The Ifood B side campaign and complexity in digital work relations: unveiling other revascularizations?

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ABSTRACT
This article aims to reflect on discourses that permeate the relations between workers of the new service proletariat in the digital age. Based on the perspectives of Digital Discourse Analysis and Popular Linguistics, we will address some important aspects about the advent and expansion of a new digital service proletariat, deprived of several rights, including that of organization and whose work gains momentum with new digital business models, capable of connecting different types of work with their different degrees of precariousness. The theoretical-methodological foundation articulates Digital Discourse Analysis as conceived by Marie-Anne Paveau (2019, 2021) and Cristiane Dias (2018, 2019) and Popular Linguistics, which, according to Preston (2021), focuses on what is what happens in language and what non-linguists say about it. The object of analysis is the material collected by the report made by apublica.org (04.04.2022), which constitutes the corpus related to this digital proletariat. In this case, language is related to an ideological construction that propels meta-discourses that reveal power relations. These, ultimately, go back to relations between subordinate workers. Finally, as they are inscribed in a situation of discursive obstructions of different natures, the discourses inferred from the report allow accessing voices and glimpse processes of discursive revascularization (BARONAS; LOURENÇO, 2022) simple, complex and even of other natures.
Este artigo visa refletir sobre discursos que permeiam as relações entre trabalhadores do novo proletariado de serviços na era digital. Baseado nas perspectivas da Análise do Discurso Digital e da Linguística Popular, abordaremos alguns aspectos importantes sobre o advento e expansão de um novo proletariado digital de serviços, privado de vários direitos, inclusive o de organização e cujos trabalhos ganham impulso com novos modelos de negócios digitais, capazes de conectar distintas modalidades laborais com seus diferentes graus de precarização. A fundamentação teórico-metodológica articula a Análise do Discurso Digital tal qual pensada por Marie-Anne Paveau (2019, 2021) e Cristiane Dias (2018, 2019) e a Linguística Popular que, segundo Preston (2021), se debruça sobre o que se passa na linguagem e o que os não linguistas dizem sobre ela. O objeto de análise é o material coletado pela reportagem realizada pela apublica.org (04.04.2022), que constitui o corpus relacionado a esse proletariado digital. Nesse caso, a linguagem relaciona-se a uma construção ideológica propulsora de metadiscursos que desvelam relações de poder. Estas, em última instância, remontam às relações entre trabalhadores subalternizados. Finalmente, por se inscreverem em situação de obstruções discursivas de diferentes naturezas, os discursos depreendidos da reportagem permitem acessar vozes e entrever processos de revascularização discursiva (BARONAS; LOURENÇO, 2022) simples, complexas e até mesmo de outras naturezas.

**Keywords**


**Palavras-Chave**

designed to meet the interests of iFood, a company whose main product is an application that works as a marketplace for restaurants, bars, markets, etc., offering delivery services. These services are carried out by professionals who are legally considered autonomous, with no employment relationship and who have their payments conditioned on deliveries made, and any tips given by customers. It is, therefore, a job “without predetermined working hours, without defined workspace, without fixed remuneration, without rights, not even that of union organization” (ANTUNES, 2018, p. 42). According to Antunes (2018), there are several consequences generated by this work model, ranging from the elimination of labor rights to encouraging isolated work, devoid of social and collective interaction.

However, despite this context, couriers across Brazil began to debate the precariousness of their labor conditions and the way delivery apps exploit them in Brazil. Such discussions culminated in the organization of a strike for the category, which took place on July 1st, 2020. The mobilization, which has become widely known as Breque dos Apps, took place simultaneously in thirteen states and in the Federal District and had as its main guidelines the increase in the amount paid by delivery, providing protective measures against COVID-19 and improving working conditions.

According to the report by Pública, *A máquina oculta de propaganda do iFood* (The hidden propaganda machine of iFood), the visibility achieved by the strike motivated iFood to launch, nationally, an open letter in prime time on open TV, and on-line, on a website, in order to counter the criticisms perpetrated by the strike movement. In addition, the company decided to closely monitor both the strike and its repercussions, as well as adopting an advertising model which is not signed by any institution, in order to enable, according to a source heard by the report, the dissemination of “ideas and opinions in a format that imitates the way couriers communicate, simulating (...) posts and narratives that came from real couriers” (LEVY, 2022). According to documents, reports, photos, and screen captures that the journalism agency had access to, through advertisers involved in the preparation of campaign material, it is a format based on social media networks, and on content massive publishing and posting in the form of memes from the internet, jokes and videos. That way, it is possible to promote a brand or idea, but hide the advertiser and agency behind the content served. This content was systematically released through pages and profiles on social media networks such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, as well as comments on posts that addressed the subject. The main objective of the method was to soften the impacts of strikes against iFood and, simultaneously, to bewilder and undermine the mobilization of couriers.

Considering the historical and discursive event that *Breque dos Apps* is, and the leak of materials that gave rise to the previously mentioned report (that serve us as a source for this study) as producers of controversial sayings that show, in addition to a war of narratives about iFood, an obscured process of proletarianization of a specific kind of labor activity typically exercised by people with high levels of education and knowledge about how technodiscourses and digital tools work, we used the material collected by Pública’s report, in addition to some key excerpts from the mentioned article, as our research archive. According to the Discourse Analysis method, we proceeded to the discursive clipping: “with the gesture of clipping, the analyst aims to analyze the discursive functioning of a given text, seeking to understand the establishment of significant relationships between the significant elements
of the shell language.” (SOUSA; GARCIA; FARIA, 2014, p. 103). Our corpus, consisting of discursive sequences cut from the reportage material, is diverse: it presents Whatsapp dialogues between the advertising agency and also memes produced by it “anonymously”, as if they were produced within the strike movement.

