

**SOCIAL AND DISCOURSIIVE PRACTICE:
an investigation of editorials in *Secretaria Executiva* and
Mulher Executiva magazines**

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ABSTRACT: In this article I report the data analysis and results in terms of social and discursive practice based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), on Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and gender studies. The purpose is to discuss what is happening in the immediate social *context* in which my corpus, six editorials of a Brazilian magazine dedicated to executive secretaries - *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva*, is inserted and how that environment affects women's identity. The main objective was to answer what the editorials, the interviews and the news report reveal about the social context. Therefore, I present the results of the context of situation analysis with its three variables; field, tenor and mode. For the field variable, first I report some characteristics of production and distribution and types of articles found in the magazine to point out what is going on in that context. Second, the group of students' and teachers' opinions, and the linguistic features of the editorials represent the variable tenor, answering who interacts with whom and the way the interaction is realized in that context. Third, I discuss the variable, mode, showing the role of language. Finally, I present the final discussions.

KEY-WORDS: executive secretaries, context of situation, textual analysis

RESUMO: Neste artigo relato a análise e o resultado de minha pesquisa em termos de prática social e discursiva com base na Análise Crítica do Discurso (ACD), na Lingüística Sistêmica Funcional (LSF) e nos estudos de gêneros. O objetivo é discutir o que acontece no contexto social imediato no qual meu corpus, seis editoriais de uma

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revista brasileira dedicada às secretárias executivas - *Secretária Executiva e Mulher Executiva* - está inserido e como este contexto afeta a identidade feminina. O objetivo principal foi responder o que os editoriais, as entrevistas e as reportagens revelam sobre o contexto social. Para tanto, primeiro apresento os resultados da análise do contexto da situação em suas três variáveis: *campo*, *tenor* e *modo*. Para a variável *campo*, reporto algumas características de produção e distribuição, e tipos de artigos encontrados nas revistas, indicando o que está ocorrendo naquele contexto. Segundo, o grupo de alunos e professores e os traços lingüísticos dos editoriais representam a variável *tenor*, respondendo quem está interagindo e de que modo a interação é realizada naquele contexto. Terceiro, discuto a variável *modo*, mostrando o papel da língua. Concluindo, apresento as discussões finais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: secretárias executivas, contexto da situação, análise textual

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the professional secretary takes more responsibilities and works more independently. Many names appear to reflect this expansion of the secretarial job: Secretary, Administrative assistant, Executive Administrative assistant, Management assistant, and others. A survey in the USA showed that 66% agree that the title Administrative Assistant best describes their expanded job (BRETAS, March 2000, p. 6).

Within the professional context in Brazil, women at work, and in particular the executive secretaries or administrative assistants, seem to be an exemplification of a gender opposition as women mostly represent this profession. Garcia (1999, p.87) presents some evidence of this aspect through the results of the analysis of 1012 advertisements for women's secretary job positions from 1991 to 1997 published in a Brazilian newspaper. The majority of the advertisements analyzed looked for women and not for men.

Furthermore, few male students graduate in such a degree. This is my particular observation as a teacher for four years in a state university. For example, in the 2003 academic registration in my class there were 2 men to 18 women. The registration forms are not included in the article in order to safeguard students' identities.

In the managerial area, women secretaries are in general linked to good personal appearance (beauty), to social etiquette, obedience and submission. However, the importance of beauty is one item that has been decreasing, what may indicate a change of status (GARCIA, 1999).

In addition, in some regions, the salaries are very low in relation to the demand of work. According to results in an interview, Navarro (2002, p.12) shows that there is a great difference in salaries depending on the region where secretaries work. In Brazil, a bilingual secretary receives around R\$ 2000,00 to R\$ 2500,00 while a junior secretary in small companies receive around R\$ 800,00 to R\$ 500,00. A highly qualified group of women receive more than R\$ 3000,00.

Therefore, it is possible to affirm that the secretary professional profile has been changing in the last years. The stereotyped perspective that the secretary is only an assistant of administrative secretarial tasks now assumes that individuals are undergoing more authoritative executive job positions. "A new generation of professionals is coming as a consequence of globalization. The great difference will be the professional skills" (HILLSHEIM, 2002, p. 6).

Another possible reason for this change is that academic specialization has produced a new professional profile. In Brazil, according to the INEP (Brazilian National Institute of Educational Studies and Research) there were 143 Executive Secretary or Bilingual and Trilingual Executive Secretary College degrees in 2003 (Internet site of Ministério da Educação, Oct, 2004). This contingent of students has been allocated in job positions with new abilities and proposals of actions, which in its turn has probably caused some possible changes in the managerial board of workplace institution.

