

STREET PAPER, ASSISTANCE AND PROTAGONISM: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF CAIS MAGAZINE

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Abstract

This paper integrates a research project that aims to investigate five street papers, in the Portuguese language, linked to the International Network of Street Papers. Street papers are defined as independent publications aimed at offering working opportunities and social programs for people experiencing homelessness in addition to assuring a wider range of social support. The distribution of these publications occurs on the streets, sold by homeless people (Alexandre; Resende, 2010), but beyond the structural changes of journalistic routines and practices, is there a discursive change implied, in terms of discourses activated for the representation of homelessness? To investigate this question, the research project includes a collection of recent texts from five different publications and interviews with the editors of each of them. This paper focuses on only one of them, *Cais* magazine, from Lisbon, and is limited to analyzing, by means of systemic functional linguistics (Halliday, 2004; Gouveia, 2009) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003; Resende, 2009), the interview conducted with the magazine's editor in July 2011. Due to the interest in the extent of homeless people's participation in producing *Cais* magazine, we selected an excerpt in which the 'vendors' are represented. Although it is not explicitly textured in the surface of the text, the analysis of cohesion, transitivity, modality and assumptions was capable of showing that people in homelessness appear to be positioned in a passive standing in terms of action for social change.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, alternative media, street papers, homelessness

1. Introduction

This paper presents the partial results of research associated with the integrated project, “Publications in Portuguese language about the homeless population: critical discourse analysis”, whose aim is to investigate the five local publications, written in Portuguese, specifically geared towards the homeless population. They include: *Ocas* magazine and *O Trecheiro* newspaper, from São Paulo; *Boca de Rua* newspaper, from Porto Alegre; *Aurora da Rua* newspaper, from Salvador; and *Cais* magazine, from Lisbon.¹

The integrated project includes, on the one hand, a collection of recent publications that compose a documentary corpus. On the other hand, it includes interviews with the editors of each of the five periodicals. This paper focuses only on *Cais* magazine and is limited to analyzing, by means of systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and critical discourse analysis (CDA) tools, an excerpt of the interview conducted with the magazine’s editor in July 2011. Due to the interest in the extent of homeless people’s participation in producing *Cais* magazine, we selected an excerpt in which the ‘vendors’ are represented. Thus, I will analyze here only one street paper out of a more comprehensive study. It is the first one we approached in the study, and although we have already carried out research in the other four contexts, by no means is it my intent to generalize the results here, primarily because the Portuguese magazine should not be compared to the Brazilian papers, given the very specificities of each case.

The results of this particular analysis are not supposed to represent all street papers in the Portuguese language, nor even all street papers that use this same basic business model. This is a localized and particular piece of research, and generalization is not on the agenda here. However, I would state that *Cais* magazine is the only Portuguese street paper in the International Network of Street Papers (INSP), while four Brazilian initiatives are in this same network. The Brazilian periodicals, in general, are very different contexts, in comparison with the Portuguese one, as I will briefly comment at the very end of this paper.

In addition to the introduction and final remarks, this paper is organized in four sections. The first section discusses critical discourse analysis according to the theoretical model chosen for the study. The second addresses the street press in general and *Cais* magazine in particular. The

¹ The integrated project is supported by the Foundation for Research Support of the Federal District (*Fundação de Apoio à Pesquisa do Distrito Federal – FAP-DF*), Process # 193.000.039/2012. Under my coordination, the following researchers take part in the project team: María del Pilar Tobar Acosta, Gersiney Pablo Santos and Andreia Alves dos Santos.

third contextualizes the interview carried out in Lisbon.² The last section presents critical discourse analysis of the data, while appropriating analytical categories developed in SFL and CDA.

2. Critical discourse analysis and language in society: an overview of a complex field

First of all, critical discourse analysis (CDA) needs to be defined, albeit briefly. When mentioning CDA, it is necessary to elucidate which CDA version is being referred to. CDA is not a homogenous theoretical body; rather, it is constituted of heterogeneous approaches labeled ‘critical discourse analysis’ (Blommaert, 2005). In Resende (2009), I highlighted that, despite displaying diverse theoretical and methodological premises, the CDA versions have certain common characteristics that assure coherence in the field. There are at least three common traits: *interdisciplinarity*, *positioning*, and the *use of linguistic categories as tools* for social critique.

