbal and the visual dimensions are inseparable. For the Brazilian author, the verbal and the visual in the verbal-visual dimension are in a place where separation is not allowed, nor is valuing one over the other. Both are necessary to the understanding of the utterance as a whole. “Productions of a verbal-visual nature, circulating in different spheres, are editorial cartoons, advertisements,

⁵ Text in original: “O termo verbal é compreendido tanto em sua dimensão oral quanto escrita e visual abrange a estaticidade da pintura, da fotografia, do jornalismo impresso, e a dinamicidade do cinema, do audiovisual, do jornalismo televisivo, etc. Nesse sentido, o que ganha relevo é a concepção semiótico-ideológica de texto que, ultrapassando a dimensão exclusivamente verbal reconhece verbal, verbo-visual, projeto gráfico e/ou projeto cênico como participantes da constituição de um enunciado concreto. Assim concebido, o texto deve ser analisado, interpretado, reconhecido a partir dos mecanismos dialógicos que o constituem, dos embates e tensões que lhe são inerentes, das particularidades da natureza de seus planos de expressão, das esferas em que circula e do fato que ostenta, necessariamente, a assinatura de um sujeito, individual ou coletivo, constituído por discursos históricos, sociais e culturais, mesmo nos casos extremos de ausência, indefinição ou simulação de autoria”.

magazine covers, newspaper pages [...], poems articulated with drawings, communication on the Internet, fictional texts” (BRAIT, 2009b, p.144)⁶.

Thus, the verbal-visual theatrical protocols emerge not only as another possibility related to verbal-visuality but also as a work methodology in theater classes. The next section will discuss the specificities of the use of verbal-visual theatrical protocols, showing how the research was conducted and how I see the use of verbal-visual theatrical protocols by other teachers/researchers who may be willing to experiment this work methodology in their theater classes.

1.3 Research Methodological Framework

In this research, protocols are not considered as if they had to account for the theatrical/artistic event. They do not need to be class logs. I concur with Isaacsson (2006), who states that the researcher must be aware that “recognizable elements are only fragments of a creative thought” (p. 82)⁷. When discussing research in the field of theatrical practices, the author talks about the scenic creation as a ‘trip’ with many choices which do not leave material traces. “The complete traces are wholly perpetuated in the memory of the participants’ bodies and minds” (p. 82)⁸. The role of verbal-visual theatrical protocols is, therefore, directed more toward the world of senses which echo from a theatrical practice than toward the containment of a theatrical practice in class logs (as if it were possible to be done).

In the beginning of this article, I pointed out that the specific area of this research was the undergraduate program in Scenic Production from Universidade Federal do Paraná in Curitiba-Brazil. This program has been acknowledged by other universities as the first in Scenic Art to direct student formation to Scenic Production in a technological undergraduate program in a federal university. The course chosen as the research field was *Theatrical Games and Improvisation I*, which is offered in the first semester of the program. It has the duration of 60 hours, divided in 15 classes. I am the

⁶ Text in original: “Fazem parte das produções de caráter verbo-visual, em circulação em diferentes esferas, charges, propagandas, capas de revistas, páginas de jornal, [...] poemas articulados a desenhos, comunicação pela Internet, textos ficcionais”.

⁷ Text in original: “os elementos reconhecidos serão somente fragmentos de um pensamento criativo”.

⁸ Text in original: “Os vestígios completos só se perpetuam integralmente na memória dos corpos e da mente de seus participantes”.

course instructor, and the reason why I have chosen this course is because the students who enroll in it are freshmen who enter the Scenic Production undergraduate program with different expectations and end up doing a course which is basically composed of practical initiation to theater.

Ever since I began teaching the aforementioned course in 2009, I have been working with protocols from the following methodological path: In every class, three students are responsible for producing the protocols, which should be photocopied for every student who attends the course and presented in the subsequent class. As freshmen groups are generally composed of forty five undergraduate students, on the first week of classes, a protocol timetable is prepared so that at the end of the school term every single student may be responsible for producing at least one protocol. In most groups, due to the fact that some students quit this stage of their academic life, the final number of protocols is between thirty and forty. At the end of the term, students will have all the protocols so that they can file them and revisit them whenever they want.

In this university theatrical activity, even after my suggesting that the protocols should go beyond the verbal language, it is recurrent that students end up doing logbooks in which they write down notes about the class which look like class descriptions.