1. Digital discourse Analysis and Folk Linguistics: an in-between issue

Before starting to proceed any analysis, it is necessary to observe a particularity that occurs throughout the whole corpus to be analyzed. All of it is transversely permeated by cultural aspects that surround language, its materiality, the meaning-effects that it can create through the use (or non-use) of its formal aspects. For Hoeningswald (2021) it is important that linguists aim to understand not only the language itself, but also how people react and what they say about it. For him, “the investigation of the social role of speech differences is, of course, a legitimate part of the objective study of what GOES ON, rather than what is SAID about it, although fragments of the latter kind always intrude.” (HOENINGSWALD, 2021, p. 25). The author continues his reasoning by pointing out that it is even more important to analyze “how speakers BEHAVE in the face of dialect differences” (idem ibidem). For Paveau, this kind of study (2021, p. 15) represents a kind of linguistics common sense, or even a profane speakers' linguistics, massively found in online environments. In these virtual environments, it is possible to observe a myriad of practical knowledge, which differs from the theoretical, considered scientific, for being essentially empirical and permeated by beliefs, “which constitute guides for the action of social actors” (PAVEAU, 2021, p. 16).

Considering, therefore, that non-linguists produce linguistic descriptions and theorizations, we can affirm that this phenomenon is even more patent on-line: “One can [...] verify the presence of what we call linguistics of profane speakers on the internet, notably in discussion forums [...]” (ROSIER, 2004, p. 70). Although the author refers to popular linguists to exemplify the issue of the debate about purism in language, which is always the subject of discussions in virtual environments, we believe that the look should not be restricted only to the popular imagination in relation to the set of rules of language, but we must seek to observe the issue from a global view of the relationship between non-linguists and language in their daily lives, which are currently heavily permeated by the digital world.

In this sense, according to Orlandi (2008, p. 33), DA constitutes the “space between” linguistics and other sciences, especially regarding issues of language (linguistic object) and exteriority (historical object).

This is a strange fate for discourse analysis, which clearly reflects the dimension of its division and all its wanderings: when proceeded, it changes study field and, at the same time, that it raises some questions for linguistics, within linguistics itself, it also poses problems for social sciences within themselves, or rather, about the foundations that the social sciences are built to constitute. (ORLANDI, 2008, p. 33).
Understood then as an in-between, or “space between”, Discourse Analysis is established in the study of the clashes of meaning, of historicity, of the textualization of discourse and its relations with the conditions of production, of language as a place of passage. Precisely because of its interplay, this work justifies its theoretical framework by mobilizing, in a dialogue relationship, Discourse Analysis and Popular Linguistics. And in the relationship between these two fields under construction, there is still the digital.

Nowadays, we have observed that the digital environment has become a condition for the political-ideological production of discourse (DIAS, 2018). This characteristic adds a new veil of complexity to such discourses, which become deeply influenced by the machinic environment, which starts to play a constitutive role in the formulation of these sayings. According to Paveau (2021), the discourses engendered on the Internet and social media must be analyzed, ecologically, as technodiscourses, in order to take into account all the technical particularities involved in the enunciation process. For her, the addition of the prefix “-tecno” does not only seek to change the meaning of the word’s radical, but denotes “a theoretical option that modifies the traditional episteme of language sciences” (BARONAS; LOURENÇO, 2022, p. 9). It is, therefore, about understanding and rethinking the man-machine relationship as part of the constitution of subjects (DIAS, 2018).

The present article aims to reflect on technodiscourses about the relations between different categories of workers from the new proletariat of services in the digital age. We intend to do so by analyzing the material collected by Pública’s report, seeking, thus, to articulate the Digital Discourse Analysis proposed by Paveau and Dias, in addition to Folk Linguistics, since the technodiscourses put into circulation reveal both the power relations put at stake by the new economy of digital services, and demonstrate the use of empirical know-how and approximative knowledge about language in dealing with the advertising copywriting work. Therefore, we will seek this articulation through the theory of discursive revascularization, proposed by Baronas and Lourenço (2022). Through it, the need to create conditions is investigated so that subjects in a situation of social vulnerability can speak and be heard, definitively entering history”, even if such vulnerability is not so evident when it comes to social actors who are able to enjoy several labor rights to which others, such as couriers, do not have access. That is the case of advertisers: although they are specialized workers, they are undergoing a proletarianization, and a labor precarization process even though this process is not so evident.

By analyzing the work activity of advertising professionals, with their tensions between enunciation in traditional media and social media, and the subsequent anonymous denunciations about the campaign they were working on, it is possible to envision a trail of more or less patent discursive formations that reveal the relationship between different degree subaltern workers: if, on the one hand, we see couriers forced into job insecurity, on the other hand, we see advertising professionals who, although enjoying work with less demeaning conditions, they also depend on their workforce to survive and, therefore, submit to developing activities that, not infrequently, come into conflict with their own values. This seems to be, effectively, the meaning-effect created by the leakage, for the report, of confidential documents, screen captures and even recordings of internal meetings with the team involved.
in the B side campaign, as well as the hypothesis that permeates the analysis that will be carried out throughout the present article says.

This article intends to analyze the way “that a given subject, faced with an obstacle (a discursive obstruction), ends up finding alternative paths to overcome these difficulties” (BARONAS; LOURENÇO, 2022, p. 17) and opposing this process to a second perception: that of perception of a political, ideological and labor obstruction, typical of a historical moment marked by labor precariousness in the midst of the so-called digital revolution, which brought the internet to the center of contemporary capitalism. It is, therefore, a relationship of tension between what Baronas and Lourenço (2022) agreed to call simple and complex revascularization, respectively, since it seems to constitute an in-between, that is, a nuance between the two types of revascularization process.

