

# Meaning effects of (un)sustainability in print advertisements by Real/Santander Bank

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## Abstract

This article aims to reflect on the discourse of Real/Santander Bank under two perspectives: a) the characteristic of its repeatability in the bank's discourse materialised in print ads published in *Veja* magazine during the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development; and b) how the bank constructs discursive processes that lead to the production of sustainability meaning effects in their ads. Among other things, we observed that the discourse process of the bank is anchored in words of interdiscourse that give rise to positioning, as well as in its own previous discourse (advertisement).

**Keywords:** Corporate communication. Discourse. Meaning effects. Advertising. (Un)Sustainability.

## Initial considerations

The growing use of the word “*sustainability*” is clear in the communication of public and private organisations from various segments, in order to somehow gain visibility and build a positive “concept-image” (BALDISSERA, 2004) of the brand, products and/or services, thus positioning themselves in a way to be perceived by their target audiences as organisations that operate with sustainability, a trend confirmed by Velleda Teixeira (2017) in advertising.

Organisations occupy a privileged ideological position in society, which enables them to act in the attempt to guide individuals towards a way of being in the world by presenting themselves as a reference in the establishment of standards, rules and values in order to direct and contribute to the economic maintenance of an enunciating organisation, as a means of guaranteeing their permanence in the market. This process tends to culminate in communication strategies, such as, for example, print advertisements that are analysed in this article from the perspective of Pêcheux's Discourse Analysis. In this sense, advertising, being the most visible aspect of this process that contributes to building world concepts, intentions, interests and strategies of organisations, carries the consequences of a phrase that is not always ethical and/or is aligned with the requirements of the *Conselho Nacional de Auto-Regulamentação Publicitária* (National Council of Self-Regulated Advertising – CONAR, acronym in Portuguese). However, it is important to point out that organisational strategies

precede advertisements. In other words, advertising is the materialisation of strategic decisions of the organisation. Therefore, advertising is only part of a more complex process.

In this sense, from the perspective of organisational communication, when we analyse the discourse materialisations in advertisements, we do not analyse the ad in itself, but the organisational discourse<sup>1</sup> that materializes in it. This is because advertising is one of the dimensions of organisational communication, the dimension of “communicated communication” which, according to Baldissera (2009), includes: the official, authorized voice; the planned processes, that which the company says of itself in its discourses. It happens that not always is this textual manifestation (which is the result of a procedurality) compatible with the practices of the organisations, especially regarding sustainability, since organisations rarely consider sustainability in its complexity. This issue is reviewed briefly in the next section, since it constitutes the theoretical foundation upon which to consider Real/Santander Bank’s<sup>2</sup> discourse materialized in the advertisements from two perspectives proposed here for reflection: a) the characteristic of its repeatability in the bank’s discourse materialized in print ads published in *Veja* magazine during the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development; and b) how the bank builds discourse processes that lead to the production of sustainability meaning effects in their ads.

### On (un)sustainability

Frequently, the use of the prefix “*un*” together with the term “*sustainability*” is explained by the fact that “the historicity of the notion of sustainability and its historic-discursive construction indicates a constant (re)building of the notion, at the same time in which it notably increases environmental unsustainability” (VELLEDA TEIXEIRA, 2017, p.16 – Our translation). Due to this discourse construction being based on pre-constructed<sup>3</sup> limiters on the environment, which penetrate and constitute the notion of sustainability, there is a tendency to prevent advancement towards sustainability. In other words, these discourses “now”, which come from “previously said” discourses (pre-constructed limiters), end up confirming the reductionist and simplifying view of the current environment in society, a view that culminates in environmental (un)sustainability. These pre-constructions (The main ones are considered here) are: a) reducing the environment to the ecological dimension; b) the dichotomy between the individual and nature; and c) the economic model and the social relations established by it.

1 Discourse “is not necessarily about a transmission of information between A and B, but, more generally, an ‘effect of meanings’ between points A and B”. (PÊCHEUX [1969] 1993, p.81 – Emphasis by the author, our translation).

