Critical Discourse Analysis: Between Educational Sciences and Journalism

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ABSTRACT

This research, in which we used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) applied to the field of Educational Sciences, was developed within the scope of the project of PhD in Education. We submit the question - *what relations can be identified between opinion articles concerning Education published in two broadsheet newspapers and the values and aspirations defended by the new middle class?* A quantitative methodology was used, and the directors of the newspapers studied were interviewed, as well as parents and teachers. CDA was used on the 20 opinion articles chosen as corpus of this study. It is our belief that it is essential to understand the intentions and the consequences of opinion articles related to the school.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis; Education; Opinion Articles; Parentocracy.

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The facts we see depend on where we are placed, and the habits of our eyes. (Lippman 2007, p. 44)

The investigation has initially founded on Basil Bernstein, who studied the middle class, and Phillip Brown, because some of the opinion articles studied allow us to raise the hypothesis that *they assume and legitimize parentocracy*, a concept introduced by Brown (1990) to refer to parents' more active participation in their children's school life, namely the free choice of the institution they will attend. However, other articles seem to defend that *the investment in school capital is made through a knowledge-centred pedagogy*, coming close to the demands of meritocracy.

Therefore, the idea that parents are allowed to choose a school for their children to attend may be a way of implementing a stratified system, with an increase in social privileges for those who already have them. Conversely, the school may be understood as an element that can effectively promote standards of justice inherent to a democratic society.

The expectations and the different challenges posed to schools seem to be influenced by the degradation of the teacher's self-concept, evident, for example, in the published news of teachers' incompetence.

The different media contribute to the knowledge and representation of reality. Sá (2004) claims that in their different forms, the media constitute, nowadays, an important agent of institutionalization. They produce and disseminate certain facts, but they also ignore others. For their part, Magalhães and Stoer (2002) defend that the school's problems are approached as commonplace by the media and, afterwards in the public space.

If the school were revealed only by the media, early school leaving could be understood as an individual problem and not a social one; violence and school dropout could be seen as consequences of unjust choices, and family problems as a cultural cause. In this context, academic success depends only on the determination and the choices of each individual.

The media probably treat the school with some aggressiveness, because it doesn´t provide a clear opportunity for students to escape their social and economic origins.

However, unfavourable comments on the Portuguese public school when rankings are published or calls for exams is made suggest an opposite position, since they criticize the weakening of academic excellence. This attitude seems to correspond to the values that define the new middle class as seen by Bernstein (1975; 2000; 2001a; 2001b). This is the reason for the question: *what relations can be identified between opinion articles concerning Education published in two broadsheet newspapers and the values and aspirations defended by the new middle class?*

This issue is particularly focused on the opinion articles written by authors with some influence, who, using the multi-step model of communication theory, can be identified as *gatekeepers*[3].

From this perspective, the new middle-class readers of broadsheet newspapers, in the role of parents, are those who can form judgments and make choices about the education of their children. That is the reason for formulating the first working hypothesis: *opinion articles about education assume and legitimize parentocracy in the new middle class.* This concept was introduced by Phillip Brown (1990) to describe parents' greater participation in their children's school life, namely the free choice of the school they will attend: "a system whereby the education a child receives must conform to the wealth and wishes of parents rather than the abilities and efforts of pupils" (p. 65).

Based on the works of Brown (1990), Silva and Stoer (2005) state that parentocracy "corresponds to parents' apparent greater power, translated into a greater state regulation which encourages the formation of parents' associations and the integration of parents' representatives in school bodies" (Silva & Stoer 2005, p. 15). Therefore, the idea that parents are allowed to choose a school for their children to attend may be a way of implementing a stratified system, with an increase in social privileges for those who already have them.

However, since new middle-class families and newspaper articles defend the meritocratic school, a second hypothesis was defined: *opinion articles on education support a meritocratic school.*

THE NEWSPAPERS: OBJECT OF STUDY AND INSTRUMENT OF RESEARCH

Newspapers seem to acquire symbolic importance, as if they were capable of safeguarding values and feelings expressed in news or comments. However, we must not forget that newspapers also acquire importance in the production and dissemination of events.