More than verifying and discursively analyzing the violence perpetrated by iFood’s B Side campaign against motorcycle couriers, it is important to remark the violence that befalls advertising workers who, on the one hand, perpetuate, through technodiscourses, oppression, and on the other, also find themselves in the position of oppressed. And, faced with this fact, they find a way to rebel against their employers and contractors through denunciations to an investigative journalism agency, a fact that, discursively, triggers “a process of production of meanings that, repressed, will lead to absolute dominance of (neo)liberal discourse”. (ORLANDI, 1999, p. 59). It is, therefore, a matter of describing and analyzing the way in which an abuse of power against different workers is practiced, produced and legitimized by big companies, a tech one, and a group of advertising communication agencies, either through documentary texts (such as briefings, tactical plans and spreadsheets), mediated speeches (such as WhatsApp conversations and meeting recordings) or memes posted on social media networks.

In this context, the “discursively mediated dominance and inequality” (VAN DIJK, 2020, p. 87) relationships are closely connected to “access to discourses standards” (idem ibidem), a sine qua non condition for the process of discursive revascularization to engender itself.

For this purpose, it will be necessary to observe political, economic and cultural models linked to the patterns of oppression and domination that are being designed in the current social and economic moment of capitalism, as well as the social power that certain institutions are capable of exercising over different groups of workers. By cultural models, we mean a set of “explicit, and often meticulously elaborated, reactions by speakers, based on a system of culturally shared opinions” (MURILLO, 2021, p. 26). From the understanding of cultural models - or culturally shared schematizations - in relation to Costa Rican Spanish (esCR), Murillo (2021) ascertain the fact that, when elaborating opinions about the language, speakers formulate a response in which several discursive operations can be recognized, such as language description, valuation, explanation and prescription. Then, the author proposes to look at four cultural models shared by speakers: M1: a non-evaluative opinion about esCR, with emphasis on its variability or diversity. M2: a positive valuation of esCR, but pointing out its “defects”; It is included here the evaluation of esCR as “regular” (more or less good/bad). M3: a (very) negative valuation of esCR. M4: a (very) positive valuation of esCR.

Given the above, we can see that, in Brazilian Portuguese (ptBR), the same phenomenon occurs, even potentially presenting very similar cultural models. The most observable in ptBR is M3, whose premise is
that there is an ideal, pure or perfect language that no speaker knows how to use. This is an important point for understanding the language facts emerging from our corpus, in which advertisers try to reproduce couriers' register, named by them as “motoquês”, based on a specific value judgment concerning to ptBR that reveals (and reverberates) beliefs which are culturally shared by Brazilians, especially the one that reproduces and crystallizes claims that social lower classes speak a “worse” Portuguese.

If we take into account that social power is instituted in relation to the “control exercised by a group of people, or organizations (or its members) over the actions and/or minds of (members of) another group” (VAN DIJK, 2020, p. 88, author's emphasis), it will be possible to glimpse how cultural models are ideologically influenced by social power and even by the big institutions’ power, since it is based on the privileged and valued social resources, such as money, access preference to public discourse and communication and, ultimately, the means of production they have access to. In this extent, we can think about the influence of power and social power of hegemonic groups and organizations, in the context of capitalism in the internet age, "on socially coined models of thought" (HOLLAND; QUINN, 1987 apud MURILLO, 2021, p. 27) by different groups of workers, whether they are motorcycle couriers or advertisers responsible for carrying out the iFood Side B campaign.

2. Analytical principles

In order to analyze the phenomenon and the discursive event evidenced by the Pública’s report, it is necessary, at the first place, to describe, in general lines, how the work of carrying out an advertising campaign is designed, as well as some of the documents, usually confidential ones, involved in this process. That is necessary because advertising work involves specific techniques and methodologies, which are a shared knowledge, and a standard procedure to companies in the field. These methods guide the relationship between language and the work carried out in the institutional context of advertising agencies. In Souza-e-Silva’s words, “modern forms of work organization (...) have not remained insensitive to the relationship between language and work issue: rather, they have sought to develop different speech management devices (...). Currently, (...) both labor and routine functioning are increasingly based on symbolic activities” (2002, p. 61). The author also mentions the importance of newsletters, minutes, technical news and other documents related to the companies' internal communication and their influence on labor relations, thus justifying the choice of interactions at work as an object of study for discourse analysts.

That said, we can summarize the basic process of running an advertising campaign in a few steps:

1. Diagnosis: client’s situation is analyzed in order to provide a diagnosis on the issue to be resolved by the campaign. At this stage, it is necessary to raise questions that design the scenario in which the institution contracting the services of the advertising agency is inserted, carrying out research that considers internal and external factors;
2. General objectives definition: definition of campaign objectives and performance indicators that should guide it. In this phase, the first briefing document is elaborated;

3. Target audience definition: determination of the social, demographic group to whom the campaign is aimed. In this phase, surveys are carried out in order to generate reports about the aimed target audience;

4. Concept creation: with the documents generated by the previous phases, a prototypical advertising piece and a model of performance monitoring report are elaborated;

5. Pre-test: in possession of the first advertising piece(s) prepared, a test placement is carried out, which serves to anticipate the public’s reaction to the content, which allows for adjustments and, thus, more assertiveness in the adopted approach;

6. Creating an action plan: in this phase, parts to be used are defined, a placement map is created (through documents called Tactical Plan, communication ruler and Roadmap), defining schedule, responsibilities and actions to be taken to be carried out.

In view of the scenario created by the historical and discursive event of Breque dos Apps and the discussion of Bill 3797/20 by the Chamber of Deputies, which, in 2020, discussed the regulation for hiring, via apps, delivery service providers and of drivers, in addition to predicting improvements in working conditions and benefits for the category, iFood requested the services of two large digital marketing agencies: Benjamim Comunicação and Social Qi (SQi).

The briefing released by the report gives guidelines on how the campaign should be carried out. The image below is a leaked document’s clipping. For the sake of ease of understanding, we performed a free translation of the portrayed document.