2 The joining of the names Real and Santander is due to the merger between these two financial institutions, though some advertisements are signed separately.

3 A pre-construction is “that which refers to a previous, external, but always independent construction, as opposed to what is ‘constructed’ by the utterance”. (PÊCHEUX, [1975] 2009, p.153 – Our translation).

This reductionism of the environment was pointed out in 1977 at the Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education in Tbilisi, Georgia. At this Conference, the need to break away from practices reduced to the ecological dimension was emphasized. However, this view is still prevalent in advertising today, according to Velleda Teixeira (2017), as well as in the discourse of other fields, as pointed out by Dias (2004), Giacomini Filho (2004), Girardi et al (2011), Molon (2006) and Marpica (2008).

Therefore, it is important to explain the perspective on the environment that guides this paper, which is in line with the *Programa Nacional de Educação Ambiental* (National Program of Environmental Education (PNEA, 1999) which “conceives of the environment as a whole, considering the interdependence between the natural, socioeconomic and cultural environment, from the perspective of sustainability”. In this sense, being/doing something with sustainability constitutes a complexity of aspects; for this reason, we must explain the parameters that characterize this understanding, assumed here as defined by Velleda Teixeira (2017) based on the cell tissue model by Dias (2004). This author understands that for effective Environmental Education (EE), the social, cultural, economic, political, ethical, technological, scientific and ecological dimensions should be included. Velleda Teixeira (2017) claims that considering sustainability in its complexity based on EE is justified by the fact that “education always emerges as a path to more admirable levels of human existence and environmental protection” (LOUREIRO, 2012, p.73 – Our translation), as well as constituting a process of supporting the construction of meanings of sustainability. Therefore, for Velleda Teixeira (2017, p.99 – Our translation):

[...] sustainability as the result of an education for the environment, also needs to be understood from a “mosaic of dimensions” (social, cultural, economic, political, ethical, technological, scientific and ecological) that are interdependent and necessary for being/doing something with sustainability.<sup>4</sup>

However, if the environment is understood/developed based on a conservationist point of view, which separates environmental problems from social, economic, cultural and political ones; and from the perspective that science produces forms of knowledge that aim to dominate, exploit and control the natural world, the same model of society in effect will continue to be (re)produced. Therefore, the aim to improve living conditions should not occur based on the same references that constitute a crisis – the logic of capital. According to Guimarães (2004, p.25 – Our translation), “with society being incapable of transforming a reality (for which it is one of the mechanisms of reproduction), it preserves the movement of constituting reality according to dominant interests – the logic of capital”. In this sense,

<sup>4</sup> Original text: “[...] a sustentabilidade como resultado de uma educação para o ambiente, também necessita ser compreendida a partir do “mosaico de dimensões” (social, cultural, econômica, política, ética, tecnológica, científica e ecológica) que são interdependentes e necessárias para um ser/fazer com sustentabilidade.”

many actions by public or private organisations in favour of preserving the environment lead to a practice of reproducing a hegemonic reality because they are geared towards an educational process focused on the individual and on transforming their behaviour. It is also conservationist, since it structures their understanding and their actions within the same paradigmatic references that have created this environmental crisis (GUIMARÃES, 2004). For this reason, we must define the parameters for what sustainability is when analysing the discourse of Real/Santander Bank that is materialized in their advertisements. In this sense, the mosaic of dimensions that constitute sustainability in its complexity have defined this understanding, being the criterion for choosing the ads, the procedures of which are presented in the next section.