All of the different versions of CDA recognize that transgressing disciplinary boundaries is a basic assumption for analyzing partially discursive social problems, given the internal relationship between language and society (Pardo Abril, 2007). Therefore, each one of the differing CDA versions seeks to operationalize concepts and categories that were developed in the social sciences (Wodak, 2003). Some CDA approaches constitute influential theoretical and methodological bodies, with adept researchers in Brazil and throughout Latin America. This includes the contributions of Norman Fairclough, Teun van Dijk, Theo van Leeuwen and Ruth Wodak, all of whom establish different interdisciplinary relations in their versions of CDA.³

When referring to CDA, one must also consider the developments brought by Latin American researchers (Resende; Ramalho, 2013). Latin researchers not only contributed to disseminating CDA as a theory and investigational method, but they also created their own approaches, questioning already legitimized approaches and introducing advancements that could not and should not be taken for granted (available examples are Magalhães, 2000; Meurer, 2004; Pardo Abril, 2008; Pardo, 2008; Montecino, 2010; Ramalho, 2010; Resende, 2010; and Ramalho & Resende, 2011). It is therefore important to highlight the connection of the integrated project discussed here with the Latin American Network of Critical Discourse

² This interview in Lisbon was possible thanks to the support of the Centre for Social Studies (*Centro de Estudos Sociais*, CES), University of Coimbra, Portugal, under award “Grants for Young Researchers”.

³ See, for example, Fairclough (2003), van Dijk (2008), van Leeuwen (2008), Wodak (1996).

Analysis of Extreme Poverty (*Red Latinoamericana de Análisis Crítico del Discurso de la extrema pobreza*, REDLAD).⁴

In addition to the interdisciplinary nature of CDA, another intrinsic characteristic of differing theoretical-methodological approaches is positioning. In all of its lines, CDA proposes critical approaches for text analysis while assuming a clear position regarding social problems of a discursive nature and denying the myth of “scientific impartiality”. The aim is therefore to unveil discourses and ideologies that sustain domination structures. According to this principle, a more adequate concept of ideology would be from Thompson (1995), for whom ideologies are symbolic constructions at the service of power relations, understood as domination. What interests CDA is not the abstract notion of power, but *power abuse* in specific contexts (van Dijk, 2008).

Fairclough’s CDA version focuses on the relationship between discourse and social change. A crucial matter, when focusing on social change, is the relationship between structure and action, or between individual and society. It is very useful to discuss this by means of critical realism (CR), with its *transformational model of social activity*, especially when one intends to overcome, on the one hand, a structuralist approach – focused on structure and not accounting for the possibility of creative action – and, on the other hand, a voluntarist approach – focused on the agency and not accounting for the previous character of structures in relation to social action (Bhaskar, 1989).

Under the influence of the theoretical model of society developed in CR, the focus of CDA is not on social structure or on individual action, but on the relationship between structure and action, as a means of simultaneously focusing on the constraints and possibilities that arise from structure, which informs the action, and the potential effects of the reifying or transforming structures, by means of action. According to this model, society provides the conditions for human action, but only exists within human actions, which always use some preexisting form of social order (Bhaskar, 1998). This temporal asymmetry between structure

⁴ Excerpts of research studies conducted by this network members were released as collective publications, such as the books *El discurso sobre la pobreza en América Latina* (Pardo, ed., 2008) and *Discurso, pobreza y exclusión en América Latina* (Montecino, ed., 2010), and the special issue of *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*. The network has also contributed to the formulation of interdisciplinary CDA relations, both theoretically and methodologically. REDLAD is a productive example of how discourse analyst potential widens when working in groups. I believe in collective initiatives – I think the formation of research networks congregating researchers with common interests expands our capacity for acting on the problems we investigate. In the Brazilian case, for example, researchers in this network, in addition to conducting research projects, are working together with the social movement National Movement of Homeless Population (*Movimento Nacional da População de Rua – MNPR*) and with the governmental organization Intersectoral Monitoring Committee of the National Policy to Combat Homelessness (*Comitê Interministerial de Acompanhamento e Monitoramento da Política Nacional de Enfrentamento à Situação de Rua – CIAMRua*).

and action implies that it is not a relationship among equals. This leads to an intermediate organization entity: the position-practice system. Social practices and positions are, according to Bhaskar, mediators between abstract social structures and concrete social action.

Theories regarding practices and positions, conceived as intermediate entities between structure and action, focus on the *structural conditions for action* and consider the transformational relationship between social structure and agency. This CR ontology can be applied to social organization at the semiotic level: *semiotic structures* in terms of social structure abstraction; *texts* in terms of social action concreteness – the materialization of our discursive actions; *orders of discourse* and their constituting elements – genres, discourses and styles – in terms of intermediate organizational entities (Fairclough, 2003; see below). This approach allows us to focus not on the semiotic systems *per se*, nor on the isolated discursive action, but rather on the relationship established between semiotic systems and textual production in specific contexts, associated with the positions occupied in the practices performed.

According to Harvey (1992), all social practices are composed of many articulate *moments* that cannot be reduced to a single one. In CDA recontextualization (Chouliaraki; Fairclough, 1999), the moments constituting social practice are: semiosis, material activity, social relations and social actors, with their underlying creeds, values, desires, and underlying ideologies. In this perspective, the semiotic moment (intersubjective construction of meaning through language) is one of the moments of social practice, along with other moments that should also be privileged in the analysis (Resende, 2010). The semiotic moment, which constitutes and is informed by other social elements, also possesses its internal moments, conceived in three dimensions: discursive action, discursive representation and discursive identification (Fairclough, 2003).