BRIEFING - B SIDE IFOOD REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Introduction: Every time we work with iFood we create strategies for “SIDE B”. These strategies aim to create a slight rumor on social networks about the subject we want to address at the moment, in this case: REGULATORY FRAMEWORK. So we use Facebook Pages, Instagram Profiles, Twitter Profiles, Facebook Profiles created by us to generate these rumors. As? We comment in publications that talk about the subject, we go to profiles that address the subject and we indirectly comment that some companies are moving so that the RF actually happens, it depends on what is being addressed regarding the subject, negative or positive, but NEVER signed like iFood so that no one suspects. We can post about Coca-Cola and Rappi, for example, which are already moving, from time to time we can talk about iFood, but never make it clear that we work for them.

Goal:

- Creation of a strategy focused on B SIDE. What are we going to do to raise this issue on social media networks? How can we discuss RF within social media networks without having to sign as iFood?
- We should go after micro influencers, nano influencers.
- Saying that the couriers must be valued.

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1 In advertising jargon, briefing is understood to be the document in which the initial guidelines for planning and carrying out an advertising campaign are given, not necessarily having a single defined author, but being the result of the work activity of one or more professionals of a team.
It is noticed that the guiding questions presented in the topic related to the campaign's specific goals, end up inquiring "the set of utterances that we can qualify as profane linguistic practices (that is, that do not come from representatives of linguistics as an established discipline, the “non-linguists”), linguists", so called by N. Niedzielski and D. Preston (PAVEAU, 2021, p. 19). Therefore, according to the campaign's briefing, the advertisers' involved in iFood's B campaign job would necessarily involve designating, evaluating and referring to language phenomena in order to then reproduce them.

According to the report, the actions carried out in April 2021 ranged from hiring actors, who were responsible for distributing stickers and carry banners asking for "vaccination now" in the acts of motorcycle freight forwarders, to the dissemination of posts and comments by false users, who would have been created by iFood's advertising agencies contractors. Such contents were broadcast mainly on two fanpages, that is, Facebook pages, which served to support the narrative, in addition to a Facebook group, another WhatsApp group and Twitter profiles. The first fanpage is entitled Não Breca Meu Trampo (Don't stop my job, in a free translation), through a more politicized content and

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2 As a matter of fidelity to the text of the original briefing document, we made a free translation that preserves features of popular language and some grammatical deviations, as can be seen in the original one in Portuguese (Image 1).
the second is called “Garfo na Caveira” (Fork in the Skull, in free translation), more focused on memes.

According to the report, the first fanpage had the specific aim of interacting with the couriers, understanding them and collecting data, through artificial intelligence, in order to create more assertive content for the task of undermining the strike. Within the perspective of planning an advertising campaign, these are the studies for determining the target audience and its characteristics. Through studies and reports filled with inputs generated by artificial intelligences, several elements, characteristics and even certain regularities about the technodiscourses and the linguistic register spoken by the couriers were raised.

This way, the content produced for the fanpages was aligned with a strategy to recover the way the strike was known on social networks, taking advantage of the fragility in the registration process of the event in Brazilian people’s collective and discursive memory. The desired production of meaning seems to have sought (and succeeded in) making the strikers’ guidelines, which were leading to a class organization and providing a category of workers, previously devoid of the possibility of organization, with a revolutionary potential in terms of political and social, were barred, in the words of Orlandi (1999, p. 63), “violently by the status quo. (...) So, possible meanings, historically viable, were politically interdicted. And they became unviable”.

This interdiction process, in the case of the analyzed campaign, took place through planning and creation of content that involved studies on the language used by motorcycle couriers, baptized by the creators of the campaign as “motoquês”. The description of the page, for example, even though it makes use of this linguistic variety, shows a discursive formation more aligned with the interests of sectors of the high digital business community, despite the meanings that the strikers aspired to. This is because such companies, like iFood, have a management modality in which labor relations can be disguised as transactions between companies which, in the words of Antunes (2018, p. 37) “based on fixed-term contracts, flexible, according to the productive rhythms of the contracting companies, with profound consequences that further disrupt the working class, its working and life time, its rights, its health conditions, its subjective universe, etc.”

The page description reads: “A gente quer melhorar de vida e ganhar mais. SEM patrão e salário mínimo. No corre bem feito a gente tira mais e não tem chefe pra enchê o saco. A gente quer liberdade pra trampar pra quem a gente quiser!” (“We wanna improve our living conditions and earn more money. With NO boss, nor minimum wage. When the rusty trombone is well done, we make more dough and there's no boss to piss us off. We want freedom to work for whoever we want!” in free translation). This positioning is reinforced by several scheduled posts, previously approved by iFood, that is, as we can see in the Communication Rule, a document in the form of a spreadsheet made available by advertisers who denounced the campaign to Pública.
As it is a long spreadsheet, which could not be fully reproduced in this article, we will reproduce below a table in which we are going to be able to see an excerpt from the mentioned spreadsheet. Thus, the analysis will be based on a selection of some exemplary directions documented by the material.

For the sake of readability of Image 2, we will describe the content of the columns arranged in line 1 of the worksheet, between columns A and L of the document. The other columns are not filled in and, as they deal with issues more related to the creation and monitoring of advertising campaign pieces, therefore, they are not relevant for the kind of analysis proposed in this article.

The worksheet with the communication ruler is composed of columns in which the following communication elements are arranged:

A. **THEME / PILLAR**: subjects that each post should address;
B. **CHANNELS**: the social media network the content should be disseminated on. The CHANNELS column is divided into three sub-items, according to the social media network in which the placement should be made. The subdivisions are:
   a. FB: Facebook;
   b. IG: Instagram;
   c. WA: WhatsApp;
   d. TW: Twitter;
C. **CONTENT IDEA / SUGGESTION**: suggestions for texts, emojis, links etc;
D. **TEXT / ART DIRECTION**: guidelines for the copywriting, post’s image design or other composite element (such as pictures, gifs, lettering etc) that must appear in the post;

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME / PILLAR</th>
<th>CONTENT IDEA / SUGGESTION</th>
<th>TEXT / ART DIRECTION</th>
<th>CHANNELS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Segurança</td>
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<td>Prevenção social</td>
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<td>Desenvolvimento</td>
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E. **TEXT / CAPTION DIRECTION:** direction for comments or captions that must appear in the post copywriting;

