Environmental Discourses in Organizations: the Case of a Brazilian Mobile Telecommunications Company

Alexandre de Pádua Carrieri*
E-mail address: alexandre@cepead.face.ufmg.br
Nucleus of Organizational Studies and Symbolisms, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais - UFMG
Belo Horizonte, MG, Brazil

Alfredo Rodrigues Leite da Silva
E-mail address: arls@cepead.face.ufmg.br
Nucleus of Organizational Studies and Symbolisms, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais - UFMG
Belo Horizonte, MG, Brazil

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the discourse configurations on the environmental theme in business organizations and its relevance to the understanding of the inclusion of ecological discourses in the discourses of organizational members. A case study into a Brazilian telecommunications company offers empirical evidence. It begins with the understanding that organizations adopt several strategies in an attempt to disseminate a certain environmental discourse. As these efforts share space with other pressures, a fragmented discourse emerges. In this paper, the pressures of the environmental theme on organizations are discussed in order to understand this process. The second part of the argument focuses on the context of the case study – Brazilian organizations – and, afterwards, the third part deals with ecological discourses in their insertions in organizational interests. The data of the case study were collected through documental research and 40 semi-structured interviews. The analysis was applied based on Discourse Analysis. In conclusion, an ambiguous discourse configuration was shown that offer elements for the understanding that philanthropy, legal obligation and organizational competitiveness need to be used together to offer legitimacy to the theme of environmental responsibility in business organizations.

Key words: environmental discourses; electromagnetic irradiation; visual pollution; Brazil; mobile telecommunications business.

*Corresponding author: Alexandre de Pádua Carrieri
UFMG/FACE/CEPEAD, Curitiba street, 832/1202, Centro, 30170-120, Belo Horizonte/MG, Brazil.

INTRODUCTION

The Greeks thought of nature as an element to be conquered (Buarque, 1994). This contemptible view of nature reached its highest point in the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, when scientific effort aimed at understanding and dominating nature and organizations were free to create an impact on their surroundings according to company objectives (Shrivastava, 1994).

From this viewpoint, organizational studies began to incorporate so-called environmentalist discourses: (Parker, 1996), organizations affect the environment and therefore the environmental theme has presented organizations with the possibility of market maintenance and competitive advantages. In this sense, the organization is also affected by the environmental question. There have been many crises and environmental accidents, such as pollution, the hole in the Ozone layer, and the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station, which have led the government and society to demand changes from companies adopting environmental policies (Donaire, 1994).

Some organizations, besides fulfilling the legislation, have adopted protective measures and environmental improvement into their operations, such as: changes in the productive process, adoption of new technologies, recycling and substitution of raw materials. In these cases, the concern with the environment involves the possibility of durable growth.

Researchers like Strannegård (1998), Layararques (2000) and Fineman (1996) have shown that, in spite of any organizational initiative, the environmental theme will only be incorporated into the organization when it is also considered a question that involves the factory floor level and the managerial plane.

Carvalho (1991) corroborates the previous argument, including values like knowledge and experiences in a chain of relationships as being inseparable from both economical and political or cultural and individual. The connection between these organizational aspects and those in the middle means that any change, to any extent, is reflected in other levels of organization and life. Consequently, the study of the environmental theme through the understanding of environmental discourses in organizations is relevant and viable.

In this article, there is an empirical case study of a Brazilian cellular mobile telecommunications company: Telemig Celular. Since its privatization in 1998, the telecommunications sector has undergone many modifications: increasing competition, the opening of the market and technological transformations with varied implications: electromagnetic irradiation and visual as well as chemical pollution.

A regulated methodology of Discourse Analysis - DA (Fiorin, 1989) was used to analyze semantic courses, themes, lexical selections and the construction of characters. DA provides means of considering the organization as an arena where multiple discourses are **fought** in order to change, control and homogenize cultures, meanings and historically built identities (Reed, 1998). For this reason, DA is considered to be appropriate for investigating discourses configured to the environmental theme in business organizations.

To develop this approach, following this introduction, the article discusses the pressures of the environmental theme on organizations. The argument then focuses on the Brazilian organizational context and considers the ecological discourses and their insertions into organizational interests. Finally, a case study involving Telemig Celular is provided in order to provide evidence to support the proposed objective.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL THEME PRESSURES ON ORGANIZATIONS

The predominant globalization discourses: cost reduction, productivity and competition growth, have been a source of primary pressure to develop organizational discourses and practices in Third World countries. In this process, the organizations have restructured, with different opinions appearing on the environmental question. Consequently, the environmental theme is capable of being divergent or convergent with these discourses depending, mainly, on the organizational strategies, the factors that relate to them, and the social, political and economic contexts of each country.

