

**THE SEMIO-DISCURSIVE FACEBOOK BRANCH: THE CONSTRUCTION OF AFFECTIVE HYPER DISCOURSES.**

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**Resumen.**

La Comunicación Mediada por Computador es un tema a ser indagado dentro del contexto educativo actual, generado reflexiones en torno a nuevos modos de interacción y el uso del lenguaje en este tipo de comunicación. Así, este artículo pretende comprender de qué manera Facebook, como dispositivo mediático, influye en el lenguaje escrito de estudiantes de secundaria. Los soportes teóricos corresponden a los conceptos del mercado lingüístico y el dispositivo mediático. Como resultado, los híper-discursos multimodales son la producción lingüística final emergente en el mercado lingüístico del Facebook por medio de las prácticas comunicacionales de los estudiantes de noveno grado, entendidos como agentes afectivos, al interior del muro de Facebook.

**Palabras Clave.**

Prácticas comunicacionales, Facebook, híper-discursos, mercado lingüístico, dispositivo mediático.

**Abstract.**

Computer-Mediated Communication is a contemporary issue to be explored in the current educational context; hence, reflections upon new modes of interaction and language usage need to be developed. In that regard, this paper is aimed to comprehend how Facebook as a mediatic device influences high school students' written language. Thus, the theoretical support along this analysis includes the concept of the linguistic market and the mediatic device. As a result, the multimodal affective hyper-discourses are the final emerging linguistic production in the Facebook linguistic market through communicational practices by ninth graders as affective agents inside the Facebook wall.

**Keywords.**

Communicational Practices, Facebook, Hyper-discourses, Linguistic Market, Mediatic Device.

## 1.- Context of this reflection.

The present paper is a reflection on the monographic research “Exploring Communicational Practices through Facebook as a Mediatic Device” (Aldana, Baquero & Rivero, 2012)<sup>4</sup>, which was developed at *Universidad Distrital (FJC)*. The participants were 33 students, 17 girls and 16 boys whose ages ranged between 13 and 16 years, from the *I.E.D Morisco* in *the Minuto de Dios* neighborhood. The purpose of that research was to understand the function of Facebook as a mediatic device in the process of reshaping ninth graders’ communicational practices. The qualitative paradigm (Creswell, 2007) and phenomenological method (Johnson & Christensen, 2008) that framed this investigation allowed us to study these phenomena from their holistic complexity.

Also, we conducted two data collection instruments. On the one hand, we designed the communicational format (See appendix 1). Its structure entailed the content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004), a classification of speech acts (Cohen, 1996) and technical-technological characteristics stated by Ferreira (2008), among other features (Crystal, 2008; Mante & Piris, 2002). On the other hand, we implemented the Face-talk, an in-deep interview (Holstein & Gubrium, 2001), in order to disclose ninth graders’ perceptions on the communicational phenomenon (See appendix 2).

Accordingly, the affective mediatic device emerged as a final category throughout this research. However, this article embraces the subcategory the semio-discursive branch of the Facebook wall as a mediatic device, which includes the alternative modes of interaction and the language usage produced within the computer-mediated communication. For this reason, the article discusses how Facebook as a mediatic device modifies ninth graders’ written language.

## 1.1. Introduction

The communicational phenomenon has been presented as a major element in the production of different practices in the computer-mediated communication. In doing so, this phenomenon is addressed regarding the concept of mediatic device together with communicational practices; likewise, the linguistic market and the multimodal theory of communication both are essential factors to carry out the analysis of the latter. For this reason, it will be described briefly how these previous concepts have been comprehended along this reflection.

On the one hand, the mediatic device is defined as a “multidimensional, conceptual and methodological unit inside the mediatization process for understanding the communicational phenomenon.” (Aldana, Baquero & Rivero, 2012: 12). In this manner, this relational concept embraces three hetero-referential branches namely, semio-discursive, socio-cultural, and technical-technological ones. In this sense, Ferreira (2008) states that the semio-discursive branch considers language as the chief mediator of different linguistic features inside the mediatic device.

On the other hand, the communicational practice is comprehended as “the practice which takes place in a virtual field where agents exchange semio-discursive goods to produce and reproduce linguistically their habitus based on their capitals at stake”. (Aldana, Baquero & Rivero, 2012: 20). Moreover, this exchange is allowed by the objectified conditions provided by the constitution of the linguistic market (Bourdieu, 1991). Therefore, the different semio-discursive goods are given a specific value within the linguistic market.

