Reflections on the Dialogic Analysis of Verbal-Visual Discourses: a Case of Humor in Brazilian Politics / *Reflexões acerca da análise dialógica dos discursos verbo-visuais: um caso de humor na política brasileira*

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we aim to scrutinize the functioning of the verbal-visuality under a dialogic perspective of discourse, using as material of analysis a humorous video montage about the political actor DilmaRousseff, during the Brazilian presidential campaign, in the year of 2010. Firstly, we reflect on some of Bakhtin's theoretical and methodological assumptions and also on Brait's, namely, the one of verbal-visuality, grounded on the bakhtinian conception of language. Secondly, we retain ourselves in the analysis of the text which is the object of the article, that have guided us to the following question: How have contribute and worked the verbal and visual elements for production and direction of senses in the video montage? Our hypothesis is that the discourses registered in the montage creates a sense of ideological trail that leads interlocutors to interpret the candidate as a person without discourse, manageable. Facing this question, we will try to demonstrate this hypothesis that we support.

KEYWORDS: Verbal-Visuality; Dialogic Analysis; Political Discourse; Humorous Text.

RESUMO

Neste artigo, temos como objetivo perscrutar o funcionamento da verbo-visualidade de uma perspectiva dialógica do discurso, utilizando, como material de análise, uma videomontagem humorística acerca do ator político Dilma Rousseff, durante a campanha presidencial brasileira do ano de 2010. Primeiramente, procuramos refletir acerca de alguns pressupostos teórico-metodológicos de Bakhtin e de Brait, qual seja, o de verbo-visualidade, alicerçado na concepção bakhtiniana de linguagem. Em um segundo momento, detivemo-nos na análise do texto objeto do artigo, que se pautou na seguinte indagação: como contribuem e funcionam os elementos verbais e visuais para produção e direcionamento de sentidos na videomontagem? Nossa hipótese é a de que os discursos carregados pela montagem criam uma trilha ideológica de sentido que leva os interlocutores a interpretar a então candidata como uma pessoa sem discurso, manipulável. Diante do exposto, tentaremos demonstrar a hipótese que sustentamos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Verbo-visualidade; Análise dialógica; Discurso político; Texto humorístico

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Opening Remarks

The Internet is a space – a cyberspace, some would argue – where we can find a large number of communicative phenomena of the contemporary world. This is because what was once referred to as "do-it-yourself", which originated a range of social events concerning fashion, music, and even labor relations and/or the acquisition of knowledge on the internet, is nowadays a "post-it-yourself" trend concerning anything which, for various reasons, seems relevant to "you". Post it and share it (Broadcast, says the insignia of YouTube). In this sense, the exchanges allowed by interactive websites, such as YouTube, make it possible to see cultural changes in societies over time, especially with regard to the circulation of discourses of different orders. This is what the website editorial says:

> Founded in February 2005, YouTube allows billions of people to discover, watch and share originally-created videos. YouTube provides a forum for people to connect, inform, and inspire others across the globe and acts as a distribution platform for original content creators and advertisers large and small. See our company timeline for more information on our company history <http://www.youtube.com/t/about_youtube>. Acess on: 02/08/2013.

Thus, it is possible to say that this network of information and interaction, powered by hyperlinks, semiotic resources and visual, verbal, auditory means, among others, is a unique domain for discourse researchers who may want to analyze the social meanings that circulate "supposedly" freely, without boundaries, to commit themselves to a "brave new world" – not so young as a technological creation, but certainly a new tool for communicative exchanges such as "post-it-yourself".

On YouTube, anyone can find a number of different videos by accessing the website in his or her own space. By typing any keyword we are interested in and clicking "search", we are promptly shown a list of different videos semantically related to that word. By searching for keywords, YouTube is thus similar to the Google search engine, which, incidentally, has gained great contributions from the fields of Linguistics dedicated to detailing and electronic debugging *corpora* for translation, lexicography, and text-statistics studies among others. Therefore, discourse nowadays unites and merges, on the one hand, different technological resources in the construction of what one may want to express and, on the other hand, allows for the construction of different ways to represent social phenomena in discourse (ABRIL, 2008). Thus, sites such as YouTube, besides hosting other tools for the (re)construction of meaning –

namely the video montage, for instance – allow people to articulate different mechanisms of verbal and non-verbal discourse.