The discourse of opinion articles published in two broadsheet newspapers was taken as the object of study, with a view to understanding opinion makers' reasons for writing about education, as well as the consequences their articles can have in the community. However, opinion articles assume in this investigation the place of instruments of research, because through them we intend to achieve many of the objectives outlined, for instance, to confirm the hypothesis under study.

Also, Fairclough (1995b) focuses on the value of newspaper articles as research tools in times of sociocultural change:

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[3] University of Twente [homepage on the Internet]. Gatekeeping - Regulate The Flow Of Information. [cited 2009 Apr 30]. Lewin (1947): "the *gatekeeper* is the person who decides what shall pass through each gate section, of which, in any process, there are several". Available from: https://www.utwente.nl/en/bms/communication-theories/sorted-by-cluster/Media-Culture-and-Society/gatekeeping/.

> Media texts constitute a sensitive barometer of sociocultural change, and they should be seen as valuable material for researching change. Changes in society and culture manifest themselves in all their tentativeness, incompleteness and contradictory nature in the heterogeneous and shifting discursive practices of the media. (p. 52)

The collected opinion articles studied here were published between October 2004 and September 2006. In this period, problems that would later arise between the Ministry of Education and teachers had not yet occurred. Opinion articles published at posterior dates would push our investigation into another network of interests. Besides, our choice also corresponded to a troubled period, because the Ministry of Education was run by two Ministers of Education from two different governments. The aim was that, though reading, interpreting and analyzing opinion articles, conclusions could be drawn which would confirm the hypotheses formulated.

METHODOLOGY

Throughout this research, we have sought to identify the values and expectations of the new middle class (Bernstein 1975; 2001b) regarding the School as conveyed by the opinion articles published by *Diário de Notícias* and *Público*, two broadsheet newspapers. In this way, a set of objectives was identified, which we tried to achieve using the appropriate methodology.

First, the concept of new middle class was discussed through a literature review centered on Bernstein (1975; 2000; 2001a, 2001b). This exploratory stage later conducted this study to Bourdieu (1973; 1979; 1984; 2004) and the concept of *capital*.

The particularities of the new middle class take us to the concept of *parentocracy*, because our goal was to understand if families of this social class would be able to choose their children's school. We sought to study this concept through Brown (1990; 2003), the author suggest that education reflects three waves (Figure 01). Brown (1990) about parentocracy refers: "the existing 'third wave' [parentocracy] policies will not only reinforce but increase educational inequalities" (p. 66). Brown (1990) admits that this wave is understood as an enemy for the working class and compares it to the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Just like the apple, so parentocracy emerges as a temptation for the more economically and socially unprotected classes. These, being seduced by the benefits of competition, are deceived when they find the reproduction and legitimation of inequalities: "it was there to tempt the working classes but it would ensure their damnation as they were duped into believing that the competition for credentials was fair, rather than fixed, in order to reproduce and legitimise existing inequalities "(p. 72).

It became essential to understand the network in which the concept of parentocracy moves, as well as verify if the opinion articles assume and legitimize it; 8 opinion articles were studied using *CDA*.

Figure 01. The three waves in Education identified by Brown (1990).
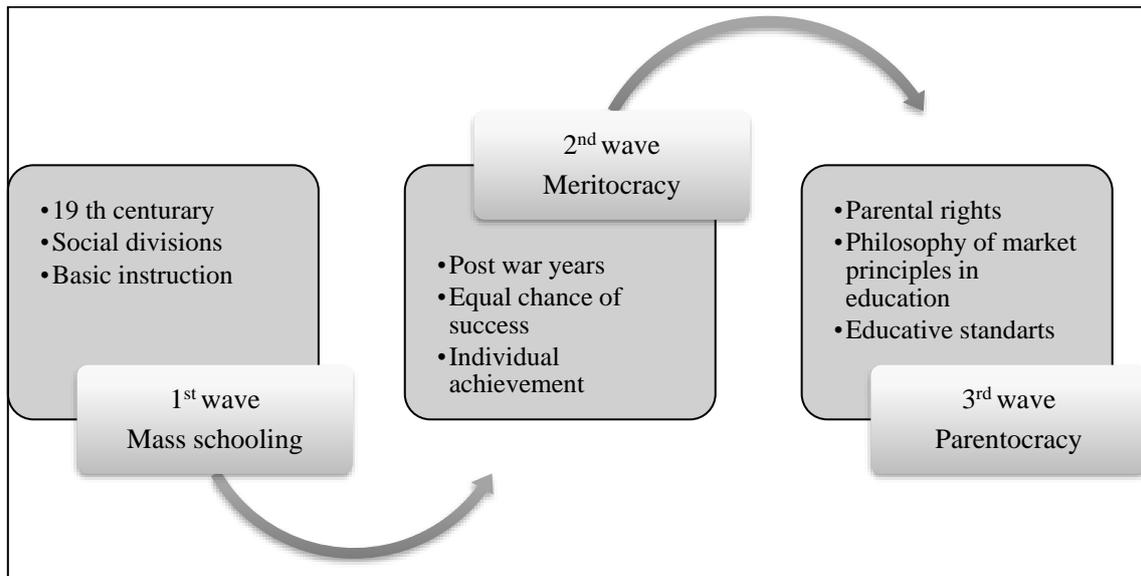
Source: Based on Brown (1990).