In 2011, when I was teaching *Theatrical games and Improvisation I* in the same university and undergraduate course, something new happened: I invited students to take risks, that is, to look for other enunciative experiences when doing their class protocols. I was surprised to see that class protocols started to be created in different genres, such as letters, newspaper reports, photographs, drawings, editorial cartoons, songs, crosswords, videos, and others. This array of possibilities started to draw my attention due to their willingness to be innovative, for they had started to abandon the written protocol samples and to penetrate other dimensions so they could differently express the meanings attributed to theater classes.

From then on, I started to glimpse the possibility of researching other means of theatrical practice meaning production which would go beyond the verbal dimension of language. Similar to the manner in which I had asked students to take risks while doing class protocols in 2011, after explaining what a verbal-visual utterance was all about, I

suggested that class protocols in that term, the first semester of 2012, be created under the verbal-visual perspective.

On the first day of class, students were invited to be part of my research. I explained the theoretical framework related to the verbal-visual dimension and I encouraged them to create their protocols under this theoretical condition even without my knowing at the moment what kind of protocols would come out from that group. I told them that their protocol productions would not be marked, for my sole interest was to verify the ways in which they could attribute meaning to theater classes under the verbal-visual perspective and that the whole materialized content presented by them would not be valued as good or bad, right or wrong. Students were only committed to handing in their verbal-visual theatrical protocol on due day according to timetable; besides, in each class, three students were responsible for protocoling that class and for individually handing in their productions to the teacher and the classmates in the following class. Forty protocols were produced during that term, and all of them became research material. Each protocol was named after the first written expression found in the protocol, such as Protocol *From the body I Feel*, Protocol *I perceive*, Protocol *Prostitute*.

An interesting factor to consider is that even if protocols under the verbal-visual perspective are open to different types of materiality, all the forty protocols turned in ended up representing school practices. For their protocols, most students spontaneously used A4 sheet papers or split them in half in order to do drawings by hand or to do digital drawings, especially when quotes were used as enunciative means.

As to the quotations, I did not require that the students directly quote images and texts in their protocols. Some of them used citations and referenced them; others did not. This choice resulted from the understanding that if the work is done from the dialogical perspective, different voices should be present in the protocols; therefore, if I created some sort of refinement rule for their creation, I would also be ‘refining’ the subjects in terms of what they really meant, whether it was about “personal” issues or a sentence they wanted to quote.

Besides, they were not asked to identify themselves as the authors of the verbal-visual theatrical protocols. As students were aware that they were part of a research, it

was up to them to write their names in the front or in the back page of the protocol or to hand it in with no identification whatsoever.

When discussing the spheres of discourse production and circulation, Bakhtin emphasizes that a specific sphere is not always absolutely defined, for its borders are always unstable. With that in mind, I decided that I should not organize protocols per class as a methodology of data analysis. If I distributed and analyzed them per class, the study would become comparative, and this is not the focus point of the research. Independently of when the protocols were created, whether they were from classes in the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the term, and of the content discussed in each class, discourse production is taken into account in the interrelation between the academic and the artistic spheres. I'm interested in the meaning that echoes from all these verbal-visual theatrical protocols rather than in knowing that such and such protocols may refer to a specific class.

This is related to the methodology I chose for this research. I acknowledge that grouping the protocols by class or by specific themes would also be interesting and relevant; however, by doing that this research would take a different turn. The protocols were literally intermingled and, as most of them had no record of the date of the class to which the students referred, it was possible to analyze them through meaning approximation. For this article, I have chosen four verbal-visual theatrical protocols: *Theater play*, *From the body I feel*, *Explore yourself*, and *Prostitute*.

2 Verbal-Visuality and Meaning Production

It would be utopian of me to imagine that all the meanings which echo from these data could be enclosed in this article or even in the research itself. Looking at meaning production is also a dialogical practice in which the voices of the researcher, the authors of the analyzed protocols, the theory upon which the research is based, the reader who looks into the investigation, and still all the other voices constituted from different possible interlocutions in and from the investigation are at play. The analysis propounded here aims at looking at the relation between verbal-visuality and theatricality in order to investigate how they complement each other, how they can be

discussed based on verbal-visual theatrical protocols and how they enable knowledge in theater and language to be built.



The first protocol I present to the reader is called *Theater Play*⁹, which verbally and visually announces its sphere of production. To enunciate, the author uses a specific genre for publicizing stage play productions. The image, confirmed by the presence of verbal utterances, brings one of the central premises of theatrical knowledge to the plane of expression: the mask. Going back to the origins of the theater, Heliodora places the mask in a central position as a watershed, showing that one day

[...] an individual endowed with a very special talent comes along and proves able to express the desires of his community. At first, this person performs or imitates everything that is unknown and, as time goes by, it is possible to see that he is the seed from which the priest, the philosopher, the physician, the poet...the actor will be born. In order for this individual to perform in a convincing manner, the spirit or the god worshiped in the ritual shows a fundamental element for the birth of the theater, the mask (HELIODORA, 2008, p.10)¹⁰.