Additionally, we have considered the two axes of the multimodal theory of communication proposed by Kress and Van Leeuwen inasmuch as they elucidate that the multimodal communication contemplates two traits, namely, “the semiotic resources of communication, the modes and the media used, and the communicative practices in which these resources

are used” (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001: 111). To that end, we assume that “language use is contextualized in conjunction with other semiotic resources which are simultaneously used for the construction of meaning” (O'Halloran, 2004: 1). In connection with this matter, we focus on the semiotic resources of communication and the communicational practices wherein these resources take place.

By considering the prior conceptual background, this reflection first describes the diverse modes of interaction in the Facebook wall and their respective implications. Second, we explain how discourses and hyper-discourses are produced and in turn, the sorts of hyper-discourses developed in the Facebook wall. Third, the elements of the multimodal cohesion within the hyper-discourses are portrayed. Afterwards, we consider aspects such as objectified and subjectified modes of linguistic production, a virtual symbolic efficacy which entails the emergence of an affective agent. Moreover, alternative communicational practices as semio-discursive multimodal goods are shown. Finally, we conclude how the semio-discursive Facebook branch modifies ninth graders' written language.

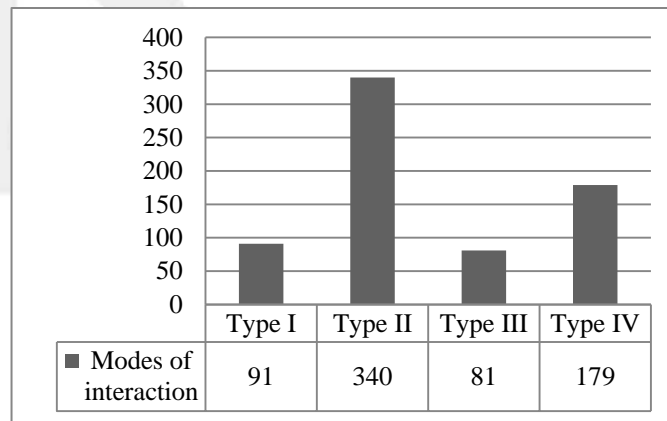
## **2. Findings and discussion on the semio-discursive Facebook branch.**

### **2.1. The Multimodal Dimension of Hyper-Discourses.**

Communicational formats demonstrate that the Facebook wall frames agents' existence conditions to the appropriation of capitals through four modes of interaction<sup>5</sup>. The most frequent ones are the II and IV types (See Bar chart 1: Modes of Interaction). In this regard, agents give a higher value to these sorts of interactions. Moreover, due to the Facebook wall legitimates, structures, and delimits the modes of the appropriation of capitals, agents interact in order to acquire them within the linguistic market dynamics. In this manner, the *linguistic market* provides objective conditions established by agents' communicational practices according to Bourdieu (1991: 55).

In this respect, language “as the means of media” (Ferreira, 2008: 168) is a predominant and constituent element of communicational practices for generating discourse in the Facebook wall. However, “what circulates on the linguistic market is not language as such, but rather discourses” (Bourdieu, 1991: 39). Thus, an institutional, socio-historical, and subjective articulation of agent’s linguistic production is necessary to beget discourses. Hence, it leads us to conclude in Bourdieu’s ideas (1991) that the product of the relation between linguistic habitus and the linguistic market is agents’ discourses.

**Bar chart 1: Modes of Interaction**



Source: Compiled by authors.

As a consequence, since the technical technological mechanisms of Facebook wall enable the virtualization of the linguistic market dynamics, hyper-discourses can be developed. The most prominent are the affection, social interaction, and virtual reality hyper-discourses; in this manner, hyper-discourses become virtual multimodal discourses that allow agents to have a quick and intuitive mobility through the Facebook wall hyperlinks.

Furthermore, this multimodal dimension of hyper-discourses embraces a “multimodal principle” explained by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1998, cited in Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001: 3). This principle comprises a dynamic articulation between the elements of visual composition and written language that transmits discourses by means of what can be said and how can be said. Seeing that it is essential a dynamic articulation to convey hyper-

discourses, we take into account the conjunction and cohesion between visual texts and written texts as argued by Van Leeuwen (2005).