### Methodological procedures

As previously mentioned, the ads for Real/Santander Bank presented in this article constitute the empirical *corpus* from the doctoral research by Velleda Teixeira (2017), and so, we will present how this *corpus* was defined. Initially, a document survey was carried out in the database of *Veja* magazine, more specifically, in 520 editions during the period that includes the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (Decade of ESD<sup>5</sup>), from 2005 to 2014. This research resulted in the collection and cataloguing of 891 ads with appeals to sustainability, forming the archive<sup>6</sup> of the thesis. The criterion for choosing the ads was that each one should present at least one of the dimensions of the mosaic (social, cultural, economic, political, ethical, technological, scientific, ecological). Afterwards, the advertising companies were grouped by segments. Then, we identified those that advertised the most, as well as the organisation that advertised the most in each of these segments. The organisations selected based on this criterion were: Real/Santander Bank, the Coca-Cola Company, Natura Cosmetics and Vale Mining.

The ads by Real/Santander Bank taken together represent a total of 98 ads with appeals to sustainability in *Veja* magazine during the Decade of ESD. Table 1 presents a time line with the distribution of these ads by year during the decade in *Veja* magazine.

**Table 1** - Time line (2005-2014) with ads from Real/Santander Bank

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
16	19	16	14	14	9	3	5	2	-	98

Source: Created by the author.

<sup>5</sup> The purpose of the Decade of ESD was of stimulating changes in attitudes and behaviors on the various levels of society, considering the complex implications that result from the lifestyle that lacks a due concern with the depletion of natural resources of the planet (UNESCO). Available at: <<http://unesdoc.unesco.org>>. Accessed on: March 10, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> According to Sargentini (2014), an archive is not only a set of data: it reveals historical, political and cultural interests.

The procedure used to perform the analyses presented in the next section was done as follows: a) initially, the ads were grouped by period of publication: beginning, middle and end of the decade; these different periods enabled an observation of the movement of meanings during the period; and b) based on the notion of “regularities”<sup>7</sup> (FOUCAULT, [1969] 2008, p.231 – Our translation), the ads were grouped considering “repeatability” in the verbal language and in the imagery. This allowed for an analysis of only one of the ads in each group of ads published (at the beginning, middle and end of the decade), since the ones that will be analysed (Table 2) reflect meanings similar to the other ads of their group.

**Table 2** – Empirical *corpus*

Organisation	Advertisements	Publication	Edition
Real/Santander Bank	1st) <i>Investe no Futuro</i> (“Invests in the Future”)	6/22/2005	2010
	2nd) <i>Investe em Sustentabilidade</i> (“Invests in Sustainability”)	9/5/2012	2285
	3rd) <i>Ajuda você a ser Sustentável</i> (“Helps you become Sustainable”)	7/24/2013	2331

Source: Created by the author.

Next, we present the analysis of each one of the three ads from Real/Santander Bank selected for this purpose.

Advertisement 1 – *Investe no Futuro* (“Invest in the Future”)

Organisation – Real Bank

Published on – 6/22/2005

Publication and edition – *Veja* magazine, edition no.2010

Pages – no.12/13

<sup>7</sup> With this notion, Foucault ([1969] 2008) draws attention to regularities that can be found in a range of texts, which, when identified, indicate discourse developments.

**Figure 1** – Advertisement 1 – Investir no Futuro (“Invests in the Future”)



Source: Veja S/A Digital magazine database.

In the 3 ads, we highlight the discourse sequences (utterances) (henceforth DS) that together amount to 10 DSs. In DS1, in the passage “to believe in the sustainable development is to invest in a better future”<sup>8</sup>, we highlight the verb “to invest” as a concept from the areas of Economics and Administration, which means what people who believe in sustainable development do. The meanings of future presented here refer to the future of the children, which could also take place through education or culture, but, in this DS, it is claimed that the future only happens through economics and administration, since choosing the verb “to invest” guides the meaning to this context, indicating that economic value is predominant in the discourse of this DS.

In the image, we find something that is recurring in the ads: the attempt to establish a derived relation between a determined product/organisation and a desirable situation. The image of children is based on the firmly established convention in society that children carry the representation of the future. Therefore, a child can, on his own, become a symbol for the future by iconographic convention. This convention is anchored in the verbal language of DS1, and vice versa.