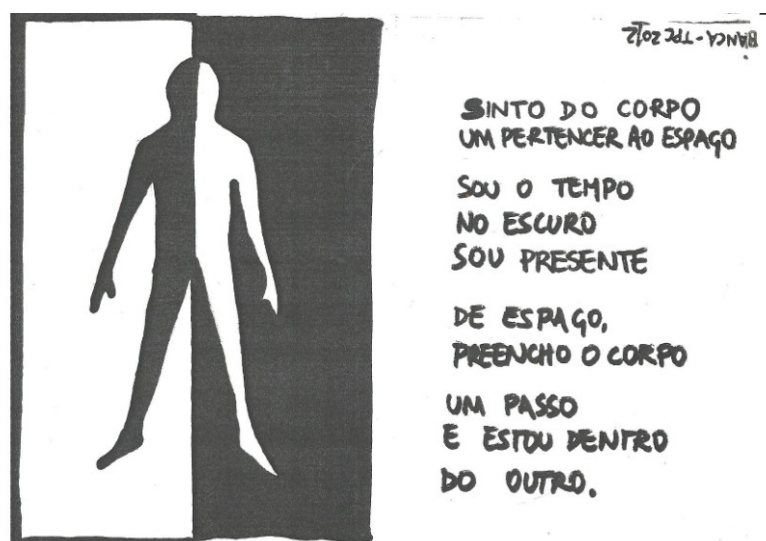
⁹ Text in the first protocol: “Theater play / Masks / ‘Keep your mask on or take it off in front of everybody’ / Direction and production: Andrio Robert Lecheta / Admission ticket: 1 kilo of food / Every Tuesday and Thursday at 7 pm / Guairá Theater”

¹⁰ Text in original: “[...] aparece um indivíduo dotado de um talento muito especial e se mostra capaz de expressar os anseios de toda a sua comunidade. Esse indivíduo, de início, representa ou imita tudo o que é desconhecido, e com o passar do tempo se verá que, na verdade, ele é a semente da qual nascerão o sacerdote, o filósofo, o médico, o poeta e... o ator. Para esse indivíduo poder representar, de forma

It is interesting to notice that despite the fact that the university program focuses on Scenic Production and not on Interpretation/Acting, the student associates a practice class with the stage and not with the backstage. The course activities which base protocol creation are totally practical; there are no tables or desks in the classroom, and students wear comfortable clothes for the exercises. Thus, the similarity of this course with acting courses is set. The reference to the mask in the protocol is linked to the verbal utterance *Keep your mask on or take it off in front of everybody*, which confirms the presence of the mask as fundamental for interpretation/acting.

However, the place from which the person speaks is hybrid as one can see in the way the student speaks of himself. In the item Direction and Production, the author uses his own name, distancing himself from his student position to place himself as the director and the producer of the play. Even if the play to which the protocol refers is not “real,” all the resources used indicate an appropriation of the genre in order to enunciate. When indicating Teatro Guaíra as the place where the play would be performed, he points to the concept of what a successful scenic producer in Curitiba is all about – the one who can take his play to Teatro Guaíra, the largest and the best-known theater in the city.

The verbal-visual theatrical protocol *Theater play* presents, thus, a hybrid theater class, oscillating between performance techniques and the awareness that the course aims to develop professionals in Scenic Production.



convincente, o espírito ou o deus cultuado no ritual, aparece um elemento fundamental para o nascimento do teatro, que é a máscara”.

From the protocol *From the body I feel*¹¹, it is possible to understand that the theater class protocol demands corporeality, availability for practice. Although the verbal and the visual dimensions look separated in the space provided for them, they are inseparable as to the meanings present in the verbal-visual text regarded as a concrete utterance. The severed, divided body presented in the image is meaningfully reinforced by the verbal text. The whole idea of body movement, from a body that comes and goes, that discovers itself, that is not finite, that is complemented in the space and in the Other, allows one to reflect upon the dialogic relations about which Bakhtin spoke.

For Brandist (2012), “utterances must be understood *dialogically*, as a chain of responses” (p.77, emphasis in original)¹². The “responsive reactions” take different forms and incorporate voices from preceding utterances, giving them new tones, which may be of irony, indignation, reverence, etc. The body is somehow presented in every protocol as the central starting voice, enunciated in different manners even if that does not occur explicitly.

