

THESIS ABSTRACT

TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS: AN INTERCULTURAL DISCURSIVE INVESTIGATION

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A growing attention on the development of students' academic performance has been noticed among recent educational studies. Assuming a relationship between students' optimal academic development and teachers' expectations and teacher-student relationship, this study aimed at clarifying the intricacies of such relationship according to the teachers' point of view. The corpus consists of answers from a questionnaire provided by 10 (ten) "minority" high school teachers in Brazil and the United States: five Brazilian teachers of Portuguese and the same number of American teachers of English. The questionnaire was designed to shed light on, primarily, teachers' expectations towards their students – more specifically, towards at-risk students – and on the differences and similarities of teachers' answers in the two cultural contexts. The analysis was carried out based on Critical Discourse Analysis (FAIRCLOUGH 2005, 1994, 1991) and on educational views on teachers' expectations (EGYED & SHORT, 2006; JUSSIM & HARBER, 2005; MULLER, 2001; HOY, 2000; MULLER, KATZ & DANCE, 1999). Overall, the two groups of interviewees show a willingness to engage in a good relationship with students and also showed the importance of further attention when students present academic-related problems, for instance. The study also determined a difference in focus amongst the two groups: Americans demonstrated greater concern to the students' academic problems while Brazilians focused on the students' personal problems. The results lead to a general and consistent attitude from teachers: concepts and actions are consistent with the hegemonic view of a prospect

successful student, the one who eliminates personal background effects and with minimal academic deficiencies. Teachers' expectations refer to their relationship with the student. Students' engagement and sparse problems occurrence are rewarded. Hence, the reality of the attributed students at risk of failing is characterized by uninterested teachers and low expectancy. These findings were again revisited by answering the guiding question of this study. The results found from question 1 (How do teachers evaluate their efforts towards the students?) was that teachers demonstrated limited effort, closely related to their concepts and importance of shared responsibility, and mutual interest. Some attitudes are expected before teachers decide to engage in the relationship and withal a concern with being seen as caring and nurturing individuals. As far as question 2 (How important is the high school teacher-student relationship for the student to learn the proper skills needed for academic success in college?), we were unable to reach a final conclusion while in question 3 (What do teachers believe is most important for students' academic and personal success/development?), the results point to the students showing interest in self-development as the most mentioned. Question 4 (What is/are the difference(s) between "minority" high school student-teacher relationships in Brazil and in the USA?) was important for driving the study to find some interesting aspects and into concluding that Brazilians seem to take into account the students' personal, private lives whereas Americans were more concerned with providing their students with the academic skills required for personal, academic and professional success.

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THESIS ABSTRACT

SEMIOTIC CHANGE IN MODERN AND POSTMODERN *TIME* ADVERTISEMENTS: AN INVESTIGATION BASED ON SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL SEMIOTICS AND SOCIAL THEORY

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This investigation addresses semiotic change in the context of the modern/postmodern transition from the perspective of Systemic Functional Semiotics (HALLIDAY, 1985, 2004; KRESS & VAN LEEUWEN, 1996, 2006) and Social Theory (BAUDRILLARD, 1983; BAUMAN, 2001, 2007; GIDDENS, 1990; HARVEY, 1996; JAMESON, 2002; ODIH, 2007; WILBER, 2000, 2004). By comparing one page print ads from two *TIME* magazine issues (US edition), one dated January 1929 and the other one January 2009, its three-fold objective is: 1) to identify and describe possible semiotic changes in terms of *composition*, *framing* and *functional meanings*; 2) to interpret these changes according to some of the main themes in the modern/postmodern debate; and 3) to reflect on possible theoretical contributions. At the more descriptive level, results seem to indicate a disposition to fine-grained semiotic changes. Most of the 1929 characteristics are still present in the 2009 data group, with only five slight changes: 1) two *top-bottom compositions* with image in top leading position instead of one; 2) some degree of *connection*; 3) more *conceptual* representations; 4) a stronger presence of the *imperative mood*; and 5) more images organized in *centre-margin compositions*. These slight changes, at the more interpretative level, have been read as the duplication of the modern pattern, the distinct ways time and space are experienced in modernity and postmodernity, and the end of the modernizing process and/or the emergence of a new kind of space. Also, in

their totality, these changes have been read as a process of modern radicalisation. Lastly, at the more reflective level, this work has shown the possibility of three revisions to Halliday's (1985, 2004) categorization of *process* types within the transitivity system from the perspective of Wilber's (2000, 2004) quadrants: 1) that the grammar sets up a clear discontinuity not only between outer and inner experience by also between individual and collective experience; 2) that *verbal processes* are not subsidiary but prototypical of the collective dimension of interior meanings, the world of interconsciousness; and 3) that *behavioural* and *existential processes* are borderline processes, not in relation to three main *process* types, but in relation to the interior/exterior dimensions and the individual/collective dimensions, respectively.

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