Original Articles

Contexts, mediations and production of meanings: a conceptual and methodological approach for communication and health

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Abstract

This article discusses ideas on context, mediation and production of meanings, in light of the methodology practiced by the Communication and Health Research Lab – Laces. From its theoretical grounds and its researches, granting special attention to the methods used, this paper contributes, clarifies and exemplifies the concepts of place of speech, hybridism, center and periphery of discourse, discursive competition, discursive community and place of dialogue. Assuming the process that produces realities is interstitial, since it takes place in the articulation (tense or synergetic) of two or more realities and that this articulation is a product and produces appropriation processes, this paper advocates that methods present nowadays in the communication field cannot grasp the multiple dimensions of the research object, formed basically by flows and relations. In contrast, it mentions researches that have innovated in methodology, testing a combination of procedures or making use of references and procedures that aren't typically used as a research method.

Keywords

Communication and health; research methodology; context; mediations; place of dialogue

Introduction

A topic which is repeatedly featured nowadays not only in Information and Communication Science, but also in Social Sciences, generally speaking, is interstitial space, the borderline that, quite the opposite of what is usually thought, is not where everything comes to an end, but where a new place is started, as a composition, which privileges the contact surfaces and the new realities emerging from it.

In the realm of ideas, this place has been identified and outlined, usually being called transdisciplinarity, which means the nature of transverse knowledge built from the convergence and assemblage of different learning situations. Under this focus, other correlated terms acquire new meanings, migrating and capturing concepts. Saying that they "acquire meaning", however, already expresses that these terms come from a different field of knowledge and are "captured" by

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Information and Communication Sciences. They are "made their own", main indicator that a new reality is shaped.

Migration is a concept from geography, denoting, as known, the movement of populations that carry culture and history and build new cultures and histories interfacing with societies that shelter them. The meaning of migration of concepts, therefore, carries along the origin of the word migration, with its predestination to the new, the other.

In cultural studies, migration is related to hybridism, which, among other approaches, can be understood as sociocultural processes that produce a combination of structures or preexistent practices, generating new structures, objects and practices (CANCLINI, 2000); although it can also refer to strategic processes of relocalization and reinscription in social and discursive spaces (ALBERT, 1995; BHABHA, 1998; ARAÚJO, 2002). By any means, it always carries the idea of a reality on interface, produced in border spaces and allowed by migration and appropriation movements.

It is not easy, in the academic and scientific world, to cross these demarcation lines and give up our practices based on thinking in segments ,departments, sectors. Huge steps have been taken in this direction and, even though plenty of investments are still required on this issue, publications and scientific events have focused on this object. However, when we refer to the realm of social practices and relations, which are the empiric field of our research, we come across a far more complex problem.

The segmentation of knowledge leads us to a segmentation of social practice: We partition the population and in each specific "niche" we partition the practices. This "quartering" is complemented contradictorily by its opposite movement, homogenization of these segments. Thus, we have "youths", "natives", "women", "health workers", age groups, sociodemographic profiles..., categories that, even if facilitating data collection and treatment in research, produce the tragic effect of losing track of the multiple possibilities that each one encloses.

Reality shows us that social practice is made of heterogeneity; the keywords are plurality and diversity. Going beyond that, the realities experienced by social groups are not movements with predefined, easily observable and apprehensible characteristics. Quite the opposite, they are fluid, circumstantial and relational and are always moving and escaping fixed and definite frameworks. The process that produces realities is interstitial because it takes place in the articulation (tense or synergetic) of two or more realities. This articulation, dialectically, is a product and produces appropriation processes: people and social groups are continuously turning into their own what is offered to them concretely or discursively by other groups and institutions.

We know very little about these social processes and what they produce. The celebrated research methods derived from political science, anthropology, sociology, linguistics or mathematics, which are the traditional research bases in communication, allow accessing a few aspects or dimensions of social realities, but they were founded on theoretical grounds that could not deal with this complexity. Therefore, they have been insufficient to cover analytical concepts that cannot be refused nowadays, such as intertext, polyphony, articulation, symbolic market, production and negotiation of meanings, especially when applied to a heterogeneous and multifaceted society like ours. They have been insufficient, above all, in knowledge production processes that intend to amplify voices that are usually silenced or led to produce clandestine discourses, in favor of a more advantageous inscription in the social scene. These procedures do not manage fluid objects in constant flow such as communicative relations. Our objects require methods that promote understanding of these movements of social production of meanings in various sectors and segments in society and of their modes of being and acting in the world.