As a result, interactions seem to include multimodal elements such as composition, linking information and dialogue (Van Leeuwen, 2005: 179) for constructing their hyper-discourses. Additionally, this process involves three more aspects, namely, linking image, opening, and hyper-discursive extension. To illustrate this, the construction of hyper-discourses is depicted in figure 1 (See Figure 1).

**Figure 1: Multimodal Cohesion.**



Source: Compiled by authors.

Accordingly, we describe the components mentioned in the figure 1.

a) Composition: It provides a coherent and meaningful arrangement of the visual and written elements that compose the hyper-discursive construction. Consequently, it is pointed out that the turns are moved towards the left, due to an asymmetry in the visual articulation of the interaction.

b) Opening: It indicates the first turn of the interaction which usually occurs as a short expression that can be accompanied by diverse visual texts such as emoticons or audiovisual ones as videos. Likewise, the opening sets a possible topic to refer in the interaction.

c) Linking image: It displays agents' photograph which is understood as a visual text with hyperlinks that connect other agents' visual texts.

d) Dialogue: This component frames agents' turns as a whole. These ones include visual texts as emoticons and written texts with different grammars. All of them let the topic develop to build up the hyper-discursive main thematic up. However, it is common to find the explosion of a wide set of subthemes in this section.

e) Linking information: These written texts with hyperlinks — as an element of modal hyper-discourses— make possible to explore and connect hyper-discourses fields; as well as generate linguistic productions. In this regard, sequential and simultaneous actions take place by means of these texts.

f) Hyper-discursive extension: Agents are able to prolong hyper-discourses or start a new one through this extension.

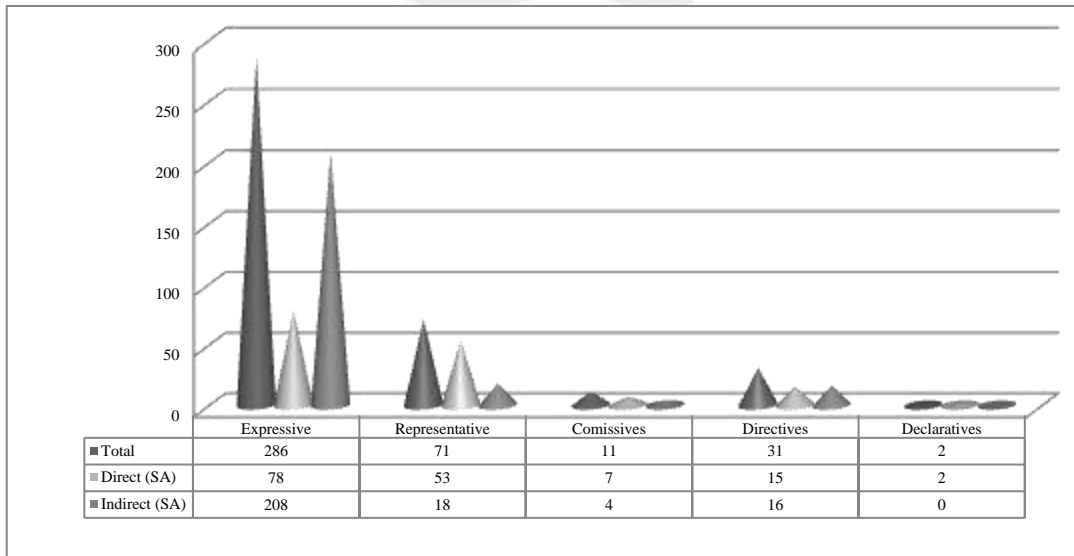
## **2.2. The Objectified and the Subjectified Modes of Linguistic Production.**

Although speech acts can be understood as “a functional unit in communication” (Cohen, 1996: 384). They must entail both objectified and subjectified modes of linguistic production. These ones are in turn oriented to affective hyper-discourses. In this respect, the objectified modes of linguistic production of speech acts are located through the objective conditions within the Facebook wall. In regard to them, the most recurrent speech acts oriented to affectivity are the expressive ones with 286 references to them (See Bar chart 2:

Speech Acts). On the contrary, the subjectified modes of linguistic production of speech acts can be found in the Face-talks as hyper-discursive fields. They are therefore transferred to the cyberfield by the computer mediated communicational practices. For instance, it can be observed in the perceptions sample affection hyper-discourses (DB-I1-46), entertainment hyper-discourses (AC-I3-39), and sexual hyper-discourses (DS-I1-63) (See Appendix 4).