The references to the body, to the mask, to the theater as a doorway to glamour are not part of the protocols by chance; to the contrary, their presence is the result of the fact that the subjects verbally and visually enunciate from the heterogeneity of socially established voices which already have a place in the world. The protocols are the materialized representativeness of this matter, discussed by Bakhtin and the Circle in their works.



¹¹ Text in the protocol *From the body I feel*: From the body I feel belonging to the space / I am the time in the dark I am present / I fill the body with space / A step and I am inside the other.

¹² Text in original: “os enunciados devem ser compreendidos *dialogicamente* como uma cadeia de respostas”.

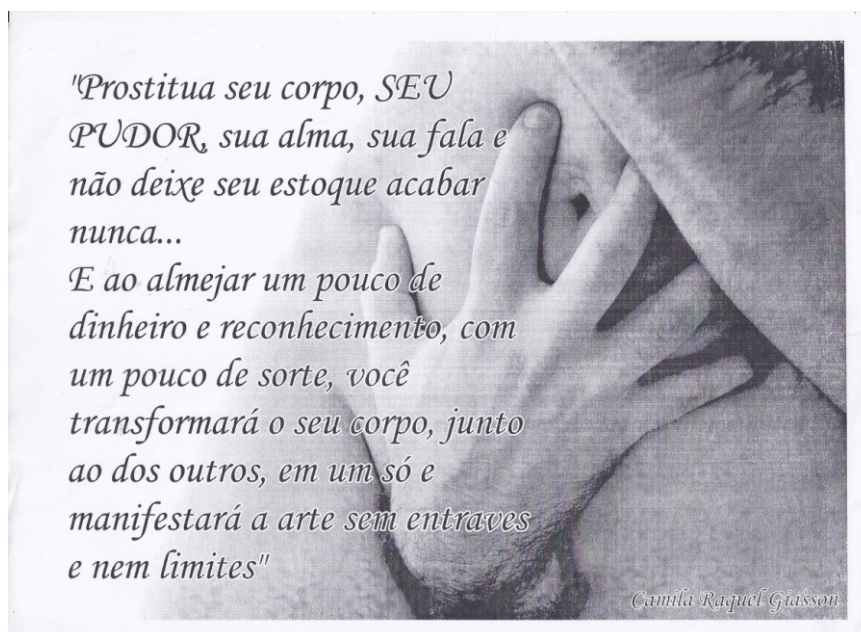
The protocol *Explore yourself* has less verbal text; however, the door is open for the meanings produced in the intimate relation between the verbal and the visual. If one dialogues with the previous protocols, one may reflect upon the meanings of body and of theater as discovery and of self-exploration as possibility for self-knowledge. However, I halt the discussion to present a meaning which has also been confirmed in the protocols so far: the deification of theatrical practices.

Not rare are the discourses which elevate the theater to a healing, therapeutic, spiritual, liberating status... In school practices, theater classes are sometimes still regarded as the nation redeemer. Here are some speeches which circulate in social spheres: Doing theater classes is good if one wants to overcome shyness; doing theater classes is good if one wants to burn body energy; doing theater classes is good if one wants to speak better; theater is good as physical exercise; theater is good to purge repressed feelings... Thus, theater classes are being discursively built as the place where those who need some sort of improvement in their lives and in their relationships go.

In the protocol *Explore yourself*, the diamond that falls as the result of someone's indulgence to exploration in a theater class represents self-discovery: Something the person has and did not know he/she did and, from the theater class on or from the self-exploration experience, came to know it in himself/herself. The person deifies the theater practice as the holder of magic potions which allow such experience. The same happens in the protocol *Theater play* if analyzed from a different point of view. It brings the idea of truth above everything, which theater solicits: A truth which is linked to the availability of whomever wants to perform. There are two options: Keeping the mask on or taking it off in front of everybody. Other possibilities do not exist.

The following protocol, *Prostitute*,¹³ continues deifying theatrical practice as though through theater people were able to morally liberate themselves:

¹³ Text in the protocol *Prostitute*: Prostitute your body, YOUR MODESTY, your soul, your speech, and do not run out of your supplies ever... / And when wishing for some money and recognition, with little luck, you will transform your body with the body of others into one and will manifest art with no obstacles or limitations.