Discursive action concerns the manners in which we act upon the world and on other people through the language materialized in texts. Discursive representation refers to the relatively stable forms of representing experience – the same aspect in the world (such as homelessness) can be represented by different discourses, which can display a competitive relation (such as the assistance and the protagonist discourses). It is in this sense that we are able to identify different political discourses; for instance, the neoliberal discourse opposed to discourses “for another type of globalization” (Santos, 2000). The discursive identification concerns means of identification through texts, which includes identities and otherness. Discursive action, representation and identification are related respectively to genres, discourses and styles. According to Fairclough (2010, p. 232), “Genres are semiotic ways of acting and interacting

(...). Discourses are semiotic ways of construing aspects of the world (physical, social or mental) which can generally be identified with different positions or perspectives of different groups of social actors (...). Styles are identities, or ‘ways of being’, in their semiotic aspect”.

Positioning and the interdisciplinary nature of CDA are of crucial importance in addressing the different versions in this field. Moreover, they imply a third characteristic central to CDA: the use of linguistic theories and categories is not assumed; rather, it emerges from data and from the analysis goals (Resende, 2009). Linguistics, therefore, becomes an instrument for social critique, since the aim of the analysis is criticism sustained by text analysis (Quiroz, 2008). The selection of linguistic categories used in critical discourse studies should therefore be justified by its use in analyzing discursive materializations of social problems. In CDA, the mere description of a linguistic phenomenon is undesirable when lacking critical purpose.

These three basic CDA characteristics are closely interconnected. Because CDA addresses the use of language in order to explore and expose the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of social inequalities (Richardson, 2007), its investigative interest extrapolates merely linguistic phenomena. This wider scope, in which processes of discursive change are analyzed considering social processes, requires articulation with other disciplines; that is, by assuming an interdisciplinary approach. In established interdisciplinary relationships, linguistic categories become useful tools for engaging in social critique.

3. The street press and Cais magazine

It is already commonplace to state that neoliberalism reduced the role of national states, undermining the achievements of the welfare state – both in terms of the contractual rights of workers and the universal rights of citizens. The withdrawal of social services is referred to by Bourdieu (1998) as the “resignation of the state” and, according to Buarque (2001, p. 241), “non-governmental organizations emerged due to the failure of the state regarding the lack of response to problems arising from new ethical values of society”.

In this context, non-governmental organizations emerge, in order to fill the void left by the state in terms of service supply, but social organizations and movements which pressure the state emerge as well, claiming for rights and denouncing the violation of these very rights. These vanguard movements prove to be extremely important in forming the collective social actor who is capable of working toward a common goal (Resende, 2008). Could this be the case of street papers, which “explicitly promote themselves as instruments of progressive social

change” (Howley, 2003, p. 274) and declare their aim to be generating income and *opening a channel of expression* for the homeless population?

Tied to the International Network of Street Papers (INSP), there are today more than 100 of publications, from more than 40 countries and representing all continents. These publications are modeled from two pioneering publications in this genre: *Street News*, from New York, launched in 1989, and *The Big Issue*, which has circulated in London since 1991 and has inspired many existing street papers today. These two initiatives are, however, very different: on the one hand, *Street News* was a “self-managed” paper, i.e., “written, produced and distributed by the homeless, the unemployed and the working poor – voices that are rarely heard” (Howley, 2003, p. 280); and *The Big Issue*, on the other hand, is produced by professional journalists; as Hanks and Swithinbank (1997, p. 152), respectively advisor and editor of *The Big Issue*, state: “Many people assume that *The Big Issue* is written and produced by homeless people. However, our first priority is to ensure that what we sell is a quality product. Therefore, all the editorial staff are (*sic*) trained, professional journalists”.

This is a huge difference, and according to Torck (2001), these frames result from different objectives or different approaches which position these initiatives differently in the “scale canonical-non-canonical press” (Torck, 2001, p. 386). Thus, concerning the street papers in the Portuguese language pertaining to INSP, we ask ourselves: Do these publications and organizations promote *protagonism* for social change or are they vertical interventions? In what position are they situated in the tension between assistance and protagonist discourses? One of the aims of this study is, therefore, to understand up to which point these initiatives constitute possibilities of self-representation for social groups which are generally represented negatively in the media, and which have little space to express their own voices.

The street papers addressed in our project are all members of INSP, which acts “as a global platform for unheard voices and advocates for the needs and the rights of people living in poverty”.⁵ According to the INSP, street papers are defined as “independent newspapers and magazines that provide unique employment opportunities for people experiencing poverty and homelessness” and “offer their vendors ongoing social support”.⁶

In relation to income generation, the distribution of these publications takes place on the streets, sold by homeless people or people in risk situations. Each vendor administers the amount of newspapers or magazines they intend to commercialize, pays a unit value that is not more than half the price of the issue, and keeps all the money from the sale. As for the wider

⁵ <http://www.street-papers.org>

⁶ <http://www.street-papers.org/about-us/>

social support, these initiatives are usually projects of far-reaching non-governmental organizations that support the publication as well as other institutional projects. That is the case of the street papers in scope.