However, regarding Brazilian women's job positions, still in the twenty-first century, few of them are occupying top business positions in private and governmental enterprises. Women claim that there still exist prejudice and conservative attitudes impeding their ascension (FOLHA DE SÃO PAULO, Nov 2004). According to research results by Ethos Institute in 2003, although the percentage of women in executive top position is much higher than ten years ago, only nine percent occupy director positions, eighteen percent being managers and twenty-eight percent supervisors (GALVÃO,

2004, p.14) (my translation). These figures show that the asymmetries between men and women in work positions are still present in our corporate environment.

Another divergent discussion is in relation to maternity. Some opinions are that women can reconcile family and work while others say that there is an impairment considering that pregnancy and children's care causes women's license from work more frequently, impeding them to assume more important positions in the company (GALVÃO, 2004).

However, there is a positive aspect that must be mentioned: women are changing the relationships in all areas. As cited in D'elia, (2003,p.9), Prtjof Capra in his book *O Ponto de mutação* says that the woman's leadership will contribute to a complete redefinition of human nature in this millennium, because she is present in all segments: family, school, society, companies, acting as a bridge and practicing a leadership style that values dialogue, partnership, cooperation and competence. This change leads us to the importance of women's participation in social life, and how this participation contributes to social transformations.

2. THE CONTEXT OF SITUATION

To deconstruct the context of situation in relation to my corpus I will answer the three following questions: i) what is the field, ii) what is the tenor and iii) what is the mode of the editorials in the magazines investigated? For the context of situation, Halliday (1985); Eggins (1994) means three concomitant elements: i) the Field, which is related to what is going on; ii) the Tenor, which is the type of the relationship between participants; iii) and the Mode, which is the type of channel of communication being used.

2.1 FIELD

The first question related to the contextual variable Field answers what is going on.

Three main traits can be found in the six editorials analyzed. The first trait relates to the problems secretaries and Brazilian executive women face in their job positions. The second is the editor motivating the readers to face their problems. The third is a reference to the articles published in the issue; the editor advertises the magazine in all the editorials. These traits are presented in the magazine production and distribution and in the types of discourses in the six issues of *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva* magazines. In the next section I show some more details about the magazines under investigation.

2.1.2 THE MAGAZINE

Secretária Executiva and *Mulher Executiva* magazines are dedicated to executive secretaries and to the executive women in general, and it is distributed by Editora Quantum, Curitiba – PR, Brazil. During the development of this work the editor changed, as well as the site on the web. The site www.secretariaexecutiva.com.br was replaced by www.executivas.com.br. The publisher produces two other magazines, both related to business context: i) Revista *Venda Mais*, specialist on sales and marketing; and ii) *Comunicação e Resultados*, directed to communication inside the company and in private life.

In the six issues analyzed, only one showed the number of copies - 10.000. In the other ones, only the number of publications in a year was written. The magazine is only distributed in private associations, universities and by subscription. The average number of pages is from 14 to 29. Comparing *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva* magazine issues published with other magazines dedicated to women, the number is not so representative. However, it is relevant for linguistic analysis as it represents a particular professional group in society. Some of the main contents of *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva* magazines are described below as an exemplification of what the magazine ‘talks about’.

2.1.3 TYPES OF ARTICLES IN THE SIX ISSUES OF *SECRETÁRIA EXECUTIVA* AND *MULHER EXECUTIVA* MAGAZINES

In the magazine under investigation, the articles combine practical guidance of typical secretary tasks, such as ability in foreign languages, communication, personal marketing, leadership, etiquette and social behavior, with articles referring to self-help, motivation and personal affairs. Few advertisers announce their products in the six issues: hotels, restaurants, fairs and congresses, and office furniture companies. Some of the announcers are: SENAC (Centro de tecnologia em Administração e Negócios) – SP, ACRIMET (office equipment) congresses and lectures in the secretarial area, and Editora Quantum. Letters to the editor, a common practice in magazines, were not found. Finally, present in all samples are the editorials, also known as editor's letter or editor's column, the focus of this investigation. Following, the titles of articles in the six magazines are shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Titles of Discourses in the Six Magazines