From the verb *Prostitute* in the imperative mode, the subject starts to point to different meanings for the theatrical practice. The body is verbally and visually represented as a work instrument for those who perform. By verbally enunciating that *when wishing for some money and recognition, with little luck, you will transform your body with the body of others*, different voices echo: The ones which consider theatrical practices glamorous, dialoguing with the protocol *Theater play*, and the ones which attribute social responsibilities to theater: *you will transform your body [...] and will manifest art with no obstacles or limitations*. I question whether theater is capable of doing all of that, if performing greatly changes people.

It is worth reminding the reader that the protocol authors are freshmen in the undergraduate course in Scenic Production and that, as they enter the university, they bring dreams and expectations about what the program is all about. Generally, their views on art are still linked to common sense, and they relate stardom to success. Therefore, not only do the classes themselves, but the idea about where the undergraduate students think this course can take them leave marks in their protocols. The feelings that arise in a class where students are playing games or improvising are different from the ones in a class of exclusively theoretical content. Upon entering in contact with this sphere, however, many undergraduate students identify themselves

with this proposal to the extent that their utterances about the classes present evaluative tones on the scenic practice.

The text *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*, written in 1928 by M.M. Bakhtin / P.N. Medvedev (BAKHTIN/MEDVEDEV, 1978), reflects upon various contradictory truths which enter the horizon of epochs or social groups. From this text, Faraco considers that:

These various truths are equivalent to the different modes by which the world enters the appreciative horizon of human groups. As the result of the heterogeneity of their praxis, human groups attribute different values (even contradictorily) to the beings and the events, to the actions and the relations which occur in their praxis. This is how human groups' praxis generates different modes of giving meaning to the world (of refracting it), which are materialized and intertwined in the same semiotic material (FARACO, 2009, p.51)¹⁴.

This plurality of meanings, which was also present in the verbal-visual protocols analyzed in this research, allows this analysis not to be categorized. Even if niches of meaning may be developed from the different echoes and reverberations which stem from the protocols, analyzing them under a dialogic perspective becomes an exercise which grants the understanding that the subjects enunciate evaluatively from their own experiences. Looking at the data and revisiting them randomly may give the analysis plentiful other meanings every time one looks at the protocols.

Final Remarks

In this article, I have discussed how the verbal-visual perspective and university theatrical practice can come close under the Dialogical Discourse Analysis (DDA) prism. Brait's theoretical contributions, stemming from the studies of Bakhtin and the

¹⁴ Text in original: "Essas várias verdades equivalem aos diferentes modos pelos quais o mundo entra no horizonte apreciativo dos grupos humanos. Como resultado da heterogeneidade de sua práxis, os grupos humanos vão atribuindo valorações diferentes (e até contraditórias) aos entes e eventos, às ações e relações nela ocorrentes. É assim que a práxis dos grupos humanos vai gerando diferentes modos de dar sentido ao mundo (de refratá-lo), que vão se materializando e se entrecruzando no mesmo material semiótico".

Circle, have enhanced the verbal-visual dimension in language and dialogue studies as well as in other knowledge areas.

From this investigation, the verbal-visual theatrical protocols are regarded as a means of enunciating on theatrical practice not yet explored by scenic studies. Naming the protocols *verbal-visual theatrical protocols* makes reference to the enunciative material expression originated in theater classes whose scope contains the inseparable verbal-visual dimension. As these two dimensions complement each other, the concrete utterance is given a wide range of meanings which go beyond the other class protocol formats used so far, such as reports, diaries, etc.

Not doubting the relevance of any theatrical practice protocol, I present the work with verbal-visual theatrical protocols as a possibility associated with the Dialogical Discourse Analysis field, which has Bakhtin and the Circle as analysis reference. Although it is possible to look at the protocols under different theoretical frameworks, I acknowledge that Bakhtinian studies do core work with verbal-visuality. Moreover, the theater is intrinsically a verbal-visual art which utilizes the dynamic nature of words and movements in order to be established as an aesthetic discourse. This article is, thus, a motivating means to trigger other studies.

The analysis done in this research has allowed us to look at theatrical practice as a place where voices are intertwined, echoing meanings which generate other possible reflections: Upon scenic production and its difficulties and challenges; upon the body in the theater, its myths and beliefs; upon theatricality today and its utopias and realities... These different meanings, pointed to by the analyzed protocols, permeate Scenic Production students' academic life, constituting them as subjects and circulating in realms other than the protocols; they are inserted in students' relations and in knowledge construction, and result in the professional development of these producers-to-be.

Therefore, this research has contributed to university theater education by combining language studies with theater practice and hopes that this investigation may lead to other studies having, in this dialogic encounter, convergent points to be explored under the verbal-visual theatrical protocol perspective.

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