


Life project, new high school and Twitter discourse

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Abstract

The article analyzes discursive positions on the life project within the scope of the New High School Reform in posts published on Twitter. The theoretical foundation that leads this study is mainly based on Foucault (1995; 2009; 2010) on discourse, power and resistance. The methodology is characterized as a descriptive-interpretative study of a qualitative nature. The analyzes indicate that the examined posts discourses circulate resistance strategies that oppose the consensus effect of the official discourse on curricular reforms carried out in the mainstay of High School, mainly with regard to the neoliberal interests underlying the implementation of such reforms.

Keywords: New High School. Life Project. Speech. Neoliberalism.

Projeto de vida, novo ensino médio e(m) discurso no Twitter

Resumo

O artigo analisa posicionamentos discursivos sobre o projeto de vida no âmbito da Reforma do Novo Ensino Médio em postagens publicadas no Twitter. O aparato teórico que conduz o estudo repousa principalmente em Foucault (1995; 2009; 2010) acerca do discurso, do poder e da resistência. Sobre a metodologia, trata-se de um estudo descritivo-interpretativo de natureza qualitativa. As análises sinalizam que os discursos das postagens examinadas fazem circular estratégias de resistência que se contrapõem ao efeito de consenso do discurso oficial sobre as reformas curriculares efetuadas no ensino médio, principalmente no que toca aos interesses neoliberais subjacentes à efetivação de tais reformas.

Palavras-chave: Novo Ensino Médio. Projeto de Vida. Discurso. Neoliberalismo



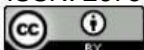
1 Introduction

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This study takes as object of analysis discourses about the life project. This is inscribed within the New High School Reform (NEM), as established by Law No. 13.415/2017. More particularly, it is important for us to think about how discursive positions on the life project can engender resistance strategies against the effect of consensus arising from the official and reformist discourse that established substantive changes in the high school level. To this end, we looked at posts published on Twitter in January 2022. We understand, from the theoretical perspective of Foucault (2009), that every discourse is connected with power relations and resistance strategies.

Therefore, we consider the conditions of possibility responsible for the emergence of the NEM reform within a specific space and time, namely: a) the process of deterioration of the Brazilian democratic fabric, manifested due to the removal process of President Dilma Rousseff (2016); b) the effectuation of a reform edited on the fly, through a Provisional Measure (746/2016) and with sharp criticism from representative and educational entities; c) the intense association of the government with sectors of the business community represented through non-profit and philanthropic institutions linked to large economic conglomerates (QUADROS; KRAWCZYK, 2019); d) the effectuation of other reforms that stripped hard-won labor rights (Labor Reform), with the promise of ensuring employability, especially among younger people, which was not seen in hindsight; e) the rise to federal power of a candidate aligned to the extreme right wing spectrum, in a way that accentuated the process of democratic and institutional degradation, with drastic consequences on public education - persecution of teachers and unions, cutting of resources at all educational levels, lack of coordination to deal with the challenges imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, defense of home-schooling, among countless other dismantling that could be cited here.

In summary, these facts are linked to a very inhospitable scenario in relation to democratic normalcy and the full exercise of citizenship, culminating in abrupt changes in various sectors of social life - school, labor and social security. It is at the heart of these

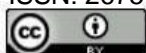




conditions the reform of the NMS and the subsequent approval of the Common National Curricular Base for the New High School (BNCC-EM) and its effects have a major impact on the curricular structure, workload, teaching materials and teacher training (see the BNC-Training).

3 By diluting the disciplines within the so-called formative itineraries, the NEM proposes that students are responsible for their formative journey and this is where the so-called life project comes into play. Although it is not a mandatory component of the new curriculum design, several mentions are made to the life project in the text of the BNCC-EM (at least eight times), the document responsible for guiding the development of curricula in the states and educational systems. In addition, the National Book and Teaching Material Program (PNLD), 2021 edition, has dedicated special attention to didactic works related to the Life Project. Thus, as the students are led to make a series of "choices" within this new curricular configuration, the Life Project would provide the necessary planning for the student to organize, from the beginning of high school, the construction of his future. In view of this, in 2022, when the networks were obliged to implement the NEM, a true explosion of speeches about this problem can be seen in different media instances.

From articles in television, print, and digital newspapers, to videos by experts on YouTube and other channels, institutional advertising from the Ministry of Education (MEC), and a diversity of publications on digital social networks, much was said about the changes that would be implemented as a corollary of the reform enacted in 2017. Among these changes, we place the interest in the Life Project, conceived here as a technology that makes the reformist wishes work, for which high school would be considered outdated, uninteresting, and divorced from the reality of young people in the country, responsible, therefore, for the high dropout rates at this level of basic education. On the other hand, an autonomous, protagonist, engaged, responsible, flexible, and attentive to changes in the world of work emerges through the reform. As an excerpt from the introduction of the BNCC-EM emphasizes, the document "[...] proposes overcoming the radically disciplinary fragmentation of knowledge, stimulating its application in real life, a





importance of the context to give meaning to what is learned" (BRASIL, 2018, p. 15), as well as "the [...] protagonism of the student in his learning and in the construction of his life project" (BRASIL, 2018, p. 15).