	2002	2003
Março	Qual é a fonte do amor.encontre entusiasmo em tudo que faz. Carreira e vida pessoal. Trabalho em equipe reduz custos para Klabin. A influência dos hábitos e atitudes nas decisões. Secretária brasileira: criativa, competitiva e competente.	Que longo dia. O traje certo para cada ocasião. Ouça seu coração. Não estou tensa...ou estou. Horário flexível e trabalho em casa funcionam. Crédito para a mulher empreendedora.. Fui trabalhar e agora.
Abril	Mercado de trabalho. Encontre entusiasmo em tudo o que faz. Você vem cuidando de sua empregabilidade? A influência dos hábitos e atitudes nas decisões. Secretária brasileira criativa, competitiva e competente. Vivendo sua verdade.	O braço direito da Discovery Network. Dia de compromisso importante deveria ser feriado. Os 7 passos de Donna Siegel para lidar com clientes furiosos. A mulher no comando.Fluência na Língua Portuguesa. Modelos de Currículos. Não estou tensa... ou estou? A mulher e os Tempos. A mulher e a TPM.
Maio	Como melhorar significativamente sua produtividade. Etiqueta é fundamental. Feeling. O amor na contramão. Cartas de cobro. The art of writing. (sic) S.O.S. Gramática. Dicas para manter o paralelismo nas frases. Você é secretária médica? Como lidar com erros. Aproveitando as oportunidades de aprender.	A primeira dama da hotelaria brasileira. Como ser chata em 5 lições. O estilo feminino de facilitar o mundo e as coisas. As diferenças entre uma profissional e uma reclamona. Uma proposta radical para mulheres visionárias.

The most frequent titles in the six magazines are about women's personal and professional life. Many of them are related to secretarial management and executive positions, but also to relationships and a feminine style of being. There are also problems to be solved or ways to improve work status. However, examining the titles of the articles as shown in Table 8, we can see that they are also concerned with self-help counseling (frustrations and messages of optimism and motivation).

Women's professional and daily problems are discussed in five of the six selected editorials. Only in editorial four is the discussion about insecurity of modern world reported. The predominant themes are about frustration, motivation, emotions, happiness, and hope. For example:

È, minha cara leitora, esta nossa vida moderna não é fácil! Ao mesmo tempo que temos tantas escolhas, tantas oportunidades e coisas boas a desfrutar, temos um lado que fica meio "escondido": aquele em que nos sentimos culpadas em não dar atenção integral aos nossos filhos, à nossa casa, ao nosso marido. (Editorial 1)

Hence, checking what the editor is discussing in the editorial, or what meanings are conveyed, we can anticipate the magazine's purpose and target public. Other themes in the six editorials are difficulties faced by our modern way of life like financial problems and job promotions. Next, I show the meanings conveyed in the six editorials based on gender studies.

2.1.4 THE IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSION IN THE EDITORIALS

Gender in the business context is not a new discussion. After the 30s when feminist movements started, the ideological dimension of women's status in society has changed (CALDAS-COULTHARD, 2000). More recently, this aspect encompasses and leads to two roles by women: housewife and worker. Just to exemplify, the Brazilian Magazine *Época*, March 2004, published a special edition entitled '*Mulheres*'. The headlines in its cover were: *sem perder a ternura; nem amélia nem workaholic; sexo, amor e prazer; trabalho sem traumas*, clearly showing the dichotomy of women's role in society. In relation to work position, it is necessary to make some allusion to status, as higher and lower levels of education in general also means correspondent job positions.

When the latest gender studies are addressed, the central discussion is to search for women's identities in different social institutions and, in the editorials this aspect is marked.

- Ao mesmo tempo que temos tantas escolhas, tantas oportunidades e coisas boas a desfrutar, temos um lado que fica meio "escondido": aquele em que nos sentimos culpadas em não dar atenção integral aos nossos filhos, à nossa casa, ao nosso marido. (Editorial 1)

Comparing these editorials to those of women's magazines in general, some differences are visible. The first is that the reference to consumerism appears only once, yet in a negative sense.

- Estamos sempre tão preocupados em conquistar cada vez mais, que nos esquecemos de viver. (Ed. 6)

The second difference is that, there is not the same cultural domination of physical beauty as in those magazines. In only one editorial this characteristic was found.

-Como exemplo aquela dieta que sempre começamos na segunda-feira e paramos na quarta. E aí vamos para casa nos martirizar e brigar com as celulites (Editorial 5)

In respect to similarities with editorials in women's magazines, one is the dominant assumption that women's contribution to society, in the role of housewife and mother, is still very strong, even if in a professional context. The other similarity is the conversational tone of the editorials (HEBERLE, 1994).

-Depois porque a mulher acaba querendo colocar a família em baixo da sua asa, dando proteção. (Editorial 4)

-Organização, diálogo com a família, um pouco de flexibilidade no trabalho – esse é o ideal para a mulher que quer se sentir bem em seus vários papéis. (Editorial 1)

The first two examples clearly show the twofold role of women: they want to protect their family, but at the same time have to be sympathetic and flexible with their family and work. Besides, the use of questions in the last example produces a feeling of intimacy with the reader, and the clause *Você também* (You too) suggests that the editor is experiencing the same problem.