In this manner, it is worth noting that objectified and subjectified modes of linguistic production concur among each other. Accordingly, this conjunction involves agents' linguistic habitus within the market (Bourdieu, 1991); concurrently, an affinity of agents' pre-existing disposition yields affective hyper-discourses in their communicational practices.

**Bar chart 2: Speech Acts.**



Source: Compiled by authors.

As part of agents' linguistic habitus, hyper-discourses entail speech acts which endow a virtual symbolic efficacy over agents' linguistic production during the linguistic exchange. In this investigation, expressive speech acts have the highest number over the others (See Bar chart 2: Speech Acts); it means they are greatly valued meanwhile the other speech acts



are devalued. It implies that agents pursue a symbolic profit unconsciously over expressive speech acts. Moreover, the acquired symbolic power is an invisible power that bestow agents a sort of legitimacy so that being either “recognized as legitimate” or just “misrecognized” in the Facebook wall in agreement with Bourdieu (1991: 23). Table 1 exemplifies some Expressive speech acts.

**Table 1: Computer-Mediated Communicational Practices Sample**

Expressive Speech Acts	Image
<b>ke mentira</b>	
<b>tu tambien te das garra</b>	
<b>Severo Temota!!</b>	
<b>ese lo farrie</b>	
<b>OrrendoTemota!!</b>	
<b>yo si dije!</b>	

Source: Compiled by authors.

### 2.3. The Semio-discursive goods at stake.

The affinity of those pre-existing dispositions or the homology between habitus gives a value to the semio-discursive goods that are in the linguistic exchange at stake, such as in the lexical items repeated index. Correspondingly, communicational formats display a highly number of affective lexical items which embrace both, positive and negative emotional connotations. In this regard, the affective lexical items with a positive emotional connotation, namely, *Querer*, *linda* and *amor*, are greatly used by agents (See Table 2).

**Table 2: Computer-Mediated Communicational Practices Sample.**

Lexical Items	Image
<b>Aiii Tan Linda Tu</b>	
<b>muii Linda</b>	
<b>eres una nena re linda</b>	
<b>Te Kiero Mas</b>	
<b>lo kiero reguero</b> <b>yo = amorsito pero ya llegue te llamo por la noche para vernos mañana te amoooooo</b>	
<b>perras guizas coimas hptas</b>	

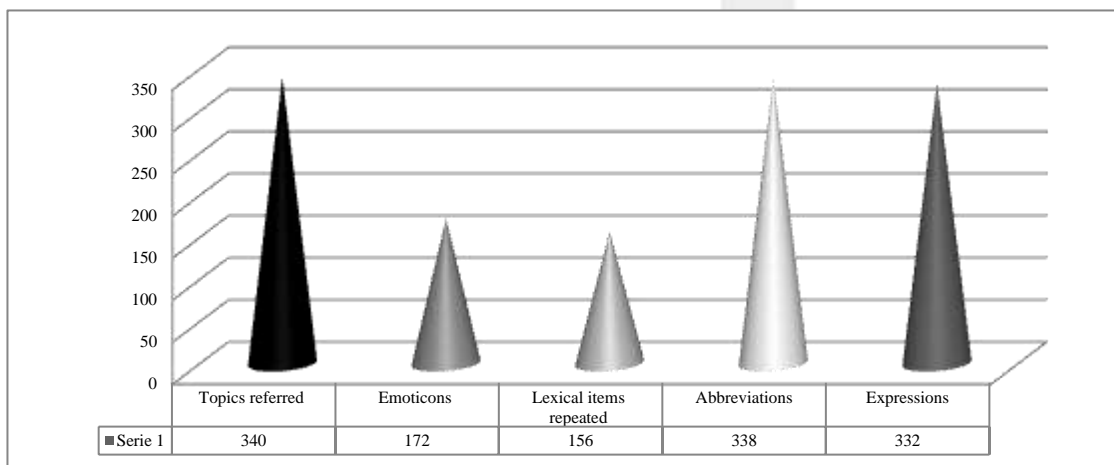
<b>SEXY BICHIS &lt;-----</b>	
<b>maLA ViDa pAra IOs pErRoS HpTs q IO HaCeN SuFrIr a uNo</b>	

Source: Compiled by authors.

