

EFFECTS OF MEANING IN CARTOONS: A STUDY OF THE POLITICALLY CORRECT

EFEITOS DE SENTIDO EM CHARGES: UM ESTUDO SOBRE O POLITICAMENTE CORRETO

EFFECTOS DE SENTIDO EN CARICATURAS: UN ESTUDIO SOBRE LO POLÍTICAMENTE
CORRECTO

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ABSTRACT: The politically correct behavior appeared in the United States as a result of the civil rights movement enhanced by the racial prejudice within the North American society. In Brazil, this behavior won followers, mainly from the 1990s on. The movement reached language leading to changes of lexical units, and replacing words with pejorative semantic meaning by others considered neutral or positive. To that extent, the aim of this work is to discuss the politically correct concept from a discursive standpoint. The theoretical support is the discourse analysis of French origin (Pêcheux and Maingueneau). The corpus consists of four cartoons from different artists. As a result, it may be claimed the politically correct discourse, be it in behavior or language, is intrinsically linked to the ideological formation and constitution of the subject, thus enabling outcomes of different meanings. The main constitutive trait in the analyzed corpus is political, deriving from an individual and/or collective attitude.

KEYWORDS: Politically correct language. Discourse analysis. Cartoons. Ideology. Effects of meaning.

RESUMO: O comportamento politicamente correto surgiu nos Estados Unidos, como fruto do movimento de defesa dos direitos civis, potencializado pelo preconceito racial na sociedade norte-americana. No Brasil, esse comportamento conquistou adeptos, principalmente, a partir dos anos 1990. O movimento chegou à linguagem, propondo a mudança de unidades lexicais, substituindo palavras com carga semântica pejorativa por outras consideradas neutras ou positivas. Nesse sentido, o objetivo deste trabalho é discutir o politicamente correto a partir do discurso, tendo como suporte teórico a análise de discurso de origem francesa (Pêcheux e Maingueneau). O *corpus* consiste em quatro charges de diferentes artistas. Como resultado, pode-se afirmar que o discurso politicamente correto, seja no comportamento seja na linguagem, está ligado intrinsecamente à formação ideológica e constituição do sujeito, possibilitando efeitos de sentido diversos. O traço constitutivo predominante no *corpus* analisado é o político, a partir de uma atitude individual e/ou coletiva, com efeitos de sentidos variados.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Linguagem politicamente correta. Análise do discurso. Charge. Ideologia. Efeitos de sentido.

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RESUMEN: La conducta políticamente correcta ha surgido en los Estados Unidos a raíz del movimiento de defensa de los derechos civiles, impulsado por el prejuicio racial en la sociedad estadounidense. En Brasil, dicha conducta ha conquistado adeptos, mayormente a partir de 1990. El movimiento ha alcanzado el lenguaje, proponiendo un cambio en las unidades lexicales, reemplazando palabras con carga semántica peyorativa por otras consideradas neutras o positivas. En este sentido, el objeto de este trabajo es discutir lo “políticamente correcto” a partir del discurso, teniendo al análisis del discurso de origen francés como soporte teórico (Pêcheux e Maingueneau). El corpus consiste en cuatro caricaturas de distintos artistas. Como resultado se puede afirmar que el discurso políticamente correcto, ya sea en la conducta o en el lenguaje, está intrínsecamente vinculado a la formación ideológica y la constitución del sujeto, posibilitando efectos de sentidos diferentes. El trazo constitutivo que predomina en el corpus analizado es el político, a partir de una postura individual y/o colectiva, con efectos de sentidos variados.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Lenguaje políticamente correcto. Análisis del discurso. Caricatura. Ideología. Efectos de sentido.

1 INTRODUCTION

Language, which has gone through several concepts from Linguistics studies, is in dialogism – as an instrument of interaction between individuals –, a fundamental characteristic for its production. We may say the exchange and interaction are the basis of this process that invokes various structures, some of which converge and others which differ among themselves.

One of the structures present in language that matters to this work is the discourse, as the place where language and ideology, discursive formation and ideological formation, subject and history are related. These elements relation – from the opacity of the language – allows to understand the effects of meaning generated by the interpretation of the constitutive traits of speech.