For authors like Parker (1996), organizations, no matter what their size or business, lose great competitive opportunities if they are not committed to the environment as organizations that adopt an environmental management policy greatly strengthen their market position. Equally, Porter and van der Linde (1995) see the environmental theme as a factor that could interfere in the competitiveness of organizations. Kleiner (1991) goes so far as to argue that, sooner or later, even the oldest companies will implement some degree of environmental management. For this author, a lot of companies are forced to buy nonpollutant equipment that slowly becomes obsolete. Therefore, the running costs of maintaining processes that pollute and nonpollutant equipment are more expensive than working to eliminate them and implement environmental management.

The concern with the relationships between the environment and organizational management is disseminating widely into a heterogeneous configuration. A country's social, political and economic context directly influences the environmental regulatory policy for the natural degradation level and, indirectly, the ideological environmental importance for the population. For Kitamura (1994), in the major countries, sustainable development is configured as a proposal to improve the quality of life and environmental protection. However, in outlying countries, where basic problems such as food sustenance have not been solved, sustainable development appears as a broad proposal aimed at solving production problems and social welfare.

The impasse seems to lie in the dispute between economic interests and environmental demands. According to Hopfenbech (1993), this impasse can only be overcome by society groups imposing limits. In today's globalized world context, it is no longer possible to consider a local level of social pressure. An information pressure network exists in relation to the environmental problems that occur in: places and nations, individuals and populations, organizations and governments. This premise has been adopted in this study

The idea here is to share the environmental theme which involves interpretations and individual, local, regional, national and international contexts, which produce different collectivities in order to configure certain understandings pertaining to the theme. Therefore, even though this study is restricted to a specific collectivity (the organizational actors of Telemig Celular in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais) the linking to several contexts - international, national and the organizational -cannot be ignored.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL THEME AND BRAZILIAN ORGANIZATIONS

In Brazil, according to Viola (1996), the pressure networks of the Brazilian environmentalist movement have been presented as a multi-sectorial movement, constituted of: 1) Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and community groups that struggle for national and international environmental protection; 2) state agencies; 3) groups and scientific research institutions; 4) a sector of management and managers concerned with efficiency in: the use of materials, energy conservation, pollution reduction, the ecodesign and total quality; 5) a green consumer market that demands, among other things, food from organic agriculture, high efficiency energy products that are recyclable and

reusable and produced with clean technologies and raw materials produced in a sustainable manner; 6) multi-sectorial networks that establish and certify the sustainable character of production and transport processes and the product life cycle; and 7) agencies and international treaties.

The understanding of the performance level of this movement in Brazilian companies is based on the recognition, as Coutinho and Ferraz (1994) point out, that the competitiveness of these companies depends on a discourse and real environmental management. Some organizations have been trying to incorporate the environmental problem towards a more sustainable business. The theme has become relevant to company competitive strategies that attempt to change the satisfaction philosophy to a consumer need, looking to explore opportunities related to the environment.

Nascimento (1997) and Gutberlet (1996) researched industrial organizations concerned about the environmental theme. In a more detailed way, Maimon (1992) points out that the environmental concern shown by companies differs between reactive/defensive and competitive strategies. The defensive strategies refer to pollution prevention and cleaning, in other words, they observe anti-pollution norms and Environmental Impact Reports (EIR). The competitive strategies see the environmental concern as a market to be conquered, something to be sold. The companies with strategies and environmental performance are those with greater placement in the international market because, according to the author, the company's capacity to answer the environmental question differs between countries and industrial sectors, mostly due to pressures from environmentalist movements and environmental legislation.

In spite of being preventative or competitive, the strategies allow the company to add value to its product by favorable public perception and through green or ecological marketing (Souza, 1993). In Brazil, however, this is not necessarily the predominant logic. According to Donaire (1994), the actions of domestic companies concerning environmental incorporation is separated into three levels: environmental control at the exits - using purification technologies or **end-of the-pipe** techniques; integrating environmental control in industrial practices and processes - selecting raw material, developing new processes and products; integrating environmental control into the company management - and environmental conservation becoming an objective pursued by the company.