On the other hand, the affective lexical items with negative emotional implications follow the highest frequency; e.g. *Bitch* and *Perras* are chiefly mentioned. In addition, it is noteworthy that the usage of the alternative code for these lexical items may change. This linguistic production then may assure a profit of distinction between agents. Accordingly, these semio-discursive affective goods provoke a virtual status; inasmuch as they are staked and exchanged along the dynamics of the virtual linguistic market. Therefore, an affective agent appears in a new existence condition and a symbolic status inside the wall. It can be exemplified in the previous table (See Table 2).

At the same time, a practical competence forces affective agents to own other semio-discursive goods in order to shield their symbolic status. On this subject, because of the inevitable necessity of preserving the status, a pragmatic function is indispensable to succeed the acceptability. That is why abbreviations (338) and emoticons (125) emerge as linguistic capitals at stake besides being a linguistic production (See Bar chart 3: Indexes). These linguistic capitals make it possible for affective agents to display feelings, emotions and moods in the wall. As a consequence, semio-discursive goods guarantee new linguistic capitals to convey agents' affectivity.

**Bar chart 3: Indexes**



Source: Compiled by authors.

Besides, emoticons are the combination of semiotic elements that project a certain illocutionary force in line with Johnson's view (2010). Consequently, these semio-discursive goods embrace both, a positive and a negative emotional connotation (See Table 3). Thus, Table 4 holds some contextualized examples of these emoticons.

**Table 3: Semio-discursive goods**

Form	Label-Meaning	Form	Label-Meaning
♥	Heart	;)	Wink
:)	Smile	;D	Big Smile
:(	Sad	:'(	Crying

Source: Compiled by authors.

**Table 4: Computer-Mediated Communicational Practices Sample**

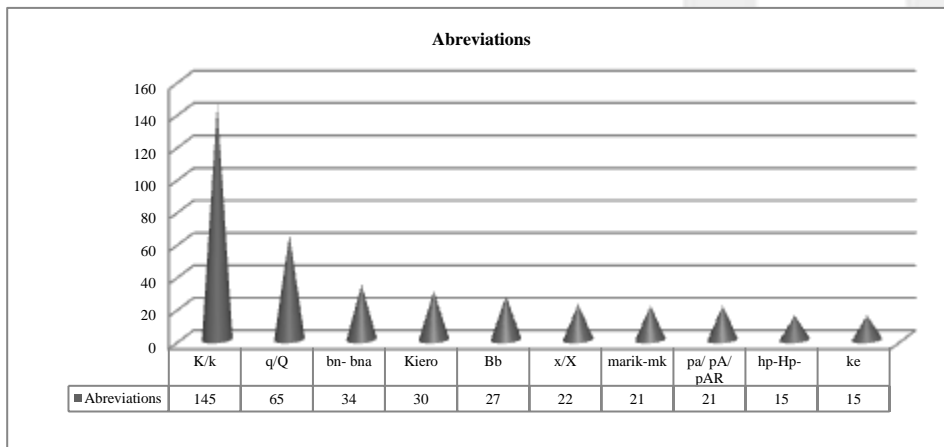
Emoticons	Image
Aiii tan Exajerada =P	
yo vere me ayudas!!!!.....=)	
hola wewa jaja :(	
Piko Pa Voz :* :\$\$\$ C;	

	
<b>jujuui mañanaaa a farriarles con toda ...jajaja....);)....</b>	
<b>jajajaja si toka Ud ia Oro Sierto =P</b>	
<b>TUHH ADD :) GRACIAS ♥ :P ;)</b>	
<b>:( marik no pude dormir pensando es que ud estaria brava con migo</b>	

Source: Compiled by authors.

In addition, abbreviations are a morphological phenomenon by which words are lessened; in this fashion, they are understood as another semio-discursive good. This exchangeable index has greater prominence over the other modes of linguistic production (See Bar chart 4: Abbreviations). In this manner, abbreviations of the Spanish conjunction *Que* had the highest number. Nonetheless, these semio-discursive goods also hold positive and negative emotional connotations contextually displayed in Table 5 (See Table 5).

**Bar chart 4: Abbreviations.**



Source: Compiled by authors.

On the other hand, there are other abbreviations that have a special connotation; inasmuch as they may be perceived as popular or vulgar uses of Spanish which produce a struggle between freedom versus official language. Nonetheless, the affinity between the agents' linguistic habitus allows the affective agents to address each other by means of a familiar and warm manner; for instance, the abbreviation of *Marica* could be perceived as an affective linguistic production. In contrast, the abbreviation of *Hijo de puta* has a strong and negative implication. Hence, we can illustrate these sorts of semio-discursive goods in Table 5.