This statement translates one of the questions that have been worked by Laces - Communication and Health Research Lab. The configuration of Laces and how it deals with these and other topics will be the object of this study.

A place of speech - Laces

Each person and group's place of speech, which is given historically and institutionally, circumscribes the realm of their attentions, proposals and modes of action in the world. The place where our speech comes from is Laces, which has its place defined by the inclusion in the Icict - Institute of Communication and Scientific and Technological Information on Health, a unit of the Oswaldo Cruz Foundation whose mission is to develop research, education and services in the realm of Information and Communication on Health, under specificities of this knowledge field, although chiefly in the construction and consolidation of interface elements.

In education, Icict offers Master's and Doctor's programs in Information and Communication on Health; specialization courses in Communication and Health and in Scientific and Technological Information; a course on Spatial Analysis Update and Health Geoprocessing, besides other short-term courses. Research is developed in three labs: Health Information, Communication in Health and Science, and Health Technology and Innovation. Amid the services offered, besides others, it coordinates a network of seven libraries and has a center to produce and publicize audiovisual material, as well as an experimentation center for interactive technologies.

At Laces, we research and teach Communication and Health. Our course of action reflects, to a certain extent, the constitution of this field. Even though the bonds between the two areas of knowledge have started over a century ago, we can state that, considering health a place of observation and speech, only in the late 1980's a field started being formed in the bourdean sense (BOURDIEU, 1989,1997), as a multidimensional space, formed by theories, methodologies, policies, practices, institutions, agreements and struggles. In the end of

that decade, in a national movement to build a new health system (Integrated Health System – SUS), the articulation between Communication and Health went through a process of problematization and renovation, propelled by criticism from a group of professionals in health institutions. This movement produces, among other scientific, academic and political scenarios, the opening, by science promotion agencies, of financing opportunities aimed at the topic.

Laces origin is placed in this context, initially as a Research Center at the Science and Technology Information Center, still in 2003. When the Center, as a token of recognition for its effective action on the field of Education and Research, was promoted to an Institute – Icict, the Research Center was settled as a Lab under the administration of the Research and Education office. It nowadays comprises eight researchers, four of them PhD's, two in a doctoral program and two having finished master's studies.

Laces is the leader - at the National Counsel of Technological and Scientific Development (CNPq) - of a research group in Communication and Health with the following research categories: "Communication in public health policies" and "Health and Media". The first receives studies on policies, practices, communication strategies in the field of health, considering the SUS constitutional principles: equity, universality and integrality, as well as decentralization and social participation policies. The second gathers researchers who, assuming right to communication as inherent to right to health, study and develop analysis methods for devices through which the media participates in social production of health meanings and the use of communication technologies influencing the broadening or restriction of this right.

Multidimensionality of communication and heterogeneity of social processes impose challenges we seek to face: Discovering, appropriating and even coining concepts that push us closer to this multifaceted reality; and 2) experimenting and developing methods that allow a grasp on our objectives (multidimensional social processes, flows and relations). This has been carried out by researches, who bring different stories from their professional, academic and scientific life and who produce different choices as to topics, objects, authors and methods. Therefore, if what is presented in the next topics certainly corresponds to a more traditional theoretic-methodological bases, and therefore consolidated at Laces, it only translates a certain number of interfaces and contexts.

A theoretic-conceptual approach to reality

Of Laces' theoretic framework, which represents a permanent opening to other possibilities, we highlight a few concepts among those that structure our social analysis and methodology practice, particularly context, social production of meanings, mediations, discursive competition, discursive community and place of dialogue, which refer to dimensions of our communication concept. We begin this topic with this conception.