It is from the exteriority of the text that the speech makes sense, seeking elements in history, in society and in the conditions of production. To understand the speech, aspects beyond the concrete, the tangible, i.e., beyond the text – be it written, oral or visual – must be sought. The discourse is established from a web of relations with previous speeches; all discourse is based on an “already-said” and, at the same time, points to another discourse. However, the subject is not aware of this mechanism. The subject believes he is the sole producer of his/her speech, that is to say, besides being his/hers, it is new. This occurs due to the unconscious process. It means that such a subject forgets other (previous or even later) speeches, and formulates them (paraphrasing) believing they are unique and original.

It is around the text, where the relation between subject and ideology orbits, that the discourse is manifested. Its materiality is noticed beyond the physical word, semantically signified. The discourse does not operate as desired messages (i.e., from intentions); it acts through produced, captured and/or interpreted meaning effects within – naturally – imposed limits.

These effects are created from ideological positions that consider the historical and social process when the word is produced. A text from decades ago has one meaning and, nowadays, it can elicit other meanings, in order to signify, resignify or simply broaden another meaning. The conditions of production are, therefore, historical and current. They are historical when one takes into consideration the date of production of the statement; they are current when one considers the reading of the statement a long time after its production. However, it is necessary to emphasize the conditions of production are not historical nor chronological, but they are within the scope of historicity, related to the discursive memory. Historicity comprises a set of facts, events and other factors that help to compose the history, which determines the role to be played individually or collectively.

This context can be understood and contextualized from the discursive formation (DF), concept systematized by the philosopher and historian Michel Foucault. For him, the DF is fundamental for establishing the position that each individual assumes and, thus, becomes the subject of this position. According to Foucault (1996, p. 8-9),

[...] the production of discourse is controlled, selected, organized and redistributed at once by a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its power and its dangers, to cope with changes events, to evade its ponderous awesome materiality. [...] we know perfectly well that we are not free to say just anything, that we

cannot simply speak of anything, when we like or where we like: not just anyone, finally, may speak of just anything.¹

A DF enables us to understand the production of meanings from its relationship with the ideology that also occurs from a process, the so-called ideological formation (IF), a term coined by Michel Pêcheux, who connected, originally, the concept of ideological formation to ideological state apparatus (ISA), an expression coined and conceptualized by Althusser (1980, p. 43). “I shall call Ideological State Apparatuses a certain number of realities that present themselves to the immediate observer in the form of distinct and specialized institutions.” In the list of ideological state apparatus, the author lists the religious, school, family, legal, political, information (press), trade union and the cultural nature.

The ideological state apparatus would be, objectively speaking, what corresponds to the mechanisms related to the concrete materiality of ideological instance. It is worth noting that Pêcheux’s concept of ideology comes from a consideration on the so-called historical materialism. The philosopher says, “[...] the ideological “objects” are always supplied together with “the way to use them” – their “meaning”, i.e., their orientation, i.e., the class interests which they serve – which allows the commentary that practical ideologies are class practices (practices of class struggle) in Ideology.” (PÊCHEUX, 2014, p. 132).

Thus, it can be argued that discourse claims ideology which, in turn, claims language. Orlandi (2015) asserts language makes sense from the relation subject, discourse and ideology.

From the idea that the specific materiality of ideology is the discourse, and the specific materiality of discourse is language, it works the relation language-discourse-ideology. This relationship is complemented by the fact that, as M. Pêcheux (1975) says, there is no discourse without the subject and there is no subject without ideology: the individual is interpellated into the subject by ideology, and that is how language makes sense. (ORLANDI, 2015, p. 15)

From the relation language-discourse-ideology the effects of meaning mean and also resignify, but do not belong to a specific device. They are adrift and connect to the texts from the uncovering of these relations. The effects of meaning are captured by who interprets the speech and are not absolute. The meanings produce effects as the analyst reads and make relations, more or less stable, with the aspects that interact with the speech, therefore one should not consider that the game of intentions is the starting point for the apprehension of the possible effects of meaning.