In general, legislation only propels the company to the first level and, therefore, other pressures are required to obtain other levels. The globalized information highway has given the consumer better understanding of environmental questions resulting in increased demand for products produced with clean technologies in a sustainable and differentiated manner (Bonin, 1993). This demand has obliged companies to (re)formulate managerial strategies in order to get or maintain more demanding markets. Finally, it is no longer possible to ignore the environmental factor in the organizational context.

THE ECOLOGICAL DISCOURSES AND THEIR INCLUSION IN ORGANIZATIONAL INTERESTS

In a study on **ecological discourses**, Carvalho (1991) concentrates on the analysis of the so-called official ecological discourse and on the other alternative ecological discourse. The former comes from national and international government institutions and aims to regulate ecological practices. It is allied to the discourse of companies and institutions that maintain that, rather than denying the theme, they aim to co-opt the discussion and legalize the globalized industrial development, trying to balance it with environmental preservation and the quality of life. The latter also proposes new social constructions but without great commitments to globalized development. It antagonizes the first discourse, creating different identities and practices both social and organizational. The emergence of ambiguous constructions is expected from this duality, as Fineman (1996) shows in research that concentrates on top organizational management. The author reveals a dualism in the actions: a green agenda opening; or a dissimulation in relation to it.

This explains the multiplicity of discourse formation coexisting inside the organizations. Some

organizational discourses, according to Knights and Morgan (1991), are privileged, monopolizing knowledge and practices, as well as using several strategies to try to control the emergence and disappearance of other discourses. As mentioned by the authors, these are the mechanisms used by the managers and top management in spreading their discourses.

These discourses, created by those that have more power, according to Foucault (1987), serve to regulate the material and symbolic creation of organizations, adapting practices and discourses. There are **greenish** discourses and practices being (re)created, (re)transmitted and (re)understood by international organizations and institutions, both national and local, as well as for several organizational levels. This is a bricolage process (Certeau, 1994), that needs to be understood by the researcher interested in working with the environmental theme.

METHODOLOGICAL STEPS FOR THE CASE STUDY

This study is based on specialist contributions on the environmental theme and theoretical and methodological dimensions of Discourse Analysis (DA). On this basis, a series of interviews were carried out with Telemig Celular employees. All levels of the company staff were interviewed including: top management, technicians, union employees and former-employees. The interviews were semi-structure and, therefore, an initial itinerary was used to put them into context (Thiollent, 1987). The definition for the number of research subjects occurred when object information was saturated, as Poirier, Clapier-Valladon and Raubaut (1983) propose. In this case, 40 interviews were carried out between 2002 and 2003 and, simultaneously, documental research into the company and union was done.

Based on oral and written texts, it was possible to guide the analysis to find the system of representations internalized by the organizational actors and see the path of the semantic course analyzed in this study.

The interview analysis has a challenge greater than merely dealing with individual depositions, as it is necessary to build up evidence and establish correlations and comparative analyses that can contribute to research objectives (Neves, 2003). Recognizing such a challenge, DA was adopted according to Fiorin (2003, p. 11), for whom "discourse is the combinations of linguistic elements (sentences or constituted groups of many sentences), used by speakers to express their thoughts, the external or internal world, and actions on the world".

Contradiction is the category of interdiscursive analysis that is characterized by opposition to one discourse given to another one, with a different **vision of the world**. Within the semantic route, the intra-discourse has the main descriptive category that transmits the **vision of the world** defended and organized, implicitly or explicitly, through themes and illustrations.

In this study, the green semantic route was found by its subgroups, in themes and illustrations that constitute them. These elements were identified for analysis in the oral and written texts, using the following strategies of persuasive discourse: construction of characters, lexical selection, keeping quiet - the relationship of the **said and un-said** provides space for the other to offer his/her own constructions on certain subjects in a discourse, getting closer to the discourse and obtaining legitimacy - and the relationship between explicit and implicit elements. In several organizational studies based on DA, the use of these strategies was confirmed.

For authors Barry and Elmes (1997), Watson (1995), and Mumby and Stohl (1991), organizational actor identities are built by several discourse practices that run through the organization. These practices are immersed in a system of relationships of explicit and implicit contents that structure, in hierarchical order, the senses, the significances, the values, norms, etc. The explicit is something evident in the statement. Therefore, the announcer takes total responsibility for the contents, whereas

the implicit depend on certain interpretation by the receiver, providing greater freedom in the construction of the interpretation, in the case of the understood implicit ones, or a certain directionality for a specific sense, in the case of the presupposed implicit ones (Ducrot, 1987). Consequently, through relationships of explicit and implicit contents, the announcer offers a certain amount of space for the receiver's interpretation and divides with him the responsibility for the statement, legitimating the expressed content.