The *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva* editors express in the editorial their own experience that there is always a struggle in a woman's life and that this twofold role produces anxiety. The editors state clearly, in all the six editorials, their beliefs and, concomitantly, reproduce the struggle of women's identities in a contemporary competitive society. They position themselves in text and dialogically interact with readers trying to help them by the discourse of self-help counseling, producing a distinct discourse practice and establishing her attitude and 'ethos', that is, they want to express that they are sympathetic with readers and may be included in the same category of social identities (FAIRCLOUGH, 1992, p. 143). In the following section I discuss the variable tenor.

2.2 TENOR

The second question related to the contextual variable tenor refers to who interacts with whom or who are the agents of transaction. Another feature investigated in this variable is how the linguistic features reveal hierarchy. As this magazine is written to a feminine public, mainly to secretaries and executive women, a group of students and teachers, who knew the magazine, played the role of readers and they gave me an account of how they perceive women's executive identities as constructed in *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva*. Some of these students already work as executive secretaries; they work during the day and study in the evening.

First, I discuss examples of the students' opinions about the magazine, then the executive secretary program coordinator's and teachers' beliefs. The person responsible for the executive board of the magazine wrote in response to my questions. However, the editor's opinion in respect to women's identities was not sent because the magazine is no longer published by Editora Quantum.

2.2.1 STUDENTS' BELIEFS

Some articles chosen by the students as the best ones and some students' opinions about the magazines were: i) 'Curso superior de secretariado' is related to tendencies of secretarial profession. The central discussion in the article is that the professional should have a graduation certificate before starting work in the area. Another aspect discussed in the article is that according to a survey in the USA, the profession has become very important in the last years and it has the chance to reach the first position in the future. ii) 'Career Plan' can be used as an instrument to guide the professional career. iii) Logistics at work and at home is interesting because it shows how a woman can deal with work and family. Two students' opinions are described below.

- The best article is ""Career's Plan"" 'cause it can be used as a management instrument which can be used by the professional to guide his career.
- The best article of the magazine ME is the interview with god professional, are interesting because are (sic) they real.

Some negative opinions about the articles were: i) the magazine should be more academically oriented; ii) there are some traces of discrimination in the work market in relation to women; iii) there are few articles improving their careers; iv) an article is sexist and there is a horoscope; and v) some other students wrote that there were a lot of food, beauty, fashion, and articles considered too basic in relation to articles about secretarial techniques. For example:

- The worst article is about the three things more irritet (sic) the man in the work. Because we think the article is sexist.
- ...a maioria dos artigos da revista are articles (sic) ultrapassados que não abordam as características e competências reais do secretario executivo, limitando-se a dar dicas de beleza, moda e técnicas secretariais muito básicas.

According to the negative statements stated by the students it seems that the magazine is not fulfilling some necessities of this group of secretaries, and it produces some contradictory views about women's role in society. Although the students see the magazines' positive concern about the two-fold role women can assume, as workers

and as housewives or mothers, students see that there is still sex stereotype and discrimination, connection to personal appearance and households.

Regarding the positive statements, students said that there are good perspectives in the market for administrative assistants and that they are in favor of graduated diploma to be demanded in job recruitment. The answers were only related to professional identity built in relation to a specific magazine. The teachers' opinions will show another perspective about this profession.

2.2.2 TEACHERS' BELIEFS

I asked three questions to the teachers: i) Do you use the magazine with your students; ii) What is your opinion about the magazine and; iii) What is your opinion about the secretary profession? The coordinator of the course gave me back a general estimation.

For questions one and two she wrote: from five teachers of the secretarial area, only one suggests the magazine, yet only for complementary readings. The other four do not use or recommend it. One of them said she has not read it for almost two years. Reasons for not using it: i) it does not have academic purposes and it lacks theoretical and research articles; it has a journalese style, not fulfilling academic requirements; ii) it has few articles, if we consider its monthly periodicity; iii) absence of topics which aggregate value to executive secretary professionals.

The answers of question one and two show that *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva* are not used by the teachers mainly because they are not directed to an academic public. The coordinator stated some of the reasons in her e-mail:

- a) ausência de cunho teórico/científico aos artigos, sua formatação é jornalística e não atende as exigências acadêmicas;
- b) poucas matérias se considerarmos a periodicidade da revista (mensal);
- c) ausência de assuntos que realmente agregam valor ao profissional secretário executivo.