That said, this study takes as material for analysis one video montage posted on YouTube and entitled "DiretoaoAssunto: Episódio #04 - Copa 2010" (*Cut to the Chase: Episode 4 - World Cup 2010*), which has been initially characterized as humorous[1]. The verbal-visual functioning of the *corpus* extracted from the video is then analyzed from a dialogic perspective of discourse. In the first section of this paper we discuss theoretical and methodological concepts by Mikhail Bakhtin (1986, 1973); for instance, the Russian author's understanding of dialogic relations, the ideological sign, text, utterance, the given and the created. In addition, Beth Brait's (2012a, 2012b) contributions are also dealt with, especially the notion of verbal-visuality, according to which the Brazilian linguist, grounded on the Bakhtinian concept, puts forward a robust theoretical framework for dealing with dialogic interrelations between verbal and visual texts that make up a wide range of social practices. In the second part of this paper, on the other hand, we turn our attention to the dialogic analysis, which is based on the following questions: How does the verbal-visual operation work toward the production of meaning by the announcer in the video montage? Is it possible to affirm that this video montage is a text composed by political-party discourses or only by soccer-related discourses or, still, by other discourse manifestations which are more subtle to begin with? Can the material we have selected form an ideological sign which establishes dialogic relations among its composing elements in order to yield comprehensions and achieve the goal of disqualifying the candidate by means of the humor that is engendered in the making of this composition?

1 The Dialogic Perspective of Discourse

Verbal-visuality is present in a multitude of materials in the study of language. When verbal-visuality is addressed from the dialogic perspective compiled by Bakhtin, it is

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[1]We understand the nature of the video montage in question to be humorous because there is an element of surprise against what it is expected to show. In addition, on the webpage where it has been posted, paratexts inserted by the announcer of the video montage as captions hint at the humorous nature of the video: "Talk-Show with the former President Lula's Minister. Today's topic- The World Cup - This is a humorous video. Offensive comments will be deleted. It is possible to be critical without legal violations. ww.twitter.com/exilado". With this remark, "It is possible...", the announcer modulates his speech so as to avoid reprimands, which is an important trait of humorous discourse. The focus on the degradation of Rousseff's image allows us to affirm that this is a derisive effect, which, according to Simone Bonnafous's argumentative perspective is "*l'associationde l'humour et de l'agression qui la caractérise et la distingue en principe de la pure injure* (BONNAFOUS, 2001, p.53).("the association between humor and aggressiveness which characterize and distinguish it [derization] from the simply injury")

important to remember that the study of language does not have an ultimate, immutable goal. Instead, goals are redefined as discourses arise and compel us to ask new questions, which is typical of any science that is in constant evolution, or is at least in search of a *Télos*, not in a cumulative sense, but rather as a pendular motion between action and review of both theory and methods, in a teleological sense, which incorporates ground-breaking movements. To be certain, there is much to be discovered about the development of language due to, for instance, scientific and technological advancements of societies in which individuals are immersed, which may cause the emergence of new materialities. As Ferdinand de Saussure has put it, in order to understand language as a whole, it is necessary to know many languages, which, in turn, are mutable and immutable at the same time, something which can cause countless changes, with loss, differences and additions, in the hourglass of human history. Thus, people, in their ordinary interrelations of communication through language, create new ways of thinking, acting, understanding and interacting by means of new objects, causing them to flourish for new events in the historical uniqueness. Accordingly, people are constituted in language, and by language, when they assign meanings to the world, to themselves and to other people through dialogic relations between the meanings that are intended to be exchanged, acquired, or put into circulation.

In the book *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*[2], Vološinov holds that "everything ideological possesses *meaning*: it represents, depicts, or stands for something lying outside of itself. In other words, it is a *sign*. *Without signs there is no ideology*" (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.9; author's emphasis); in isolation, by itself, there is no ideology. For instance, a tool that at first has one single function can acquire a purely ideological meaning and become a sign, like the hammer and the sickle for Communists, and bread and wine for Christians. Thus, the author claims that, beyond materials and consumables, we have a universe of signs. Signs reflect and portray part of a reality, a result of language interactions. Signs can be faithful or take reality from a particular stance, for every sign is linked to an ideological assessment, involving the effective domain of signs and of what is ideological, and "*everything ideological possesses semiotic value*" (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.10; author's emphasis). Therefore, being a phenomenon from the exterior world, the sign has a material support such as, for instance, sound, physical mass, color, body motion and other ways of

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[2] In the Brazilian publications, Valentin Vološinov ("Valentin Volochínov"), along with Bakhtin, appears as the coauthor of *Marxim and The Philosophy of language*. In the English translation that we had access to, only Vološinov appears as the author. In this paper, both Bakhtin and Vološinov are regarded as the authors of the book.

materializing the ideological meanings acquired during social interrelations in the history of subjects. This may have been an issue perceived by scholars who have painstakingly addressed *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* as an opportunity to reassess verbal-visuality, since the sign coupled with issues concerning the discursive functioning of what is verbal-visual allows for a broad spectrum of studies.