The implicit, the **said and un-said**, as well as the announcer's other strategies of persuasive discourse to be interpreted by the receiver, can also reveal potentially undesirable contents for the announcer. It is along this path that the researcher uses DA to study organizational phenomena. In this manner, even when a hegemonic discourse appears, hidden aspects of the phenomenon under study that do not interest the announcers offer the researcher means of proving such aspects.

THE COMPANY UNDER STUDY: TELEMIG CELULAR

The cellular mobile telecommunications business began in 1993 as a project of Telemig, a traditional Brazilian state-owned telecommunications company (Telemig, 1993). In 1998, the cellular mobile service was separated and then privatized from the fixed service and independent companies were formed. According to one of their directors, the beginning of this journey was marked by the search to meet the needs of the customer as quickly as possible, placing antennas in urban spaces without doing many studies and giving any thought for the long term.

In 2000 and 2001, the companies in the sector were under pressure from social movements regarding transmission towers. Then, the National Agency of Telecommunications - ANATEL, the system regulator, announced a decree, recommending that towers and cellular telephones should follow the European emission indexes for electromagnetic radiation. In response to this pressure, Telemig Celular sponsored a study on electromagnetic emissions from mobile telephone antennas (Telemig Celular, 2004).

The merging of Telemig Celular with Amazônia Celular (in the Brazilian State of Amazonas) may also have influenced the relationship of the former toward the environment. According to one interviewee: "Amazônia does this. We have to come and go there a lot, so this helps, to see the forest, the green, this helped us very much here. To think about the antenna construction, and battery recycling" (Director 1). The analysis of the Telemig Celular company's position concerning the environment was made through its documents and interviews, which also show the use of social responsibility and environmental discourse as a possible means to legitimize and differentiate the organization.

That discourse was addressed to the entire state of Minas Gerais, where the company, in 2003, had more than a million customers (73% of the market), 1,500 employees, 23 of its own stores and 7 thousand sales points, reaching about 16 million inhabitants in over 292 places. The spread of this discourse was made possible through different strategies of persuasive discourse and actions, to be discussed below.

THE GREEN SEMANTIC COURSE IN TELEMIG CELULAR

When developing their discourses, the top management manifested supposedly interesting themes for employees, customers and society (i.e., the people of Minas Gerais state). However, the proceeding fragment, like several others, puts these themes into a more distant configuration from a conciliation between these interests and closer to a hierarchy of priorities:

(1) "if you go to Telemig Celular today, there you'll find many quality indicators, social and environmental responsibility, etc, etc, but what you feel is, what really counts, actually, are the financial results, understand?" (Manager 9).

The conjunctive locution **etc** (et cetera) is used to contain all indicators, except for those words that refer to **what really counts**, and **financial results**. Therefore, the explicit theme of **greatest importance is the financial indicators** stands out from the rest. This shows the opposition between the implied implicit theme of **conciliation of the social and environmental interests in the company**, marked by the environmental expression and **social responsibility**, and the implied implicit theme of **hierarchy of interests**, which prioritizes the financial results.

In addition, the implicit theme of **financial return demand** appears, to the detriment of any strategy or positioning. This vision of the world, based on profit, the aforementioned inside interest, integrating collaborators, should be disseminated to everyone. This is the managers' job, even if used as a persuasion strategy, an ambiguous discourse, positioned between **conciliation** and **hierarchical interests**.

In studies, Carvalho (1991) indicates the inseparability of financial, social and individual questions, as they are all inserted in a chain of relationships that permeate actors and organizations. The evidence of the persuasive discourse ambiguities in Telemig Celular corroborate this understanding in a context in which the aforementioned chain of relationships contains convergent and divergent themes.

In several interviews at the managerial and top administrative levels, the **strategy** theme was used to silence **environment linked** themes. The lexical selection of the word **strategy** sends a strong persuasive discourse, silences the other subjects (nothing should be said) as the themes are, or may be, considered strategic for someone in top management. This is observed in fragments 2 and 3:

(2) "The company singled out subjects that it did not want discussed i.e. strategies, the environment, radiation, antennas, cultural change, competition, social responsibility" (Former-director 1).

(3) "the theme of the antennas and batteries, environmental protection only came to be discussed internally because of ANATEL. But you will have difficulties here researching this, it's... it is strategic, you know?" (Manager 10).