The survey of opinion articles about education has also allowed us to find a clear relationship between the new middle class and the concept of *meritocracy*.

Therefore, the necessity was felt to understand the implications of *meritocracy* in the school and in decision making. We also sought to determine if opinion articles suggest that acquiring cultural capital, in schools, is done through a knowledge-centred pedagogy. Once again, a CDA approach to the study of 8 other opinion articles was used (Table 01).

Table 01. Distribution of opinion articles.

		NESWSPAPER	
	Hypothesis	*Diário de Notícias*	*Público*
Opinion Articles	Opinion articles assume and legitimate parentocracy.	4	4
	The investment in school capital is made through a knowledge-centred pedagogy, coming close to the demands of meritocracy.	4	4
	Total	16	

Source: Based on Brown (1990).

An exploratory and descriptive study about the correspondence between social communication and power was also added. This stage was particularly important in achieving three key aims: to justify the value of the opinion articles as instruments of research; to facilitate the reading and the quantitative and qualitative analysis of opinion articles; and finally, to know the lexicon used in the media.

Our investigation included a bibliographical survey and two interviews with two editors of the newspapers under study. This stage also allowed us to understand possible intentions and consequences of the opinion articles studied.

The choice of the opinion articles as instruments of research was, in our opinion, well justified. Much of social, politic, economic and cultural knowledge is acquired through the media. On the other hand, by sharing their attitudes and their idealisms, opinion makers naturally affect the beliefs and values of their readers. These articles have allowed us to understand how parents' expectations regarding their children's educational plan can be shaped and even legitimized by opinion makers.

We decided to base the research on just two leading generalist Portuguese dailies, since the core of the inquiry lies in the discourse of the different opinion articles analysed rather than in the newspaper itself.

Still, Fairclough (2003) defends that the consequences of the texts, taken as a written act, in the events of social life don't occur in a short period of time, and the texts themselves are influenced by different situations: "We can broadly distinguish two casuals 'powers' which shape texts: on the one hand, social structures and social practices; on the other hand, social agents, the people involved in social events" (p. 6). Moreover, we can mention that the discourses, texts, represent the real or concrete world, but also have other possibilities, originated, for instance, by the capacity for chance. Fairclough (1995a) emphasizes that discourse represents the materialization of the ideology: "In using the term 'discourse' I am claiming language use to be imbricated in social relations and processes which systematically determine variations in its properties, including the linguistic forms which appear in texts" (p. 73). Although the text usually corresponds to what is written, a broader perspective allows to understand that it can be written, spoken, or to correspond to non-linguistic forms. As Fairclough (1995a) states:

> A text is traditionally understood to be a piece of written language – a whole 'work' such as a poem or a novel, or a relatively discrete part of a work such as a chapter. A rather broader conception has become common within discourse analysis, where a text may be either written or spoken discourse [...] in cultural analysis, by contrast, texts do not need to be linguistic at all. (p. 4)

On the other hand, Phillips and JØrgensen (2002) seem to defend a union between discourse and the domains of social life, in which they recognize different discourses. Thus, discourse analysis can correspond to the analysis of these patterns: "underlying the word 'discourse' is the general idea that language is structured according to different patterns that people's utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life, familiar examples being 'medical discourse' and 'political discourse'" (p. 1).

