ON INTERTEXTUALITIES IN DIGITAL ENVIRONMENTS: THE USE OF HASHTAGS

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- ABSTRACT: Since their emergence in the 1990s, hashtags have been used with different discursive functions on the internet and have become an important brand in this environment. In this paper, we discuss how hashtags, working as a link, can establish intertextual relationships both in digital and non-digital environments. Based on Carvalho (2018), we defend the hashtag as a marked dialogue between texts, that is, an intertextual occurrence through which a text alludes to a set of texts, since, by evoking it, the user establishes a tangible relationship with a non-specific set of texts. To do this, we analyzed three hashtags, two in the digital environment, Twitter, and one in a non-digital space, the streets of the city of Fortaleza. Considering the studies in Text Linguistics (Cavalcante *et al*., 2019), we sought to show that, even though they were born and conceived in the digital sphere – hashtags maintain vitality in non-digital spaces.

- KEYWORDS: intertextuality; hashtags; hypertext.

Initial considerations

In 1945, the year of the end of World War II, the American engineer and inventor Vannevar Bush published the article "As we may think" (Bush, 2011), in which he proposed the idea of the memex, a mechanical device that would make it possible to quickly and flexibly archive and access, even from a distance, different blocks of information through buttons that would easily lead the reader to skip ten or a hundred pages or even go back to the first page of the index. The purpose of the memex was also to show that, as Ribeiro (2008) says, the human mind does not think linearly, but by association. Later, this idea would give wings to the emergence of the world wide web and the notion of links and hyperlinks, at least fifty years before they became popular in Brazil, through the friendly interfaces of desktop computers. Authors such as Barret (1989), Ribeiro (2008), among others, attribute to Bush the idealization of hypertext.

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With these ideas in mind, in this study, we are returning to an important discussion in the area of language and technology and its bridges with textual linguistics, which involves intertextualities in digital environments. We start from the idea that the intertextual phenomenon can sometimes be indistinctly linked to hypertextuality, if the type of relationship established between the texts is not considered.[1] In line with the postulations outlined in Araújo and Lobo-Sousa (2009), we believe that it is necessary to reaffirm the limits of what intertextualities are, at the risk of compromising the explanatory potential of the phenomenon or even losing it in the haze of other phenomena, especially those that we accept as constitutive, such as Bakhtinian dialogism, interdiscursivity and enunciative heterogeneities. Therefore, in this paper, we aim to discuss the limits of intertextualities in a digital environment, specifically in the use of hashtags.

The notion of intertextuality used in this study, in the light of textual linguistics, refers to the relational process that can be verified between specific texts, as well as between a text and a set of texts. In this way, we understand as intertextual the occurrences that range from the most marked citations to what we have called broad allusions and imitations of genres and styles (Carvalho, 2018). As a criterion for recognizing intertextuality, we check for evidence of some kind of repetition in the texts. Thus, the less marked the relationship between the texts, the further we move away from the intertextual phenomenon — which we define as punctual, generally planned and always indicated — and closer to the dialogical status that is constitutive of all language uses.

In order to deal with this proposal, it seems appropriate to first return to the basic concept supported by Textual Linguistics, namely that of text. We will then reflect on intertextual phenomena and on the digital environment, adjusting the magnifying glass to hashtags, which, like links, can be intertextual marks on networks (Xavier, 2002; Koch, 2004; Araújo; Lobo-Sousa, 2009). We will support the thesis that, despite the characterization of hypertextuality[2] as a particular mode of enunciation, namely, a digital enunciation (Xavier, 2002; Araújo; Lobo-Sousa, 2009; Cavalcante *et al*., 2019),[3] in text analyses, there are more similarities than differences between intertextual phenomena performed online or offline.

"Revisiting the status of the text"[4]

Reflection on the concept and properties of the text continues vigorously within the scope of Textual Linguistics, especially at a time when we are discussing the digital space

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[1] Although it is a valuable discussion, we will not do it in this article, as it is not among our objectives.

[2] We will assume hypertextuality here as a digital environment, although we understand the risk of assuming this position. We suggest reading Lobo-Sousa (2009), Elias and Cavalcante (2017) and Cavalcante *et al*. (2019), for a deeper discussion.

[3] Here we suggest reading Araújo and Lima-Neto (2012), whose works question this thesis as this article is not dedicated to this discussion.