In this process, it is worth addressing the role of the subject of discourse, not as the author of the text to have the senses captured, but as voice that speaks from many voices, in a polyphonic tone. The subject of the discourse is not an individual, but an entity that expresses him/herself in a contradictory way in discourse. Contradictory because the subject of the speech is simultaneously free and submissive. Free because he/she says what he/she wants, what he/she thinks and if he/she thinks he/she is the unique holder of such sayings. Submissive because what he/she says is the resignification of other sayings, i.e., the subject says what he/she says because he/she is crossed by history, because this is allowed, in an operation of subjectification. This means the subject’s discourse is not new and this happens because he/she takes ideological positions permeated by history.

Maingueneau (2005), when dealing with discourse, talks about three important aspects: discursive universe, field and space. The French linguist defines as discursive universe the set of discursive formations of all kinds that interact in a given situation. “This discursive universe is necessarily a finite set, even if it cannot be seized in its entirety” (MAINGUENEAU, 2005, p. 35).

By discursive field, he understands “[...] a set of discursive formations that come together to compete with each other, they delimit themselves reciprocally in a determined region of the discursive universe” (MAINGUENEAU, 2005, p. 35). The discursive space, in turn, can be understood as the thematic or segmental demarcation of a field. “You can deal with the political, philosophical, dramaturgy, grammatical field”, among others (MAINGUENEAU, 2005, p. 36). He says that it is in the field that the speech is “[...] and we develop the hypothesis that this constitution may be described in terms of regular operations on existing discursive

¹ All direct quotations were translated by the author (Editor’s Note).

formations. That does not mean, however, that a discourse is constituted in the same way with *all* discourses in this field.” (MAINGUENEAU, 2005, p. 36).

From the definition of discursive field proposed by the linguist – more specifically the political field – this work reflects on his object, the politically correct taken as a discursive space. In this context, the objective is to analyze four editorial cartoons that address the theme: two of them refer to the politically correct behavior and two address the language practiced in this context.

The theoretical framework used is the French Discourse Analysis (DA) (Pêcheux and Maingueneau), and the main objective is to analyze the effects of meaning in editorial cartoons discourses, whose themes are related to the aspect of what is meant, considering the conditions of production, by politically correct.

2 POLITICALLY CORRECT: CONTEXTUALIZATION OF THE OBJECT

The politically correct behavior appeared in the United States, in the middle of the 20th century, as a result of the movement for the defense of civil rights, potentiated by racial prejudice in American society. At the end of the last century and at the beginning of years 2000 this behavior conquered adepts in Brazil.

The politically correct, as the name itself, defends a posture, an attitude of respect for others in social relations as a way to reduce the prejudice, initially, against the blacks. This movement has expanded to other segments, such as people with disabilities, homosexuals, women, indigenous people and street dwellers.

This movement also came to language, proposing changes in lexical units as a way to reduce prejudice and discrimination. In Brazil, the culmination of this process was in 2004, with the primer *Politically Correct & Human Rights*, edited by the Special Secretariat of Human Rights, linked to the Presidency of the Republic.

The document proposes the replacement of words with pejorative/negative semantic load by other considered not aggressive, i.e., more gentle and milder. Cyprian (2004), in a primer on the politically correct language, says that the aim is to encourage reflection on the theme.

We do not want to promote backward discrimination, ‘gilding the pill’ to conceal the bitterness of the terms that offend, insult, underestimate and humiliate the neighbor that we consider “the others”. On the contrary, in this glossary, we present in the first place precisely the pejorative expressions, then we comment on them. Thus, we want to stimulate the debate, encourage reflection, because, for some of our interlocutors, we are the “different” ones. (CIPRIANO, 2004, p. 3)

Valente (2002) even used euphemism as a synonym for the politically correct language. The researcher analyzes journalistic textual productions and, in one example, discusses the terms “emerging” instead of “backward country” and “excluded” instead of “miserable country”, considering these exchanges euphemisms.

Until the first half of the 20th century, when euphemisms were not necessary, in this area – or, if you prefer, politically correct language – the countries were simply rich and poor, when not metropolises and colonies. With the adoption of the concept of ‘development’, after the Second War, ‘developed’ and ‘underdeveloped’ are now used. Later on, in order not to deride everyone, indifferently, with the infamous reputation of underdeveloped country, the best was rewarded with the gentle “in development”. (VALENTE, 2002, p. 331)

The professor and researcher Sírío Possenti (2009, p. 35) acknowledges that the politically correct language consists in a “confused movement, with ups and downs, which holds some relevant theses, other extremely questionable and still others frankly laughable”. He argues that, although the discussion seems essentially political, what occurs outside the tongue is quite relevant to language studies.: “Whatever you say in relation to the political effects, we are faced with a movement that has already produced discursive

facts which cannot fail to be analyzed, regardless of its historic durability and solidity of the theses that justify them.” (POSSENTI, 2009, p. 35).