We can glimpse in the discourse of the Base a shy connection with the modus operandi of neoliberalism, understood, in the wake of Dardot and Laval (2016), as a rationality that enthroned different spheres of contemporary social life, especially in the construction of managerialist subjectivities, manageable and guided by business logic. Thus, being a protagonist represents a strategy of bioregulation, to the extent that the subject is considered responsible for his or her formative path, and success or failure in the process of making his or her life project is up to him or her alone. At the core of the notion of life project, lies knowledge from the field of business administration, from a managerial and corporate ethos, to the extent that the contingencies of life and the future of young people would be subject to a precise and meticulous calculation that would allow them to achieve goals through the development of skills and competencies, including those of a socioemotional nature. In the words of Castiel (2021, p. 194), "[...] life itself, in all its aspects, becomes the object of performance/fraud mechanisms and also, paradoxically, of risk/accountability.

Given this briefly outlined panorama, we established the following research questions: what discursive positions are assumed about the life project in Twitter posts? How can these positions initiate strategies of resistance that can confront the power relations of neoliberal nature? To provide answers to these questions, we conducted this research.

2 Methodology

This research is classified as a descriptive-interpretative study, since we describe and interpret speeches about the life project in publications made on the social network Twitter. It is also a qualitative approach, because it is important for us to observe the nature of the phenomenon observed, not neglecting to mobilize the subjectivity of the



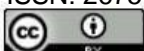


research subjects in the process of selecting and organizing the object of study. Furthermore, we distance ourselves from a bias that considers the management of variables, statistical data and other elements of quantitative origin.

The choice for the social network Twitter occurred because it is a kind of contemporary "agora", in which the most different debates proliferate, and for being an instance whose main objective is not to make friends or publish photos (although this is fully possible), but to be a more inductive space of discussions and online connections. This makes data collection possible because, unlike other networks, there is greater access to content published in profiles that are not necessarily followed by the user/researcher's account.

Therefore, in January 2022, we did a search with the terms "life project", "new high school", and combining "life project and new high school", which resulted in approximately fifty posts. We read them all beforehand and selected ten of them to analyze in this article. The selection was made due to the following criteria: a) they could express the positioning of distinct subjects of the teaching and learning process, who were directly affected by the NEM - as student and teacher, for example; b) they could outline how the Life Project as a potentially transversal component has been concretized in Brazilian schools.

In order to maintain ethics in research in online environments (RECUERO, 2017), we chose not to make explicit the names of the profiles producing the posts, although we know that they are not always names of real subjects - sometimes - they are nicknames and/or pseudonyms. Anyway, following Foucault (2010), we do not care about the empirical subject and/or the author of the post, but, yes, the position assumed by such subject at the moment he/she enunciates. Another point to be emphasized is that no changes were made in the writing of the posts, in order to maintain the specificities in the writing practiced in the context of social networks.





3 Results and Discussion

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We divided the analysis into two blocks, in order to delineate the discursive regularities detected. Thus, in the first block, the posts point out how the Life Project has affected the experiences of students and teachers and, in the second, we identify some specificities of the Life Project as a component of the curriculum matrix of NEM. Throughout all the statements, resistance strategies emerge, through linguistic-discursive resources, such as irony, sarcasm, and the tone of revolt. Let's see.

Posting 1

Thinking here that now with this new high school I am going to stop teaching history to the third grade to do a life project. How am I going to help others to make a life project if I don't even know how to make one for myself?

Posting 2

I teach in a school that adopts this "new" model and, believe me, these electives are nothing more than a bunch of bullshit, the high school curriculum will be full of pseudoscience, with these electives and life project (that already exist in the curriculum here)...

Posting 3

So-and-so gave a presentation on the "life plan" of the New High School and this presentation made my life expectancy drop by about 10 years.

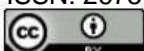
Posting 4

I could have sworn I wasn't going to have this disgrace of a life project because I'm not doing the new high school but my high school stuck this bomb in the schedule what the hell.

Posting 5

I went to the school library to look for a dictionary and found this complete course. I think I will use it in the "new" High School for "Life Project" classes [The post shows a picture of the book Complete Tarot Course by Nei Naiff].