[4] We named the first section of this article after an allusion to one of the most important works in Textual Linguistics, the article Revisiting the Statute of the text, written by Cavalcante and Custódio-Filho (2010).

and its relationship with ways of textualizing. Defining the text, as Adam (2019) rightly says, is a task that comes up against major obstacles, mainly because it is a shelter for diverse and heterogeneous possible realizations, ranging from trivial conversations to digital occurrences, which update practices and uses through from a device connected to the internet. With increasingly advanced digital technologies, language subjects have been able to greatly expand the enunciative potential of the sociosemiotic resources available. Today, there are (practically) infinite ways to make text.

Faced with so many innovations, it seems appropriate to return to our theoretical and epistemological foundations. Thus, we will think about text based on the postulations of Bakhtin and his circle, since they are the lines of force that support phenomena such as intertextuality, which we will deal with later. We will briefly discuss the points that we believe underpin our perspective on language and text, as well as their consequences for the analytical exercise.

We take text "as an utterance (in the sense given to this term by Brait, 2016), which happens as a singular event, composing a unit of communication and meaning in context, expressed by a combination of semiotic systems" (Cavalcante *et al.*, 2019, p. 26). This conception, as we have announced, is in line with the Bakhtinian postulate of dialogism, according to which

> Utterances are not indifferent to one another, and are not self-sufficient; they are aware of and mutually reflect one another. These mutual reflections determine their character. Each utterance is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances to which it is related by the communality of the sphere of speech communication. Every utterance must be regarded primarily as a response to preceding utterances of the given sphere (we understand the word "response" here in the broadest sense): it refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies on the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account (Bakhtin, 2011, p. 297).[5]

In other words, each text manifests itself uniquely and situationally in a given sphere of human activity, making up an uninterrupted chain of interaction. From this perspective, interaction only exists from an utterance — or text — that has fundamental characteristics, namely: the alternation of subjects, which determines its borders, and conclusiveness. This, in turn, is given by the exhaustibility of the object; the subject's project of saying and generic conditioning. In practical terms, understanding the text as a unit and an object of analysis implies admitting that it is disciplined by limits, that

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[5]   Original: *Os enunciados não são indiferentes entre si nem se bastam cada um a si mesmos; uns conhecem os outros e se refletem mutuamente uns nos outros. Esses reflexos mútuos lhes determinam o caráter. Cada enunciado é pleno de ecos e ressonâncias de outros enunciados com os quais está ligado pela identidade da esfera de comunicação discursiva. Cada enunciado deve ser visto antes de tudo como uma resposta aos enunciados precedentes de um determinado campo (aqui concebemos a palavra "resposta" no sentido mais amplo): ela os rejeita, confirma, completa, baseia-se neles, subentende-os como conhecidos, de certo modo os leva em conta* (Bakhtin, 2011, p. 297).

is, that it has a beginning, middle and end. What's more, the text only exists in relation to other texts, towards which it manifests a responsive-active attitude. (Bakhtin, 2011; Volóchinov, 2018).

Socio-interactional and (inter)discursive aspects, as well as the heterogeneity of voices that mark every utterance, are obviously also important for textual analysis. However, the text analyst's focus will always be on the regularities that organize the production and interpretation of meanings. From this perspective, elements such as (as) synchronicity, the media, the hypertextual character and internet connectivity (Muniz-Lima; Custódio-Filho, 2020) have also been taken into account today, since they cross the modes of textualization.

Nor does it escape us the perception that much of what has been theorized about text still does not include certain social semiotic resources and potentialities available in the universe of media and digital support. However, we defend that the concept of text, regardless of the media, support, or environment in which it takes place, needs to be valid and applicable to any realization. Environment, media, or support enhance countless and rich textualizations, but the text — as an object of analysis — continues as an event, a conclusive unit of coherence in context.

In our view, text is text, regardless of the environment in which it takes place. This defense, it should be noted, hinders the attribution of specifiers, already crystallized in the literature, such as digital text (Sousa, 2013; Araújo, 2013) or electronic text (Marcuschi, 2004; Krug, 2019) or digital native text (Giering; Pinto, 2021); as opposed to non-internet (or pre-digital) texts.[6] What seems to exist, in fact, is a digitality of the text (Araújo, 2013), a position assumed, probably, because certain characteristics are attributed to the text that, in fact, do not belong to it, but to the environment in which they are realized and circulated.

About intertextualities and their limits

As we have already mentioned, Bakhtinian dialogism is the ideological condition of all linguistic matters, which means that the relations between texts never end and are, therefore, constitutive. However, occasionally it is possible to see evidence of links between texts, whether single or taken together. When this happens, we are dealing with the phenomenon we have called intertextuality.

In fact, we stress that intertextuality will always and irremediably be constitutively dialogical, although not all dialogical relationship are necessarily intertextual. Likewise, it is also important to point out the intersections and distances between intertextuality and other phenomena that, for us, are also constitutive: interdiscursivity and enunciative heterogeneities.