In question three, only the coordinator gave an answer. She said that she could only give information about the profession regarding her university. She affirmed that

there is a great demand for this professional lately, mainly because of the specialization in management assistance and foreign languages. In her university, for more than a decade, the secretarial degree program is the first in demand for a vacancy. The evasion of students is another important aspect. She said that the number of students that cancel their university studies is very small if compared to others in the same area. In her own words:

XXXXX, em função de meu mestrado não tenho acompanhado a evolução da profissão no Estado, nas em nível local, percebo um grande aumento na procura por este profissional, principalmente os de formação acadêmica (em função da especialidade adquirida em nível de assessoria e idiomas). Aqui na XXXXXX, somos, a mais de uma década, o curso mais procurado do Campus. Esta procura, ao meu ver, reflete a importância funcional deste profissional. Uma vez matriculado, o índice de evasão é muito baixo, se comparado aos outros cursos da mesma área (informações mais específicas acerca destes índices podem ser obtidas junto a Secretaria Acadêmica do Campus).

According to the coordinator, in that academic context, the value of the executive secretary profession and the question of sex are not mentioned, although ninety per cent of the students are female.

Another distinction is in respect to curriculum. Three areas compose the syllabus: communication, secretarial skills and administration. Some Brazilian executive secretary colleges are allocated in the Applied Social Sciences Center (ASCC), while others are a branch of BA in Letters and Arts. In my university there is a balance in relation to the hours of study, one-third for each area, and the faculty is allocated in the ASCC. It seems that those colleges, which are allocated in ASCC, tend to have fewer hours for communication studies than those which are allocated in Letters and Arts.

Besides describing the students' and teachers' opinions, in the next section I also analyze the style in the editorials, their hortatory characteristics, content, textual structure and features and self-help discourse.

2.2.3 THE STYLE IN THE EDITORIALS

The six editorials in *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva* magazines always have the editor's full name printed and the handwritten signature. Two of them

have the editor's picture at the bottom of the page and they also include the editor's e-mail address. At the end, they all finish with the message; "*Grande abraço, um ótimo mês. Boa leitura!*" Two different editors, both of them women, wrote the six editorials.

Regarding the location in the magazine, the editorials are in the initial page and they occupy almost the whole of it, on the right side of the page. There is a list of the names of the executive board responsible for the magazine production and an advertisement offering the magazine subscription. Four editorials are introduced by a title:

- Quando foi que começou a ficar complicado? (Editorial 1)
- Fuja da frustração.(Editorial 1)
- Dividir ou equilibrar?(Editorial 1)
- Dia 08 de março, dia internacional da mulher. (Editorial 1)

The two other ones have a direct quotation of an advice message.

- "Para a frente, para a frente, jovens. Vençam todas as dificuldades que aparecerem. A Luz iluminará o caminho a percorrer". D'Alembert (Editorial 1)
- "Esperas ser feliz quando tenhas tudo o que desejas. Enganas-te. Terás as mesmas inquietudes, iguais cuidados, idênticos desgostos, semelhantes temores, desejos". Albert Einstein (1879-1955) (Editorial 1)

The two objectives as those found in editorials of magazines for women, as cited in Heberle (1997), can also be found in *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva* magazines editorials: i) to emphasize some articles from the issue and ii) to establish an informal mood between the writer and the reader in order to attract them to read and buy the magazine.

- Leia a nossa matéria da capa e veja o que pensam as secretárias brasileiras sobre o assunto. (Editorial 1)
- Bem, a revista toda está muito bonita! Moderna, alegre... Você também achou? Gostaria de saber sua opinião. Escreva para mim!(Editorial 1)
- Este mês estamos trazendo, como matéria de capa, o segundo assunto mais votado em nossa enquete.(Editorial 1)

In these examples the editor makes use of some conversational strategies. The question mark and the request are used for interactions and are patterns of oral discourse. If these conversational strategies are used in a written form, they suggest that the editor wants to produce a more intimate and informal tone to the editorial, functioning as a chat with the purpose of convincing the reader to buy the magazine.

Moreover, some other traits in style in the editorials in the women's magazines are that the editors follow editorial norms, and keep the advertisers' interests and the company's philosophy. These elements 'tell us' that there are different 'voices' reproduced in the editorials, not exclusive of who is writing. Four examples are cited below.

- Todos **os colaboradores** da Editora quantum e eu, (Editorial 1)
- e a **Sandra Solda**, nossa nova jornalista-colaboradora (Editorial 1)

When the editor mentions the *director*, it is clear that there is a hierarchy in the company and some rules must be followed. However, the use of her colleagues' names, *Cristiano, Brasília, Sandra*, give an informal mood to the editorial trying to reveal how the environment of work in that publishing house is built in a friendly relation.