Therefore, it was our intention that the investigation was considered by a single discussion, in which it was possible to verify the theoretical, social and political context that surrounds each of the published articles. In fact, Lima (2005) seems to call attention to the way in which educative subjects are dealt with outside the school, emphasizing the incoherence between the importance that education assumes in various discourses and the trivialization apparent in the way school problems are handled.

When selecting the newspapers – *Diário de Notícias* and *Público* –, we had in mind several industry surveys, namely *Bareme-Imprensa*. The readers of the two chosen newspapers belong predominantly to the most privileged social classes and are interested in contents such as politics – national and international –, economy or culture. We consider that these are readers who, in their role as parents, are better able to have a balanced opinion about education and, so, who are in the best position to design an education plan for their children. In brief, we suggest that the readers of the broadsheet newspapers belong to the middle class and are attentive to the school journey of their children. We would like to select other newspapers; however, these would expand the field of our research and prolong the investigation. It would be very interesting, also, to cross-reference the data obtained from *Diário de Notícias* and *Público* with the data that would be obtained, for example, from tabloids. However choosing a larger number of newspapers might cloud the study, making it more cumbersome and with more variables. Thus, the choice of newspapers for this research fell on *Diário de Notícias* and *Público*.

Diário de Notícias, because it was the newspaper which, at the beginning of the research, *showed* a greater level of harmonization between the different social classes considered by *Bareme Imprensa*. The first issue of this periodical was published in 1864, and its arrival brought about clear transformations in the journalism framework of the time, since it was a "popular [newspaper], of a price [10 *réis*] and style accessible to all, essentially news-oriented and with no party affiliation" (Tengarrinha 2006, p. 214).

Conversely, *Público* was chosen because it was the daily newspaper favoured by the upper and upper-medium classes, also according to Bareme Imprensa, presumably the social classes more capable of making decisions regarding their children's education. This periodical was founded in 1990. Ponte (2005) mention the inclusion of the topic 'education' in *Público*: "Education, always one of the banners of this newspaper, is a topic which allows it to reach new readers. Besides, it has a potential for timeliness, due to the constant dispute of meanings and the controversy which are its brand" (p. 175). This way of addressing matters relating to education typical of *Público* is sometimes quite evident, for instance, in the existence of a physical space in the newspaper with the heading 'Education'.

Clearly, the research would have been geared towards other webs had the chosen newspapers been different, since their readership would also be distinct, with diverse interests and concerns. We believe it is extremely interesting to broaden this study to cover other social classes and, therefore, to consider other newspapers, such as tabloids. In other words, we acknowledge the need to correlate the choice of newspapers with the readership profile and the research objectives.

We selected as principal stages for the development of this research involving direct contact with the opinion articles: collection, reading and critical discourse analysis. But also the stages that allowed the exploration of the research's key concepts, which consist in: bibliographic search, interviews and document analysis – legislation and newspaper articles. Equally important were the stages that made it possible to explain some of the delineated network.

Table 02 was based on the research design and on the figure proposed by Woolley (2009). This figure attempts to relate the objectives of our study to the methodology techniques used. At the top of the figure it is the question of the issue being addressed. Reading this figure clearly shows that we have used a mixed methodology or a so-called pluralist methodology – quantitative and qualitative – in the development of our research. Therefore, we can say that this research articulated the theories explained and developed throughout the text with the methodology, consequently forcing us to a critical position.

Table 02. Relationship between the methodology and the objectives defined for the research[4].

BIBLIOGRAPHIC AND STATISTICAL SURVEY (qualitative and quantitative methodology)		
What relations can be identified between opinion articles concerning Education published in two broadsheet newspapers and the values and aspirations defended by the new middle class?		
METHODOLOGY	**RESULTS**	**INTEGRATION**
Quantitative methodology	Statistical analysis with a view to identifying regularities in opinion articles (topics and timing) and in newspaper readership (gender, age and social class, for instance)	The conclusions are written thought the dialogue between the theoretical contextualization and the total set of data. The separation between theory and methodology is not recognized.
Critical Discourse Analysis	Analysis that allows us to verify how parentocracy and meritocracy are reflected in opinion articles	
Qualitative methodology (individual interviews)	It seeks to explore how the media agents observe some of the issues addressed. It seeks to explore how educational agents observe parentocracy and meritocracy.	