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[6]   The issue is so crystallized that, due to the non-use of a specifier next to the term text, it is already assumed that the referent points to the printed environment, in the written language modality.

Originating from the theoretical framework of French Discourse Analysis, the notion of interdiscursivity means that every utterance is part of a large-scale axiological discussion, since it responds, in some way, to what has already been said. From this perspective, discourses always include other discourses, insofar as they are constituted, socio-historically, inscribed in a system of semantic restrictions of the formations from which they originate. In practical terms, discourses will always be taken as crossing, that is, in interdiscursive relationships, whether of alliance or opposition, given "the impossibility of dissociating the interaction of the discourses from the intradiscursive functioning" (Maingueneau, 2008, p. 37).

And, as with Bakhtinian dialogism, intertextuality and interdiscursivity are not opposed. Nor are text and discourse opposed, but they are seen as interdependent. This view favors an analysis that takes into account aspects pertaining to each, separately, but always integrated. It is therefore important to reaffirm that neither dialogism nor interdiscursivity coincide with the concept of intertextuality that we are advocating. Dialogism and interdiscursivity do not imply intertextuality, although the opposite is true.

Another phenomenon, also constitutive for us, with which intertextuality sometimes overlaps, is that of enunciative heterogeneity. Bakhtinian dialogism was taken up by Jacqueline Authier-Revuz (1982) to propose the concept, for which she brings, as a differential element, the incorporation of the notion of the unconscious, coming from the theoretical framework of Freudian-Lacanian psychoanalysis. We therefore have dialogism and heterogeneity as categories that lead to reflections on the discursive subject. The de-centering of the "I" is evident, since an "I" always presupposes other "I's", constitutive of both the subject and the discourse(s).

The notion of heterogeneity is subdivided into constitutive and shown. The first relates to the very condition of existence of subjects and discourses, considering that every discourse comes from the interweaving of discourses dispersed in the social environment. The second, in turn, refers to the ways in which the voice of the other is presented in the thread of the text. The heterogeneity shown therefore reveals the inscription of the other and allows us to identify constructions in which voices or points of view do not coincide, that is, it allows us to apprehend different enunciative voices.

At this point, we can affirm that dialogism and interdiscursivity and heterogeneity are phenomena bigger than intertextuality, since "all intertextuality presupposes the dialogical character of all discourse and the crossing of voices representing different social places that are stabilized and destabilizes themselves during interactions" (Cavalcante; Brito, 2011, p. 261). Having said that, we emphasize that both the intertextuality and the heterogeneity shown are indicated either by more prominent typographic elements or by other textual parameters, such as referencing. And, as we have said, intertextuality and heterogeneity can sometimes overlap, even if they are not confused. Despite this, the investigation of these phenomena is based on different epistemological foundations.

After this not-so-brief demarcation of boundaries, let us now reflect more closely on the intertextual phenomenon, which, although not essential, gives creative and

argumentative potential to textualization. According to Carvalho (2018), what we have argued is that intertextuality, based on the mechanism of repetition, is subdivided into: I) strict, verified when a given text incorporates part of another identifiable text, or is a transformation or commentary of it, and II) broad, given by the resumption not of a specific text in another, but of a set of texts.

There are strict intertextual relations given by copresence, that is, insertions of part(s) of one text into another, as occurs in quotations, paraphrases and allusions, as well as by transformations of one text into another, carried out by parodies and transpositions. Metatextualities are also strict, that is, the relationships established by comments to a specific source text. It should be noted that these processes manifest themselves in complementarity. In the case of transformations, as well as in metatextuality, there will always be occurrences of copresence (Faria, 2014).

The broad intertextualities include: a) broad allusions, cases in which there is no return to a set of texts, but rather a diffuse reference to facts, contents or situations which, although they do not refer to specific text(s), establish a tangible relationship between one text and several others, and b) the imitation of compositional, thematic or stylistic parameters of a certain genre of author's style, abstracted by referring to a non-specific set of texts. Broad occurrences, although more diffuse, can be indicated by textual elements such as redundancy of (sub)topics, referencing, repetition of formal or compositional aspects, among others.

These types, although qualitatively distinct, not only do not exclude each other, but they commonly overlap and complement each other. Not infrequently, we observe coexisting types in the same text. Let's see an example:

Image 1 – *Capitã Cloroquina*[7]

Source: Instagram[8].

The text above takes up, by means of a strict intertextual process, the testimony of the Ministry of Health's Secretary for Work Management and Education, Mayra

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[7]   "Early treatment? We never indicate."

[8]   Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CPVjMPgptJi/?utm_medium=share_sheet. Access on: 4 Dec. 2023.