We shall now look at the specific case of *Cais*, which is our object of study here. *Cais* magazine is supported by *Associação Cais*, a social solidarity association created in 1994, whose mission is “to contribute globally to improve living conditions of the homeless, who are socially and economically vulnerable, in situation of destitution, exclusion and risk”.⁷ After 2003, their range of action expanded with the creation of *Centro Cais*, which supports “homeless people and other excluded and impoverished groups”.⁸ Today, there are two of these centers, one in Lisbon and another in Porto. The association states its aims: “including in the agenda themes related to poverty and social exclusion; increasing networking and consolidating partnerships; recognizing the value of beneficiaries (users) of the social system when critical elements are present; developing and implementing social intervention strategies that are adequate to the needs of the target population”.⁹ In addition to the magazine, the association manages other projects, and *Cais* magazine, one of these projects, is defined as “a schooling instrument *for homeless participation*” (my italics). The magazine, the first creation of the association, declares its aim to be “awakening readers and public opinion for the social problems regarding homelessness and other forms of exclusion”.¹⁰

Local initiatives such as these – organized in a global network – announce a different model of media, the so-called *advocacy journalism* (Waisbord, 2009). Beyond the structural changes of journalistic routines and practices, is a discursive change also implied in terms of discourses activated for the representation of the homeless situation and for the identification of homeless people in street papers? As we have seen, discourses are relatively stable means of representation that associate different perspectives about the world. Aside from its representational aspect, by the dialectic between language and society, we understand that different discourses, materialized in concrete texts, produce effects on society; that is, the text meanings can affect our understanding of social processes and of the way we react to these processes (Fairclough, 2003).

According to van Dijk (1991), the access to discursive spaces is an important issue to be addressed in CDA. In the case of street papers, it matters to know *to which point homeless people act in defining the news and the composition of texts and images*, if there is a system of

⁷ <http://www.cais.pt>

⁸ <http://www.cais.pt/page/view/25/sobre-a-cais/centros-cais>

⁹ <http://www.cais.pt/page/view/4/sobre-a-cais/missao>

¹⁰ <http://www.cais.pt/projectos/view/5/revista-cais>

sharing and exchange, in the production stages, which can overcome assistance and favor an effective protagonism, an articulation of particular modes of fight for the guarantee of rights. In this sense, Walty (2007) reflects on the establishment of partnerships between intellectuals (journalists, students, liberal professionals, teachers and professors, etc.) and homeless people in text composition, understood as enunciations composed of distinct voices, which could fuse together creating a third voice and widening public space. Speculating about the nature of this partnership, the authoress asks herself how intellectuals and homeless people relate in the context of street papers: “Are street papers an example of a process of searching for the common word?” (Walty, 2007, pp. 83-84).

The alternative media, therefore, could be characterized as an opportunity for democratized access to discursive technologies and to discursive media genres; for example, making it possible to exchange experiences among parted social groups, favoring mutual recognition, which is important for overcoming rooted prejudices. In the field of representation, discursive hybridisms could emerge from there and could allow for new ways of understanding society and problems associated with the poor distribution of resources and opportunities.

In order to understand these practices and their functioning in relation to other social practices and wider conjunctures, the integrated project needs an element achieved in field. Aware of this, we carried out research in Lisbon, São Paulo, Salvador and Porto Alegre, but here, due to the limits of a paper, I will discuss only a particular part of the Lisbon experience (on Brazilian street papers, see also Resende & Acosta (2011), Acosta (2012), and Santos (2012). Thus, considering that the understanding of this network of practices could not result from the isolated analysis of the published texts, the next section will concentrate on the reflection about the interview conducted in Lisbon.

4. In Lisbon: data generation and collection

The integrated project which this work is a part of proposes a qualitative study in which data analysis is based on CDA. The data generation/collection (Resende, 2009) includes focus interviews and documentary data.¹¹

During the research stage in Portugal, I visited the *Centro Cais* in Lisbon on July 1st, 2011. Before the interviews, the editor showed me the large facilities of *Associação Cais – Círculo de*

¹¹ It is worth noting that the project was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Human Science Institute of the University of Brasília in July 2010.