Source: Based on Woolley (2009, p. 12).

Thus, we abandoned the direction of an investigation that used exclusively a quantitative methodology, since this would deprive social practices of their magnificence and political derivation. However, we recognize the need to identify some regularities in the opinion articles collected, as well as

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[4] At the top is the question that led to the research problem, to the left the methodological techniques and to the right the results that could be achieved through the techniques used. Only the links between the techniques and the most obvious objectives were established to facilitate reading the table.

in the characteristics of readers. In this sense, we conducted quantitative research to achieve these and other objectives. Nonetheless, we consider that the integration of quantitative and qualitative methodology to obtain data, and their analysis, allows us to maximize the potential of this research, since a fuller picture can be constructed.

As stated above, we have sought to ensure that the methods for carrying out this research are consistent. In their choice, we were careful to check the ones that could best offer the hope of achieving the objectives of the research project, as well as answering the questions defined. However, we have also taken into account the words of Cardoso and Serralvo (2009), who refer to the importance of the pluralist methodology not only in the procedure but also in the way research questions are addressed.

Woolley (2009) advises of the difficulties that this methodology entails, because, in her opinion, the research context is broader, and studies on pluralist methodologist are scarce:

> Researchers using a mixed methods approach identify a range of difficulties that hinder progress toward more frequent and successful integration of data sets. These difficulties relate both to the wider context in which research is conducted and to aspects perceived as inherent to quantitative and qualitative research approaches and researchers' inclinations and training. A further obstacle may indeed be the situation itself, given the corresponding scarcity of good examples to which researchers can turn when seeking to stimulate and inform their own ideas. (p. 8)

CDA emerges as an approach that makes it possible to understand the ties between events and discursive practices, and, in this way, also allows to understand the relations of power.

Thus, if discursive practices have ideological repercussions, then, through them, individuals are given the possibility to produce and reproduce different power relations. In a simpler way, we can state that CDA is a contemporary approach that studies discourses, allowing the researcher to understand the social relations of identity and power that are constructed through written or spoken texts – in community, at school or in the media, for example.

On the other hand, we didn't find coherence in constructing a rigid theoretical framework disconnected from a methodological framework. As Richardson (2007) states: "CDA is a perspective on critical scholarship: a theory and a method of analyzing the way that individuals and institutions use language" (p. 1). Phillips and JØrgensen (2002) seem to support this aspiration because they emphasize the connection between theory and method: "In discourse analysis, theory and method are intertwined and researchers must accept the basic philosophical premises in order to use discourse analysis as their method of empirical study" (p. 4).

However, according Fairclough (2003), CDA needs to establish links between itself and social theory, because the ability to analyze texts as elements in a social process needs to be developed:

> There is a need to develop approaches to text analysis through a transdisciplinary dialogue with perspectives on language and discourse within social theory and research in order to develop our capacity to analyse texts as elements in social processes. A 'transdisciplinary' approach to theory or analytical method is a matter of working with the categories and 'logical' of for instance sociological theories in developing a theory of discourse and methods of analysing texts. (p. 6)

This perspective doesn't imply our aversion to the methodological field, since we think it is fundamental to make a careful reading to understand and operationalize the methods used.

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

As delineated above, the collection, reading, analysis and cross-referencing of published articles were considered key stages in the process of this research. In this work, however, we did not aim to confront the two papers under study, since the importance of this research did not match in verifying the value of the School theme in the selected periodicals. Similarly, our intention was also not to check articles written by commentators with articles from other journalism genres.

Phillips and Jørgensen (2002) refer to the importance of CDA to the study of the relations between discourse and the various social domains: "Critical discourse analysis (often abbreviated to CDA) provides theories and methods for the empirical study of the relations between discourse and social and cultural developments in different social domains" (p. 60).

As the importance of this research was centered on critical component, a contextualized analysis of each opinion article was essential to the work. Fairclough (1995a) identified three dimensions of discourse: "I see discourse as a complex of three elements: social practice, discourse practice (text production, distribution and consumption), and text, and the analysis of a specific discourse calls for analysis in each of these three dimensions and their interrelations" (p. 74).