Pinheiro, to the Covid CPI [Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry]. When asked by the rapporteur, Renan Calheiros, about the reason why the government would not have followed the guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO) regarding the use of chloroquine, Mayra Pinheiro highlighted that Brazil would not be obliged to follow the WHO and criticized the stances adopted by the organization during the pandemic. The doctor also stated that she was not instructed to recommend chloroquine for patients with the coronavirus and that the Health Ministry never indicated treatments for the disease, only issuing a "guidance note" for doctors, even though, according to her, all resources should be used.

In addition to this strict reprise, indicted by the image of the secretary and the verbal elements that allude to parts of her testimony, we have two intertextual processes: the imitation of genre parameters and what we have called broad allusion. Genre imitation is verified in the medicine box represented in the deponent's clothes. The speaker repeats the compositional pattern of medicine packaging, albeit transgressing elements of form and content, in order to criticize those who, contrary to all WHO recommendations, insisted on prescribing a medicine proven to be ineffective for the treatment of Covid-19. The broad allusion, in turn, is indicted by the image of countless skulls, which point to the widely reported deaths of almost 500,000 Brazilians throughout this pandemic period.

Let's look at one more example

Image 2 – Power Point[9]

Source: Instagram[10].

In this example, we can easily retrieve the much-publicized PowerPoint presentation given by Deltan Dallagnol, at a press conference in 2016, to make it easier to understand the accusations made by the Public Prosecutor's Office against former President Lula. According to the coordinator of the Lava Jato task force, Lula was the head of an unprecedented corruption scheme at Petrobras. It so happened that the pattern of the

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[9]   Newsletter, 80 e-mail, call, message over whatsapp, liked old photos, poke on Facebook, tattooed Brazil on coccyx, Keychain as a souvenir, dedicated a song, sent a live message, 🔥 on stories, 50% off, duet on Tiktok, free shipping.

[10]   Available at: https://www.instagram.com/p/CP77V7yAzYE/?utm_medium=share_sheet. Access on: 4 Dec. 2023.

presentation went viral on the social networks, being constantly evoked intertextually, as we can see. Years later, the text is still taken up by a strict intertextual process, but also alluding extensively to the circumstances in which it arose, which results in a summoning of contextual elements: a scenario of political crisis seen as a flimsy explanation for attitudes that have had serious consequences for the country. In this case, in the center of the constellation appears the name of the pharmaceutical company Pfizer, mentioned numerous times in the Covid CPI. It was made public that the company had contacted the federal government several times in order to establish a partnership for the immunization of citizens. The information infuriated a large part of the population, and, in response, many texts expressed dissatisfaction with the authorities' disregard for opportunities to minimize the losses of the Brazilian people.

As we can see, there is the parodistic resource of transforming the source text, but also allusions to the set of texts that shared the feeling of revolt by the negligence of the public authorities in the fight against the disease. The text uses humor and satire, alluding to many textual practices through which Pfizer would have tried to get the president's attention, including stories with fire emoji, a common feature when someone tries to flirt on social networks.

We are dealing here with a broader understanding of intertextuality, which expands the crystallized view that the phenomenon is limited to cases in which relations between specific, retrievable texts occur. Our definition takes verifiable relationships between texts as an object of analysis, taking them to the limit with the constitutive phenomena mentioned here. Thus, the more indicative the occurrences, that is, the more marks (not necessarily typographical, but of all kinds, as long as they attest to the "repetitions" of a text or a set of texts in another), the closer we are to intertextual occurrences. Similarly, the more diffuse and less apprehensible the relationships are, the closer we are to phenomena that are constitutive of language usage.

This discussion of the limits of intertextuality is due to our interest, in this work, in verifying their relationship in on and offline environments, from which an infinite link is established between the texts that are available in the world, thanks to the linking mechanism. This will be the focus of our reflections in the next section.

Are all relations between texts in the digital environment intertextual?

Our answer is no. After reflecting on the criteria from which we conceive intertextuality, we will extend our gaze to question the intertextual status of relations between texts in digital environments. We understand these environments, based on Lévy (1999), as spaces of data units called bits, short for binary digit, represented by numerical sequences 0 and 1. These codes constitute the language of computers, but they reach us transformed into written text, images, sounds or the convergence of these three semioses, through screens made up of specific elements that allow reading this data, laptops, desktops, smartphones, and tablets. As text linguists, we go that far in

updating these texts on these screens. Behind these binary codes are different types of languages, such as Java, JavaScript, C, C++, Objective-C, Swift, PHP and many others, the knowledge of which points to other areas of Computer Science.