Although it was possible to observe that *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva* magazines are directed to a feminine audience, a new element must be considered, the professional context. This is evidenced in the instances below by the use of the lexical choices: *colegas de trabalho, o trabalho, o trabalho das secretárias, promoção*, and *salário*. These lexical choices show that besides talking about personal problems, women are concerned with their careers and job positions.

- Você deve ter recebido muitos parabéns de seus **colegas de trabalho** e de sua família. ... É um assunto muito importante, fundamental para **o trabalho** – e ainda mais para **o trabalho das secretárias**. ...“tenho que conseguir aquela **promoção**, vou aproveitar a vida quando tiver um **salário** melhor”. Só que não é bem assim (Ed. 1)

These examples can also be referred to how the editor discusses the workplace problems with the readers, giving her opinion and taking a position in relation to attitudes and life style.

Another feature found in the editorials is the use of the pronoun *us*, in Portuguese also elliptical, e.g. *estamos* or *devemos*. Fowler *et al.* (1979) discuss the use of the pronoun *We* that is applied when the writer wants to create a sense of community and homogeneous relation with the reader.

-**Estamos** sempre tão preocupados em conquistar cada vez mais,
-Mas não **devemos** esquecer de viver o agora. (Editorial 1)

Even though the two objectives as those found in women's magazines are also used in the editorials of *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva*, that is, to advertise the magazine and to maintain an informal mood between the writer and the reader, the professional context clearly shapes that specific kind of discourse with a predominance of self-help counseling. It is also possible to affirm that hortatory texts and self-help counseling are common practices in editorials.

2.2.4 THE EDITORIAL AS A HORTATORY TEXT

Problem, command, authority, and motivation are the four elements of hortatory texts and they are found in the editorials under analysis. Moreover, if the author of a text does not have the expertise he or she applies specialists in the area such as famous people, surveys, and the institutional power of the magazine (LONGACRE, 1992, in PEREIRA & ALMEIDA, 2002). The first and the second elements, i.e., the problem and command, are exemplified by:

-É verdade que quando estamos tristes dá vontade de desistir, perdemos a esperança, choramos, nos fechamos para o mundo. (Ed.2)
-Pare um pouco e lembre-se que todas as vezes que você caiu, sempre havia um dia seguinte, um outro e um outro.[...] Tenha sensibilidade e paciência para saber encontrá-los. (Editorial 2)

In these two statements above, the editor writes about sadness and hopefulness, and thereafter in the second statement, she asks the reader to act or react against this negative state of mind or problem.

In relation to authority, in the six editorials the editors do not refer to surveys and the institutional power of the magazine to motivate the readers. However, to empower their speech, they use the words of an American poet and journalist from the beginning of twentieth century, Ella Wilcox, well known for a work full of sentiment, spiritualism and temperance.

-Buscai algo que valha a pena fazer enquanto fordes trabalho para melhorar vossas condições como desejaríeis. (Ed.1)

Again, the editor cites Ralph Marston, also an expert in self-help discourse with a page on the internet.

-Agora mesmo, em algum lugar deste planeta , alguém está trabalhando duro para realizar um sonho. Agora mesmo alguém aproveitou uma grande oportunidade. Neste exato instante, alguém está se dedicando a fazer mudanças positivas. (Edi.1)

According to Longacre (1992, in Pereira & Almeida, 2002), the last element, motivation, can be realized in both ways: by positive and negative results such as:

- O importante é saber que sempre após a queda [...], você se levanta[...].
- Provavelmente você caia de novo.....(Editorial 2)

The examples above reveal that the editor is worried about the situation women have been facing and tries to motivate them by using authority, commands and motivation to achieve her purpose of changing women's status. As stated by Longacre (ibid), the hortatory function is a textual resource used by authors to involve readers trying to promote a change of status or action.

The classification of the editorials in *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva* as hortatory texts implies that they have a specific function in the magazine and leads us to their two main purposes: to emphasize some articles from the issue and to establish an informal mood between the writer and the reader, to attract them to read and buy the magazine.

Moreover, a hortatory text is a characteristic of self-help discourse and in my corpus self-help counseling is used in all the six editorials; therefore, they can all be classified as hortatory texts. According to Meurer (1998), self-help discourse is a new tendency in professional institutions, a common social practice in modern social interaction and construed under some more or less stable textual structure and purposes such as those described in the next section.

2.2.5 THE EDITORIALS AND SELF-HELP DISCOURSE

It seems that self-help discourse is applied in the editorials fulfilling four major functions: i) to influence readers; ii) as a hegemonic technique explored to address people's intimacy in public domains; iii) to help people to deal with modern and complex social problems; and iv) construed through reflexivity and confession (ibid).