In order to understand signs, a subject needs not only consciousness, but also the material reality which brings signs close to one another, through a semiotic material that enables the formation of a chain that is not broken in the course of time – or, still, which lasts for long enough. This chain is composed of several individual consciousnesses, filled with signs, in the process of social interaction. Its primary trait is the fact that the ideological component is situated among individuals and is used by them as a means of communication as if in an *interindividual place*. Also because of this, the individual consciousness has a social and ideological characteristic, and individuals must be organized socially in order for signs to be created and make sense. Much discussed but little clarified in his different fields of research, consciousness, for Bakhtin/ Vološinov, is what takes shape and existence through the social relations of a particular organized group, thus "the logic of consciousness is the logic of ideological communication, of the semiotic interaction of a social group" (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.13). The underlying notion in the quote brought from the Russian philosopher of language, in which semiotic interaction is combined with the role of social communication in the construction of signs and, consequently, the meanings (re)conveyed by signs, which originate from subjects interacting in everyday social life, is clearly and thoroughly present in language. In other words, it is in language that multiple possibilities appear for subjects to signify and interact.

For Bakhtin/Vološinov, within this repertoire of signs, "the word is the ideological phenomenon par excellence," and is the most transparent form of social relations, because it is absorbed by the sign function (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.13). In other words, but still according to Bakhtin, the word is the most important script on the stage for language's ideological manifestations. Another aspect which grants the word an essential place in Bakhtin's understanding of language is the fact that we can impregnate it with ideology, inasmuch as social groups make it circulate in the domains of communication for – unlike other signs, in which one or more ideologies are inherent that are more or less stabilized – the word can circulate in different domains, serving to anchor the various discourses and their ideological guidance. The word is the most accessible sign repertoire in social interactions, which

therefore grants it a particular status in everyday communication, with no need for an extracorporeal apparatus to establish itself. This means that consciousness is required to form an inner sign, since the word is "the *semiotic material of inner life of consciousness* (...)" and, therefore, "*the word functions as an essential ingredient accompanying all ideological creativity whatsoeve*r" (VOLOŠINOV, 1973, p.14-15; author's emphasis), and dialogic interactions, in order for the word then to leave inner consciousness and to start circulating as a sign in subjects' everyday social life and in the discursive practices in which they dwell. This is also why, as we have mentioned previously, the word has the sign mobility to follow all ideological refraction through a dialogic verbal refraction.

Thus, the word, dialogically speaking, is the starting point for understanding the interaction between language and subjects, for the study of the laws of ideological refraction underlying signs and consciousness. This is so because the word has semiotic purity, gaps for less stabilized ideologies to be filled, which are actually commonplace. The word is present in human communication, from the most prosaic to the most complex, its nature is related to internalization and it is accompanied by every conscious act, thus allowing for the conception and establishment of a sort of bond among subjects. In the words of Vološinov:

> In point of fact, *word is a two-sided act.* It is determined equally by *whose* word it is and *for whom* it is meant. <u>As word, it is precisely *the product of the reciprocal relationship between speaker and listener,* *addresser and addressee.*</u> Each and every word expresses the "one" in relation to the "other."(...) A word is a bridge thrown between myself and another (1973, p.86; author's emphasis).

In this extract, we see that the author states that the word lives only because of the existence of at least two subjects in dialogic interaction, both of whom define themselves and one another through the set of clashes triggered by this dialogic movement. Based on this understanding, we set out to address the theoretical and methodological framework put forward by Bakhtin in the essay "Toward a Methodology for the Human Sciences", a chapter in the work *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (1986), where we find that the Russian author begins his discussion regarding the process of word comprehension by the subjects. According to his theory, in order for this process to occur, some acts must also be performed, such as: the psychophysiological perception of the physical sign, the recognition of the sign, the understanding of its meaning in a given context, the active dialogic understanding that results from the interaction among subjects and the use of language, among other factors. In

other words, we would say that a meaning as ideologically constituted in a word, for instance, can be understood as it becomes dialogically engaged with other meanings, in an active process of subjects' understanding one another.