<sup>8</sup> Original text: “acreditar no desenvolvimento sustentável é investir num futuro melhor”.

The camera, positioned in *plongée* (a high-angle shot), shows children assembling a symbol of the cycle of sustainability, guided by the policy of the 3Rs (Reuse, Reduce, Recycle), which is composed of three arrows that form a circle. The colours green and yellow in the ad reinforce the Brazilian origin of the bank, which provides an identification with the interlocutor, in addition to establishing the brand as a Brazilian bank. This strategy is also present in all the ads from Real Bank, since the bank's logo carries in its brand the symbol of a banner with these same colours.

In SD2, we see a display of the bank's actions to preserve the environment: "Real Bank. The leading bank in using recycled paper on a large scale. [...] recycled paper is used on a large scale in its external and internal communications. Every day, cartridges, plastics and paper are separated for recycling."<sup>9</sup> This presentation indicates an action guided by the policy of the 3Rs, which, at the beginning of the decade (2005), was frequently implemented by organisations seeking to position themselves as a sustainable companies, since during this period, the understanding about sustainability was highly based on these practices, partially due to the ecological nature attributed to sustainability.

In DS3, we read an explanation, that is, the reason for which Real Bank says it contributes to preserving the environment: "Real Bank contributes to the preservation of the environment because it believes that it is important for the society in which it operates."<sup>10</sup> The meanings that emerge from this DS are that the bank contributes to preserving the environment not because it believes it is important, but because it believes that this is a relevant position for society (clients, future clients and other target audiences with whom it has relationships), for the location in which it operates. With sustainability being important for (its) consumer market<sup>11</sup>, taking this position results in a positive concept-image for the bank.

In DS4, in the passage "Be like Real Bank: reduce consumption, reuse when it is not possible to reduce, and recycle whenever you can"<sup>12</sup>, Real Bank is taken as a model to be followed and, therefore, it is recommended that the interlocutor do the same as the bank.

### Advertisement 2 – *Investe em Sustentabilidade* ("Invests in Sustainability")

Organisation – Santander Bank

Published on – 9/5/2012

Publication and edition – *Veja* magazine, edition no.2285

Pages – no.14/15

9 Original text: "*Banco Real. O banco líder no uso de papel reciclado em larga escala. [...] o papel reciclado é usado em larga escala em sua comunicação externa e interna. Todos os dias, cartuchos, plásticos e papéis são separados para reciclagem.*"

10 Original text: "*O Banco Real contribui para preservação do meio ambiente porque acredita que isso é importante para a sociedade em que atua.*"

11 Researches carried out by Giacomini Filho (2004) prove that the consumer market gives preference to companies that are actively involved in environmental preservation.

12 Original text: "*Faça como o Banco Real: reduza o consumo, reutilize quando não for possível reduzir e recicle sempre que puder.*"

**Figure 2** –Advertisement 2 – *Investir em Sustentabilidade* (“Invests in Sustainability”)



Source: Veja S/A Digital magazine database.

In the verbal language of this ad, in DS5, “Santander has found in sustainability a way to make the economy evolve”<sup>13</sup>, we perceive an effect of evidence that sustainability, for the subject<sup>14</sup>, is nothing more than a strategy to achieve the objectives and goals of the bank, leading us to wonder if this evidence is intentional. This strangeness comes from the characteristic of advertising discourses; while the conception of an advertising piece is developed based on values or trends<sup>15</sup> from the real world, this construction is a symbolic representation that reflects the world in a way that society would like for it to be and not how it really is. This way, we assume that, in advertising, the wording is never formulated

13 Original text: “O Santander encontrou na sustentabilidade uma maneira de fazer a economia girar”.

14 The subject of the DA is not an individual (empirical subject); it is the subject of the discourse that carries the social, ideological and historical characteristics.

