

SUCCESSFUL VOCALITY: AN ANALYSIS OF SAYINGS ABOUT THE VOICE OF ALAN RICKMAN, PROFESSOR SNAPE FROM THE HARRY POTTER SAGA

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- **ABSTRACT:** In this article, with the objective of describing and interpreting the process of production of meanings about the successful voice, the analysis of three texts extracted from their virtual domains, formulated and circulated by the Brazilian press: *Vozeirão de Alan Rickman, ator genial do teatro, tinha vida própria* (Cury, 2016), published in Folha de S. Paulo; *Morre o ator inglês Alan Rickman, o professor Snape de “Harry Potter”* (Morre, 2016), from *O Popular* (2016); e *Estudo revela que Alan Rickman tinha a voz perfeita* (Moreira, 2016), published in *Galileo* magazine. The theoretical-methodological of qualitative-interpretivist nature procedures adopted in the development of this study are based on the procedural framework of Discourse Analysis. In more specific categories of employment, the concepts of discourse, conditions of production, discursive formation and interdiscourse are mobilized. In view of the application of this conceptual framework to the selected texts, it was understood that, by highlighting the voice of a particular subject in an environment in which the effects of discourse manufacture images riddled with socially prestigious virtues due to the systematic proposition of feedback of meanings, achieving the ballast of success rewards with visibility and fame the subjects submitted to the embedding of properties defined by the media success regime of the voices.
- **KEYWORDS:** Voice; Success; Media; Success discourse; Alan Rickman.

Initial considerations

They say that the eyes are the mirror of the soul; therefore, the voice is its invisible prosthesis. The voice expresses a deeply complex language, not only because of its relationship with the languages it appropriates, but above all because it reflects, through its wave planes, fulfillment and amplitude, the different states of subjectivity of its subjects. Neither phonology, in its organic study of the phonatory system, nor phonetics, with its linguistic investigation of the properties of vocal particles, are

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capable of translating the appeal that the voice has on its listeners or are even qualified to describe the types of impacts that certain voices cause. There are other areas to make explanatory contributions to the cause of voices. However, “[...] when we go back in time and space, we observe oratory as a set of vocal techniques used in persuasion and convincing the public by the speaker” (Soares, 2019, p. 270), causing oratory to be seen as “the art of persuasion” (Quintiliano, 2015, p. 325) and, in this way, it is one of the first criticisms of the method of using the voice for pragmatic purposes, at the same time that it is covertly integrated into rhetoric, one of the seven liberal arts.

Other clues to the implications of “inadequate” uses of voice emerge in more recent periods with speech therapy, since this, with the perspective of accommodating speech disorders to society’s language norms, results in a set of medical and linguistic efforts to standardize the appropriate use of voice. Faced with this discursive order in which speeches and voices are subject to normalization and, consequently, to interdiction, adapted and excluded voices emerge; that is, the voices represent not only groups in their metaphorical aspect but also personalities whose projection within the social circuit is given by characteristics pertinent to an aesthetic of vocal¹ success (Soares; Boucher, 2020; Soares, 2021). From this angle, voices with some type of prominence seem to fit the existing measures of intensity, pitch, and inflection, among other characteristics, to compose the set of successful voices. A simplifying reading of this process will possibly take into account only the physical similarities between the voices that hold social prominence; however, such reasoning ignores that there is a discursive functioning responsible for ordering and expanding the importance of voices to the space in which they circulate, as well as the media discourse (Soares, 2018a) when it differentiates its subjects based on their voices.