Also, Fairclough (2001) justifies the use of CDA in an investigation with the purpose of looking into the change in language that will be useful in social and cultural change studies (p. 19). Furthermore, Fairclough (1995b) highlights the hope to persuade his readers of this approach: "I hope to convince readers that analysis of media language should be recognized as an important element within research on contemporary processes of social and cultural change, a theme which is attracting growing interest in the social sciences" (p. 2). In a not very different context, Dijk (2005) links CDA with power, and of course with resistance and the reproduction of inequalities, as it allows us to study how the abuse of social power, dominance and inequality are put into practice, and also how they are reproduced and how they are resisted.

On the other hand, Richardson (2007) makes a connection between CDA and power represented explicitly or implicitly through the news, while confirming the difficulty in defining the concept of social power:

> CDA engages with, analyses and critiques social power and how this is represented and, both explicitly and implicitly, reproduced in the news. But what is social power? Power is another incredibly slippery concept and the subject of seemingly endless academic discussion about what it exactly is and what it exactly means. (p. 29-30)

The opportunity to verify the relations between the various articles and the structures that are close to them, or in opposition, as well as the elaborate plot around discourse, naturally have great value. In this sense, Fairclough (1995a) defends that discourse is formed by structures, but also contends that it contributes, in turn, to the formation of structures: "Also inherent to discourse is the dialectical relation of structure/event discussed above: discourse is shaped by structures, but also contributes to shaping and reshaping them, to reproducing and transforming them" (p. 73). However, the approximation of CDA to power issues seems to be indicated by Fairclough (1995a; 1995b; 2001) and by Dijk (2005). Fairclough (1995b) also asks the relation between discourse and the economy, because this author understands that contemporary societies can be seen as consumers and as producers of culture:

> If audiences are constructed, and competed for, as consumers, even in news and current affairs programs, does this not negate the claims of broadcasting to constitute a public sphere […] in which people, as citizens, are drawn into serious debate on the issues of the day? And if media is not sustaining a political public sphere, where else can be constructed in our mediatized society? (p. 11)

METAPHOR AND SOCIAL PRACTICE

When we proceeded to the survey and categorization of the metaphors presents in each of the opinion articles, we had in mind to verify its effects in the discursive thought and practice, as well as the cultural or ideological factors that lead their choice by opinion makers, since this seems to be the way suggested by Fairclough (2003).

The metaphor generally appears in literary texts, as in poetry, because it is easily associated with imagination or stylistic elegance. However, Fairclough (2003) refers that this stylistic figure is present in other types of language as well. On the other hand, the author defends that metaphors are not just stylistic figures, since they allow us to understand the system of knowledge beliefs in a powerful and fundamental way. So, we can admit that metaphors have the capacity to express a given evaluation, that is, they have the power to disclose the ideology of the text. Moreover, metaphors allowed us to identify the nature of certain ideologies of the author (producer) of the text.

In the headlines of the newspapers articles that we collected, we found, for example, metaphors connected to the military field (Table 03).

Table 03. Examples of metaphors taken from the headlines collected.

MEDIUM	HEADLINE[5]
Diário de Notícias	Sex education and the Association for Family Planning *under attack* (2005-05-20)
	Only Education *is saved* in the great collective fall (2005-09-30)
	Sampaio *defends fight against failure* and more qualification (2005-10-05)
Público	*Technological shock* starts today with tax benefits (2005-04-21)
	In defense of Science and Technology (2005-02-13)
	For the students, *in defense* of the teachers (2005-07-12)

Source: Authors

OPERATIONALIZATION

We understand that the language is a social practice and as such it is one of the mechanisms by which society reproduces and self-regulates. CDA will be understood, in this work, as an approach that allows us to study the language and social discourses contained in the newspapers articles. We will therefore consider the words of Fairclough (1995a):

> the representation of discourse in news media can be seen as an ideological process of considerable social importance, and that the finer detail of discourse representation, which on the face of it is merely a matter of technical properties of the grammar and semantics of texts, may be tuned to social determinants and social effects. (p. 65)

The same author also notes the importance of the sociologist's sensitivity to a study involving CDA: "[...] to be sensitive to how social structures and relations are instantiated in the fine detail of daily social practices, including discourse" (Fairclough 1995a, p. 65). Although we recognize the difficulty and complexity of such an approach, DA, when done by the researcher him/herself, allows greater attention in the (re)production of power relations – hard to verify by someone unrelated to the investigation.