**Table 5 Computer-Mediated Communicational Practices Sample.**

Form	Image
se te kiere	
TE KIERO MUCHO ♥♥♥	
Te Amo Mucho Bbe	
gracias bb	
maLA ViDa pAra IOs pErRoS HpTs q IO HaCeN SuFrIr a uNo	
marik tenia miedoo	
hp rumbo simon	

<b>me disculpa marik</b>	
<b>hptas perras</b>	
<b>esta hpta es perfecta</b>	
<b>ay hp vida mamado de esta mierdda de vida mamado de todos los hijueputas problemas q uno tiene</b>	

Source: Compiled by authors.

Equally, the virtual symbolic status of the affective agents is as well conceded by the polysemic employment of the previous semio-discursive goods; it means that affective agents gain symbolic benefits by appropriating the new linguistic capitals at stake in the Facebook wall. This polysemic use is presented along the lexical items, emoticons and abbreviations. It is contextually displayed in Table 5 where the lexical items *Hijo de puta* or *Marica* are used positively and negatively. Likewise, Table 6 illustrates the polysemic form that can be also noticed with these semio-discursive goods.

**Table 6: Semio-discursive Goods**

Label-Meaning	Forms						
Smile	:]	:)	:=)	c:	=)		
Big Smile	;D	:D					
Tongue	=P	:P	:)-				
Grin	XD	xd	xp				
Sad	:(	=(					
Standard Form	Forms						
Que	K	k	Q	q	ke	Qe	Qe

<b>Bien</b>	BN	bN	Bn	bn	
<b>Marica</b>	marik	mk	Mk	mca	
<b>Hijo(s) de puta</b>	Hpta	HpTs	Hp	hp	
<b>Usted</b>	uD	Ud	ud		
<b>Para</b>	pa	pA	pAR		

Source: Compiled by authors.

### 3. Conclusions.

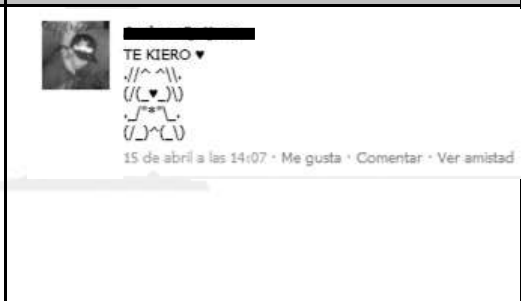
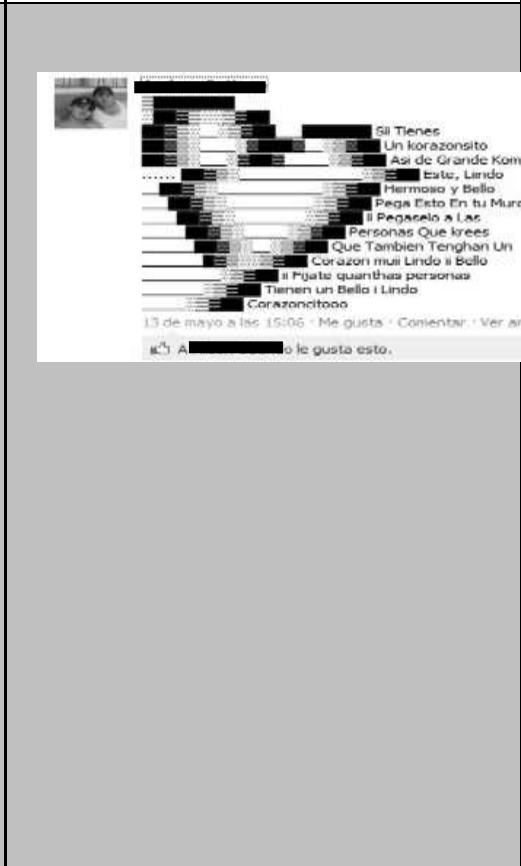
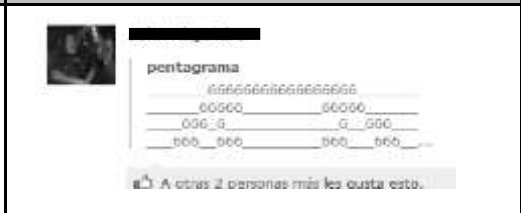
#### 3.1. The Multimodal Goods in the Alternative Communicational Practices.