In fragments 2 and 3 the themes which **the top management defines as what can or cannot be discussed with social actors outside the organization** are explicit and **the environment is one of the forbidden subjects, strategic**. These constructions reveal, in Telemig Celular, the adoption of mechanisms attributed by Knights and Morgan (1991) to managers and top management in an attempt to control other discourses and privilege themselves.

This is confirmed when, little by little, the environmental question comes to be discussed more openly, accompanying changes of the interests of managers and top management. This change is shown in the company report and in fragment 3, initiated following heavy pressure from society and ANATEL, when Telemig Celular changed its view of management in relation to the environment. In the deposition of one of the interviewees:

(4) "we worked on several subjects considered to be important by the customers. We worked on the antenna question, we became associated with UFMG [Federal University of Minas Gerais] to research wave emissions" (Manager 18).

When mentioning the performance of ANATEL on the antennas and signal transmissions, the manager revealed the **environmental management** theme as being implicit, involving the customer's interests. The **environmental management** theme is transformed from a forbidden theme into something to be dealt with and divulged through strategies of persuasive discourse and specific actions. The evidence of these changes appeared in late 2002 early 2003. Despite little information from interviewees and internal newspapers, there were already hints of a possible environmental management:

(5) "when ANATEL appeared and the antennas and their emission problems united the company" (Manager 16).

(6) "The only thing that I can tell you is that I and my team are working on this subject. For the time being it is secret, it is a company strategy" (Manager 21).

Fragments 5 and 6 reveal, as an implied implicit theme, that **some groups were working on the environmental management of Telemig Celular**. Furthermore, in other fragments, concern with this subject still stood out as something forbidden, as the use of the adjective **secret** shows in fragment 6.

By the mid 2003 after further studies, some managers began referring to a **green administration**. The interviews given in this research phase favor the construction of the green semantic course, as exemplified by fragments 7 and 8:

(7) "Telemig Celular is concerned about collecting cellular batteries … the company has a storeroom for these battery components (lead) where they can be sent when they are no longer useable and then on to specialized companies" (Manager 9).

(8) "Then there is a great concern in not deviating from the standards that are demanded for equipment installations. There is preventive maintenance" (Manager 20).

Fragment 7 demonstrates the explicit theme of the company **concern about cellular batteries**. While fragment 8 brings: a) the **agency/dept regulators** as presupposed implicit characters that demand standards; b) the **possibility of the organ regulator standards being deviated** as presupposed implicit themes, or the **concern about not deviating** would not exist; c) as understood implicit themes **the boasting conquests promoted by society about the equipment installation theme** and **the need for defining standards**, as was done at the end of 2000 (these two are also found in fragment 5); d) and as explicit theme the **concern of the company about the equipment installation**. These themes form the **green semantic course** and legitimize the argument, already mentioned, that environmental management became a company concern in the wake of certain pressures. This reasoning is defended by several authors, such as Donaire (1994) and Hopfenbech (1993).

The explicit theme in fragment 4 concerning the **partnership with UFMG**, contributes to this understanding and it mentions a recurring theme, **the end of the research undertaken with UFMG into electromagnetic wave emissions from the towers** and **the publication of a Spelling book: 'Everything you want to know about Cellular Telephone towers'**.

Besides these themes, **the implementation of an EMS** was another highlight, the system set up the means by which top management could implement their vision of what environmental management would be for the company, counting on the participation of a good part of the management.

The principles of the Environmental Policy, the EMS corner stone, were approved in a ceremony on August 29, 2003 (Telemig Celular, 2003). The ceremony was widely documented in in-house newspapers, showing the explicit themes that **now the company had EMS**, **the company and collaborators had a commitment to the environment, that other fixed and mobile operators did not possess**, **all the collaborators needed to know this**.

Telemig Celular's technology department was used to incorporate the standardized environmental management systems model, as the most expressive and well-known exponent, the standardization series ISO 14000. The EMS implementation, by means of ISO, offered top management a mechanism capable of regulating competition and limiting commercial barriers in the market. This understanding is convergent with Porter and van der Linde (1995), Gutberlet (1996) and Nascimento (1997), who believe in the positive relationship between appropriate environmental administration and company competitiveness.

The so-called **EMS Group**, composed of collaborators from several areas commanded by the Net Director, was created to execute the program. **Powers** were given to this group to create and

extinguish management practices that threaten or are inadequate in relation to the environment. However, there is an enormous fragmentation of the understanding on what this group would be:

(9) "Now, we can speak about environmental protection in Telemig" (Technician 1).