Communication is perceived by us as a processes based on dialogue and negotiation of meanings. It presupposes a continuous flow of information and knowledge among people and discursive communities (MAINGUENEAU, 1993; ARAÚJO, 2000), abolishing the polarity production-reception so characteristic of informational models. These flows are multidirectional and cover material and virtual networks, determined by contexts of different natures. For this reason, communication operates as a market, in which discursive communities negotiate symbolic goods – and their mode of noticing and classifying the world and society, searching a symbolic power (BOURDIEU, 1989), a power to constitute reality.[1]

This focus on communication as a symbolic market is based on the articulation of Verón's productive model (1980) with the theory of symbolic power by Bourdieu (1989), subsidized by a perspective of language as the field where social clashes take place (BAKHTIN, 1988) and by microphysics of power (FOUCAULT, 1982).

The same empiric reality can be perceived in several ways and, thus, it won't be the same reality. The communication concept shapes our gaze over social practice. Where most well known theories and models only see the challenge to communicate well with other parties, we perceive a discursive space, a competition nature, where discursive communities dispute meanings of topics of interest; in this market discourses circle and are appropriated while searching alliances or confrontation towards the power to be seen and make beliefs (BOURDIEU, 1989). Whereas theories perceive language as a code repertoire, therefore transferable and decodable, our perspective accepts the bakhtinian notion of language as a place of agreements and conflicts, therefore structuring **power relations**. The search for efficient communicative formulas, characteristic of models of transference, gives in to a process of getting to know the discursive functioning of relations. There is no longer the assumption that one can transfer meanings and it is admitted that meaning is unstable and negotiable (ARAÚJO, 2002).

From an operational perspective, which favors methodology formulations, we can say communication is the process of production, circulation and appropriation of symbolic property. We thus avoid considering texts as products treated in an autonomous fashion, (characteristic of current models focused on production), and value circulation and appropriation processes, strategic instances that define social meanings.

In its effort to advance thinking communication and getting closer to these instances, Laces has resorted to the Semiology of Social Discourses (PINTO, 1994). This approach offers us three principles that have been very useful to understand the "borderline" processes, besides allowing perception of discourses not only as space and an agent of status quo reproduction, but as an agent of political struggle and social transformation.

The *principle of heterogeneous utterance* (idem) states that every text is a combination of voices (polyphony)

which mutually express, articulate, oppose, legitimate or disqualify and this interactive network among statements, among texts and among texts and contexts can be called dialogism (BAKHTIN, 1988). Dialogism is an essence of the infinite semiosis principle (PINTO, 1994), which describes the incessant movement of meanings, through a remissive network that is triggered in each utterance.

If a text is polyphonic, discourse – a set of texts articulated to a practice, a discursive practice – is also presented likewise. We learn from Bakhtin, however, that voices correspond to social "accents", which in their turn correspond to different interests and positions in social topography; these voices conflict and clash with the language in a struggle for discursive domination. Therefore, discourses are the first space in which there are social clashes and where power relations are established.

Finally, the principle of the political economy of signifier (idem) - dealing with the productive process of social meanings - is the basis of the perception of the existence of a symbolic market.

This market, however, does not take place among equals. The power of producing and circling discourses is unequally distributed. We consider the existence of a discursive Center and Periphery, maximal and minimal positions of power in communication. Social agents are located in some point of this power scale, which is always situational, determined by specific communication situations and develop strategies to come closer to the Center (or, if already in the Center, maintain its position). We call the material and symbolic instances that promote these flows "mediation factors" and they are arranged in an analytical matrix (ARAÚJO, 2002; 2003).

The understanding of this market and the forces at play favored by the "discursive communities" concept, which appoint people who produce and make discourses circle, and gather together under its name, recognize themselves in them and are by them recognized (MAINGUENEAU, 1993; ARAÚJO, 2000). Recognition, which is inherent to a relevant notion of legitimacy (BOURDIEU, 1989), is crucial for the understanding of the role these communities play in the symbolic market. From a methodology point of view, among other advantages, the discursive community concept helps noticing the agent's discourses situated institutionally, the discourses in the same institution and the ones that are beyond institutional structures, not allowing mediating instances to be considered simple crossing points for discourses, destitute of the ability to produce meanings.