Apoio à Integração dos Sem-Abrigo.¹² On the top floor lies the administrative services and edition; on the ground floor, there is a convenience room, with a television, couches, and computers; a cafeteria that serves lunch for 1€50; a food bank and a deposit for clothes donation; and the historical archives of the magazine. There is also a spacious external area. A flow of people was using the space, including mostly female professionals who provided services for *Centro Cais* attending the “users” of the Center.¹³

We sat at the cafeteria for the interview. A *focus interview* was recorded with the editor of *Cais* magazine.¹⁴ Focus interviews allow interaction to develop more freely, while still focusing on specific points of interest (Doncaster, 1998). When conducting a focus interview, it is not desirable to pose a list of questions, though it is useful to raise the themes that will be addressed by following topic guidelines (Gaskell, 2005). The topic guideline for the interview was elaborated according to the following thematic framework:

TOPIC GUIDELINE FOR FOCAL INTERVIEWS WITH EDITORS: THEMATIC FRAMEWORK
1. Creation of publication (history/ accomplishments / difficulties / partnerships / team)
2. Organization and interaction of the action group: production team and homeless people
3. Experience with working in the publication (benefits / responsibilities / difficulties/ accomplishments)
4. Production/ edition / publication of texts (participation or lack of participation of homeless people)
5. Effects on public policies (or lack of)

The excerpt of the interview selected for analysis in this paper is guided by thematic framework 4, so the interview is explored considering homeless participation or lack of participation in text production, according to representations by the editor.

With regards to the history of *Cais*, the editor told me that the magazine experienced three different phases since its creation at the end of 1994. In the beginning, *Cais* had less textual content and more images – based on the concept of photojournalism. Since this initial phase, it was a magazine that sought to be interesting for mainstream readers, and not a magazine specifically about homelessness. After 2001, *Cais* became a thematic magazine, geared toward current themes: each edition explored a specific theme, and many people were invited to

¹² The space which *Centro Cais* occupies in Lisbon is a concession of the municipal government.

¹³ “Users” is the term to describe the people attended by the services offered at the Center. According to the editor, in the interview he conceded, “They are people who are institutionalized; many of them living in the streets were picked up by institutions. People go there, where they can only sleep and dine, but during the day, they have to leave. For them not to go back to the streets, some of them go to Cais, where they spend the day, have lunch for one Euro and a half, use the computer, attend English courses, Portuguese courses for foreigners, soccer, and, recently, technology classes, computer classes, and are occupied all day long”.

¹⁴ The director of the publication had been contacted by e-mail in April 2010, when he displayed interest and agreed to collaborate in the research. I contacted the editor in May 2011.

collaborate with texts and photographs. Afterwards, the aim became “to create a magazine following the model of the commercial press; a magazine with many sections. (...) This is the format of a more open magazine, more mainstream, more journalistic” (Interview with the editor).

The thematic sections are fixed: they appear in all issues and are always signed by the same people – specialists who donate their texts to the association, thus becoming *Cais* correspondents. The correspondents are mostly people involved in the academic world; many are university professors. The sections orbit around themes such as the environment, technology, entrepreneurship, justice, society, politics, and sports. Among other permanent sections, there is also a “vendor’s page”, which depicts one of the magazine’s sellers in each edition – this section is the focus of the interview excerpt selected for analysis here.

The association initiatives, as well as the magazine, are supported by covenants with many sponsors, including the state. When I asked if the association or the magazine has or had any influence over the formulation of public policies, the editor answered thus:

Hum... I don't believe so. I don't believe so. What it happens is... the association is renowned for its tutelage of social services of the state, the government, the ministry, there has been growing recognition throughout the years, not only of *Cais* but also of many private social service institutions, which are plentiful in Portugal, around 500. There are many people working. *Cais* has been growing with every administration. *Cais* is distinguished as an institution of merit, and even of public utility, therefore it has that stature. There you go. But that is different from *Cais* Association managing per se... Perhaps it is able to create certain pressure... Who can exert this pressing influence over the government is National Confederation of Social Service Organizations. In other words, there are 500 in the confederation, so it does provide strength. *Cais* is one, plus 499, that can be pressure. There is a confederation, and that confederation has meetings with ministries of labor, social security, and presents solutions, presents ideas; it is a partnership, it can provide power of influence. In that case, yes. (Interview with the editor)

One notes, therefore, that *Associação Cais*, as a private social security institution, does act in the gap left by the withdrawal of the state, offering training services (language courses and use of technologies, for example), organizing the donation of food and clothes, acting as a space for socialization, and offering the possibility of income generation represented by magazine sales. It is not, however, a movement with claims that exert pressure over the state.

Also on July 1st, copies of the last five editions of *Cais* magazine were collected. These texts compose other analytical corpora of the research study. The analyses of texts published in *Cais* will allow for an investigation of the representation of the homeless situation and citizenship

rights, as well as the construction of identification of homeless people, in the volumes of the publication in which the theme is treated – since homelessness is not a theme of every edition of *Cais*. In this respect, the editor told me:

The magazine does not address the so-called painful aspects of the life of the group it benefits, the homeless, poverty. *Cais* doesn't go deep down to show the misery, *Cais* has to show the good side of things. Readers don't want to read about misery, tragedies... And therefore the foundation is to make a magazine that interests people into buying it. (Interview with the editor)

This information contradicts the stated goal of *Cais* - “awakening readers and public opinion for the social problems regarding homelessness and other forms of exclusion”.¹⁵ Bringing this theme into society's debate agenda could be a form of explicitly combating the invisibility of the social issue, a compromise also taken on by the institution. The relevance of this compromise is emphasized in Pardo (2008, p. 26):

We know that ignorance continues to be one of the best tools for exercising abuse and submission. For this reason, we believe that bringing into light what people who live in a situation of extreme poverty feel and think about their own needs (...) is, at the same time, a form of starting to trace the path toward social justice.