This approach was the one that best suited the objectives of this study, because it allowed us to uncover the connections between opinion articles and the issues that involve education: the practices and discourses of the Ministry of Education and of the students' parents.

We recognized the need for the opinion articles to represent other articles, not selected, but we thought it was equally important to consider the articles with unique and unusual perspectives. These articles, by contradicting the views of the majority and by revealing other points of view, added value to the research. In this way, it was possible to avoid the so-called *saturation des données*, concept defined by Rousseau and Saillant (2003). However, it should be emphasized once again that the articles

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5 Our translation.

chosen for analysis didn't correspond to a sample, since, as has been mentioned, each article has a unique nature.

Our operationalization strategy regarding CDA derives from combining the approaches of different authors. This resulted not only in a methodology that made sense, but also in minimal risk occurrence. Still, it should be stressed that the perspectives of Norman Fairclough evidenced in various texts were followed, since Fairclough (1995b) seems to suggest a combination of the social and cultural analysis of texts with a linguistic analysis:

> To develop a form of discourse analysis which can contribute to social and cultural analysis, we need to combine these insights with traditions of close textual analysis which have developed in linguistics and language studies – to make them 'operational', practically usable, in analysis of specific cases. (p. 53-54)

The opportunity to verify the relations between the different texts and the structures that are close to them or in an opposition, as well as the whole network elaborated around the expressed discourse became essential in this investigation. In addition, it is important to take into account that the discourse can be implicated in the orientations of social practices, which are: economic, political, cultural and ideological.

In a first stage of the operationalization of CDA, a survey was made of all opinion articles, which were then classified according to the hypotheses defined. A table was designed to present in brief form the 20 articles chosen for this study. This table included the newspaper in which the article was published, as well as the date, the author, the title, a small quantitative analysis – in relation to the total of articles published and found for each newspaper and for each category of study – and brief quotations. This latter element would allow a simplified analysis of the articles.

This table afforded a first contact with the opinion articles chosen to be analyzed, but in no way corresponds to a discourse analysis of the articles. It only aims to show, through significant quotations, the way in which opinion makers write on the subject under study and, consequently establish some parallels between the articles.

Each text is, thus, simultaneously constituted by social identities, social relations and by systems of knowledge, and beliefs. Therefore, the need to contextualize the articles of opinion chosen in relation to their production and consumption was accepted. So, in another stage of this research, chronological tables were constructed capable of providing a timeframe to the selected opinion articles vis-à-vis other articles that were classified as belonging to the same category of analysis. To the left of the timeline, all opinion articles of the same category were registered, and to the right of that timeline all the important articles from other journalism genres collected were entered.

This stage of the operationalization of CDA allowed us to contextualize each of the articles under study. Consequently, the perspective of Dijk (2005) on context was taken into account. The context consists of the categories such as the definition of the situation, location, actions and their mental representations: purposes, knowledge, opinions, attitudes and ideologies.

Bearing always in mind the recommendations of Fairclough (1995b), after the choice and justification of the opinion articles, each of them was read and some comments were registered in the right margin of each article.

Then we responded to a set of issues in order to provide constant and similar information regarding each of them. In a certain way, these considerations may correspond to a guide to support the analysis of the articles. Thus, each article was read and analyzed individually, with a view to answering the issues considered fundamental.

In a subsequent stage, we tried to make a sequence of the subjects of each paragraph of the article under analysis and to verify how certain terms arose in the article, for example: student, school, exams, teacher, ranking, results.

In the literature review conducted, great importance was given to metaphors. Consequently, the metaphors were registered and organized in groups, as well as other figures of speech found in each article regarding: education, management, regulation and society. For example, in some articles a greater number of metaphors or figures of speech were evidenced around the management field than around the other three fields. In these articles, significant references to the field of education are not used as arguments, this only serves as descriptive factor.