One of the theoretical premises of research at Laces is the contextualization as a condition to produce social meanings (PINTO, 1999). Studies on language and power, reception theories, cultural studies and discursive studies, in general, have recognized the need to observe subjects and social relations in a situated fashion, that is, as built in a space and time that restrain their way of being. We accept this premise – discourse is situated and the theoretic principle inherent to it: The productive system of discourses constitutes the effects it produces. We call the productive system the **context**, or, in other terms, the combination of variables that allow the existence of an utterance, a text, a discourse, keeping a dialectic relation of mutual constitutivity with them.

We notice reality as a product in several contexts, whose articulation promotes an effect of unity. In constant movement and interdependent, these contexts are field for symbolic struggle and, as such, spaces where agents develop strategies to maintain and transform the dominant order, be it economic, political or discursive. In symbolic realms, interdependence is a logic consequence of interdiscursivity. The lines that separate discourses and contexts from other ones are flexible and permeable. They are moving boundaries, skidding, and can be tense lines, but are always negotiation spaces. We highlight four kinds of contexts that are relevant for the comprehension of processes that produce meanings (ARAÚJO, 2000).

The textual context (or co-text) speaks of the contiguous relation among texts on the same spatial or temporal surface. The position of utterances related to those close constitutes a condition to produce possible meanings. The symbolic power potential a text may have depends on the co-text. The keyword here is textuality.

Intertextual context is also constituted by relations among texts, but don't depend on physical proximity: its effect occurs with the semiosis network that is triggered in each utterance, which nourishes discursive memory. Each person has a specific textual network, formed by the collection gathered throughout life, which allows the same text to have multiple meanings. The keyword here is **historicity**.

The existential context refers to the position of interlocutors as beings in the world, situated in a specific time and space: the story of their life, the groups they belong to, gender, class, age, previous experience with the reference of each communicative act and their history in institutions. Ultimately, it is the existential context that will define the intertextual network and command articulation of the other contexts. The keyword here is social practice.

Situational context refers to a social place in which and from which interlocutors develop their communicative relations and participate in the struggle of meanings. People fill positions in social topography that, in contact with their interlocutors, also positioned, determine the legitimacy of their speeches and the initial degree of power from which it develops uttering initiatives. A person may take different positions, depending on the situational context. Each one exercises a different degree of power on its interlocutor, changing the nature of the text that will be produced and the discursive rules that preside the interlocution act. These positions are called "place of dialogue" (ARAÚJO, 2002; 2003). The keyword here is, **place of dialogue**.

This concept has resulted from a reflection on people's positions, in theoretic models of communication, as to the distribution of the power to speak. Thus, it is strongly associated to the theory of symbolic power

that integrates our communication focus. Analytically, it is the product of the articulation of three other concepts: Place of speech (BENVENISTE, 1989), place of reading (LANDOWSKI, 1992) and the third space of enunciation (BHABHA, 1998), inserted, however in the theoretical frame of discursive competition. Methodologically, it refers to interlocutors, processes and contexts and its application covers the production-circulation-appropriation circuit.

Finally, the notion of "context" allows relativization of an ideological effect that closes meanings, among other consequences, bringing out voices and stories that may be incongruous and which are not typically noticed or considered. Thus, context is a vital concept for us and a great part of our effort at Laces has been to translate it methodologically. However, both in the theoretical and in the methodological realm, it is impossible to speak of context without mentioning mediation, they are inseparable in communicative practice, and therefore in the process of social production of meanings.

Mediation is a concept with multiple appropriations and has been well developed in the communication realm, chiefly by the Latin American Cultural Studies. One of its greatest exponents – Jesús Martin-Barbero – has a main assumption, that communication – being a matter of mediations more than a matter of means, that is, a matter of culture, is less about knowledge and more about recognition (MARTIN-BARBERO, 1993). Barbero's work legitimates a field of studies that articulates communication and sociohistorical arrangements.

Guillermo Orozco, another exponent of the Latin-American theory of mediations developed methodologically Barbero's concept and proposed a multimediation model, in which there are individual, situation, institutional and massmediatic ones (OROZCO-GÓMEZ, 1997).