The politically correct, in the dimension of the behavior or language, is a historical fact that deserves the attention of researchers from different areas. Zanardi (2016) affirms the politically correct language (PCL) is not an institution or a public agency, much less is part of a legislative regulatory framework. The PCL incorporates recommendations of movements that act in the defense of human rights. Zanardi (2016) affirms that the PCL is more of an attitude, which can be individual or adopted collectively by social segments.

As it stands, the politically correct language is a project that has many merits, but this is not an easily exhausted topic because many biases can be mobilized to explain the causes and consequences, seeking the approval or rejection of the proposal. The challenge is made and the meaning of the word is an essential instrument in this journey, starting from the discursive formation and ideological formation, that mobilize both the history and the subject of the discourse. (ZANARDI, 2016, p. 15)

The future of the LPC obviously belongs to the future, but, presently, the modality of the politically correct provides intriguing clues that deserve to be investigated in this specific article, from the discursive point of view.

3 THE CORPUS AND THE EFFECTS OF MEANING

The *corpus* of this study is composed of four editorial cartoons. The first two deal with the politically correct behavior and are signed by the artists Quinho (2011) – Picture 1; and Carranza (2012) – Picture 2. The other two cartoons deal with the politically correct language and are signed by the artists Amarildo (2013) – Picture 3; and Rico (2014) – Picture 4. Those artists cartoons were published in their pages on the internet or on news sites, as shown in the source bellow the pictures.

A few years ago, criticism on Monteiro Lobato led many researchers and educators to defend the “edition” of books so that they did not have terms considered offensive to current standards. The current condition of production of the politically correct discourse aims to reframe the historical conditions of production, i.e., the period in which the texts were produced. The cartoon (Picture 1), signed by Quinho, shows a casting director announcing the exchange of characters from the work *Sítio do Pica-Pau Amarelo* (The Yellow Woodpecker Ranch), by Monteiro Lobato.



Picture 1: Quinho

Source: Quinho (2011)

Aunt Nastácia, black and fat, would be replaced by blond and slim Angelica. Saci would win a prosthesis. Quindim, the rhinoceros, would be sent to the zoo. Narizinho would make a plastic surgery in the nose. The constitutive traits in this discourse are mostly politicians, from a decision of individual consciousness, which affect – as actions – in the collectivity.

A possible effect of meaning, present in cartoon discourse, is the censorship, promoted by banning the performance of traditional characters, replaced by others considered more appropriate for the current time. This effect of meaning leads to another, that is, the criticism on the excesses of politically correct behavior that judges, it disapproves and condemns certain behaviors, out of what is considered correct.

Furthermore, the effects of meaning produced by the discourse go through protection to stigmatized groups considered, i.e., attempts will be made to protect the image of these groups, subject of jokes and mockery, to reduce the prejudice that leads to discrimination. The politically correct, while political attitude, aims to interfere in social relations that reflect an imbalance in the correlation of forces between social segments: blacks and whites, people with disabilities and people without disabilities, protection to animals, among others. These groups are protected by the politically correct, that – while behavior – suggests the replacement of stigmatized situations by milder and more gentle situations, including the language with the exchange of vocabulary used in this context.

The analysis of Picture 1 can also suggest a compliment to the politically correct behavior, but when examining the discourse effects of meaning of the character in the cartoon – the casting director –, it is also possible to calibrate a trenchant criticism to the proposal: the exchange of characters considered stigmatized does not reduce the discrimination, be it racial or against the person with disabilities. It is worth mentioning that the genus cartoon – with its structure and functionality – refers to various possibilities, i.e., the meaning that inspires is varied and depends also on the process of interpretation of those involved.

In this cartoon, the characters – targets of the politically correct – are frightened by this measure as if they do not understand the initiative of the casting director. This estrangement can be explained based on current production conditions, quite different from those in which story and characters were created.