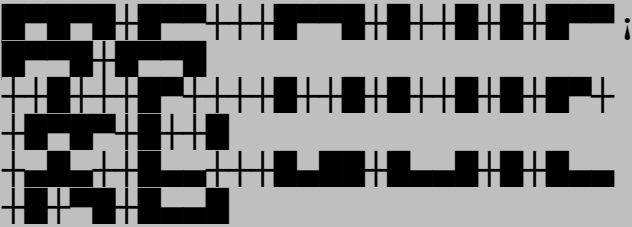

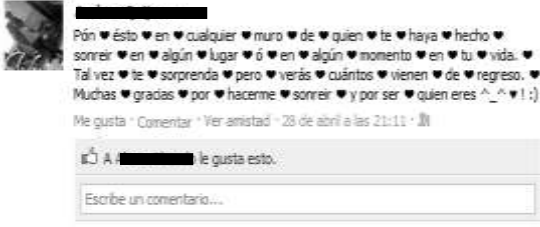
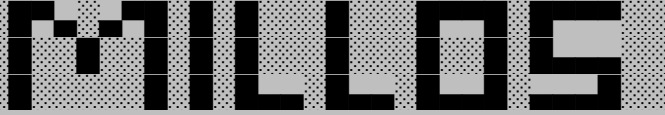

The affective semio-discursive goods in agents' communicational practices also imply a multimodal characteristic in view of the semiotic metaphor expressed by O'Halloran. That is to say, the multimodality demonstrates that "the function of an element may be receded and new functional elements may be introduced in the movement from one semiotic resource to another" (Pang Kah Meng, 2004: 41. In O'Halloran, 2004). In that account, the affective semio-discursive goods consider the function and meaning to integrate two semiotic resources. In this regard, multimodality is articulated by the inclusion of diverse semio-discursive goods. As result, the most frequent and creative multimodal goods are organized in Table 7:

**Table 7: Alternative Computer-Mediated Communicational Practices Sample.**

<b>Form</b>	<b>Image</b>
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 <p>♥(◡ ◡ ◡)♥.....PEGALO EN EL MURO DE 15 PERSONAS ♥QUE SEAN IMPORTANTES PARA ti ESPERO ESTAR EN LOS KINCE</p>	
<p>Pón ♥ésto ♥en ♥cualquier ♥muro ♥de ♥quien ♥te ♥haya ♥hecho ♥sonreír ♥en ♥algún ♥lugar ♥ó ♥en ♥algún ♥momento ♥en ♥tu ♥vida. ♥Tal vez ♥te ♥sorprenda ♥pero ♥verás ♥cuántos ♥vienen ♥de ♥regreso. ♥Muchas ♥gracias ♥por ♥hacerme ♥sonreír ♥y por ser ♥quien eres          ^ _ ^ ♥! :)</p>	
<p>VAMOS JOSE LUIS TANCREDI TE QUEREMOS DE REGRESO CON            .... LO MEJOR CON EL MEJOR.....          PASEMOS ESTE MENSAJE EN HONOR A TANCREDI.. SOLO °°/M</p>	

Source: Compiled by authors.

These multimodal goods in the alternative communicational practices permit the affective agents to acquire and assure a distinction, i.e. a symbolic virtual status. It is because “the more linguistic capital speakers possess, the more they are able to exploit the system of differences to their advantage and thereby secure a profit of distinction” (Bourdieu, 1991: 18). Consequently, affective agents with a higher symbolic virtual status may distinguish themselves in the wall, from those who are less provided with linguistic capital.

Similarly, these virtual multimodal goods are given a higher value in the linguistic market dynamic. In this regard, affective agents with a lower symbolic virtual status attempt to “make an effort to adapt their linguistic expressions to the demands of formal markets” (Bourdieu, 1991: 21); in contrast, affective agents with a superior symbolic virtual status try unconsciously to legitimate themselves by making an invitation to reproduce their semio-discursive goods. For this reason, expressions such as *pégalo*, *pon*, *pasemos* y *vamos* are frequently employed. Hence, these reproductions are feasible because these goods circulated together with the affective hyper-discourses in the wall. As an example, these persuasive features reproduce these semio-discursive goods (See Table 7).