At Laces, joining these and other contributions and starting from the simple and general idea that mediation is a property exercised by the element that allows a conversion of a reality into another (ARAÚJO, 2002), we try to discover new possibilities to potentialize its applications in studies about the production processes of health meanings. In this purpose, we developed a matrix of mediation factors that can promote or hinder the traffic among positions of discursive power. Our matrix comprises the following factors: Motivations and interests; relations (personal, group and community, institutional and organizational); competence; discursivity (discourses, nomination systems, paradigms, theories and models); communication devices (enunciation, production and discursive circulation, technologic mediation); and laws, norms and conventional practices.

Relational processes are usually seen at institutions as ideally harmonic. However, the scenarios in which they happen are spaces of asymmetric relations and clash. Notions of Center and Periphery, of discursive competition, of hybridism as a struggle strategy for better places in the dialogue, of mediation and context, facilitate our understanding of how Peripheries deny or resist homogenization and other strategies of status quo maintenance, be the Center represented by an in-

stitution, a government office, a management system, methods, theories or models of analysis and action. With this conceptual collection, we have the possibility to consider contextual, historical, political, geographical, enunciative specificities, besides analyzing better the peripheral strategies of relocation and reinscription in social and discursive scenario.

A methodological approach of reality

Laces has a permanent interest in understanding and formulating an analysis of policies, processes and communication practices and their relation with the conformation of social relations. The most constant object has been, by theoretical premises, discursive practices in institutions and population sectors, located in specific topics. The recurring questions, even if constantly being updates are: How are the dominant meanings in health shaped? How do people and institutions balance their strength and compete for symbolic power in social practice and specifically in health? How does the population reestablish meanings and take possession of information on health? How do means of communication participate in the creation of social meanings on health? How are the meaning networks formed?

In our researches, we believe that people, filling different interlocution places do not show up for symbolic consumption in a homogenous and stable fashion, but movements and modes of appropriation (therefore, production of meanings) are constituted through multiple interactive processes. The appropriations will determine different ways of acting on reality and finding solutions for health problems. We also believe that communication is a permanent negotiation process and that there is no cause and mechanic relation between receiving and understanding a message and changing behavior.

We have devoted special attention to experimentation and methodological development, motivated by the gaps left by methods typically used to approach the reality studied. This adds another question, which would define our research: Which methods allow us to grasp the greater number of dimensions in health communicative practice While we resort to classic methods in Social Sciences, such as interviews, we attempt to introduce new procedures and experiment combinations that allow us to broaden the scope of object dimensions in research and correspond to concepts as context, mediations, discursive competition, discursive communities, enunciation devices, circulation and appropriation, which cannot be grasped adequately my common methods. We selected three researches that can illustrate what was displayed.

Health promotion and HIV/Aids prevention in the City of Rio de Janeiro: A methodology to assess public policies and communication strategies

As our interest is to experiment the combination of procedures that allows us to advance beyond typical recall verifications (mode of communication assessment

which aims at finding out what people remember and understood from the messages) and assess the specific modes of adding sense in epidemiologic prevention, we have chosen Aids among teenagers in poor areas of Rio de Janeiro as our topic. The methodological proposition was associating a mobilization process, so as to obtain communication products created by the youths, to a discursive analysis method, which would allow, by means of these products, examining discourses that compose their modes of facing Aids.

For mobilization, we chose Toro's method (1996), which worked with organic forces of the studied area and helped give visibility to several discourses so that they could compete in a less asymmetric way. For Toro, communication is defined as the capacity society has to circle its own discourses and discourses from other societies. Thus, admitting the plurality of social discourses favors the emergence of non-hegemonic meanings, improving conditions so that social players may become political players.

For the analysis, we chose the Social Analysis of Discourses, a discourse approach that relates text and context, that is, analyzes the texts compared to their production, circulation and appropriation conditions (PINTO, 1999).[2] ASD joins relevance granted by enunciation and historicity devices - characteristic of the French branch of discourse analysis - and a pragmatic emphasis on discursive relations, characteristic of Anglo-American approaches.[3]

We also mapped the communication sources and flows on the Aids topic (ARAÚJO, 2006), in the realm of youth segments studied.