Data generated in Lisbon will be under focus in a later stage of the investigation. This paper will explore only a snippet of the transcribed interview with the editor. From the text resulting from the transcription of the interview, I focus on an excerpt which specifically addresses homeless participation in the production of texts for the magazine. My specific interest here is to map the discursive modes of representation of homeless people classified as “vendors” in the interview.

5. Resentation: the participation of vendors in the intwrvievw with the editor

In this section, I will explore how participation (or lack of participation) of homeless people in producing the magazine is represented in the interview conducted in Lisbon, with the editor of

¹⁵ <http://www.cais.pt/projectos/view/5/revista-cais>

Cais.¹⁶ From the transcription of the interview, given the limitations of the academic paper, only one excerpt was selected, which deals specifically with the position that *Cais* vendors occupy in the dynamic of the magazine. The selection addresses the “vendor’s page”, a recurring section in all editions of the magazine, in which a vendor of the magazine is represented. The representation in this section is depicted by a colored photograph, in close-up, under which is read “REVISTA CAIS” (*Cais* Magazine), in capital letters, and in the line below: An instrument of preparation for homeless participation. Beside the image, a quote from the depicted person is represented, disclosing his/her experience as a *Cais* vendor.¹⁷ The text appears with quotation marks and in the first person, making it seem like his/her own text or a transcription of his/her speech. However, in the interview with the editor, when we spoke of this section, he told me:

Editor – Esta é a página do vendedor. Então temos vários vendedores, e para dar um certo protagonismo ao vendedor, para o público que comprar a revista também olhar melhor para o vendedor, não é só na rua, ele está aqui também. Para dar mais, mais... dignificar também o vendedor, a figura do vendedor.

Viviane – E aí eles escrevem um pequeno texto [

Editor –] Não, isso sou eu é que escrevo. Ou seja, isto é... eu pergunto à pessoa ‘Ó, meu amigo, para si, o que sente quando vende a revista *Cais* na rua?’ Ele me fala ‘Ah, eu gosto muito, falo com as pessoas, ganho algum dinheiro, pra mim tá bom’. Eu escrevo isso. Tás a ver?¹⁸

Editor – *This is the vendor’s page. So we have many vendors, and in order to convey a certain protagonism to the vendor, for the reader who buys the magazine to take a better look at the vendor, not only in the streets, he is here too. In order to give more, more... to dignify the vendor, the image of the vendor.*

Viviane – *So they write a small text. [*

Editor –] *No, I’m the one who writes it. In other words, it’s like... I ask the person: “Say, buddy, tell me what you feel when you sell *Cais* magazine on the streets?” He answers “Oh, I really like it, I talk to people, I make some money, it’s good for me”. I write that. Do you see?¹⁹*

¹⁶ As the scope here is the representation of the group by the editor in this particular interview, I will not discuss data like age distribution, ethnic pertain, gender, health/disability status, literacy and spoken language skills among *Cais* vendors.

¹⁷ In this paper, my aim is not to analyze the ‘vendor’s page’ itself. If it was the case, it would be worthy to use insights from Kress & van Leeuwen (2006), known for their work on social semiotic and multimodal analysis (an example is in Sant’Ana & Resende, 2013).

¹⁸ As the interview was made in Portuguese language, I maintain here the original. See the translation below.

¹⁹ In the transcription, interpolations were identified by means of brackets [], and the incomplete ideas in spoken and recorded text are signaled with an ellipsis.

In order to start analyzing this excerpt, I shall try to identify how the element “vendor” (“*vendedor*”) appears represented in the structure of the sentences. For this, I shall resort to the system of Transitivity developed in the field of SFL. It is not my goal here, however, to scrutinize the details of the complex system of Transitivity as proposed by Halliday (2004), and for this reason I will abstain from detailing processes and the associated participants. I will only use the referential as a tool to verify the degree of agentivity attributed to the participant “vendor” in the representation of the editor, without, however, using the nomenclature of the specific jargon of this linguistic theory, except when necessary. In terms of the recontextualization of this referential in CDA, the system of Transitivity relates to the representational meaning, in the way we represent aspects of the world and how, in this task, we mobilize discourses.

The excerpt deals with the section “vendor’s page”, and this is the subject which initiates the quote in the dialogue. The editor states “This is the vendor’s page”, and we were actually looking at that section of an issue of the magazine. Everything that follows from this first sentence of the editor in the excerpt is qualification, description, and circumstantialization of the section. Indeed, there are many prepositional structures in this excerpt, with circumstantial value of finality and purpose: “*in order to* convey a certain protagonism to the vendor”, “*for* the reader (...) to also take a better look at the vendor”, “*In order to* give more, more... to dignify the vendor”. What the editor discursively accomplished in this first excerpt, therefore, is a circumstantiated justification of the section in focus.