F. **REF:** link to a reference post, which was organically elaborated by pages of micro-influencers or nano-influencers followed by the campaign's target audience;

G. **WHAT:** a brief description of the composite elements that must be used in the post to be elaborated;

H. **CUSTOMER STATUS:** any commentaries the customer may make in relation to the content planned for the post.

The worksheet contains the planning and the script for the preparation of fourteen posts to be published in different social networks, in some cases simultaneously, although it does not specify textually, in the case of Facebook, on which of the campaign pages the posts would be published. For analysis purposes, we are going to analyze a specific part of the document. We are going to dwell on the instructions for making a post to be published on the four social media networks worked on by the campaign. Also, the directions are inspired by another post, presumably as an organically elaborated one, that was already in circulation, which was considered to be an example of the way in which the campaign should approach the laboral safety issue.

Such prioritization allowed us to make, through a representative sample of the material, general evaluations related to the characteristics that emerge from the document as a whole and to observe the technodiscourses put into circulation. At the same time such material directs the analysis of the meaning-effects generated by discourses that were put into circulation in a specific work environment, which produces linguistic knowledge and unveil cultural data. In its turn, this cultural data can reveal cultural data and games of power that pervade the relations between language and work in the current capitalist context, which has made the Internet a new privileged place for value generation. This methodological choice is based on the reflections of the French researcher Sophie Moirand (2018 apud BARONAS; LOURENÇO, 2022), who defends the construction of the “small corpus” as a way of reflecting on the present. When it comes to discourse studies, Moirand proposes, then, that a digital corpus, for example, can be elaborated through a “collection of examples”.

Observing the content of the document and the table we created to analyze it, we can observe some regularities which are remarkably present in all scripted posts. One can see, for example, the emulation of discursive practices engendered by couriers, marked by the frequent use of emojis, images, text and, in some cases, videos. These, it is worth noting, also have specific directions (and even links to posts already published on social media networks) for the development of the respective scripts, possibly written by micro-influencers and nano-influencers monitored, and maybe even hired, by the campaign.

Guidelines and ideas for the copywriters to create each of these elements are organized in separate columns. This way, we can evaluate that the communication ruler, by its own form and division, reveals the planning of several serial textualities, that is, a set of formulations that have a common trait as a repeatable element and a variation (DIAS, 2019), which (co)operate the production of senses and the effects of humor. According to Dias,

Serial textualities (...) are produced in this process of serialization, which, on the one hand, is characterized by the explicit repetition of an element of the series (the one that guarantees readability through the identity of the text as belonging to a series) and, on the other hand, it is characterized by the variation of the saying, its regularization within a series. (DIAS, 2019, p. 65)

In this sense, we can find, in the communication ruler, what could be understood as a foundation of a serial textuality, as a kind of script for TV series, to follow the trail of Dias’ idea, exercising coercion and semantic instructions. The language materiality of the communication rule serves to be subsequently activated at the level of a later language production. As a discursive formation, in the Pecheutian sense, the communication ruler determines what can and should be said.

The post we are analyzing is about safety at work issues and it is approached through a tragicomic situation that, according to research carried out by the agency, is common in the daily work of couriers: being chased by dogs. It is suggested to create a meme based on a video, probably from a camera belonging to a real estate security circuit, which shows a delivery man running away from a dog, brought by a client and that is released from a leash.
A short text is suggested, which addresses the issue of work safety in a light and relaxed way. The original sentence suggestion, in Brazilian Portuguese, has words like “motoca”, here used as a synonym for “couriers”, deviations from the standard norm (in terms of nominal concordance and capitalization of the country name, which is a very common deviation on platforms web 2.0), a mixture of English and Portuguese, when referring to dogs, and ends with an emoji that represents laughter.

In this context, it is important to talk about the relationship between memes, humor and the discourses put into circulation in the case reported by Pública. When focusing on humorous texts, Possenti (2008, p. 28) states that these are “privileged places of language and discourse – or of discourses and conditions of production”, since they demand a series of grammatical and enunciative maneuvers, such as presuppositions, inferences, ambiguities that refer to often antagonistic ideologies and the need for speakers to recognize cultural factors. Memes, in turn, have many similarities with such characteristics, although they do not necessarily have a humorous character. This becomes evident in the processes of presuppositions, inferences and, above all, the apprehension of the ideological aspects that emerge from them.

When thinking about Internet memes, Shiffman (2014, p. 41) defines them as: “(a) a group of digital items sharing common characteristics of content, form, and/or stance, which (b) were created with awareness of each other, and (c) were circulated, imitated, and/or transformed via the Internet by many users.”

This concept proves to be particularly fruitful if we look at the case of the so-called iFood Side B campaign. If we think about the first part of the series that will compose the meme that alludes, ironically, to laboral safety against a specific occupational hazard for couriers (being chased or bitten by dogs) guaranteed by a possible labor contract. In this sense, if at first, a saying similar to the sentence recommended as the basis for the post (“Alguém sabe se no brasil tem alguma lei que proteja os motoca dos dog?”, freely translated as “Does anyone know if there is some law in brazil protecting couriers from doggies?”) could prompt a reflection on safety at work and rights labor laws, the use of the emoji corresponding to a laugh (😊) imposes an almost instantaneous break at this possible meaning-effect formulation. The meme, in turn, will fulfill the role of talking about the subject in a way that can sound fun and cathartic for the couriers and, at the same time, minimize the suffering or even the possible fear in relation to possible accidents with dogs and the helplessness caused by a legal vacuum in this regard. The communication ruler shows, therefore, the use of a technique of overlapping “a background known as the ‘right’ association between the different meanings made possible by a certain linguistic material” (Posenti, 2009, p. 225), the humor in the post uses the pleasure that the joke provokes to disrupt “the working class, its time of work and life, its rights, its health conditions, its subjective universe, etc.” (Antunes, 2018, p. 37). In this way, it is possible to soften the seriousness of the situation, exempting the platform from any obligation regarding this possible accident at work, which is now minimized.