A gesture of possible interpretation is to reflect on the irony that is present in this discourse, as if only a sense was, besides correct, fixed. By this bias, only the so-called “politically correct” (concept emerged in actuality) could be considered, and history, consequently, erased, so nothing of characters representatives of African culture or with apparent physical disabilities. Thus, the politically correct assumes a delimiting meaning and can even reflect an ideological blindness: if it does not meet the standards of what is considered “politically correct”, in actuality it must be taken off the board.

Hence the need to have refer to history to understand this effect, which integrates the process of discursive formation in question. The work *Sítio do Pica-Pau Amarelo* was written by Lobato, in several volumes, between the decades of 1920 and 1940, i.e., in the first half of the last century. Therefore, it is necessary to think that in those years the social relations were very different from today.

The fight against racism and prejudice of any order was incipient and the natural order was discrimination based on color, race, physical appearance. The colonization of various parts of Brazil did not include environmental preservation and the deforestation and hunting were common practices and, in some cases, necessary for the much-desired progress and development of the nation. The protection of trees and animals in reserves, with prohibition of hunting and fishing, came to pass, by virtue of legislation, many decades later.

In relation to the discursive formation, today, it is perfectly possible to think in a formulation (in rules of saying) providing placements, such as preservation, non-discrimination more clearly and effectively in their discourses. For Foucault (2002, p. 99), the function of a discursive formation: “[...] belongs to signs based on which one may then decide, through analysis or intuition, whether they ‘make sense’ or not, according to what rule they follow one another or are juxtaposed, of what they are the sign, and what sort of act is carried out by their formulation (oral or written)”.

It is worth saying that a given discursive formation contributes to the meaning registration, considering also the conditions of production, from the existing signs. The function of the linguistic “politically correct” sign makes no sense to the characters of Monteiro Lobato for not having existed in his time. Thus, the politically correct – that finds an echo in the current days – is seen for

having been subjected to a process of discursive formation (what is possible, what is said), with specific signs that favored the meanings from the ideology:

[...] the material objectivity of the ideological instance is characterized by the structure of unevenness-subordination of the 'complex whole in dominance' of the ideological formations of a given social formation, a structure which is nothing but that of the reproduction/transformation contradiction constituting the ideological class struggle. (PÊCHEUX, 2014, p. 134)

The criticism, as an effect of meaning, can also be observed in Carranza's cartoon (Picture 2). The tradition dictates that, in Christmas, gifts are exchanged, even if the date is something greater than the trade, such as the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the savior of the world. However, the boy of the cartoon will not have Santa Claus because his mother, supporter of politically correct behavior, is against the domestication of reindeers. She accuses Santa Claus to tame the wild animals, which is a crime, by law. The criticism is ironic and can be understood as a non-truth. "The subject-ironic prefers – for one reason or another – stating something through a non-truth [...] When inserted in the communication, the irony is part of a lucid game, cat-and-mouse game – sometimes cruel – among the subjects of communication." (MACHADO, 2014, p. 117).



Picture 2: Carranza

Source: Carranza (2012)

Another possible effect of meaning of the discourse, whose majority constitutive trait is also the politician, is the exaggeration, the excess. The mother breaks a Christmas tradition, making the son cry, in the name of a behavior. The exaggeration in the critique becomes a kind of counter-attack to excess of one's own behavior determined by the politically correct. The great device that produces the effect of humor is precisely this exaggeration, this kind of political fanaticism that promotes a break and, consequently, provides the comic character of the cartoon.

In addition to proposing changes in personal or collective attitude, the politically correct proposes the exchange of terms considered derogatory by others that soften the situations and that can provide a *status* to whom they relate. Amarildo's Picture 3, for instance, shows a man stating "the neighbor's son is a faggot" ("bichona" in Portuguese), but when it comes to his life, "my son is homosexual".



Picture 3: Amarildo

Source: Amarildo (2014)

From the word “faggot” meanings emerge linked to sexual depravity, to promiscuous behavior deprecated morally and socially. Its use suggests, from the discourse, negative effects of meaning, derogatory. From the term “homosexual”, on the other hand, meaning linked to citizen with non-standard sexual orientation outcrop, claiming basic rights for the full exercise of their citizenship. This lexical item refers to a speech in which the citizen and his sexual orientation should be respected.