If we look at the role bestowed to the “vendor” in the representation of purpose present in the first line of the editor in the excerpt, the following map can be drawn:

Utterance	Place of “salesperson” in the utterance
(i) This is the vendor’s page.	Modifier/ qualifier of “page”
(ii) So we have many vendors, and	Attribute of ‘to have’ (it is <i>Cais</i> who has)
(iii) in order to convey a certain protagonism to the vendor,	Beneficiary of <i>Cais</i> action (it is <i>Cais</i> who conveys)
(iv) for the reader who buys the magazine to take a better look at the vendor,	Phenomenon: object of the appreciation of <i>Cais</i> consumers (it is the reader who looks)
(v) not only in the streets, he is here too.	Carrier in circumstantial relational processes (to be)
(vi) In order to give more, more... to dignify the vendor.	Beneficiary of <i>Cais</i> action (it is <i>Cais</i> who dignifies)

Table 1 – Mapping of the element “vendor” in the representation

In all cases, the element ‘vendor’ has an overshadowed agency; it is represented as a mostly passive entity – in none of these instances is an action in the world represented by this group. *Cais* vendors are represented by the editor mainly as objects of the actions conducted by *Cais* (to convey protagonism and to dignify in (iii) and (vi)). Note that, in the instance “in order to convey *a certain* protagonism to the vendor”, even this protagonism (of which the vendor is a passive object) is textured as a low-affinity modality – that is, the pre-modification of “protagonism” by “a certain” weakens the protagonism in the representation, diluting the enunciator’s compromise with that which he enunciates.²⁰

The group ‘vendor’ is also represented as an object of scrutiny and appreciation by the consumer of the magazine (in (iv)). In this case, by complementing with ‘better’ textured in “better look”, the comment activates the assumption that the group is not well viewed – that is only assumed, because it is not stated clearly, but can be inferred from the textual surface. Another structure of presupposition appears in the lexical selection of “to dignify”, since, by suffixation with ‘-fy’, ‘dignify’ means ‘bestow dignity’. Thus, the identification of homeless people in this excerpt, notably of the group identified as *Cais* ‘vendors’, is negative – people are identified as passive, by the choices of the processes that represent them and their position in clause structures, in addition to being identified with a bad and undignified view.

During the whole text of the interview, there are no representations of the group as being capable of acting to operate changes in the state of things. There is only one instance in which the *Cais* ‘vendor’ takes an active position in the clause structure – this occurs in utterance (v), “he is here too” –, but as a Carrier in a Circumstantial Relational Process, which represents a condition more than an action.

In the sequence, the transcription shows an intervention of mine, when, guided by the quotation marks presented in the section “vendor’s page”, I presume that the texts were written by the vendors: “So they write a small text”. The editor quickly corrects me, stating that he is the one who writes the small quoted texts appearing alongside the photographs of vendors represented in this page.²¹ In his explanation, he hesitates – “In other words, it’s like ...” – and

²⁰ According to Fairclough (2003, p. 166), “the question of modality can be seen as the question of what people commit themselves to when they make *statements*, ask *questions*, make *demands* or *offers*”. Statements and questions refer to exchange of knowledge; demands and offers refer to exchange of activity. In knowledge exchange, the modality is *epistemic* and refers to committal to the ‘truth’; in activity exchange, the modality is *deontic*, referring to committing to obligations/ needs. In the example in focus, we have a low affinity epistemic modality.

²¹ At the end of the interview, when I specifically asked about participation of homeless people in the magazine production, the editor confirmed the lack of effective participation of vendors in the production of this section:

then informs that he asks the person how s/he feels as a vendor of *Cais* magazine, and textures the information in the text which will be published. However well-intentioned the formulation of this question is posed – and I never doubted the excellent intention of the people who dedicate themselves to this initiative, nor is it my goal to judge this –, we must recognize that we are dealing with a power relation that limits what the vendor can say to the editor when asked “tell me what you feel when you sell *Cais* magazines on the streets?”. And this voice, already constrained by the power relation, is retextured by the institutional voice which, in turn, has interest in formulating a positive representation of *Cais* sales, and reframes this voice in an already fixed design: “I really like it, I talk to people, I make some money, it’s good for me”.²²

This can justify the relexicalization present in the last sentence of the first comment of the editor in the excerpt: “to dignify the vendor, *the image of the vendor*”. In this representation, “the vendor” is relexicalized as “the image of the vendor”. It is not the self-representation or even representation of a specific vendor on the page, but the discursive creation of a group with more or less homogenous characteristics. It thus conforms to what can be called “the image of the vendor”. Therefore, with regards to the representation of the group ‘vendors’ in the interview, a condition of passivity or immobility is assumed. Discursively, this is constructed by the absence of ‘doing’ processes and by the denial of participation in the production processes of the magazine.