We return to the reflection undertaken by Araújo and Lobo-Sousa (2009), whose relevance has only increased, considering that we still have not managed to deal with many of the issues related to the ways of making text in the digital environment. The authors are the first to respond negatively to the question of the subtitle, saying that

> […] the fact of linking one text to another does not necessarily guarantee the intertextual phenomenon. Thus, we can suggest that the link, strictly speaking, generates hypertextuality and not intertextuality, since what we see is that intertextuality can even be made explicit in a link, but not generated by it. (Araújo; Lobo-Sousa, 2009, p. 579, our translation).[11]

The authors' issue was raised above all by the 'postulations of Xavier (2003), who combines hypertextuality and intertextuality. The author advocates "infinite hyperintertextuality". According to him, hyperlinks promote a strategic relationship between texts, in such a way that, when clicked, intertextuality is established. To this end, he uses the notions of explicit intertextuality (planned and marked) and content intertextuality (given by the sharing of themes), proposed by Koch (1991). As Araújo and Lobo-Sousa (2009) have already pointed out, these intertextual categories were revised by Koch herself some time later. Furthermore, the nature of the relationships between the texts was not considered either, nor was the textual evidence of the claimed intertextuality. The author only assumed that the fact that they were linked by the hyperlink mechanism already guaranteed the intertextual status attributed to the hypertext.

In both Xavier (2002) and Araújo and Lobo-Sousa (2009, p. 579), the hyperlink is seen as a technical-computer device that interconnects texts or fragments of texts, making it the main factor responsible for intertextuality in digital environments. Although we agree with the latter authors' proposition that hypertextuality is not a guarantee for the existence of intertextuality, we try to go a little further: firstly, we do not limit hyperlinks to the internet. Here, we align ourselves with Gualberto (2008), who understands it as the links that connect nodes — or textual blocks, organized in separate but interrelated blocks. Thus, "hypertext is a network of these nodes, connected by links" (Gualberto, 2008, p. 57). From this perspective, what differentiates the hyperlink from the link is just the prefix, pointing hyper to the digital universe, in the wake of the group that defends the limitations of hypertext to the web.[12] This first difference

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[11] Original: *o fato de* linkar *um texto a outro não garante, necessariamente, o fenômeno intertextual. Assim, podemos sugerir que o link, a rigor, gera a hipertextualidade e não a intertextualidade, pois o que percebemos é que a intertextualidade pode até ser explicitada em um link, mas não gerada por ele.* (Araújo; Lobo-Sousa, 2009, p. 579).

[12] We refer the reader to the works of Koch (2002), Primo, Recuero and Araújo (2004), Gualberto (2008) and Hissa (2009), for further information on the concept of hyperlink and possible classifications.

is important to show that what happens in digital environments has more similarities than differences with what happens outside.

What is interesting in the seminal proposals on hypertext studies, which were later studied again to explain what happens in an internet environment, as in Lévy (1993) and Landow (1997), is that the idea of relating texts is nothing new, even though this relationship is established by mechanical means, as in Bush (2011, p. 126):

> Thereafter, at any time, when one of these items is in view, the other can be instantly recalled merely by tapping a button below the corresponding code space. Moreover, when numerous items have thus been joined together to form a trail, they can be reviewed in turn, rapidly or slowly, by deflecting a lever like that used to turn the pages of a book. It is exactly as though the physical items had been gathered together from widely separated sources to form a new book. It's more than that, as any item can be joined into numerous trails.

In this excerpt, we have a first idea of what the link would later become, although the author does not use this nomenclature at any point in this text. For Ribeiro (2008), what really mattered to Bush was not the technique, "but the associative way of making links between information" (Ribeiro, 2008, p. 55). Connecting two blocks of information was the most important thing. It can therefore be seen that the principle of linking information and texts does not lie in digital technologies. As Coscarelli says (2006, p. 8, our translation)

> […] we link all the time. In our language, for example, we have many ways of marking these links from one subject to another: 'and by the way', 'since you touched on this subject' [...], or of saying that we are suggesting other centers of conversation: 'changing the subject completely', 'changing from water to wine', 'before I forget', among countless others.[13]

The author's examples refer to a possible face-to-face interaction. However, on material support, we can use the table of contents and go straight to the point of interest, or go to a footnote or end of chapter and come back; or even see a quote and go straight to the 'references of an article. In front of a computer connected to the internet (or even offline, with some programs), using touchscreen or mouse techniques, we can click directly on a hyperlink and go to another text.[14] The principle is the same. What changes

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[13] Original: linkamos *o tempo todo. Na nossa língua temos, por exemplo, muitas formas de marcar esses links de um assunto para outro: 'e por falar nisso', 'já que você tocou nesse assunto' [...], ou de falar que estamos sugerindo outros centros de conversa: 'mudando completamente de assunto', 'mudando da água para o vinho', antes que eu me esqueça', entre inúmeras outras* (Coscarelli, 2006, p. 8).