Just like subjects, texts can only be constituted when they are in contact with other texts. It is by conversing with other texts that what is behind can be seen, or what is inside and what is ahead, and thus one can see not only other texts, but the reality of extratextual things. Such textual influences impact on the evolution of the subjects who, at the early stages of their lives, develop the word in the dialogic process in contact with other words, like the words of the mother. The word, then, acts as revelation, lighting and encounter with the world, or to state this near aphorism in other words, it is a linguistic bridge between subjects; however, there is a kind of "forgetting" by some of the authors of the word, forgetting that the word of others actually builds the word of subjects themselves, that is, a deletion of dialogic relations that are monologized by consciousness (BAKHTIN, 1986). Thus, we may think that the word of another person can and must be remembered when, for example, it is accompanied by a certain intonation, which, in turn, involves phonic and semantic elements, which means that we associate two or more forms in order to understand it.

While reflecting specifically on our target material in the analysis, and to deal properly at least with the analysis from the dialogic perspective that we hope to achieve, the meticulous contributions by Brait are enlightening as theoretical conceptual thinking since, at this stage, we need to think of nodal concepts in the theme, its operation and discussion nowadays. In the text *Perspectiva dialógica* [Dialogic Perspective] (2012a), Brait addresses concepts of text and discourse from Bakhtin's perspective. These are central concepts in order to consider language in its many manifestations – propositions that we are concerned with in this paper. To that end, the author presents texts from different times, in which these concepts were formulated by Bakhtin (and Vološinov), particularly in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* and *Marxism and Philosophy of Language,* as we have already highlighted.

From *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* , Brait (2012a), and in particular the first work, "The Problem of Text in Linguistics and Philology, and the Human Sciences: an experiment in philosophical analysis" the following definition of text originates: " 'text' is understood in the broad sense – as any coherent complex of signs "(BAKHTIN, 1986, p.103), a definition which can be further clarified by reading *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1973), a fact which confirms the need to look at both texts for the meaning of this concept that underscores the articulatory feature between the works of Bakhtin and the Circle.

Thus, it is necessary to look deeper into the notion of text as a "coherent complex of signs" and think that this sign, in a broad sense, can be verbal, visual and/or verbal-visual. Indeed, the concept of sign is a key definition in Bakhtinian reflections, and, because the sign is ideological, one can notice there is a semiotic and ideological concept of the text in which the ideological conception conveys meanings that, in turn, create trails toward meaning with which subjects live, by means of dialogic linguistic interactions, something which we have attempted to reflect upon by analyzing the corpus in this paper.

In addition, there are two other concepts linked to the notion of text: utterance and discourse, which are articulated and create a strong bond, for the utterance is formed by the relation with extralinguistic elements and is connected to other utterances. In Bakhtin's theoretical enterprise, the issue of the dialogic relations between utterances and discourses is marked in such a way that the scholar even presents two constitutive sides to the nature of utterances, *the given and the created*. These two theoretical facets aim at explaining that, in an utterance, there is always something created from something given, out of a dialogic relation, something that is different from what is found in:

> The monologism of thinking the human sciences. The linguistic is accustomed to perceiving everything in a single closed context (in the system of a language or in the linguistically understood text that is not dialogically correlated to another, responding text) (BAKHTIN, 1986, p.120).

Following this train of thought, the Russian researcher considers that Linguistics and Metalinguistics have a dialogic relationship instead of a mutually exclusive one. This hints, therefore, at a methodological perspective to conduct studies of the utterance, thus taking the utterance as a unit of discursive communication. In the work *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* (1986), more specifically in the chapter "From Notes Made in 1970-71", a concept of text is put forward in which the text is linked to utterance as a whole, i.e., the way the utterance might be connected to a web of other texts, utterances, discourses. Therefore, there are no single or isolated utterances; there are always utterances that precede and that follow, which leads us to the methodological issue of how to address the whole. Thus, in any analysis, we need to address all the aspects that are engendered therein. We may think that, in the Bakhtinian thought, there is a methodology for the study of language and a definition of discourse as a specific discipline because, according to Brait (2012a), it is as if the theoretician felt the need to create a metalinguistics as suggested in *Problems of Dostoevsky's*

Poetics. Metalinguistics, as explained by the Brazilian linguist, would be presented as a methodology for the study of discourse and its many facets. Discourse would not only be approached from an internal or external perspective, but actually in its double-voicedness as "dialog", which once more allows us to think that this theoretical reflection takes on a multimodal dimension of language, which also includes the verbal-visual dimension in the dialogic interactions among subjects.