### **3.2. The necessity of a Hermeneutical Competence.**

The evidence throughout this investigation makes us consider the rising of hermeneutical communities (Martín-Barbero, 2002) inside the Facebook wall cyberfield. In this fashion, affective agents (ninth graders) are able to cope with the new ways of perception and depiction of identities, as well as feeling and expressing them. Regarding these statements, there is therefore an emerging hermeneutical competence interrelated to Bourdieu’s practical competence. On that account, besides affective agents generate virtual multimodal gesticulation under practical strategies that “have numerous functions and which are tacitly adjusted to the relations of power” (Bourdieu, 1991:7), their hermeneutical competence provides an effective and efficient interpretation of each other’s virtual multimodal gesticulations.

After analyzing the prior aspects, it is concluded that affective hyper-discourses are the final emerging linguistic production within the Semio-discursive branch of the Facebook wall; it is possible seeing that they occur after the virtualization of the linguistic market and the semio-discursive goods through technical-technological mechanisms. Simultaneously, affective hyper-discourses regard agents’ habitus; since, their homology and their practical competence endow and shield a virtual symbolic efficacy upon this sort of production.

Hence, it is required a hermeneutical competence to carry out an effective and efficient interpretation of the affective hyper-discourses which are materialized in the affective agents' virtual multimodal gesticulation.

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**Appendix 1, Communicational format.**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Number of interactions</b>
From ____ to ____	

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Date (Last post):</b>
<b>Interactional mode:</b>	<b>Date (Data collection):</b>

**Part I**

a.1 Image (Number)	a.2 Number of interventions	a.3 Text	I like

**Part II**

b. INDICES				c. ANALYTICAL FEATURES			
b.1 Topics Referred				c. Frequency			
Academic		Non Academic					
b.2 Emoticons				c. Frequency	c.2. Label (Name – Meaning)		
b.3 Abbreviations				c. Frequency	c.3 Standard Form		
b.4 Lexical items repeated				c. Frequency	c.4 Syntactical Units		
b.5 Expressions				c. Frequency	c. 5 Meaning- English gloss	c. 6 Speech Acts	

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## Appendix 2, Face-talk

(Guiding questions)

1. ¿Desde hace cuánto tienes Facebook?
2. ¿Por qué te llamo la atención Facebook y como te enteraste de él?
3. ¿Cuál ha sido la experiencia más agradable que ha tenido con Facebook?
4. ¿Cuál ha sido el mensaje que más le ha gustado en el Facebook? ¿Por qué?
5. ¿Cuáles son los temas más recurrentes que usted recuerda en sus conversaciones en el Facebook?
6. ¿Le gusta usar emoticones? ¿Cuál es el emoticón que más le ha llamado la atención del Facebook? ¿Por qué?
7. ¿Qué palabras prefiere abreviar? ¿Por qué?
8. ¿Para qué utiliza o a qué se refieren expresiones como severo, rabón y qué chimbita?
9. ¿En los contactos que tiene en el Facebook incluye a su familia?
10. ¿Qué motiva etiquetarse los unos a los otros como hermano, hermana, madre, padre, primas, etc.)
11. ¿Cómo escoge las fotos que publica en el perfil del Facebook?
12. ¿Qué cosas te ofrece Facebook que no encuentras en otras redes sociales como Myspace, Hi5?

**Appendix 3, Perceptions Sample**

AC-I3-39		
39	<b>AC</b>	A mí me gusta que me inviten a farras.
DB-I1-46		
46	<b>DB</b>	Conocer las chicas. Uno conoce la de niñas. Uno ¡uuy! Uno las conoce y tan, uno la agrega y tan y les empieza a hablar y pues ahí uno la conoce y si está interesada en uno pues tan, pues encuentro y si no pues cagada.
AC-I3-39		
62	<b>DS</b>	No, pues que me pusieron 66 y que significaba sexo.



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<sup>4</sup> This is an unpublished monographic research at Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Bogotá, Colombia.

<sup>5</sup> **Type I:** A participant posts a comment in the Facebook wall and an external user replies with "I like" option. **Type II:** An external user posts a comment in the Facebook wall and the participant makes use of the "I like" option. **Type III:** A participant posts a comment or a video with a comment in the Facebook wall and another user replies with comments too. **Type IV:** An external user posts a comment or video with a comment in the Facebook wall and a participant makes comments on it too.