[14] If you come to this footnote, another text, therefore, you will see that the principle of links in hypertextuality does not change at all what is happening at the moment, during your reading. It is now expected that the academic reader, at the

are the media, the supports and the relationships that we, the subjects of language, establish with the texts and with the space in which they take place.

At this point, it also seems appropriate to reflect on interactions on the web. We do not deny the speed and the efficiency, as well as the navigability in the digital spaces on the internet. It is an unquestionable fact that the popularization of the internet has brought about a real revolution in human communication and the ways of textualizing. As we have noted, there are countless genres and texts linked to the enunciative needs that emerge from this heterogeneous space of discursive practices and, of course, it is not possible to deny that technologies and the digital environment provide productive semiotic interweaving, as well as infinite textualization possibilities. However, this does not mean that we are dealing with a particular form of enunciation or, more precisely, a digital mode of enunciation.

As we believe, there are indeed multiple enunciations embodied in/by the multifaceted character of pre-digital textuality now coated and/or enhanced by technical innovations in digital environments (Araújo; Lima-Neto, 2012). This reasoning also applies to links, which are as old as human language, and to the relationships between the nodes they establish, which do not necessarily point to intertextual relationships or a so-called infinite intertextuality, previously advocated by Xavier (2002) and others.

We should emphasize here that, as we have argued, intertextuality, even broad intertextuality — situated on the borderline with phenomena such as dialogism — is linked to the verification of textual evidence, that is, linguistic marks of all kinds. Without the presence of evidence attesting to the repetition of a text in another(s), we would be dealing with relationships other than intertextual ones. We are not denying that intertextual relations can be established through hyperlinks. However, we must first ask ourselves whether it is possible to ensure that any form of indexing of one text to another(s) will always be intertextual. What we claim, in this regard, is that we understand intertextuality as a greater (and therefore independent) phenomenon than hypertextuality.

However, it is important to point out a particular type of hyperlink that, in our view, is naturally intertextual: the hashtag, which we will discuss in the next subtopic.

Hashtag on the web and its intertextual nature

The hashtag, according to Silva (2017, p. 20) is "the combination of the terms hash (hash) with tag (label) and refers to a string of characters that form a unit when preceded by the hash symbol". It originated in the extinct IRC (Internet Relay Chat)[15] in the 1990s and functioned as a kind of encapsulator, with the purpose of organizing the topics of a conversation. However, it only became popular on Twitter in 2007, when it

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end of this text, will return his eyes to where he left off, proving that non-linearity (or multilinearity or non-linearity) are not part of the digital environment, since the expected movement would be the same, regardless of whether you read this work in print or on some screen.

[15] More information available at: https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet_Relay_Chat#EFnet. Access on: 24 Sep. 2021.

was used as a tag. In 2009, it became a link, with the purpose of grouping texts under the same topic and, as a consequence, also grouping people, expressing a common idea.

Over time, other social networking sites also adopted the hashtag as a link, namely Instagram and Google+ in 2011, and Facebook in 2013. Given its popularization, the hashtag has also taken on different social functions (Araújo, 2017)[16] and formats: words (#amor), expressions without a verb (#lulalivre), sentences (#euacreditoempapainoel), etc.

We've taken just one example here to demonstrate how it works on Twitter in 2021:

Image 3 – #CPIdaCovid on Twitter

Source: Twitter[17].

The screenshot above was taken on September 28, 2021, at 9:15 pm, the day Bruna Morato[18] testified at the COVID-19 Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry, in the Federal Chamber. On this day, the hashtag #CPIdaCOVID [#COVIDPCI] was, for a few hours, the most commented topic on the web. This is an interesting example to show that the #CPIdaCOVID [#COVIDPCI] is an instance of broad intertextuality: the hashtags evoke broad dialogues, showing that there is a tangible relationship between a set of diffuse texts (the testimonies at the CPI, posts on different social networking sites, news, etc.) that deal with what happened in the Federal Senate that afternoon. On a social networking site, this expression immediately becomes a link, showing how this intertextual relationship takes place in the very materiality of the digital environment,

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[16] For space reasons, we will not dwell on these issues, but we refer the reader to the works of Araújo (2017) and Burikova and Ovchinnikova (2021), which listed several discursive functions, such as giving intensity to the semantic content of the text, adding context to the message, building individual identity, suggesting adherence to social mobilization, promoting services, commenting on emotions, among others.