(10) "The EMS group was formed, there was solemnity, but they won't have as much autonomy as they imagine, understand?" (Technician 4).

(11) "The [EMS] group came with power, but change something here to improve the environment? [laughter]" (Manager 11).

In fragment 9, the respondent, even considering the rest of the deposition, does not explain what really changed in the daily routine regarding the environmental theme. The use of the adverb **now**, repeating the idea of a change in the present, proves the theme by implicit presupposition that **before, nobody could speak about environmental protection in Telemig**. There is the expectation that an expected change has occurred, rather than just the condition of giving a clear explanation.

While fragments 10 and 11 recognize EMS Group's existence as an explicit theme, mentioning the **group**, both of them, however, emphasize the no changing theme. The first presents the explicit theme that **the members of the EMS group would not have as much autonomy as they imagine**. The second uses the persuasive discourse mockery strategy by laughing when saying: **to change something here to improve the environment**; the theme that **nothing will change in the company in relation to the environment** is implicitly implied, and reinforces the explicit theme of **lack of autonomy** in fragment 10.

In spite of this opposition in the discourse, a certain consensus is found in the most recurring theme about the managers' concerns: the installation of the necessary equipment to enable the company to enlarge its network and increase the area of telephone coverage. This concern is attached to the economic factor, as it is shown in fragment 12:

(12) "instead of using transmission towers we preferred to choose transmission posts, although this means a higher cost for us, so we decided to adopt this strategy as we are mainly worried about the visual impact" (Manager 16).

(13) "There are often difficulties installing a phone transmission station imposed by the community itself" (Manager 20).

Fragment 12 shows, as explicit themes, **the company concern about the visual impact** and its **willingness to pay a higher cost owing to this fact**, but it is quiet about the explicit theme presented in fragment 13, that **the community resists tower installations**. Therefore, the implicit themes of the two fragments are that: a) **the company needs to install many towers or post** (explicit theme in several documents and interviews); b) **the company opted strategically for the posts because they can be built in larger numbers and with less resistances from the society**. In other words, the concern with the visual impact is a company strategy to guarantee a larger coverage area for its transmission signal in the shortest possible time. This strategy is confirmed as an explicit theme in several depositions, as the following show:

(14) "Our company worries a lot about public opinion, with the visual impact that a tower or antenna can cause and not so much about the environmental impact… An example of this concern with the visual impact was the implementation of the ecological tree in the Federal University [UFMG] forest. I participated in this implementation project and the cost was extremely high" (Manager 6).

(15) "We try to install the transmission stations on the tops of buildings… This brings benefits for us, related to the visual impact they can cause and there is good rent income for the building where we install them" (Manager 5).

The prominence given to the construction of a tower disguised as a tree at UFMG (UFMG, 2002) and the recurring **concern for the visual impact theme** appeared in an explicit way proving the searching to disguise the urban area expansion. Here, an implied implicit theme relevant to analysis

stands out: **the company worries about its public image and seeks to minimize the effects of its area and economical expansion by decreasing visual impact**. Here again, the subject of the confrontation between social pressures and economic interests appears, discussed by Hopfenbech (1993). In this case, employing actions that aim to reduce the first actions in favor of the second.

Furthermore, the fragments above show the management environment discourse elaborated by top management, as the use of the possessive pronoun **ours** indicates, in fragment 14, and the first person plural **us**, in fragment 15. In several interviews these lexical choices appeared, revealing the presupposed implicit theme of **the managers' integration with the company or groups within it**. In this sense, the **ecological tree** - a post disguised as a tree - is remembered with a great deal of pride by the managers. The pride that they are preserving and due to this the company does not cut costs. In compensation, such investments are used as elements of the strategies of persuasive discourse to disseminate the company's environmental responsibility.

The noun **cost** in fragments 12 and 14 is a lexical choice that also proves, as implicit presupposition, **the financial concern** theme, frequently mentioned by managers. This theme appears in the green semantic course for two reasons. The first, when it interests the actors to show that the company invests in environmental preservation and does not economize resources despite the high cost of investment. The second, when the managers show that **the towers can bring financial benefits to the people**, an explicit theme in fragment 15, shown by the statement **is a good rent income**. The other recurring theme in the green semantic course is the cellular battery, in fragment 16:

> (16) "We thought about simplifying battery withdrawal; people like that. They then think we protect the environment" (Manager 7).