In this first enunciative series, we can observe how the life project has impacted the routine of teachers and students and how they position themselves in relation to these changes. In post #1, the teacher asks how she will teach the subject Project from

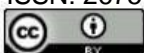




life, instead of teaching history, supposedly her area of training, if she cannot draw up a life project for herself. This position shares a certain questioning about the obscurities that the NEM reform has generated, specifically about a lack of identity for the curricular component in question. Chervel (1990), when undertaking a study of the history of school subjects, considers that the emergence of a discipline is sensitively linked to the existence of a consolidated field of knowledge, which does not occur in relation to the Life Project and this absence of a given identity for this component generates the discursivized discomforts in the posts.

Thus, in 5, the enunciating subject highlights that the teaching material to be used would be a Tarot Course; in 2, it is pointed out the existence of pseudosciences to penetrate within the disciplines of the diversified base, the so-called electives; in 4, the position of the student subject rebels against the insertion of the discipline in his formative path ("disgrace", "this bomb"); in 3, the mobilization of humor works as a way to reject the life project in the current context - of dismantling public policies for young people. It is worth noting that the use of quotation marks suggests irony on the part of the enunciating subject, by denouncing the type of life presupposed in the NEM's mainstay. Considering the instabilities inherent to neoliberal rationality and financial capitalism, young people are urged to make plans that tend to be frustrated in the medium and long term. Thus, we can recognize the functioning of resistance strategies, given the fallacious character of the life project, for which it is necessary to resort to forces from the field of magic (post 5), mention the incompatibility in didactically transposing the knowledge of this component in a scenario in which the teachers themselves are confused (post 1), denounce the emptying of the diversified base of the curriculum (post 2) and rebel against the implementation of the life project (post 4). As Foucault (1995) reminds us, resistances are coextensive with power relations, so that every power relation, in this case the effects of the NEM reform, engender struggles, uprisings and responses, manifested in the dissatisfactions and criticisms of the discursive materialities studied.

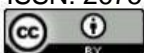
Other posts from the second block of the enunciative series under study corroborate this Foucauldian assertion. In one of the posts, we read: And in the new *life*





project, has the discipline of "life project" I suppose it is pro student 'project' your life and choose between delivering ifood or rappi(Posting 6). In this statement, the position of the enunciating subject is based on the referential (FOUCAULT, 2010) linked to historical conditions of precarization of labor force and, in this sense, the life project serves to the student to choose which food delivery company via digital application will serve (read to be exploited). Other posts also criticize the reason for the existence of the life project component: the government legalized coaching via life project (Post 7), New high school: the mulequeque leaving the life project class thinking about suicide (Post 8); first life project class will be a behavioral analysis of the BBB (Post 9); Are you happy now, new high school? I'm becoming a brownie entrepreneur, going to my former life project teacher's door and making him buy 5 every day!

In the discourse of posts 7 and 9, there is a discursive positioning according to which the life project, by not having a precise identity and serving obscure interests, would be a kind of institutionalization of the coaching practice in the school environment and, thus, the content would be to discuss the behavior of participants in a reality show. In post 8, there subsists a discursive game contrasting the terms life and suicide and, in 10, there is a sense of sarcasm from the enunciating subject, to the extent that his former life project teacher is urged to buy the products developed from the activation of the entrepreneurial spirit (DARDOT; LAVAL, 2016) developed due to the discipline. In general terms, we can recognize the activation of resistance tactics to neoliberal rationality from which the life project results as a constituent element of the NEM, in view of the training for the precariat (STANDING, 2020) and the absence of a human, integral and critical aspect. To this end, we emphasize the constant use of linguistic-discursive resources such as humor, mockery and irony, which tend to deconstruct the truths of the official discourse of the NEM.





4 Final considerations

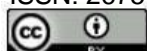
Throughout this text, we sought to analyze Twitter posts about the life project within the NEM reform, in order to scrutinize the discursive positions assumed in these statements, the possible functioning of resistance strategies against the neoliberal rationality responsible for shaping subjectivities flexible, resilient and in line with the designs of the market.

The analysis allowed us to see that the positions taken in the posts denote the effects of this new curricular configuration from the teacher's and student's point of view, and certain singularities of the life Project as a curricular component. In short, both teachers and students assume a position of discomfort regarding the life project, conceived as a subject with purposes in the process of juvenile schooling, if we take into account the acute scenario of dismantling public policies and social security. By mobilizing discursive resources of humor and criticism to enunciate about the life project, the posts can be situated as resistance strategies, whose microphysical effects frontally challenge the capture of the educational field by insidious business market interests. In this sense, we believe to have fulfilled the purposes of this study, but we point out that further research is necessary, aiming to examine, especially, the more systematic action of resistance in the school space in the contemporary conjuncture.

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