[17] Available at: https://twitter.com/search?q=%23CPIdaCovid&src=typeahead_click. Access on: 28 Sept. 2021.

[18] Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFtfVEp__Gg. Access on: 28 Sept. 2021.

bringing together hundreds of thousands of texts in a list that refer to the same set of information.

In 2, both Mídia Ninja's post and that of Congresswoman Samia Bonfim, there is a direct quote from a text uttered by the lawyer Bruna Morato: "Death is also medical discharge", which, in turn, would already be an allusion to a text often uttered in the corridors of the hospital under investigation. In any case, the lawyer's quote (here, therefore, strict intertextuality, by copresence) went viral on the networks.

Image 4 – #deathcanbemedicaldischarge[19]
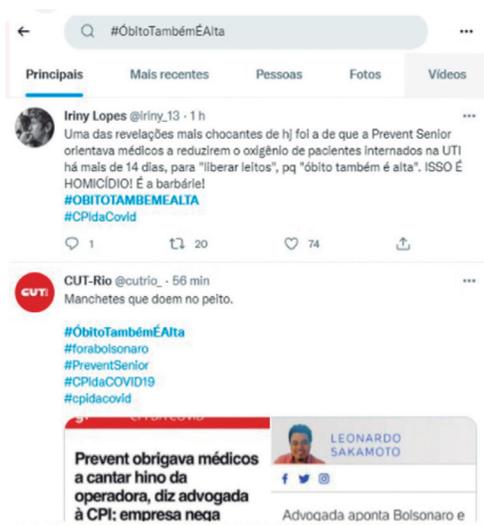
Source: Twitter[20].

Let's note the movement: the hashtag (and its variations) #ÓbitoTambémÉAlta [#DeathIsAlsoMedicalDischarge] also became one of the most commented on Twitter that day and, due to the volatility of the environment, it led to the creation of a set of other texts that soon spread through the networks, once again generating a broad intertextuality. It is therefore a text uttered outside the digital environment, but which has increased its reach due to the technical potential of digital technologies that make up social networks.

So we see, the first example #CPIdaCOVID [#COVIDPCI], as a text produced *on* and *for* the web, with the clear intention of going viral and bringing together under its linguistic materiality a set of texts debating the facts that occurred in the Senate, while the second example is a text produced outside the internet environment, but migrated

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[19]   "Iriny Lopes: One of the most important revolutions today was that Prevent Senior advised doctors to reduce the oxygen of patients admitted to the ICU for more than 14 days, to "free up beds", because "death is medical discharge". This is murder. It´s barbarism. #DEATHISMEDICALDISCHARGE #CovidofPCI".

[20]   Available at: https://twitter.com/search?q=%23obitotamb%C3%A9m%C3%A9alta&src=typed_query&f=top. Access on: 28 Sept. 2021.

there and spread, under a tag, whose discursive function is, above all, to give intensity to the content of the text (Araújo, 2017), with the clear argumentative purpose of taking a stand the aforementioned practices, considered criminal by certain social groups. Now let's see how a hashtag, although created to circulate in the digital environment, has been absolutely effective outside of it as well.

Hashtag off the web

Araújo (2017) develops a categorization for hashtags that have different discursive functions outside the digital environment: an intensity marker, when the # functions as an "intensifier of the semantic content of the message" (Araújo, 2017, p. 106); a context marker, or "a semiotic resource that indicates the information that will contribute to the understanding of the text content (Araújo, 2017, p. 111); and, finally, an instrument of social mobilization, when, under its tutelage, a hashtag has the purpose of bringing together groups that defend the same cause and fight for social change.

The author does not focus on the intertextual potential of hashtags, but draws attention to the power they have even outside the internet. We took the author's work as a basis to discuss the #vaidarcerto movement, a catchphrase from the doctor Elias Leite, who, due to the pandemic, circulated videos on social media as a motivational purpose and — why not? — promotional purpose for a health insurance company.[21]

The catchphrase spread outside the internet and today occupies dozens of spaces in the city of Fortaleza, generating a semiotic landscape whose main proposal is to motivate the population to fight the pandemic. Let's look at the following three examples:

Image 5 – Hashtag used outside the digital context[22]

Source: Authors' elaboration.

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21 More about this story can be read at: https://www.opovo.com.br/noticias/especialpublicitario/unimedfortaleza/2021/04/08/voce-conhece----a-historia-por-tras-do--vaidarcerto.html. Access in: 25 Sept. 2021.

22 #ITSGONNABEALRIGHT.