There are battery withdrawal places in the stores for people to discard used batteries and the company uses advertising to make customers aware of this. Fragment 16 inserts this action as being something more related to customer taste than environmental protection. The fragment is explicit that **the customers like to have battery withdrawal simplified**. Another theme, implicit presupposition, is **the possibility that battery withdrawal does not guarantee environmental protection**, identified by the lexical selection of the word **think**, a verb indicating uncertainty, regarding the **environmental protection** theme inferring the possibility of environmental protection not becoming concrete.

The manager depositions outline a green semantic course that reveals a discourse linked to top management discourse, as they see themselves as **committed actors to Telemig Celular, and the actions related to environmental preservation**. In this context, another theme is that **the popularization of the green discourse by the other collaborators suits the managers**. Such themes are explicit in the following fragment:

> (17) "We, the managers, are responsible for driving the company on, for spreading the social and environmental obligation of a company. It depends on us, upon the collaborators to participate in this view" (Manager 11).

The implicit presupposition theme that **the managers need to disseminate certain views** (as the company depends on them for this) enters in opposition with the **fragmentation** theme, given by the technicians. For the technicians, the management pro-environment view appears more fragmented. There are several themes that intersect, creating a patchwork quilt of the green semantic course. Notably, the technician depositions provide a more critical view of the company, permeated by the ironic discourse, while the other is quite attached to the managerial and top management discourse. This is observed in fragments 18 and 19:

> (18) "that environmental management, there's nothing, Telemig Celular only worries about following the municipal legislation and tries to always be in agreement with the rules, ANATEL constantly inspects the conditions in which the towers and centrals are installed and their operation" (Technician 2).

> (19) "Telemig Celular is quite concerned with environment. We have several actions. In relation to nature preservation. We have concerns with batteries and Towers ... we have plenty of concern" (Technician 22).

Fragments 18 and 19 are representative of the technicians' discourses. On the one hand there is fragment 18, more critical, indicating the explicit theme that **there is no environmental management, only the execution of legislation and ANATEL rules**. On the other hand, there are discourses denying the first, as shown in fragment 19, with **the great concern of Telemig Celular with the environment** explicit theme. It is evident that, in spite of the official discourse and the managers' responsibility in disseminating it to everybody (Fragment 17), distinctions remain. This can be illustrated, again:

(20) "Telemig even developed a battery withdrawal program, where each company store has a little box for battery withdrawal" (Technician 12).

(21) "I don't think the batteries are the company's responsibility. I don't see the battery as such a great threat/danger. The work at Telemig Celular is similar to recycling advertising, it preaches, but it doesn't practice" (Technician 13).

In fragments 20 and 21 the explicit theme of the **batteries** appears in different ways. In the first, the theme that **the company actions appear to be serious and concerned with cellular battery withdrawal**. However, in the second, the theme that **the company does not have a responsibility for battery withdrawals** is evident.

In the last fragment, two aspects permeate the dominant discourse, in direction, in the daily organizational, but are not convergent with it. Fragment 21 has a supposed inference of **the problem of the batteries being of no importance** theme, marked by the expression **don't see**, cutting out the consumer, the person who bought the cellular phone and will dispose of the battery. At the same time, the fragment points out the explicit theme of **the use by the company of the withdrawal discourse for advertising purposes**, and indicates the implied implicit theme that **there is a lot of boasting, due to market logic interests, and little actual concern with the environmental subject**. This is noted by the word **advertising** and expression **it preaches but doesn't practice**, referring to Telemig Celular.

The **transmission towers** and **antenna support posts** were another theme frequently mentioned by the technicians, just like in the manager depositions, but in the technicians' case, again, the discourse were quite fragmented, as the following passages show:

(22) "Look, Telemig develops studies on this, in relation to radiation and nothing has been proven until today, there is a great dilemma in relation to this, but for the time being the studies show that they don't cause any damage" (Technician 11).

(23) "They make topography studies, things like this, taking into account the best location. And these antennas are built according to the place which obtains greater wave coverage and not the place with the most appropriate environmental condition" (Technician 14).

(24) "Thank God the current legislation already hinders antenna placements, mainly in places close to schools, for instance" (Technician 25).