In the development of these reflections, what we have attempted to focus on is the theoretical-methodological move which was set in motion by the Brazilian author within projects that aim to show how Bakhtinian thinking contributes to the analysis of verbal-visual discourse and, therefore, how they contribute to the analytical study of cultural objects that articulate, on the plane of expression, explicitly or implicitly, the dimensions of verbal and visual language. Therefore, the semiotic-ideological concept of text must be brought to the fore – as previously said – "analyzed, interpreted, recognized from dialogic mechanisms that constitute it, the conflicts and tensions that are inherent in it, of the particulars in the nature of its plane of expression and the domains in which it circulates" (BRAIT, 2012b, p.2)[3]. We therefore believe that along the epistemological path laid by Bakhtin, Brait brings together a strong theoretical contribution for studies of verbal-visuality, particularly concerning the relation text/utterance as a "coherent set", as already noted. The concept of discourse arises, then, in these notes, "as a network of *dialogic relations* established and assumed by a subject (and not given beforehand), expressed in the language from a *point of view*" (BRAIT, 2012b, p.4; author's emphasis)[4]. Both in these theoretical notes and in *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* discourse as dialogic relations appears as the object of the metalinguistics upon which the theoretical-methodological gesture is grounded, a gesture that establishes the dialogic perspective for discourse analysis as well as the notion of text/utterance, *i.e.*, both – metalinguistics and text/utterance conception – serve as the foundation for reading verbal-visuality.

As a result, it is possible to say, following Brait's propositions (2012b), that, in his study of what is visual and verbal-visual, Bakhtin has placed within dialogic relations the core of a dialogic analytical theory of discourse and, therefore, he regards other sign materials,

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[3] In the original: "analisada, interpretada, reconhecida a partir de mecanismos dialógicos que a constituem, dos embates e das tensões que lhe são inerentes, das particularidades da natureza de seu plano de expressão e das esferas em que circula."

[4] In the original: "como rede de *relações dialógicas* estabelecidas e assumidas por um sujeito (e não dadas de antemão), expressas na linguagem a partir de um *ponto de vista*".

other phenomena as constitutive of language and meanings in the interrelations among subjects.

2 The Trained Dilma: the Dialogic Analysis of Verbal-Visuality

In this section, with the analysis of the video montage, we deal with the workings of the dialogic relation of verbal-visual aspects in the humorous political discourse which, in this case, attempts to build a discourse of incompetence for the presidential candidate at the time, DilmaRousseff. As mentioned before, our material, the video montage entitled: *DiretoaoAssunto: Episódio #04 - Copa 2010*, has been analyzed for the verbal-visual materiality – the *corpus* for this paper – which will serve as the basis for verifying our understanding of verbal-visual aspects in light of the theory of dialogic discourse. A few more remarks can be provided about the selected material: it is the fourth episode out of six, which have been posted on YouTube without necessarily following a logical-mathematical sequence and which can be understood if viewed in any order. The person who posted the six video montages on the site uses the alias *exilados* (*exiled*), and it is possible to imply that he or she was also the producer and editor of the videos. This particular episode is one minute and seventeen seconds long, and the main target of humorous derisive discourse in this montage, as we said, is the presidential candidate at the time, Dilma Rousseff. The episode was posted on May 13, 2010, before that year's elections.

The first section of the video montage is composed of part of a video recording depicting a man asking the candidate to greet viewers (Picture 1). Then, another video excerpt follows, featuring a seal in an aquatic park (Picture 2). Stills of both parts are shown below. The transcription of the audio that accompanies the first part follows the pictures. Only in this excerpt were there lines by Dilma.

Picture 1: between 00:02 and 00:08 seconds.   **Picture 2**: 00:11 seconds.

E1[5]: (The man we see in the video says a sentence as if asking Dilma something, but it is not possible to make out what he says. We can only infer that he asks her to talk to the camera)
E2: In a minute, okay?
E1: Just a greeting, only a greeting, just a greeting...
E2: Okay, "Hi!" Like this? (smiling)
E1: That's it! "Hi", Dr. DilmaRousseff...
E2: Hi! (smiling)
E3: Hi!

