

Media Language and its Plural Semiotics: Representation of the Figure of “Xuxa Meneghel” in Chilean Publicity

Bruno Gomes Pereira^{1*}

¹Doctor in Estudos Linguísticos from the Universidade Federal do Tocantins (UFT) University Professor of Centro Universitário Anhanguera Pitágoras Ampli Santo André, São Paulo, Brazil

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*Corresponding author: Bruno Gomes Pereira

Abstract

This article aims to analyze, based on the principles of Applied Linguistics (AL), the media representation in the face of the return of the presenter Xuxa to the Chilean advertising market, through a commercial for a mobile phone brand. In the neighboring country, Xuxa's return caused a resounding success, gaining worldwide repercussion, even surpassing the golden times of the children's songs of that artist. The Theoretical Foundation finds interdisciplinarity among different currents of discursive language studies its main reference for microanalysis. The methodology is of a qualitative and documentary approach. The data reveal a mediatic return marked by the ideology of an artist wrapped in an unattainable affective memory, which also guarantees her wide commercial receptivity in other countries of the world.

Keywords: Chile; Advertising; Xuxa.

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1. INTRODUCTION

There are several studies that deal with the persuasive power of Xuxa's media figure in all advertising spheres in various countries around the world. These studies are of the character of Educational Sciences, Psychology, Anthropology, Language and so many other scientific aspects that try to present explanations for such success.

However, it should be considered that most of these studies analyze a Xuxa from almost four decades ago, which was surrounded by a playfulness that enchanted children and seduced adults. However, with over 40 years using her image, Xuxa may not be the same in many ways, but her firepower remains intact to the point of mesmerizing people in a timeless way.

That is the word that I summarize the global presenter: timelessness. Two points are considered in this statement, namely: i) global not in the sense of having made himself an artist on Venus Platinada (referring to Rede Globo Television, in which, for years, he no longer belongs to his cast), but yes in the sense of making, on the media, a personality known all over the planet due to the empire he built around his image with a strong appeal to the child audience; and ii) timeless, because, even though it has constantly reinvented itself to stay on the air and follow social

changes, its ways remain the same: intimacy with a captive audience and its power to thrill and sell at the same time using a an image that seems to have perpetuated over time: that of an untouchable Queen.

In time, it is worth noting that, in this article, we are not referring to the person Maria da Graça Xuxa Meneghel, but rather to the public and media figure, called Xuxa Meneghel, who, for scholars on television phenomenon, is, in fact, more than an artist, is a brand.

In this article we analyze a little about the repercussion on the international scene of Xuxa's participation in a Chilean commercial for a mobile phone brand. Even though decades have passed, the repercussions in the media seem to exceed the expectations of the world advertising market, whether by the discourse wrapped in the image of the presenter, or by the awakening of the affective memory that was awakened by the way Xuxa was in the commercial.

This work is housed in the field of Applied Linguistics (AL), more precisely on the border between discursive theories of language and the sociology of relations, as shown in Figure 01.

2. Interdisciplinary dialogues in applied linguistics: perspectives of discourse theories

AL is a perspective of language studies that preaches, precisely, the need to interrelate knowledge

from different origins to make the object of study complex. Therefore, by not disciplining itself, the AL demands a more sensitive look from the researcher, as it understands that social phenomena cannot be explained in a unilateral way.

This position goes against what Signorini (1998; 2006) thinks, when he affirms that LA cannot be seen as a discipline, considering that its object of investigation does not end with itself. We must, therefore, consider that everything is inserted in a larger universe, therefore, subject to other interpretations depending on the knowledge mobilized at the time of data processing.

The same was discussed in the studies by Pereira (2014; 2016) who, to problematize the context of academic writing production, sought support in sociology, pedagogy, anthropology and other areas of knowledge, which brought information that was not contemplated in studies that were linguistic only.