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3 It is important to note that, in Brazilian Internet jargon, “dog” is used instead of “cachorro” to refer to the animal in a more affectionate way, which is why we chose the word “doggie” in our free translation.
It is worth remembering that the creation of such content for the campaign was not done by chance. The very statement that the issue of being chased by dogs is a frequent subject among couriers suggests that the communication rule was based on studies. According to the report, qualitative and quantitative research was carried out, so that it was possible to understand the role of work via apps in couriers’ lifes, the share of the income generated by this job in the family income, the degree of social vulnerability to which they are subjected, and amount of time worked. In addition, a specialized company would have monitored and analyzed more than 19,000 messages exchanged in 15 Whatsapp groups, which provided knowledge for hiring digital micro and nano-influencers, creating content with credible subjects, aesthetics and vocabulary.

In this sense, such data are of interest to us insofar as they dialogue with what Paveau, in his analysis device, proposes as inherent characteristics of technodiscourses (PAVEAU, 2021, p. 20), such as:

- Composite features: simultaneously linguistic, multimodal and technical of discursive materiality;
- Extensibility: the way conversational functions and simultaneous collaborative writing tools develop the content as much as the enunciators);
- Relationality: the way in which all discourses produced on-line relate to each other and to the machines, in addition to existing only from the internet user’s subjectivity;
- Investigability: linked to the possibility of tracing the authors of each published speech.

To Paveau (2021, p. 20), “Technodiscourses are inseparably linguistic and technical, two faces that are so intertwined that they do not allow the actual linguistic materiality to be decoupled from the connected spaces technical functionalities without impairing the analyzes by carrying out such procedure.”

It is precisely the confluence of the language with technical features and issues that allowed the creators of the iFood Side B campaign to place themselves in a paradoxical position of spokespeople for the couriers, even though they were actually infiltrated agents, working against the interests of that class. After all, if on the one hand social media networks and digital communication technologies in general offer subaltern delivery people the possibility of creating their own enunciation spaces by commenting and sharing posts, on the other they end up offering a larger and more fertile space for the purposeful reproduction of power structures and hegemonic oppression: that of the big companies of the digital economy, which have access to the economic and financial power to artificially boost posts, comments and, therefore, technodiscourses according to their own interests. That is because the campaign was intended to generate engagement among couriers in posts that exalted the work model imposed by the apps, by interspersing humor and serious pieces. It is as if, faced with the imperative of asserting their client’s interests, the advertisers working for the advertising agencies responsible for the campaign created “alternative routes for resolving/unobstructing their problems” (BARONAS; LOURENÇO, 2021, p. 1), even though these problems did not personally concern them personally or professionally. This is an apparent contradiction imposed by the advertiser’s own métier: that of creating pieces in order to serve the strategic interests of their clients, despite their own interests, as workers of a new digital proletariat, who are constantly subjected to laboral abuses, such as long work journeys with no overtime payment, tacit and unofficial no right to class organization and so on.
If we think that app workers' demands proved to be (potentially) harmful to iFood's interests, it would be necessary, for the advertisers to produce technodiscourses which sounds similar to the ones produced by motorcycle couriers. Those technodiscourses should circulate on social networks, and should be capable of recontextualizing potentially dangerous utterances through an enunciative resumption (BARONAS; LOURENÇO, 2021, p. 11). Hence the need to produce speeches about the sayings produced by the strikers, since dealing with the so-called “motoquês” was mandatory for the campaign to succeed. It is possible to observe, in the reproduction of some dialogues, possibly carried out via digital messaging applications, in which advertisers analyze discursive productions and plan ways to simulate them. This way, the technodiscourses, formulated with the help of data mining, gain new contours: the elaboration of the sayings becomes digital, produced within a machine that serves almost as a co-author, allowing the circulation of the oppressor’s sayings (namely, iFood) as if they were from the oppressed (the couriers), or at least intending to sound like the oppressed. Strange is the mirror of Discourse Analysis which, between the language reality and the history reality, found the machine reality.

It is precisely at the confluence of language and history that the digital finds the possibility of becoming an object of study. More specifically, it is within Discourse Analysis that we can shelter the study of digital discourse as the primacy of the very condition for enunciation possibilities, understanding the technical issues as meaning co-builders.

It is not possible, however, to disregard that the sayings produced by the agency, textualized in Whatsapp conversations, reveal profane knowledge about the language. In the emergence of an advertising campaign that, in addition to approaching a specific target audience, should aim to become it (or, at least sound like it), there was the construction of hypotheses and knowledge about the “motoquês” language that led to the adoption of this linguistic variety on Facebook pages. About this, Paveau (2020) states that:

For the time being, we propose to call popular the spontaneous knowledge of social actors about the world (deposited among other spaces in proverbs and popular sayings, for example), which differs from academic or scientific knowledge, in the same way that practical knowledge is distinguished from scientific knowledge, the same way it differs from theoretical knowledge. Spontaneous knowledge is made up of empirical knowledge, not susceptible to logical verification (spontaneous knowledge is neither true nor false, since it is approximate knowledge, as explained by F. Markovits) and also of beliefs that constitute guides for the action of social actors: urban legends or the moon's influence on crops or even whether the sky is more or less cloudy as a possibility of rain are beliefs revealed by spontaneous knowledge. (PAVEAU, 2020, p. 15-16)

It is clear, in this sense, that this knowledge produced by non-linguists, linked to established cultural models (MURILLO, 2020), leads to a set of behaviors that are also culturally shared. In this case, folk knowledge about “motoquês” led to the construction of posts, tweets and memes that, in fact, built effects of the order of (group) belonging: It was believed that these were people belonging to the strike movement. In a subsequent topic, we are going to analyze how these discourses work when circulating among the advertisers.
Marketing Agency

Wed. Feb 10, 21

Employee A
Dudes, just a little hunch in the subtitles we’re using on Não Breca Meu Trampo (Don’t Stop my Job). I think they’re too long, less is more. Let’s shorten them and also we don’t need to put too much emphasis on the motoquês, it’s getting a bit artificial, don’t you think?