The second video excerpt (Picture 2) depicts a seal and its trainer. Supposedly in an aquatic park performance, the animal is demonstrating all its trained cleverness. There is the typical upbeat music of circus presentations in the background, and this second part is only three seconds long. Following both clippings, a slide is shown that is common in other video montages in the "series" created by the "producer" *exilados*. The slide contains the following words around a photograph of the candidate: "Cut to the chase with President Lula's ex-minister!" While it is shown, we can hear a jingle in which it is possible to notice a whistle and some musical instruments. We can infer that the music comes from somebody whistling in a relaxed way.
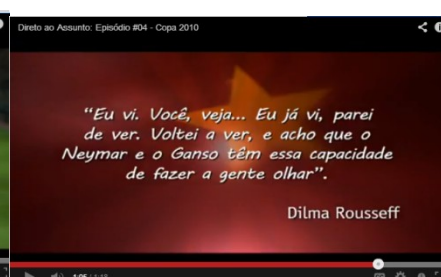

Picture 3: 00:16 seconds

The following *slide* (Picture 4) shows a classroom blackboard and the following question has been written by the producer: "Ex-Minister, what is your guess on the squad for the 2010 World Cup?" The famous samba by LuizBandeira is playing in the background, "Na cadência do samba", which has become memorable in the "Canal 100" program, a newsreel dedicated to documenting great moments of Brazilian soccer. Shortly after that, a line by the candidate has been inserted. This line has presumably been produced during a press conference, considering the context. The candidate then answers the "question" and, during

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[5] E1: The man talking to Dilma. E2: DilmaRousseff. E3: The person shooting the video.

her speech, resources such as pauses and insertions are deployed, such as at the moment she supposedly makes a pause in her speech. This is an assumption because one cannot establish whether it is a spontaneous pause or the result of editing – and then there is the sound of a car having trouble to start. Next, the video is interrupted for the insertion of the last slide (Picture 5), which has the shape of a flag fluttering in the wind, with an orange star in the center, as the background for music which is remarkably similar to the anthem "A internacional" ("The International", in English), widely disseminated among supporters of socialism around the world.

Picture 4: 00:23 seconds.   **Picture 5**: 1 minute and 05 seconds.

In addition, there is a narrator who reads the following lines, which are shown overlapping the star:

> E4[6]: "I watched. You, watch...
> E4: I already watched, I stopped watching
> E4: I went back to watching, and I think Neymar and Ganso can make us look."

It can be noted that these statements are the reproduction of what Dilma said in the preceding video and are signed by "DilmaRousseff." Overall, these slides create trails toward meaning for verbal-visuality to be understood. They allow the following interpretation to set in: the candidate, like a trained seal, obeys only her trainer and repeats his commands. Furthermore, the montage suggests that the candidate at the time has been "tamed" and "conditioned" simply to obey, without any discourse of her own, who accepts even strangers telling her what to do. In other words, she takes orders from anyone, as in "E1: Just a greeting, only a greeting, just a greeting.../E2: Okay, "Hi!" Like this? (smiling) / E1: Yes! "Hi!" Dr. DilmaRousseff.../E2: "Hi!" (smiling). In the sequence, that first slide is inserted again (Picture 3), which has a photograph of the candidate and the transcriptions shown

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[6] E4: narrator of the slide in question.

above, and then, once again, we can watch a short excerpt with the seal clapping its fins. Later, another short part features the candidate, who quickly asks for permission to leave.

Our main goal is to identify the dialogic functioning of the discursive verbal-visuality that comprises the *corpus* under scrutiny, taken from the video montage. We have selected these short passages, but we cannot disregard the piece as a whole in the process of constructing meaning, *i.e.*, it is not possible to detach fragments from the whole in order to analyze them separately. Therefore, we notice the syntax that is built throughout the video montage by dialogic combination of multimodal components, such as the pictures clipped from different moments showing the candidate; the music (mimicking the tic-tac of a clock, for example, making reference to the socialist anthem and to the sounds in a circus, which seem relevant in the sense that they reveal language's multimodal dimension although they are not exclusively verbal-visual elements) – as well as the utterances that are present in the penultimate excerpt (where the producer transcribes the candidate's answer/line).

As concerns methodology, by reflecting on the understanding of the montage, in which there are always previous and later utterances, since there is no isolated utterance (BRAIT, 2012a), and with regard to the dialogic perspective of discourse, we notice that this stance can be perceived at two distinct moments – the first and the second videos that make up the first few seconds of video montage, for instance, which have been inserted to build and constitute a text/discourse that can yield a certain meaning (aimed as target and achieved by the constraint of the circulation of discursive knowledge). In other words, notions can be regarded as the creation that is born out of what is given (BRAIT, 2012a) and, thus, we believe that the dialogic process takes place when a text is incorporated by another, both to produce and to transform it (BAKHTIN, 1986).