1. Final remarks

The representation of ‘vendors’ in the excerpts tends to depict a condition of passivity, which is confirmed in the analysis of processes associated with this element in clause structures, by the lack of ‘doing’ processes, which could represent its material action in the world. There is no representation of the group as being capable of acting, of assuming an active position in the transformation of the situation or even of participating in the decision-making regarding actions in this direction.

Although it is not explicitly textured in the surface of the text, the analysis of clause structures and assumptions was capable of showing that homeless people are represented in the

“[in] the vendor’s page, the person does not participate; he only allows himself to be photographed and gives an opinion about selling”.

²² According to Torck (2001, p. 387), “The power of writing, and its elite dimension, the intellectual role of the journalist as a ‘maître à penser’ and as a privileged addressee of political power (...) could also play a role in the absence of homeless people’s voices’ in street papers”.

text as passive; they appear to be positioned in a passive standing in terms of action for social change. This representation of the homeless group classified as ‘vendors’ gains relevance if we agree with Spivak (2010, p. 55) in that “the possibility of collectivity itself is [or can be] persistently foreclosed through the manipulation of (...) agency”. According to the analyzed data, the sale of *Cais* magazine undertakes instrumental value, that of income generator, but does not associate symbolic value to this action, in representation. The absence of this group’s participation in the production processes of the magazine keeps its voices silent – they do not give an opinion in defining agendas nor do they self-represent in published texts.

In terms of discourses mobilized by *Associação Cais* guiding its practice, we can say that the assistance discourse is strong, and that the protagonist discourse, though enunciated in the definition of the magazine as “an instrument of preparation for homeless *participation*” (Cais, 2011, my italics), does not resist the assistance tendency.²³ For Resende (2008, p. 287), this is associated with a wider discursive change, of which the situation in this Association can be a consequence:

The celebration of civil society participation in the public sphere used to guarantee interest in mobilization projects, [but] currently, society’s participation seems to incline towards suppressing the absence of services abandoned by the State, in programs that society is invited to participate in terms of volunteer work. The mobilization discourse seems to have weakened in struggle with the assistance discourse – while the social mobilization discourse preaches society’s protagonism in resolving social problems (such as poverty, for example), the assistance discourse recognizes social problems but privileges solutions that do not emanate from the populations that suffer from the identified problems, but from assistance/charity of other sectors of society.

If we consider that people involved in practices of the Association and the magazine are people engaged in the cause against extreme poverty, we can ask ourselves why they assimilate discourses whose effect is a reduction of their ‘conditions of possibility’. In this sense, the role of the discursive element is emphasized, since the massive circulation of powerful discourses – such as the assistance discourse or the discourse of structure immobility or of organization incapability for protagonism – results in disarticulation of forces engaged in alternatives and the weakening of public debate.

I do not intend to make a deconstructive criticism of the effort engaged in this initiative. We know that leaving the streets is a difficult process, and the type of support offered by *Associação Cais* may be crucial for the individual who struggles with this process. *Cais*

²³ <http://www.cais.pt/projectos/view/5/revista-cais>

magazine, as an instrument of income generation, seems to be successful, and this effort should not be downplayed. However, an initiative at the scale of *Associação Cais*, with the support of the media and quality of the magazine, could represent an effective symbolic space for self-representation and self-organization. And this could mean much more, favoring the expression of voices many times silenced by the media and the formation of a collective social actor capable of mobilizing for social change. According to Critical Realism terms, a review of this nature in the production practices of the magazine would not only encourage the emergence of new discourses, hybrids in its origin, as well as new ‘conditions of possibility’, in which protagonism could be a fact.

It must be recognized that there is an effort towards incorporating a protagonist role, if not specifically for vendors, at least for “users” of *Associação Cais*.²⁴ This effort can be seen in the organizational dynamics of the section *Repórteres de Rua* (Street Reporters). The pages published in this section are effectively a collaborative production, a result of workshops where participants are encouraged to collaborate with suggestions for agenda setting and textual products of collective authorship. I attended one of these workshops, also during my July 2011 visit, and I consider this project of great relevance for the construction of a new type of relationship dynamics in *Cais* magazine. At the time, I had the opportunity to record an inspiring interview with the project coordinator, and this material, to be analyzed further, will be the subject of a future paper.

With regard to the integrated project, from which this article is drawn, though some of the Brazilian data are still being analyzed, we already know that in the Brazilian production, at least in street papers *O Trecheiro*, *Aurora da Rua* and *Boca de Rua*, there is indeed more effective homeless people participation – in the production of texts. The comparison between the Portuguese and the Brazilian contexts is, however, complex: in Brazil, a very active social movement on the issue of homelessness is growing stronger every day, the National Movement of Homeless Population (*Movimento Nacional da População de Rua* – MNPR), and our studies show some kinds of relationship between Brazilian street papers and this social movement, especially in the cases of *O Trecheiro* and *Aurora da Rua*. I believe that this social movement, in the Brazilian context, is a catalyst for protagonism in street papers gestated there, but for now this is nothing more than an open question, yet to be investigated.

²⁴ “Users” is the term to describe the people attended by the services offered at the Center.

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