Yeah, sure we can shorten them, little by little we’re watching the way the couriers interact and they’re responding just fine to the language we’re adopting. With subs we also reduce motoquês use, let’s do it.

Cool. Let’s go for it. Put it in the [postimg] rule

Mon, Apr 26, 21

We can put less focus on the signature too, so it won’t become a standard, leave it as dull as possible. Sometimes you sign, sometimes you don’t, sometimes you use little flies

We can’t show there’s an agency working on it

For Garfo na Caveira (Fork in the Skull) we can sound scrappy, I’ve done another video for Não Breca Meu Trampo (Don’t Stop my Job) talking bout the break

Yeah, sure. But without sounding like a pro. It’s social media network tone, guys. B side. It’s not like if it was an official hot shot contracted page...
When observing the dialogues, it is possible to notice, for example, a value judgment about “motoquês” language, as when referring to it as “dull”, “scrappy” and evaluating it as non-standard, which is opposed to an allegedly more professional linguistic register (“sounding like a pro”), attributed to advertising copywriters. Paveau (2020) classifies non-linguists’ practices as prescriptive, descriptive, interventionist and militant. In our understanding, the listed dialogues are part of descriptive practices, since they are strongly based on the speakers’ subjective perceptions: “we don’t need to put too much emphasis on the motoquês, it’s getting a bit artificial, don’t you think?”. The surveyed description does
not follow any type of linguistic and/or discursive regularity, but reveals cultural patterns that, if they do not make explicit conflicts and power relations, show that the subalternization of certain social groups can also be influenced and manifested by language and its uses.

Paveau (2021, p. 71) states that the power issue is central to Discourse Analysis and that it is also greatly relevant to Digital Discourse Analysis. The author asserts that it is necessary to consider the power of those who “hold digital skills beyond or alongside more traditional sociological primacies such as (...) economic power”, so that, online, the holder of discursive power is one who has the necessary qualifications to deal with new technologies. Such an analysis, however, does not consider a context in which there are shifts in the morphology of work (ANTUNES, 2018), from which a new proletariat in the service sector emerges. This is made up of both highly qualified and low-income professionals, showing itself to be “wider, more heterogeneous, complex and fragmented than the industrial proletariat of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century” (ANTUNES, 2018, p. 103, emphasis added). author).

Antunes (2018) explains that the most qualified, intellectualized segments, close to technological-informational-digital advancement, experience a systematic process of “involvement” and, in some cases, even manipulation within the workspace. The author even states that, on the other hand, precarious workers, due to their dispossessed condition, tend to rebel. This phenomenon can be observed exactly among advertisers and app deliverers. If, on the one hand, the advertisers involved with the Lado B campaign demonstrated involvement with the values propagated by the hegemonic sectors of capital, on the other hand, the couriers, who despite having a certain amount of knowledge towards technology are still very powerless and dispossessed, demonstrated a rebellious drive for self-preservation and organized themselves in a strike movement and class associations. In this context, the high qualification, as well as the profane knowledge about the language, allowed advertisers to analyze a large amount of data, through digital intelligence, and to devise strategies to undermine the strike through continuous monitoring, until the campaign was considered a success.

However, a closer look reveals yet another layer of conflict to the case we are analyzing. This is a tendency towards rebellion arising from a place, in principle, unexpected: that of the advertisers, who once made efforts to manipulate the work environment and neutralize and undermine the couriers’ rebellion. We asked ourselves, then, about the meaning effects that these anonymous denunciations and leakages provoke. As an integral part of the new digital proletariat, advertising professionals decide to speak anonymously to the press, reveal confidential documents and even reveal the names of contractors, in a metonymic representation of the new bourgeoisie of capitalism in the digital age.

This is a new process of discursive revascularization: fearing professional reprisals, advertisers involved in iFood’s B side campaign find in traditional media a way to resolve a personal demand: the need to denounce injustices and oppressions that they, themselves, once helped to perpetrate without, with that, exposing their own identities and, therefore, putting their careers at risk: After all, given the investigability and amplification, characteristic of technodiscourses, denunciations perpetrated in
social networks could have serious implications, which could place them on the verge of social vulnerability, since that the advertising market has a significant reserve army\(^4\).

Baronas and Lourenço (2022, p. 26–27) state that discursive revascularization processes can be simple and complex, having different natures and equal importance. For them, the complex discursive revascularization seeks to “clear up collective problems” and the simple one “aims to solve more individual problems”.

But how can we discursively classify the situation of discursive revascularization unveiled by the complaint about the Lado B iFood campaign? Endowed with complexity, the case reveals a certain class consciousness, since, although professionally qualified and with full technical mastery of the functioning of social media networks, and even some knowledge in data analysis and artificial intelligence, the advertisers, who denounced their contractors to Pública are also proletarianized workers, even if they suffer less intensely the pains and discomforts of poverty and job insecurity than the couriers.

In this sense, the report creates a meaning effect on the importance of what was said by each publicist interviewed. Denouncing iFood’s B side campaign may have been a form of solidarity, support and, perhaps, redemption with the couriers. However, because they usually attend to closer circles to those of the real holders of economic power (in this case, big advertising and marketing companies, responsible for the communication agencies hired by iFood) and because they are more professionally qualified for (so called) skilled job positions, well-educated, and are a little closer to the technological-informational-digital development industry, advertising professionals cannot use their own social networks as a space to solve the moral problem that arises. Therefore, the traditional media leads their way to a revascularization process. The report keeps them anonymous, since they fear professional reprisals after the publication. This is precisely the greatest indication of the simple character of this process of discursive revascularization, since the search for the traditional press seeks to avoid personal harm.