Methodologically, the combination of theories and procedures has shown to be productive. It allowed, among other things, to reveal heterogeneous contexts, socially disqualified perspectives and deflecting strategies (of discursive camouflage and clandestinization of one's own discourses, among others) of those historically destitute of symbolic capital and in the periphery of discursive powers. This reality is usually hidden by the ideological effect of homogenizing subjects and discourses (PÊCHEUX, 1990), because of the habit of treating the population based on statistical averages and profiles and on a communication model that only considers the decodification degrees of messages.

This research was carried out between February 2002 and July 2003, with financial support from CN-DST/Aids/MS e and Unesco.

Assessment of communication in dengue prevention research

This research sprang from the interest in processes of producing meanings in epidemiologic prevention and its premise is that meanings result from a combination of several discourses that arise from different sources. There was also the interest to participate more actively in the increasingly tougher debate on relations between means of communication and health institutions.

Let's consider the specific case of dengue, an epidemic disease and start with three questions: what does media say and how does it talk about dengue? What and how health institutions talk about dengue in the materials distributed to the population? How does the population take in these lines and how do they reverberate in preventive practices?

Methodology is based on experimentation associated to procedures generally adopted isolated, applied in three distinct and parallel movements: eeping track and analyzing the enunciation devices of two hard copy newspapers and two TV news programs selected among the ones the population watches and reads the most; analyzing communication materials (flows and content) that health institutions circle in the period studied and obtaining what the population says about dengue.

Analysis was comparative, opposing great media and institution discourses as well as these discourses and the population's speech. Social Analysis of Discourse (PINTO, 1999) was the analytical option associated to two cartography modalities: One of flow of institutional materials from the Ministry of Health to the population and one of sources and flows of communication on the prevention of dengue, starting from the identification of the population itself.

Methodology has proved to be adequate for the objectives allowing, among other results, to evidence similarities between the media enunciation devices and the institutional ones and their discrepancy compared to the population's devices.

The research (2003-2007) was supported by Faperj, by means of the Development and Technological Innovation in Public Health Program (PDTSP) at Fiocruz.

Speak up, Counselor! Analysis of strategies and networks of interest at the XII National Health Conference

In this research, we tried the joint use of two methods of discourse analysis, developed in different universities. One is Collective Subject Discourse – DSC, proposed by Fernando Lefèvre (Public Health School/USP), which attempts to identify "central ideas" present in several discourses and map the constitution of symbolic collectivities that characterize specific segments of social and political players (LEFÈVRE & LEFÈVRE, 2006). And Social Analysis of Discourse – ASD, developed by Milton Pinto and his students (Communication School/UFRJ), already mentioned before in this paper, which works with the notion of enunciation devices and relates text, intertext and contexts of production, circulation and appropriation.

As an object, we had communication strategies used by counselors at the XII National Health Conference[4]. The objectives, besides methodological experimentation, are mapping the network of interests represented at the Conference and identifying communication strategies used by representatives.

The combination of methods, besides enabling a realistic analysis of possibilities and limits of this meth-

odological articulation, produced results that wouldn't be possible in any other referential. Among them, we highlight the presence of multiple speech places competing on the grounds of enunciation and privileging certain groups and harming the collectivity represented. Another interesting result was revealing equalization devices of the dialogue place as main strategy to build the counselor's legitimacy. It has also enabled to better understand the constitution of Center and Periphery and confirm circulation as a place for mediation, transforming meanings, adding and dissolving values in discourses, in this case by means of enunciation devices to recognize/legitimate or deny/disqualify.

The research (2003-2007) was financed by CNPq and by Fiocruz's own resources.