15 It is important to emphasize that, in this article, we address advertising from the perspective of organisational communication, which means that: “when we analyse discourse materialisations in ads (such as those carried out in this thesis), we do not analyse the ad itself, but the organisational discourse that is materialized in it, since the ad, being public, is one of the most visible occurrences of the world conceptions (beliefs, values and affiliations of the organisations), intentions, interests and strategies of these organisations (VELLEDA TEIXEIRA, 2017, p.10-11 – Our translation). Original text: “quando analisamos as materializações discursivas em anúncios publicitários (como o realizado na tese), não analisamos a publicidade em si, mas o discurso organizacional que nelas se materializa, pois que o anúncio, por ser público, é uma das ocorrências mais visíveis das concepções de mundo (crenças, valores e filiações das organizações), intenções, interesses e estratégias dessas organizações”.

by accident, but strategically. Therefore, when a bank claims that in sustainability it has found a way to make the economy evolve, it makes clear that it is seeking profits from this action and, as such, loses the magic inherent to advertising.

This question, from the perspective of DA, recalls what Pêcheux ([1975] 2009) says about not claiming the obvious. This issue of the obvious serves for us to read the utterance critically: “Santander has found in sustainability a way of making the economy evolve”, since the obvious is not said, we thus interpret that the utterance is produced because it is not clear that “sustainability is a way of making the economy evolve”. This idea is also present on the linguistic surface with the question: how does sustainability make the economy evolve? Nevertheless, this question is only asked to, soon after, dissolve the question, by presenting *how* sustainability makes the economy evolve. This is an attempt to explain the question and, at the same time, answer it, keeping something effectively silent: that it does not want all kinds of clients, but only those who need investments from the bank.

These meanings are built in a way that the reader can make only one interpretation of the text. This effect is obtained by excluding other possible wordings, hence, other meanings, but if we take DS5 and transform it into a paraphrase, we can see other underlying meanings: “Santander has found *in* sustainability a way of making the economy evolve”. This way, other possible meanings could be: “Santander has found *through* sustainability a way to make the economy evolve” (“*through*” being more associated to the idea of crossing); or “Santander has found *by means of* sustainability a way to make the economy evolve” (“*by means of*” being more associated to the idea of an instrument used in performing a determined action).

So, we see that what remains on the level of the unsaid is *how* Santander found a way to make the economy evolve. In other words, it is not exactly in sustainability that which makes the economy evolve, but *through* it, as made explicit in DS6: “because to finance companies that profit conscientiously, to invest in more prepared university students and to open agencies in communities such as the Alemão Complex, in Rio de Janeiro, generates business”<sup>16</sup>. The financial objective of the bank, as we have previously said, is to lend money to companies. However, not loaning money to companies that dismiss concerns with the environment in their activities is an integral part of the Equator Principles, developed in 2002. For this reason, Santander encourages organisations to invest in sustainability, as the discourse materialized in their ad makes explicit. If companies act according to the guidelines of the agreement, the bank can then loan money to these organisations, thus achieving their financial objective.

From another perspective, by referring to different groups of the public, the discourse produces the effect that everyone wins with the service of the bank, as expressed in DS7

16 Original text: “*porque financiar empresas que lucram de forma consciente, investir em universitários mais preparados e abrir agências em comunidades como no Complexo do Alemão, no Rio de Janeiro, geram negócios*”.

“they generate businesses in which everyone in the world wins”<sup>17</sup>; in this sequence, the pronoun “everyone” together with “the world” denotes the inclusion of all individuals. If we analyse this utterance from the theory of premises and conclusions, the meaning that one arrives at is: if “everyone in the world wins” and I am part of the world, therefore, I have to win.