It is thus possible to think that verbal-visuality in the montage is constructed through a "syntactic discursive" organization "of the material elements", in two intertwined axes: on the first axis, we can say, more connected to linearity, that we observe a guidance of discourse obtained by the organization of the video montage itself, *i.e.*, possible effects arising from such an organization. There is a second axis, coupled in a more simultaneous way, in which there are multimodal materials in the production of discourse sense in the video montage, such as the game of images, writing and song, among others. Obviously, there are elements beyond verbal-visuality, though that too, such as the ideological guidance of discourse, which are constituted at the dialogic junction engendered in the montage. It is, therefore, as a result of most of these dialogic relations between what we call axes that we can make sense of the

video montage as a whole, which is intended to disqualify the political actor DilmaRousseff during the 2010 presidential campaign, just as someone who is not competent enough to act as the President of the Republic of Brazil.

We actually notice that the text, as the video montage is understood, is constituted by a dialogic process with other texts (short excerpts from other videos and music), constructed in such a way, as we have explained, according to axes. That means that, together, they make it possible to experience another perspective of meaning, which is different from the one the given element brought. Therefore, one is in contact with the element created by the announcer, with what is extratextual. We understand this extratextual to be the statement (by means of derisive humor, which aims to disqualify) that Dilma is not spontaneous: she has been trained and rehearsed, a mere puppet obeying the discourse and the commands of a ventriloquist and/or political godfather in this case. To use a typical label in Brazilian political discourse, she is a "lamppost."

Methodologically, to deal with the whole in the analysis, we can consider the slide that appears after this short sequence: "Cut to the chase with President Lula's ex-minister!", in which the announcer refers to Dilma as President Lula's ex-minister instead of DilmaRousseff, the candidate or any other term that identifies the role in question. Semantically, there is here the construction of another meaning, that of Rousseff not being able or suited to take the office of president. She would actually be a position to be occupied by someone (textually stated in the montage to be former President Lula, as it can be inferred, by the circulation of discursive knowledge about both political actors, Lula and Dilma, that the former president is her political coach and also the one who will actually rule), to continue his political plans, once the "trained seal" just follows orders from the trainer. In this track of created meaning, there is the deletion of the semantic feature "competence", which is believed to be required from a future president, something that the video implies Dilma lacks[7].

We also believe that the snippets from the video montage that we have analyzed could be materially represented by the statement "Dilma is trained", which is materialized in the

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[7] Perhaps, an interpretation which is filled with meaning in these 2010 elections, which we deal with here, and which, updated, has recently circulated widely in the media and in the discourse of "experts" in politics during the competition for São Paulo elections, is that, also supported by Lula, the candidate at the time, and now current mayor, would not be more than a second lamppost elected by Lula. "I am Lula's second lamppost. Is there anyone here who isa candidate for lamppost?",asked Haddad, as he was riding a float, in reference to President DilmaRousseff, who was also called that when she fought to succeed Lula in 2010". (In theorginal: "Sou o segundo poste do Lula. Tem alguém candidato a poste aqui?", perguntou Haddad, do alto do trio elétrico, numa referência à presidente Dilma Rousseff, que também foi chamada assim quando concorreu à sucessão de Lula, em 2010") Available at: <http://www.estadao.com.br/noticias/politica,sou-o-2-poste-do-lula-afirma-haddad,952575,0.htm>. Accessed on August 2, 2013.

symbolic sense, *i.e.*, it constitutes a sign achieved/built/created mainly by the verbal-visual materiality which, however, resonates strongly in language's multimodality, in a dialogic link that displays utterances/discourses: ("Just a greeting, only a greeting, just a greeting.../Okay, "Hi!". Like this?") image (pictures 1 and 2, for example) and sound combined. In short, we could say, when we use our interpretation of Brait's (2012a) considerations on Bakhtin(1986, 1973), namely that the video montage from which we obtained the *corpus*, it is an utterance that converses with other already given utterances in order to create what is "new", which operates and guides meaning in negative discourse toward the image of candidate Dilma. To sum up, it is possible to interpret that the main goal of the video montage announcer is to miscreate the candidate through the humorous discourse which is intended to underscore traits that suggest her lack of skill and inability to rule the country well, including the following accusation to the candidate in this "probation-like" scenario: She has been tamed, a mere puppet of the president at the time, or of any other person, because she - like a trained seal - has been conditioned simply to clap her hands, obey other people and entertain others in this show. The president-to-be Dilma, in the evidence provided by the video, will only fill a blank that is lawfully hers since the one to actually rule the country is her political mentor and the president at the time.