In this sense, AL seems to be confluent with what is proposed by the Theory of Complexity, worldwide disseminated by the philosopher Edgar Morin. For the researcher, it is, at the very least, naive, to believe in an absolute truth about anything, starting from the assumption that the point of view is not something neutral (cf. MORIN, 2011). Therefore, to better understand something that is under analysis, we must consider the interdisciplinarity between different human knowledge, which also guarantees greater efficiency in the results of the research.

We attribute to the term “interdisciplinarity” the same meaning given by the Education Sciences, in the studies of Finance (2008), when stating that something inter is something that does not end in itself and, therefore, depends on the other to present a satisfactory version, at least momentarily.

However, the greatest contributions on AL in Brazil come from the research by Pereira (2017), who problematizes this perspective of language studies as a contemporary way of doing science. This implies discussions in several aspects, considering that the social is manufactured through language.

The Figure 01 illustrates the interdisciplinary movement between Bakhtinian Studies, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), Studies on Social Voices and the Sociology of Relations, promoted through AL.

It is not our intention to have an exhaustive discussion about such areas of knowledge. The goal is only to mobilize some information that can explain our object of study in a satisfactory way.

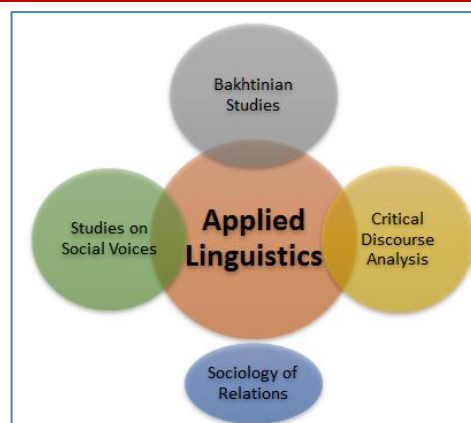


Fig-01: AL Dialogical Movement

Reference: Own authorship

As shown in Figure 01, AL is at the center, uniting the other areas of knowledge or perspectives of human knowledge. However, it is worth noting that it is not because it is an interdisciplinary approach that everything that is measured is of interest to us here.

From the Bakhtinian Studies we are interested in the Marxist conception (2003) of this philosopher, when he understood that the division between classes comes precisely through language. However, we have changed the meaning of the term “classes” here, giving it not a capitalist tone, but rather the segregation of those who choose, for some reason, to be moved or not with the mass phenomena. Therefore, understanding that Xuxa’s return to the international advertising market has become something that spread across the world in a few hours is not necessarily unanimous from a quantitative point of view.

On the other hand, still in the Studies of Bakhtin (2006), we are interested in the dialogical and dialectical perspective with which the phenomena of language are reverberated. In other words, everything that is said today has been said before, even if in a different way, as language survives in social practices that only remodel it. Therefore, in the Chilean commercial starring Xuxa, the presenter appears exactly the same as that of Xuxa decades ago, which is a decisive factor for the resumption of imagery in people’s minds. Therefore, it is something directly dialogical.

From the Studies of Social Voices, we are more interested in the studies of Mey (2001), which are very close to the polyphonic questions of Bakhtin (1984). For the Danish researcher, sociopragmatics explains many phenomena of language, as we cannot deprive them of the time and space in which they were practiced. Regarding the theme of this article, we can relate Mey’s (2001) thinking to the fact that everything that involves presenter Xuxa and her history with Chile and other Latin countries, as well as the physical

appearance exactly the same as the times when Xuxa has become an icon over there.

From CDA we are more interested in the unfolding of meaning that involve the appearance of the artist, as well as the notion of discourse and ideology that puts an end to any naive intentions of the advertising campaign. For Fairclough (2008), ideology is precisely what moves the user of the language when it comes to expressing oneself. It is the hidden that becomes non-hidden from the effects of senses that can cause it to be directed. Therefore, the worldwide commotion in seeing Xuxa in the Chilean commercial is a mass phenomenon far from being permeated by naivety. It is something well thought out, in order to strengthen the image of the corresponding mobile telephony.