The effect of meaning created by the discourse reveals – also politically – two dimensions of the politically correct: one that can be described as “incorrect for the other”; and another that can be “right for me”. If the situation is the same (homosexuality), why different attitudes? Calling the “neighbor’s son” a faggot and “my son” a homosexual reveals discursive positions in which one attacks the other, while protecting oneself when the matter concerns him / her. Here, the ideological stance of the subject is exposed and varies according to those involved. The euphemistic feature of politically correct language is highlighted here in a significant way by translating the levels of hypocrisy that a society can reveal, depending on the topic under discussion.

According to *The New Dictionary Aurelio*, by the Nova Fronteira publishing house, in the first edition from 1970, euphemism “[...] is the act to soften the expression of an idea by replacing the word or expression by another more enjoyable, more polite” (FERREIRA, 1975, p. 592). We can deduce that the word “bichona” is able to hurt, so the character mitigates it when it concerns him, softening the expression when he exchanges it for “homosexual”. If the politically correct language can be used by people when they feel that the effect of the meaning of discourse can hurt those who they like, why not use this same mechanism with the other, an unknown person, for example?

The same occurs with the character of president Dilma, who uses the word “privatization” when it comes to the actions of her opponents and “sharing” for the actions of her government and her party. This occurs because the discursive formation of both allows one word and not the other, which also reveals the ideological formations, be them individuals or a given group (in this case, political parties). Sharing here could also be replaced by “concession”. Despite privatization and sharing having different legal figures, the fact is the politically correct language adds new meanings to the original semantic load, for a new concept. This feature necessarily refers to the ideological process that takes place within the language.

Possenti and Baronas (2006) agree discussing and analyzing the politically correct movement is to do so, at various times, from the ideological function of language, “[...] since it is most likely the existence of prejudices that produces those effects of meaning, although it is impossible to disregard the fact that the discourse can serve to feed back the social conditions that support ideologies and discourse themselves. The hypothesis of “pure” words is certainly naive.” (AGUILERA; YIDA, 2006, p. 69).

For Britto (2004), the ideology is even more efficient and decisive, and even violent, in places where it is not easily perceived “because it is exactly in this situation that no counter-ideological discourse is possible” (BRITTO, 2004, p. 137). That is why “words are woven from a multitude of ideological wires and serve as a plot to all social relations in all fields” (BAKHTIN apud BRITTO, 2004, p. 135).

The ideological process undertaken by the words, in the functioning of language, may also be evidenced in Picture 4, by the cartoonist Rico. In a discussion between two people, tempers nearly reach the physical confrontation. The first, shouting, curses: “You... you... dumb”. The second, finger in battle, corrects “not dumb; solipede mammal, please”. Here one must associate the imaging speech that gives the “dumb” a so significant stupidity, that is represented in animal and not in human form.



Picture 4: Rico

Source: Rico (2014)

As the effect of meaning is the fact that the second character considers himself a dumb, politically correct, preferring the term “solipede mammal”. After all, the problem is not having the intellectual capacity reduced, i.e., low intelligence, but being classified as dumb, what is socially and historically considered extremely offensive. The exchange of the word – by ideological questions – does not change the fact itself (dumbness), but eases the label of dumb, that causes so much discomfort.

The ideological character cannot be disassociated from the production of the politically correct language. The concept of ideology here is taken as the process of meanings production, by means of signs, that express a certain reality. This concept is supported by Bakhtin (2006), for whom: “Each ideological sign is not only a reflection, a shadow of reality, but also a fragment of material reality. [...] A sign is a phenomenon of the outside world. The sign itself and all its effects (all its actions, reactions and new signs that it generates in the surrounding social area) appear in the exterior experience.” (BAKHTIN, 2006, p. 31).

The teacher and linguist José Luiz Fiorin (2008) highlights there are two aspects used by advocates of politically correct language that contradict – for him – the functioning of language and that, in this way, become irrelevant to the defense of the proposal. The first aspect is to suppose that an isolated expression is loaded with meaning and social assessment. “In fact, a word operates in a discourse and not in isolation. Therefore, not all uses of the word *black* with negative value denote racism” (FIORIN, 2008). The second aspect relates to the etymology, i.e., to the study the origin and evolution of words. Fiorin reminds us that the word *etymology* is composed of two Greek terms that want to say “study of the true meaning”.