The first function, to influence readers, was developed above in the hortatory textual feature in editorials. The second, as a technique to address people's intimacy in public domains can be seen through some textual elements and content elucidating how women's experiences are explored in a public domain. For instance, in the examples below the work institution plays a role in woman's life and self- help discourse is pervasive in their lives through reflexivity.

-Não importa se você está bem preparado, se é inteligente, se tem contatos, ou se tem toda a técnica do mundo – os resultados que você terá dependem completamente das ações que você tomar. (Editorial 6)

-Uma até chegou a dizer que “a jornada dupla da mulher tem um preço altíssimo para a sociedade sem valores, que vivemos hoje. Será que a mulher tem de pagar esse preço, tão alto, sozinha?

Reflexivity and self-help discourses contributed to construe social identities in the six editorials probably with the purpose of orienting the readers how to deal with the demanding and stressful workplace domain; they also work as a technique to influence women's status in work positions.

Thus, the redundancy of self-help discourse present in the editorials of *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva* can be interpreted as an example of this

new tendency of fragmentation in professional institutions and a common social practice in modern social interaction. Moreover, advice discourse seems to be pervasive and used by people to deal with problems of power and knowledge relations as well as to protect the individuality of social beings. In the editorials analyzed, advice discourse was used to guide readers on their behaviour and to create feelings of security through hortatory texts.

Since the purpose of the magazine under investigation is to construct women's image and identity at work, self-help discourse is manifested as a way of helping business women in their stressful way of life and in their self-identity development, confirming the modern tendency pointed out by Fairclough (1992). In the next section I discuss the variable mode.

2.3 MODE

The third question related to the contextual variable mode refers to the channel of communication, to the role language plays in the social context. Editorials are a common type of written discourse in newspapers and magazines, so language plays a constitutive role, that is, without language, the editorials would not exist. In *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva* magazines, they include some main features. For instance, the editorials promote the medium indicating some articles or sections, and they are written both in an informal and formal tone. For instance,

- Este mês estamos trazendo, como matéria de capa, o segundo assunto mais votado em nossa enquete: etiqueta empresarial. (formal)
- Confesso que é um assunto que eu adoro! Enquanto muitas pessoas torcem o nariz para isso, eu sempre me interessei, desde pequena. (informal) (Editorial 1)

Some traces of oral form such as the expression “que eu adoro” are also present in the editorials and the editors alternately apply interrogative, indicative and imperative sentences to create a conversational tone.

Como dividir seu coração em dois? Em três? Em quatro? Nós, mulheres, somos mestras nisso... Será que somos mesmo? Abraçar uma carreira, ter filhos, educá-los, cuidar da casa, amar o esposo... Como conseguimos tempo para tudo isso? (Editorial 1)

The conversationalization of discourse simulates oral language, however, editorials are to be read silently and are monologic (HEBERLE, 1997). In the last section of this article I present some discussions referring to the social context in which the data were collected.

3. DISCUSSIONS

The results concerning the social context, or context of situation, showed that executive women and secretaries in Brazil are inserted in a context where hierarchy, physical appearance and the dichotomic roles women have to assume as housewives and workers are still pervasive aspects modeling the social identities.

Although the word hierarchy may be linked to submission, in this context I highlight that executive women and secretaries are assuming more important roles within the workplace sphere, leaving behind the stereotype of a submissive employee and limited to a trivial professional activity. As it was mentioned in *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva* magazines and in Folha de São Paulo (Oct 26; Nov 4, 2004) newspaper articles, two examples of change are: i) new terms being used by the secretary professionals such as administrative assistant or management assistant, and ii) more independence in work decisions (more women in chief executive positions) signaling new directions.

However, according to results of a survey in Folha de São Paulo (Nov, 2004) investigating why there is a very limited number of women in top business positions, 56% of the subjects answered that the corporative sphere is still 'machista' (male chauvinist), 23% of the subjects answered that feminine work has a different profile, 17% of the subjects answered that women are more concerned with their families, and 4% of the subjects answered that the reason is that women do not want to be the number one.

The survey in the article cited above confirms that men still dominate the business context, that women have a different administration style, that some of them are more worried about their families than their careers, and also that some of them do not want to assume top positions.