Fragment 22 presents the explicit theme that **radiation does not cause damage**, legitimating the statement with the noun **study**. Here, the alignment is shown with the managerial discourse. However, fragments 23 and 24 repeat themes that distance themselves from this discourse: a) the explicit theme that **the administration of the antennas is focused on their usage, not in environmental management** (fragment 23); b) the implicit implied that **the company cannot be trusted, welcoming the arrival of the legislation to hinder its performance**. That last one, originating from fragment 24, is reinforced by the lexical expression **Thanks God**, as well as for the presupposed implicit characters' choice, in this case **the children** that, frequent the **schools**, could be harmed by the company if legislation did not exist.

Based on the presented analysis, there was certain homogeneity among the managers and top management environmental discourse, and fragmentation in the technicians' discourse. There is a strong differentiation among the technicians. Knights and Morgan (1991), highlighted in the distinct

power and interest relationships among the technicians that permeate the organization, come in the constructions of the discourses, and offer elements for the understanding of this configuration. The different organizational levels also tend to distance themselves to the extent of the discourse, starting from the differences in terms of interests and power relationships that involve them and extrapolate the organization. Hence, the discourses are not necessarily homogeneous by the simple fact that all of them come from the same company. In the studied case, the group homogeneity is ambiguous in comparison with the other one in the same organizational context.

This configuration stems from the duality of the discourses and the ambiguous constructions that Fineman (1996) associates with the environmental question. For the author, there is room for a green calendar but, in some cases, this is a dissimulation seeking to promote a certain image. This study showed neither a full dissimulation, nor a total opening for the green calendar. The bricolage (Certeau, 1994) between the two positions, permeated throughout discourses that presented themes inserted in one or another, reveals the ambiguous discourse configurations on the environmental theme at Cellular Telemig.

There are different groups that see their company's environmental management as being inexistent or inadequate. Others prove that the question is not important because the problems are the cellular telephones, not the company equipment. And still there are those aligned with the managerial discourse for the adaptation of environmental management in the company, supporting a technical dimension. The discourse on the inexistence of environmental management clearly opposes the last discourse and, therefore, top management. Thus, battery destination, the tower constructions, the transmission signal coverage, the company power in comparison to that of competitors would be interlinked themes and marked by the prevalence of economic value rather than concern for society or the environmental theme.

CONCLUSIONS

This study understands that, in order to incorporate their discourses on the environmental theme, the actors are submitted to and interpret actions and strategies of persuasive discourse of: top management, other organization members and of the society actors. To utter/exteriorize their discourses, they configure their strategies, mixing those to which they were submitted, composing their own construction. The bricolage process is constituted (Certeau, 1994), of that which the researcher should use to understand the discourse configurations in organizations.

The actors, in the incorporation, are submitted to several actions and strategies of persuasive discourse: themes, pauses, lexical choices, etc. They can assume them or deny them at different levels when producing their discourses.

To direct themselves more towards assuming them, they have discourses that are potentially homogenous with the top management or differentiated between organizational groups (technicians, managers, etc.). To address themselves more towards denial leads to potentially fragmented discourses. In both cases, to assume or deny, when giving their discourses, they reproduce part of those strategies they were submitted to.

In convergent discourses, which prevailed among the managers, more similar strategies can be used, presenting, approximately, the same themes and illustrations as the green course.

However, in divergent discourses, which prevailed among the technicians, even when using similar strategies, themes, different illustrations and even opposition, also inserted in the green semantic course, are expressed, given that inside the semantic course, theme subgroups in underlying opposition can exist. For instance, inside the green semantic course the following underlying opposition exists: profit from environmental protection *versus* environmental protection through an ecological conscience.

Full homogeneity clearly does not exist, even in the group with a tendency to a potentially homogeneous discourse. This is not a dysfunction to be corrected but merely a consequence of a certain freedom that every social actor possesses (Chanlat, 1996). This can be illustrated by Fragment 11, where a manager uses a divergent discourse, in spite of occupying a managerial position he uses the strategy of choosing the explicit theme that **the EMS group came to improve the environment**, but the mockery grows due to the laughter, presenting the implicit theme that **nothing will change in the company with regard to the environment**. These actions lead to what was called the green semantic course, the environmental protection course, strategically built by top management and incorporated by the management.

Finally, at Telemig Celular, the environmental responsibility discourse was observed as an economic investment, indispensable for the company not to prejudice its image in the society. In this sense, the top management discourse equates to the understanding of Porter and van der Linde (1995), Gutberlet (1996) and Nascimento (1997), among others, that associate environmental management to competitiveness. The question is seen as an indispensable strategy for company survival in the market. This is the **other face** of environmental protection. It goes beyond philanthropy and legal obligation and also attracts entrepreneurs to the theme of environmental responsibility.

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