Since we inscribed our research in a macro social study, with a natural valuation of the social act, we took into account the relation between the discursive practice and the order of discourse. Therefore, an attempt was made to understand the discourse networks to which the discursive practice belongs. However, we have tried to know the social and cultural relations, as well as the structures that constitute the context of discursive practices. In this regard, Fairclough (1995b) states that the interpretation of the texts includes the identification of the underlying holistic structures: "Such structures are intrinsic to the mental models of events and source texts, models which reporters try to convey audiences (readers, etc.) draw upon in interpreting reports" (p. 30).

The references and the reflections regarding CDA must not lead us to situations identified as incorrect: summarizing the articles under study; taking a position – despite acknowledging the impossibility of the researcher being outside his/her own research –, or isolated citations.

It was our intention that this operationalization would translate into a consistent, rigorous and accessible CDA, that is, capable of being verified by others. In a final stage, an attempt was made to reconcile the previous stages, therefore a text was written for each article in which we tried to show the paths taken and the approach to CDA implemented.

Each of the texts produced from the CDA has a particular value. However, we attempted to relate the analyzed articles to the theoretical references discussed in each chapter.

LAST WORDS

In this text, an attempt was made to identify the methodology used in a research in the area of education. As was mentioned, our preferences were not based on ease, but rather on coherence and the contribution that the methodology could make to the research.

Our methodologic options were made explicit in the research design, as well as in the definition and contextualization of the study hypotheses, because we consider that the CDA of the opinion articles allow us to know and discuss the study hypotheses defined.

We were also concerned to justify the use as research tools of opinion articles on education, published by *Diário de Notícias* and *Público*. At a time when the media acquire increasing value, it is important to understand the purpose and effects of these articles.

However, we consider that the discourse contained in the articles of opinion becomes, itself, the object of study. In this sense, we acknowledge that the discourse of the opinion articles is capable of legitimizing and persuading others.

Even so, it is essential to understand whether the media can influence the audience, as well as dilute and legitimize certain perspectives or conducts. It is also important to know the lexicon used, in the media, and to understand what an opinion maker is. Consequently, the possibility that the media correspond to a form of power can be addressed.

Finally, the research conducted *only* aims to launch ideas to provide an answer to the initial issue. We consider that the conclusions reached may make a small contribution to the debate on education and citizenship besides highlighting the importance of the study of Critical Discourse Analysis, as methodology for research in education. Opinion articles assume the aim of conditioning parental involvement and they promote active participation in the school life of their children. As we argued in another paper (António & Teodoro 2011), not all the families have the ability to choose. Parentocracy does not refer only to individual choice, it also concerns issues of equality and democratic access to school success. Possibly that's why Brown (1990) argues:

> […] the ideology of parentocracy has not emerged as a result of a ground swell of popular demand for radical educational reform among a majority of parents, and does not imply an increase in 'parent power' over the school curriculum. On the contrary, it has been the State and not parents who have strengthened their control over what is taught in schools. (p. 66)

As teachers and citizens, we can confirm the importance of the education system being regulated by standards of justice and quality, but that is another matter!

Possibly the first step in finding answers is gaining awareness, so that the constraints can be overcome. The answers, however, always depend on where we are positioned, as Lippman (2007) states: "The facts we see depend on where we are placed, and the habits of our eyes" (p. 44).

It is our intention to use this methodology in Task 5 — Pisa in the Media, in the scope of the project A success story? Portugal and PISA (2000-2015). Thus, we are going to analyze critically the discourse of the different articles collected in order to understand the links between the events and the discourse practices, as well as the relation between them and the political entities/institutions considered in the project.

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Análise Critica do Discurso:
Entre as Ciências da Educação e o Jornalismo

RESUMO

Esta investigação, na qual usamos a Análise Critica do Discurso (ACD) no campo das Ciências da Educação, foi desenvolvida no âmbito do projeto de doutoramento em educação. *Partimos da questão — Que relações se podem reconhecer entre os artigos de opinião sobre a educação, publicados em jornais de referência, e os valores e as aspirações defendidos pela nova classe média?* Usamos uma metodologia quantitativa, e realizámos entrevistas aos diretores dos jornais estudados, assim como a pais e a professores. A ACD foi usada em 20 artigos de opinião escolhidos como *corpus* de estudo. Acreditamos que é essencial compreender as intenções e as consequências dos artigos de opinião sobre a escola.

Palavras-Chave: Análise Critica do Discurso; Artigos de Opinião; Educação; Parentocracia.