It appeared in a period in which it was believed that history was decadent; which, in the scope of language, meant that the evolution of languages was a degradation. Therefore, the original meaning was the true sense. See the ideological substrate of search of etymologies which were forgotten in the march of history. Reminding them means considering that history is decay. (FIORIN, 2008)

The teacher also says there is a false etymology and cites as an example the term *history*, of the English language.: “There is a masculine pronoun *his* starting the word because history reflects the point of view of men. This distorts completely the origin of the word, because the Indo-European root that gave rise to this word is *-weid*, which indicates the vision, which serves to knowledge.” (FIORIN, 2008).

The defense of the origin of the word (*etymology*) to explain its original meaning affecting the functioning of language, to refuse the proposal of politically correct language, does not explain all the complexity of the theme, exactly because the intended meaning is not linked directly to the original meaning of the word, but to its linguistic use, either in the text or in speech. The meaning – from the discourse – is given in a historical-social process, outside the language, and connected to the so-called discursive formation and in its inter-relationship with ideology.

In this sense, even if the word *black* – in the example mentioned by Fiorin – has no negative origin, its use is associated – in most cases – with a pejorative meaning, as can be observed in expressions like *blacklist*, *black market*, *black sheep*, *black cloud* and in many others.

For both, replacing the word *black* in the expressions quoted would not affect semantics because the new terms would seek new effects of meaning, but this attitude would eliminate from the expressions (which are also part of the discursive and ideological formation) associations of black to the bad, to the misfortune, the exclusion would associate discursively pejorative meanings to black, as a color and a race.

In this case, *blacklist* can be a list of detractors; *black market*, parallel market or illegal market; *black sheep*, torn sheep (or, metaphorically, a person of very strong personality or even stubborn); *black cloud*, dark cloud.

Here is an important remark. The proposal of the politically correct language is to change the expressions from its everyday use, from situations according to its occurrence, its use. This is not to propose the amendment of consolidated expressions in publications such as Monteiro Lobato's and many others. When these words were used, they were part of the process of discursive and ideological formation, thus revealing the production conditions of the epoch and it is precisely this dynamic that has value for text and discourse studies, after all one of the main characteristics of discourse is precisely to be always in motion.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The constitutive discursive trait predominant in the analyzed *corpus* is the political one, from an individual and/or collective attitude that produces effects of meaning. Thus, we can consider in the whole analysis: i) the politically correct behavior presupposes an ideological stance that unveils from personal attitudes / collective or the substitution of linguistic terms; ii) the politically correct behavior that points exaggerations also commits excesses when it wants to regulate the behavioral attitude or language; iii) the politically correct began to be visible by having undergone a process of discursive formation, from the relationship subject-history-ideology; iv) the exchange of words classified as negative does not eliminate prejudice or discrimination nor reduces the groups considered vulnerable; v) if, on the one hand, the exchange of these terms does not eliminate the prejudice, on the other hand, its maintenance maintains a negative meaning that can perpetuate prejudice; vi) the politically correct language, which has euphemism as a mechanism, reveals a selectively correct behavior when it refers “to me” and “to the other”.

Language is alive, dynamic and the words take on different meanings according to their time, regardless of its etymology. This means to say that the meaning is also defined by the user of the language, from use.

The mere substitution of terms considered derogatory or stigmatizing, by other more gentle or milder, may not reduce or eliminate prejudice against those segments in question. However, it should be considered the use of derogatory terms also tends to promote the maintenance of prejudice ideologically embedded in word, and thus the maintenance of this prejudice also contributes to that the segments remain stigmatized.

It is not the determination of a term (the linguistic materiality), considered “politically correct”, at the expense of another that is not, or even the intention of the speaker that will change the opinions and positions and commitments. Before anything else, it is necessary to pay attention to another kind of determination or crossings: the historical-social conditions. The subjects are constituted and, at the same time, crossed by the socio-historical conditions. Within all this dynamism and discursive moving is a subject determined by a series of aspects, among which we can mention the production conditions, the ideology, the discursive formation and history itself.

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