In the Sociology of Relations, we are interested in two aspects: i) the ephemerality of the postmodern world; and ii) the relationships of affection between human and non-human actors. With the advent of globalization, everything became easily publicized and, thus, the scope of things became something that cannot be measured. These are called “net times”, in the terms of Buaman (2004). On the other hand, we have a variety of non-human elements that reinforce the feeling of nostalgia for the commercial: the ship, the presenter's clothes and the other imagery resources that referred to the scene of the children's programs that gave Xuxa the air of royalty.

In the next section, we briefly present some research that deals with the media figure of Xuxa Meneghel in some segment.

3. Panorama of some academic investigations about the media figure of “queen xuxa”

As stated in the Introduction to this article, there are many studies that problematize Xuxa's media figure and offer a reading from the mobilized theory. Among all the researches, perhaps the most famous is the book by the American researcher Amélia Simpson (1994), in which she brought up a series of elements capable of characterizing Xuxa as a typical mass phenomenon in developing countries, where education and health was not necessarily priorities. However, the researcher from the United States of America did not have the firepower of Xuxa, who, knowing subtly to reinvent herself, guaranteed her perpetual timelessness. Soon, the presenter who won the land of Uncle Sam, proved, with time, that it was not the result of the moment.

Since then, there have been several scientific researches about Xuxa. We can quote that of Zolin-Vesz (2013), who questioned Simpson's arguments (1994), and attributed to the American text a colonialist and segregating tenor. This work analyzed the North

American discourse about Xuxa Meneghel from the dialogue between AL and discourse analysis.

In the field of journalism and social communication, we have Campos' research (2006) as a very expressive investigation with regard to the consumption reach of the figure of Xuxa Meneghel. For the author, the phrase “want, power and achieve”, in Xuxa's own words, was a real draw in encouraging consumerism,

Further on, we have Pereira's research (2017), who, in a compilation of researches, analyzes Xuxa's media figure under different purposes. For the author, the figure of the presenter is an object rich in details for all areas of human knowledge, because, in addition to the awakening of affective memory, the figure of Xuxa Meneghel attracts attention never seen in other Brazilian artists, which makes her a unique case of success in Brazil. In his book, Pereira (2017), he discusses pedagogical, media, sociological and psychological issues from AL, which deal with Xuxa as a mass phenomenon.

In the next section, we describe a little bit about the aforementioned Chilean commercial that Xuxa starred in.

4. Xuxa's return to latin advertising brand in wom commercial

Wom is a mobile phone team from Chile with great repercussions there. At the beginning of the television advertising campaign starring Xuxa Meneghel, there is a brief narrative that satirizes the service and services provided by other mobile telephones in the country.

The video tells the dissatisfactions of Edmundo, a customer of any operator that never has gigas to surf the internet, as well as does not enjoy a good signal to make calls. During the advertisement, Edmundo goes through several vexing moments, such as the impossibility of navigating with his mobile data and the negligence of telephone operators when the customer seeks her to express their relationships.

However, all this discomfort is dissipated when Xuxa presents Edmundo with the benefits of migrating to Wom, which, as stated in the video, “Wom has more gigas than Xuxa”, which suggests internet access speed, as well as quality in the signal of the unlimited connections.

Xuxa, however, appears triumphant and with the same vigor of youth, when descending from his iconic ship, with Edmundo, singing a version of the song “Tindolelé” [¹] made especially for the campaign.

¹ The song “Tindolelé” is one of the biggest successes of Xuxa's career, having been translated into Spanish, English, French, Russian and Mandarin.

The verse "everything is happy" suffered a pun in which, in Spanish, it outlined the happiness that Edmundo came to feel.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The proposal, with this article, is to invite the attentive reader to reflect on the language mechanisms that permeate interdiscursive constructions that agglomerate ideologies and cause movements in the dialogical field of advertising.

We hope that this work can arouse the interest of other researchers and that they can rethink the advertising field as a fertile sphere of analysis, as it offers discursive, imagery and sound elements capable of recombining and, thus, building different meanings and social impacts.

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