Indeed, in the trail toward meaning that is set forth by the montage, it is possible to interpret that if a person cannot even articulate her own discourse, she will not be a good ruler, among other things. In other words, the utterances that make up Dilma's backstage discourse, along with the seal in the performance, can build a generic equation of deontic value: Dilma talks + seal claps = Dilma has been trained. That seems straightforward at first sight, but there is something more provocative therein, which is the way in which this content is presented: verbal-visuality, *i.e.,* the umbilical unison of image, linguistic materiality, sound and editing. These components produce a syntax through a dialogic relation that engenders itself, thus creating some ideological signs and bringing out others that circulate in our society.

Concluding Remarks

In order to conclude this brief essay, we emphasize that we have not set out to formulate a basal epistemological reconsideration of Bakhtin's theory, revisited by Brait to address verbal-visuality. In fact, we wish to deal with the implications and relevance of the

tenacity and productivity of Bakhtinian concepts approached and scrutinized by two scholars in the field of language studies.The video montages brought to the fore in this paper have a complex multimodal organization, in which the discourse is coupled with multiple meaningfulmaterialities– semiosis – for instance, sound, image, color, editing resources, syntactic organization of discourse, among other things. However, we have hypothesized that multimodality is built mainly out of the dialogic relations within verbal-visuality, which implies addressing language in verbal and visual semiosis.

It must be said that we have ascertained in this very brief and incomprehensive analysis, grounded on the notion of discourse as a product of dialogic relations, the possibility of reading verbal-visuality in the snippet through the concept of discourse: that utterances (videos represented by pictures 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, respectively) are set to circulate and signify in the social-historical environment through a dialogic relation that creates and allows them to form another utterance that yields another meaning.The excerpt that corroborates our hypothesis is the insertion of a seal (in the beginning and in the end) during a performance in an aquatic park and, in order for this animal to carry out what was assigned for it to accomplish, this seal has been trained, there is a sequence of movements to be performed in a given time frame, and everything has been previously rehearsed. We believe that the sequencing of verbal-visuality in the montage as a whole creates a trail of interpretation that is ideologically targeted at the interlocutors in this kind of material. This is so pertinent that the utterances underscored by the producer focus on suitable moments for the association of the candidate at the time with another discourse, which is not her own. Snippets of other videos that have been clipped in the montage can produce a framing for viewing in order for meaning to be woven. This is intended, presumably, to create an image for interlocutors which is negatively put together, namely the representation of the candidate reverberating/based on the idea that she is not spontaneous, that she has been trained to play the role of candidate and future president, and that she has no discourse of her own, so she does not have the knowledge or the skills and, therefore, will be manipulated to act in this way or another.

We should also point out that the video montage can be found in a virtual space, hosted by a website that can be accessed easily. Users can post videos of virtually any kind and also comment on such videos or others. However, the distinguishing feature is the possibility of accommodating verbal-visuality, which allows for the construction of meaning in a given discourse. One can also note the perspectives, the ways and tools for how a kind of hegemonic idea concerning a certain topic are put forward, which is made possible, in the

case we have studied, by cyber technologies, such as YouTube, which disseminate individual and collective knowledge, get involved in the construction of conditions and spatial and temporal settings and organizations that regulate social life and, quite often, institutions (ABRIL, 2008).We would also argue that cybercultures make records of themselves in the writing of history in a unique way. Not right, not wrong, not new nor old, but actually different. In the intricacies of these technologies, beginning with tools for discursive circulation in one way or more, the social history which surrounds us in the current conditions of production and reproduction of knowledgeis narrated in the same way that books, proverbs, legends, folklores, families, research findings and other elements for disseminating knowledge do.

We can say that the existence of websites like YouTube enhances the ability to transform the meanings of discourses that carry a certain meaning, but, when they are dialogically transformed, like video montages – according to our hypothesis – taken by other discourses, they may acquire another potential in the construction of meaning. Thus, it is possible to say that this reconstruction, with the underlying help of technologies, guarantees the contributions of different discursive practices. Currently, the interaction of machines, internet support, software and people may dazzle us and seem natural and difficult to assimilate fully, but interaction with the technology of writing, a linguistic system, paper, ink, which is easy and natural at present did not use to be so at one point either.

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