Image 6 – Hashtag in commercial establishments

Image 7 – Hashtag in residential building

In images 5 and 6, the hashtag was used in two commercial establishments, taking up a lot of space on their facades. In 5, for example, the hashtag is more prominent than the name of the store, due to its salience (Kress; Van Leeuwen, 2006), such is the importance given to the campaign. In 7, the # occupies a more timid space on the facade of a residential building, also suggesting that the campaign is adopted/practiced by all residents.

What we see is that #VAIDARCERTO [#ITISGONNABEALRIGHT] (and its variants) has also gone viral, becoming a meme,[23] outside the digital environment, through a broad intertextuality, alluding to a diffuse network of facts involving the pandemic and all the suffering it has caused to the population, allowing the establishment

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[23] Here, meme is being understood in terms of Dawkins (2010), as a cultural replicator, that is, ideas that are replicated from time to time in a given culture.

of relationships between the texts immersed in this pandemic context. Therefore, the idea is that any citizen who walks around the city and comes across this semiotic landscape during this period will feel welcomed by a hopeful discourse that the pandemic will pass and everyone will be fine. This is only possible because this text was produced in a situation that involves all the inhabitants of the planet, without exception, including those who move around the city of Fortaleza, and is therefore a fact that can be recovered by anyone who knows what is going on. Even if they don't, this doesn't make the phenomenon unfeasible.

By this we mean that the hashtag has ceased to be part of the digital universe and has spread to public life outside the internet, making the intertextual relations established no different from those that take place on the internet. Understanding the text and the way we cognitively process information is much more based on the author-text-reader tripod, regardless of the environment in which this relationship is taking place. The condition of becoming a link, when using the # symbol, is maintained when used on the walls of buildings and, consequently, its potential to establish relationships with other texts, which, from the point of view of the human cognitive processing (which works by associations, like Bush's memex), follows the same logic as what happens in digital environments.

We therefore argue that intertextuality is a textualization strategy that concerns the producer and the reader and their abilities to (re)construct meaning(s) much more than the environments in which the texts circulate. We do not deny the potential for a hashtag to spread in a digital environment, of course, but what we mean is that, regardless of whether they appear quickly on smartphone screens or are graffitied on the walls of buildings, intertextual relationships happen in the same way from the point of view of the subjects. There are therefore many more similarities than differences in the analysis of texts carried out in on- or offline environments.

Final considerations

After the discussions we've had here, we think it is important to shed light on the points we consider crucial: text, regardless of the environment in which it is updated, is always text. In this way, the use of adjectives such as digital can establish a power relationship that, as we understand it, should not exist. It is enough to think that the use of non-digital text, or analogical text, was not customarily marked.

The advent of and investment in research focused on the digital environment seems to have ushered in an asymmetry between texts, a certain privileging of what has been called digital texts, as if they were a new object, with characteristics so peculiar that they were far removed from what, until then, had been covered by the concept of text. We are not denying the digital environment and its enunciative potential, such as greater interactivity and more uses of semiotic resources, but what we claim here is that there are more similarities than differences between what happens in the online and offline universes.

From this perspective, we seek to demonstrate that even relationships conceived and born in the digital realm — such as hashtags — can maintain their vitality in non-digital spaces. We argue here that the hashtag constitutes a particular type of intertextual occurrence, namely, a resource through which a text alludes to a set of texts, since, by evoking it, the user establishes a tangible relationship with a non-specific set of texts that share a given thought. There is, in this case, a marked dialogue — intertextual, therefore — between texts.

LIMA-NETO, V; CARVALHO, A. Sobre as intertextualidades em ambientes digitais: o uso de hashtags. Alfa, São Paulo, v. 67, 2023.

- *RESUMO: Desde o seu surgimento na década de 1990, as hashtags têm sido usadas com diferentes funções discursivas na internet e se tornado uma marca importante nesse ambiente. Neste trabalho, discutimos como elas, funcionando como um link, podem estabelecer relações intertextuais tanto em ambientes digitais quanto não digitais. Defendemos, à luz de Carvalho (2018), a hashtag como um diálogo marcado entre textos, ou seja, uma ocorrência intertextual por meio da qual um texto alude a um conjunto de textos, uma vez que, ao evocá-la, o usuário estabelece uma relação tangível com um conjunto inespecífico de textos. Para isso, analisamos três hashtags, sendo duas em ambiente digital, o Twitter, e uma em espaço não digital, as ruas da cidade de Fortaleza. À luz dos estudos da Linguística de Texto (Cavalcante et al, 2019), buscamos mostrar que, mesmo nascidas e pensadas no âmbito digital, as hashtags mantêm sua vitalidade em espaços não digitais.*

- *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: intertextualidade; hashtags; hipertexto.*

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