Before finishing, let's consider the methodology procedure we are developing, which was mentioned here earlier and has proven to be productive in this and several other researches: The mapping of sources and communication flows grants methodological materiality to the concepts of discursive communities and polyphony, symbolic market and discursive competition, center and periphery. It is about the outline, based on a survey of the field, in participation processes or not, of a network of discursive communities that produce and circle discourses on a certain topic, driven to a certain segment of population, in a certain institutional our geographic space. The idea of a network allows us to stage the multiple articulations between material instances – discursive communities – and symbolic ones – their discourses, always having the positions of Center and Periphery as benchmarks. This procedure, allowing a characterization of a specific symbolic market, promotes discursive analysis, besides allowing, in the realm of a practical action, a better strategic planning of communication.

Presently, Laces is developing a nationwide research[5] which intends to update diagnosis on communication as practiced by SUS, identify its theoretic matrixes and define a set of markers to assess communication in the field of public policies. There are also two doctoral dissertations and a master's thesis being carried out.

Border

It's appealing to call the final consideration of a text Borders for the characteristic of being a place where what was seen, said and constituted and what is yet to happen come across. We could call it "interplace" (BHABHA, 1998), a mediation space between what is written and what will result from reading. A place that expresses interest and demands dialogue.

On this text, readings will incur - the first of all mediations that produce interface realities. Reading is rewriting the text in our own lives, says a barthesian principle. This reflexion, which points toward new appropriations and new meanings that will be produced as of the reading of the text, can be applied to the research activities at Laces.

Our effort has been driven, as we have attempted to show, towards comprehension of the reality of communicative practice in the area of health. But this reality is mediated by our gaze, therefore is already expresses a mode of appropriation and already constitutes itself an interface reality.

Having this understanding as a background, we can say that the questions that propel us are anticipated and based on others: How can we keep articulating theories and methods that help us make this world more translatable, considering differences, heterogeneity and power relations? And how can this understanding of the social world strengthen the sectors in disadvantage in the power relations (in the realm of SUS, institutions and society in general), so as to conquer a political leadership?

The challenge is not a small one, from a methodological point of view, starting with the fact that we operate in a gap: the data we have available about people and their multiple contexts are not adequate nor enough to cover the symbolic market and the intense negotiation of meanings. But the main task is really development of research procedures that correspond to our theoretical perspectives: A few concepts still require methodology translation.

Before finishing, we reiterate that Laces is a collectivity, consisting of many people who convey multiple meanings to our work. On the other hand, it has been involving other researchers, therefore, what was shown isn't an exhaustive demonstration of all theoretical and methodological approaches that are presently translated in research and other works being carried out.

Finally, if we wanted to suggest a word that could summarize the topic of this article it would be *between*. And, in an intertextual play, we could mention *interest*. Bourdieu (1997) reminds us, remitting to Hanna Arendt, of a possible meaning for the word interest: In between (inter-esse). This interest means participating and considering the social "game" important, believing that it is worth playing and that the goals must be pursued. So, here we present our interest, we believe it is worth the work we develop at Laces. This interest is brought to public always looking forward to the desired dialogue.

Notes

1. This conception was organized and proposed as a communication model for public policies called Symbolic Market Model in the author's doctoral dissertation (ARAÚJO, 2002).

2. The name given by Milton Pinto to the method he developed is Analysis of Social Discourses. Since all discourses are believe to be social and to distinguish this modality of DA from a merely linguistic or textual analysis, we chose the name Social Analysis of Discourses.

3. The main exponents of the French branch are Michel Pêcheux and Michel Foucault, in France and in Brazil, Eni Orlandi and his research group which is articulated around the Linguistic Studies Institute at Unicamp. The approach associates linguistics and history connected to structuralism and understands that it is a function of ideologies the production and reproduction of social meanings. The anglo-american branch is strongly related to

empirism and concepts of psychology of the conscience, understanding that every speech is a form of action, however a fully conscious act and that communication is a form of cooperative action. Has its origin in Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Erwin Goffman, Harold Garfinkel and William Labov are names that can be highlighted in researches. For a deeper approach to these differences, see Milton Pinto's book, Comunicação de Discurso (1994), on which this note is based.

4. The conferences integrate the structure of participative management of SUS – Unified Health System – organized from the municipal bases and the counselors are representatives chosen in an intensely disputed process.

5. Communication policies and practices at SUS: mapping, diagnosis and methodology of evaluation. Financial support from the CNPq.

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