What happens is, in the next sequence, DS8, this wording is repeated and preceded with the adverb “when”: “And when everyone in the world wins, society grows, the country grows and Santander grows with them”<sup>18</sup>. The word “*when*” establishes a temporal relation, but, more than locate the occurrence of an action in time, it operates semantically as a condition for everyone to grow. However, we should consider that this DS is permeated by a pre-construction – that in a capitalist society not “*everyone in the world*” wins; on the contrary, a few gains very much and many gain very little. The expression “*when*” in the discourse specifies the conditions in which there will be growth for everyone: “*when everyone in the world wins*”, “*society grows, the country grows and Santander grows with them*”. Since, in a capitalist society, it will never be the case that everyone wins, there will never be growth for everyone, but only for a few. In other words, this pre-constructed has excluded this notion from the utterance analysed.

Perhaps this is the scape point, an incongruence in language, in relation to the rest of the text. A non-conformity that reveals the characteristic of contradiction constitutive in a capitalist society. The adverb “*when*” could not and should not be said under these production conditions, but it bursts in, echoing and provoking movements in meanings that reveal a struggle in the balance of power to steer the proposed meanings. These meanings that escape, because language is flawed and contradictory, presenting gaps and lapses, reveal that the voice that pulses in the text is that of capital: it echoes in each phrase of the bank’s discourse materialized in the ad.

Therefore, the word “sustainability” is used in the text for the semantic information that it carries and for the meaning effects that it can generate for the interlocutor in relation to the bank, since it means a way of doing things that, especially in that historical moment (soon after Rio+20), would grant an even more significant semantic weight to the word.

Advertisement 3 – *Ajuda você a ser Sustentável* (“Helps you become Sustainable”)

Organisation – Santander Bank

Published on – 7/24/2013

Publication and edition – *Veja* magazine, 2331 edition

Pages – no.100/101

17 Original text: “*geram negócios em que todo mundo ganha*”.

18 Original text: “*E, quando todo mundo ganha, a sociedade cresce, o país cresce e o Santander cresce com eles*”.

Figure 3 – Advertisement 3 – *Ajuda você a ser Sustentável* (“Helps you become Sustainable”)

SAC: 0800-762-7777 | Ouvidoria: 0800-726-0322

Renata Saraiva  
Financeira em um carro pelo Santander.

JÁ EXISTEM VÁRIAS EMPRESAS  
SUSTENTÁVEIS. FALTAVA UMA EMPRESA  
PARA AJUDAR VOCÊ A SER SUSTENTÁVEL.

**COMPENSO**

SUA VEZ. SUA VOZ. SEU BANCO.

REDUZA  
CO<sub>2</sub>  
COMPENSA

Agora, todo carro financiado pelo Santander vem com 1.000 km de CO<sub>2</sub> compensados. Essa iniciativa faz parte do Reduza e Compense, um movimento lançado pelo Santander para ajudar você a compensar suas emissões de CO<sub>2</sub>. Para calcular suas emissões e saber como reduzir e compensar, acesse [www.webmotors.com.br/co2](http://www.webmotors.com.br/co2)

Tudo isso sobre o Programa Reduza e Compense. Faça a diferença do melhor para o planeta com seu veículo, seja a gasolina e fique mais verde.

Santander  
um banco para suas ideias.  
santander.com.br

Source: Veja S/A Digital magazine database.

In the verbal language of this ad, DS9 (“There are already various sustainable companies”)<sup>19</sup> carries an implicit message: the awareness of the proliferation of companies who call themselves sustainable. Based on imaginary formations, the subject seeks a way to talk to the interlocutor, since, according to Pêcheux ([1969] 1993), every discourse process presumes an anticipation (an imagination) of the representations of the interlocutors, upon which the discourse is founded: what I will say that has not already been said about the subject. This issue brings to mind the theory by Ries and Trout (1999, p.153 – Our translation) about positioning: in the battle to occupy a position in the mind of the interlocutor, what needs to be done is “find a way to penetrate the mind by hooking up their product, service or idea to that which already exists inside”. Considering that “*there are already various sustainable companies*”, the discourse aims to (re)position this information (which is already known) in the mind of the consumer, since it is already there, so it is only necessary to realign the connections that already exist. This is what the subject does when transferring the action of one activity (with sustainability), which was attributed to companies, to the consumer. The reader/consumer also already knew (it was in their mind) that carbon gas emitted by cars is

19 Original text: “*Já existem várias empresas sustentáveis*”.

harmful to the environment; what they did not know was the possibility of using the car and being able to compensate their gas emissions. In other words, this behaviour was not yet positioned in their mind. The subject, upon presenting this possibility, repositions an action in the mind of the interlocutor that was previously of the company and is now of the consumer.