In the academic environment, I had the opportunity to experience some similar signs of social transformation, for instance, some changes in the curriculum of executive secretary degrees, creating a balance among three areas of study: communication, secretarial skills, and administration. This variation in graduated curricula in some Brazilian universities results from the restructuring in pedagogical plans to follow the globalization effects in the business context. These alterations try to promote more independence for the executive secretaries in work decisions as I mentioned previously, as well as to reach a masculine audience. Nevertheless, as previously discussed, the number of male students is still very low if compared to the feminine public attending classes in that academic context.

Physical appearance and gender aspects are in a way linked, since questions related to feminine traits, in general, bring to discussion these aspects. Although aspects of physical appearance were not investigated in my thesis, some previous work, such as the study by Garcia (1999), show that physical aspects are still considered when secretaries are recruited, and that we can still find traces of gender asymmetries in the Brazilian work context.

Maternity is another issue to be discussed in this context as family and work seems to be a difficult task for women to solve in our modern way of life. However, women are starting to leave positive traces in work institutions and are more valued professionally in their top job positions, contributing to social transformations. Women leadership will redefine human nature due to women's more cooperative and negotiable leadership style.

The second part of the CDA perspective discussion is developed according to results related to the discursive dimension. In the academic environment the social participants, students and teachers gave their opinion about the editorials and about the social context. According to their statements, it seems that the magazine is not fulfilling an academic purpose and it produces some contradictory views about women's role in

society. They think that a woman can assume both roles, as a worker and as a housewife; however, they are not in favor of sex stereotype and discrimination, connection to personal appearance and households, as shown in some articles of *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva* magazines. Moreover, for them, the executive secretary profession has good perspectives in the job market.

The teachers' opinions reaffirm the positive perspectives for the executive secretary professional in the market; however, they did not mention the question of gender dichotomy and for this reason the discussion that this profession 'is mainly represented by women' could not be extended.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions in the discourse practice dimension are that the style and contents of *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva* do not have academic purposes, and for this reason, students and teachers do not often use it and consequently, the magazines are not successful in that context.

Furthermore, the results of the three variables of the context of situation evidence why the students are not using the magazine as an academic reference. As it can be observed there is no academic purposes in the contents of the magazine. Moreover, in the editorials the editors mainly discuss, in a more informal mode, women's professional and private problems as a way to attract readers.

The editor's assistant comment signals changes, since the publisher stopped publishing the magazine and made a partnership with another publishing house to commercialize a new one, *Vida Executiva*, dedicated also to executive women but now being sold in newsstands and not only by subscription.

In relation to the contents and types of advertisements in *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva* magazines impose some restrictions in relation to the target public, as shown in Table 8. I could observe that in the three first issues of *Secretária Executiva* and *Mulher Executiva* magazines of 2002 the public was more restricted to secretary job positions, while in the last three issues of 2003 the articles were also

directed to executive workers in other administrative assistant positions. However, the advertisers were the same and the magazine could be bought only by subscription. The physical aspects of the editorials are almost the same as those found in other women's magazines; however, the two main themes in the editorials were women's personal and professional life problems to be solved, or ways to improve work status.

Problems of women's dichotomic role of housewife and worker, of our modern way of life, and of frustrations are treated through self-help discourse reflecting the social context. The editors use messages of optimism and motivation as a way to convince readers to change opinions and attitudes, trying to solve their problems mentioned in the text. Furthermore, the two main characteristics of editorials in women's magazines of emphasizing some articles from the issue and establishing an informal mood between the writer and the reader are also found in the six editorials, confirming the function of editorials in magazines.

The conversational tone and the lexical choices show that besides talking about personal problems, women are also concerned with their careers and job positions. The style and lexicogrammatical choices, as the use of personal pronouns (*I, we us*) and question marks, show how the editors discuss workplace problems with readers, trying to create an intimate relation as a strategy to influence them to read the articles and to buy the magazine. These conclusions were also based on the studies of women's magazines previously mentioned. Nevertheless, in my investigation, the professional context and self-help counseling discourse predominate in the six editorials.

As we could observe in the literature, self-help discourse has been explored as a technique to deal with people's intimacy in public spheres in many other institutions, and it is a common practice nowadays.

According to Fairclough (1989, 1992), the modern style of administration represented by professional institutions' fragmentation reinforces individualism and self-questionings. In this dimension, it is relevant to mention that specialized consultancy and trainings in the area of motivation and self-esteem are a common practice to help people to deal with problems of power and knowledge relations, as well as to protect the individuality of social beings.

Finally, the four textual elements found in the six editorials, i.e., problem, command, authority, and motivation, suggests the hortatory characteristic in the self-help discourse and the author's use of other voices to convince the reader if he or she is not an expert in the area.

The discussions and conclusions above reinforce the value of contextualizing research, as many aspects in relation to experiences and meanings can be evident when applying to the context.

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