In a lecture given on October 27, 2022 during the Seminário Regional do I Congresso Internacional de Análise do Discurso Digital: caminhos e perspectivas, at Unicamp-SP, Roberto Leiser Baronas\(^5\) stated that discursive revascularization stems from a concept of vulnerability arising from Sociology and that it is necessary to think about it discursively, and even starting to think about the perspective of contradiction, which are usually numerous in our reality. The denunciations denote a process of discursive revascularization that seems to be somewhere in between the simple and the complex, since the situation of the complainant advertisers demonstrates a certain subtlety and even a certain contradiction in relation to (a certain concept of) vulnerability. Handing over confidential documents, meeting recordings and even screenshots of internal conversations between the team demonstrates that

\[\text{\ldots} \text{ saying no is a simple thing, contrary to what common sense says. First, because saying, expressing yourself through language is, at the same time, acting; it is also and above all acting on people; it is, finally, to manipulate, in a symbolic way, real objects. To say is to intervene in the real relations between people,}\]

\(^4\) The concept of industrial reserve army was coined by Karl Marx and refers to the structural unemployment inherent in capitalist economies.

with words that are not those relations, but which are, in some way, a representation, a counterpart, an image, a sound image (SCHWARTZ; DURRIVE, 2007, p. 167).

In this sense, in the first place, the advertising group’s discursive disobstruction found its way discursively obstructing another vulnerable group. Therefore, here, very essayistically, we try to think of a third type of revascularization: that which, in order to unblock, obstructs. However, at a later time, this same group was compelled to denounce the obstructive revascularization that they themselves carried out, clearing it through the traditional media, under a veil of anonymity, as in a kind of intermediate revascularization processes, which stands in between the simple and the complex one, acting on

3. Final considerarions

Contemporary society is crossed by a fundamental trend: the precariousness of work relationships, which gain new momentum with digital business models, which connect, via cell phones, the most different types of work. In this context, couriers organize themselves for improvements in their precarious working conditions, even though they face difficulties in their struggles, essentially organized by digital means. These difficulties arise from the very characteristics of technodiscourses (PAVEAU, 2021): traceable, replicable, expandable and relatable, the couriers’ linguistic practices themselves serve as input for a B side advertising campaigns that seeks to undermine workers’ mobilizations by emulating their discursive practices. It is a revascularization that, in order to clear an obstacle, ends up obstructing, again, a first speech, already revascularized.

But the complexities and contradictions of life and the world of work in the digital capitalism era reveal different discursive vulnerabilities and revascularizations, when the same group of advertisers who obstructed the speeches of couriers decides to expose a cycle of oppression, and reveal power games involved in iFood’s B side campaign, through a new discursive revascularization process (BARONAS, LOURENÇO, 2022). Thus, the same advertisers, who once worked against couriers, end up finding in denunciations, interviews and document leakages to the traditional media the practices of linguistic and discursive manipulation used to undermine Breque dos Apps, the couriers’ strike, in a movement that could be potentially helpful for couriers, who are still trying to organize themselves. These are contradictions that permeate the relationships between vulnerable people, real people, permeated by complexities, contradictions and values, which are strained and materialized by discourses that, if they do not find conventional paths, open new possible ways for their circulation.

Additional information

Authors’ evaluation and response
O texto "A CAMPANHA LADO B DO IFOOD E A COMPLEXIDADE NAS RELAÇÕES NO TRABALHO DIGITAL: DESVELANDO OUTRAS REVASCULARIZAÇÕES?" traz uma análise fundamentada na Análise de Disurso pecheuxtiana e na Linguística Popular acerca de uma denúncia feita por publicitários em relação à máquina oculta de propaganda do iFood a partir de uma reportagem veiculada pela agência Pública (jornalismo investigativo). O tema em análise é extremamente relevante nos tempos atuais em que vivenciamos a uberização das relações de trabalho, em que a precarização atingiu níveis desumanos e essas relações de desigualdade-subordinação (que são estruturais e estruturantes do/no modo produção capitalista) se acirraram intensamente.
Há pequenos ajustes a serem feitos que estão apontados em comentários no arquivo enviado. É necessária uma revisão atenta nas referências (estão incompletas).

As relações teórico-analíticas construídas pelas autoras são muito bem estruturadas e fundamentadas. Trata-se de uma análise atenta à luta de classes e à luta pelos sentidos que atravessam práticas discursivas em circulação social, evidenciando os jogos de força engendrados na/pela língua.

Recomendação: aceitar.

EVALUATOR 2

O trabalho submetido a avaliação se inscreve no que Paveau (2020) conceitua como prática linguística militante e traz uma contribuição deveras relevante e pertinente para o campo da linguística popular - objeto de reflexão do dossiê em questão - e para a a análise do discurso digital. Para além de colocar em prática essa integração teórico-metodológica entre dois campos das ciências da linguagem, proposta defendida por Achard-Bayle e Paveau (2008/2020), no contexto francês, o artigo apresenta uma discussão inovadora sobre a precarização, plataformação do trabalho na era digital. Nessa discussão, o artigo não se resume a somente descrever a questão da precarização, plataformação, como fazem muitos trabalhos no âmbito da sociologia do trabalho (Antunes et alii, 2020) por exemplo, mas sobre-tudo como os trabalhadores precarizados encontram formas de resistir a essa precarização por meio da linguagem, a partir dos processos discursivos de ressignificação (Paveau, 2021, Paveau, Costa e Baronas, 2022) e de revascularização (Baronas e Costa, 2022). Nosso parecer é pela publicação do artigo.

Conflict of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Research protocol and pre-registration

In evaluating the routes proposed by Equator Network, I consider none of them relevant to the current research. We also inform that the research developed has not been pre-registered in an independent institutional repository.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing does not apply to this article, as no new data was created or analyzed in this study.
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