This discourse strategy is to talk to the interlocutor, who supports environmental issues and, perhaps, is also a client of Santander and, especially to those who are thinking about replacing their car, as we interpret in DS10: “Financing by Santander comes with 1,000 km of compensated CO<sub>2</sub>”<sup>20</sup>. The imaginary interlocutor incorporated in the text is established in the very act of writing, for whom the author imagines (intends) their text and to whom it is directed. In this discourse construction, the subject informs and instructs the interlocutor about the way in which Santander can help him/her become sustainable. With this stance, it masks the real objective of the discourse – that of adding value to one of the products provided by the bank: financing for cars.

This discourse can also be interpreted based on one of the characteristics of the advertising discourse: the construction is founded on the values and trends evidenced in society, in order to create the identity of its brands and/or products advertised to the public. Loyal to this characteristic, the discourse by Real/Santander Bank brings carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) to this construction, an approach in line with the socio-historical moment experienced by society and with the raised discussions regarding this issue, especially because automobiles are considered the major villains in relation to the environment, because they emit gases that cause the greenhouse effect, which is responsible for climate change. From this perspective, the subject activates scientific knowledge that validates their wording in the interdiscourse, which is part of the mosaic of dimensions (social, cultural, economic, political, ethical, technological, scientific and ecological), in order to be/do something with sustainability.

After this representation of analyses, two aspects of the discourse by Real/Santander Bank will be reviewed to reflect upon in this article:

a) the characteristic of repeatability in the bank’s discourse - materialized in the print ads published in *Veja* during the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development – can be observed in the verbal language with the utterance “*the bank invests in sustainability*”.

In the imagery, the characteristic of repeatability is observed in the image of the individuals who appear in the ads assuming the place of clients. This repeatability, at times, also appears in the colours green and yellow used in the layout of the ad, as exemplified in advertisement 1, as well as in all of the ads by Real Bank, since the logo of the bank carries with its brand the symbol of a banner with these same colours. The repeatability in the bank’s discourse is explained, since, for Foucault (1979, p.231 – Our translation), “we live

<sup>20</sup> Original text: “*financiado pelo Santander vem com 1.000 km de CO2 compensados*”.

in a society that produces and circulates discourse which has truth as its function, passing itself off as such and thus obtaining specific powers”. From this perspective, repeatability in discourse is in search of a truth effect in the wording, since, with “repeatability, meanings appear stable” and, this way, produce a “truth effect” in the wording.

The verb “to invest” stands out for its repeatability in the utterance of the bank, indicating a concept from the field of economics, also frequently used in administration. The way in which the utterances are constructed, the verb produces the effect that sustainability is nothing more than an investment. This shows that the discourse appealing to sustainability in the advertising by Real/Santander Bank is just part of a capitalist game and the so-called socio-environmental actions carried out by the bank are nothing more than a pursuit of their own gain. Regarding the characteristic of repeatability in the imagery, one can say that it takes place by using images of people, who also mean investments for the bank, since they are the ones who provide commercial transactions, which ensures the bank stays on the market. This construction is observed in the use of verbs that signify the relation of the bank with the community. “Contributes”, “finances”, “invests”, “privileges” and “helps” are verbs that denote help and it is based on them that the bank builds its discourse and its position as an organisation with sustainability.

Repetition is one of the characteristics of advertising and it can occur through language (verbally and/or in images) as well as in the repetition of the number of placements in an ad in a determined publication, or even by publishing the ad in various vehicles of communication. As a result of being frequently repeated, the message is taken as a truth.

b) how the bank constructs the discourse processes that lead to the production of determined meaning effects of sustainability in the ads.

It is worth noting that, in the discourse of Real/Santander Bank, in the three ads analysed, the terms “sustainable development” or “sustainability” (reduced to the idea of sustainable development), are used literally in the texts. In the first ad (Invests in the Future), the discourse emphasizes the importance that sustainability has for society. In the second ad (Invests in Sustainability), the bank demonstrates it is bringing sustainability to its discourse not only because it is important for society (as the first text shows), but because it found in sustainability a way to make the economy evolve. Since every marketing strategy needs to be constantly renewed to keep reaching its goal, the bank’s discourse, in the third ad (Helps you become Sustainable), demonstrates the awareness that there is a saturated memory in the use of these terms – sustainability or sustainable development – by organisations, which, due to their repeatability, has trivialized them. Therefore, there needs to be a way to keep associating the bank to sustainability and so, the appeal in the discourse is “*to help you become sustainable*”.

This discourse construction can be observed in the thread of the discourse of the three texts: each text results not only from previous discourse processes (interdiscourse) that lead to the position-taking, but also, and especially, from their own previous discourse

(advertisement). This operation between the texts allows us to claim that the bank's discourse carries, at the same time, a previous presence and a current manifestation that, according to Pêcheux ([1975] 2009, p.153 – Emphasis by the author, our translation), “comes from the linearisation (or syntagmatisation) of the transverse discourse on the axis of what we designate with the expression *intradiscourse*, that is, the functioning of discourse in relation to itself”. This means that not only is discourse constructed as “then-now”, but also through the interdiscourse operation itself (what is said now in relation to what is said before and what is said later).

We can also observe that the discourse processes that produce meaning effects of sustainability, in some way and to some extent, are associated to concepts from the ecological dimension. The strategies are guided, primarily, by the policy of the 3 Rs (Reduce, Reuse and Recycle) which consists of a set of action measures taken in the treatment of every type of solid, liquid and gaseous waste (sewage). In other words, the strategies are associated to elements from the physical and biological environment. However, while the meanings moved in the bank's discourse are from the ecological dimension, this is just one way of masking the economic value and the reason for the organisation's existence. This can be seen especially when Real/Santander Bank uses values that are from the market, that is, values that are intrinsically associated to the economic-financial field, to define what is sustainability. By uttering, for example, that you are investing significantly in sustainability and, as the analyses demonstrate, to invest significantly in sustainability, from the perspective of the bank, is to provide financing to companies, students and communities, segments which are mentioned literally in the ads.

### **Final considerations**

It is worth considering that financial institutions in general, and specifically Real/Santander Bank, could not avoid performing actions of a sustainable nature in a timely manner, whether due to the growing pressure on the part of society, or to competition in the segment and the need for strategies that go beyond the excellence of commercial transactions, or even, due to the association of major banks to the “Green Protocol”, or just so that this phrase, which claims to be from a sustainable organisation, has a minimum amount of support in its activities. What the analyses of the discourse of Real/Santander Bank materialised in the ads show is that the objective of this discourse is only to make the economy evolve, taking into consideration the opportunity for business, market trends, environmental regulations and demands from clients and society. This way, the so-called socio-environmental actions carried out by the bank are nothing more than a pursuit for their own gain, since the advertising by Real/Santander Bank with appeals to sustainability is only part of the capitalist game, which becomes clear in their discourse, with the repeatability that “*the bank invests in sustainability*”.

Therefore, the analyses show that the bank's discourse on this subject promotes only more of the same, that is, the growth and development of its business. Moreover, it "points out how strong, even today, the influence of conservationist and Cartesian thinking is, which separates physical nature (from human nature) so that it can be saved, excluding the interdependence and interactions with society (VELLEDA TEIXEIRA, 2017, p.188 – Our translation). These perceptions also show how much the reflections on these issues need to advance, since they impact each one of us and society as a whole.

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