In a relatively horizontal collective environment, there must be social markers, since “unlike the European Old Regime, a period in which everyone knew their place in the world pyramid, ours fluctuates a lot” (Karnal, 2017, p. 113). Within this circuit, therefore, success, especially in the media, functions as a motto by making its holders recognized by everyone, or at least by the vast majority, due to massive exposure on radio, television programs, and more. recently on digital platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, among others. It is precisely in the system intended to make everyone ‘equal’ that, notably, “in this world without permanent distinctions, we are exposed to very close coexistence. The planes are as crowded as the buses. The shopping centers, the hospitals, the beaches, the shows: everything overflows” (Karnal, 2017, p. 113). In such apparently level contemporaneity, as well as in the cultural, religious and political revolutions of the past, there was the generation of significant products for a historical period – at the same time, in which new social practices were bequeathed –, the phenomenon of media success, arising from changes in social classes, in the legal structures of the relationship between State and subject and in the symbolic gap left

¹ Here the conception of aesthetics distances itself from “the study that happens with the observer” (Mallet, 2021, p. 30) to turn to the social construction of impressions projected in discourse whose participation in the understanding of collective phenomena is integral.

by the universal desacralization of God (Han, 2017, p. 44), comes to mean the display of “[...] financial autonomy, of personal and professional fulfillment” (Soares, 2020a, p. 7). This is how media success works: as an individualizing discriminator for a small elite, while for the majority it serves as a group.

According to research on the discourse of media success in Brazil (Soares, 2016, 2018a, 2019, 2020a, 2020b), it is possible to affirm that famous personalities (and all the aura that is created for them) perform fashion trends and give rise to changes in behavior in different niches within the collective, so that this endogenous movement corroborates what Mark and Pearson (2003) say in this direction: “Many people actually build imaginary relationships with companies and their products, just as they do with movie stars and other celebrities” (Mark; Pearson, 2003, p. 182). In this way, we see how success and its representatives are framed in the space of connections between people. It is, then, based on the widespread dispersion of the discourse of media success and its impact, direct and indirect, on the social circuit that one can affirm, regarding one of the fundamentally expressive mechanisms of the constitution of successful subjects, its emblematic value. Therein lies the gravity acquired by the voice as a distinctive icon, because “the voice of those who have achieved fame is an object of observation, however, the observation of the voice of professionals who do their work with it is even greater” (Soares, 2021, p. 13).

Faced with such a situation devoid of further elucidation regarding the performance of the media in promoting the discourse of the success of certain voices, with the objective to describe and interpret the process of producing meanings about the successful voice, this article analyses the following three texts extracted from their respective virtual domains, formulated and circulated by Brazilian press: *Vozeirão* by Alan Rickman, a brilliant theater actor, had a life of its own (Cury, 2016), published in the newspaper Folha de S. Paulo, *English actor Alan Rickman, Professor Snape from “Harry Potter”, dies* (Morre, 2016), published in the newspaper O Popular, and *Study reveals that Alan Rickman had the perfect voice* (Moreira, 2016), published in Galileu magazine. Thus, given the qualitative-interpretative approach of this research, the theoretical-methodological procedures adopted in the development of this study have as their structuring basis the procedural framework of Discourse Analysis formulated by Pêcheux (2010) – according to which subject and meaning constitute themselves at the same time, in the historical movement –, subsidized by the extensive expedient of the unity of discourse elaborated by Foucault (2012) – since this is “the project of a description of discursive events as an horizon for the search for the units that are formed there” (Foucault, 2012, p. 32), allowing the organization of the collected news as belonging to the unit of vocal discourse, especially through the criterion of thematic choice denuclearized by sayings about voice.

In more specific categories of employment, in this investigation, discourse is mobilized, such as “‘effect of meanings’ between points A and B” (Pêcheux, 2010, p. 81; author’s quotation marks); production conditions, such as reproduction and/or transformation of existing meaning relationships within texts based on their historicity

(Pêcheux, 2010); discursive formation, as what “determines what can and should be said (articulated in the form of a statement, a sermon, a pamphlet, an exhibition, a program, etc.), from a given position in a given situation” (Pêcheux, 2011, p. 73); and interdiscourse, as “the sayable (the interdiscourse) that is divided into different regions (the different discursive formations) unequally accessible to different speakers” (Orlandi, 2007, p. 20-21). Given this conceptual framework outlined by the unit of vocal discourse composed here of the selected subjects, it is worth noting that, when there is a need to activate notions adjacent to those mentioned, they will be listed and explained to understand discursive phenomena that are relevant to the analysis. Having made these elucidations, we proceed to examine the news, in this exact sequence: *Alan Rickman’s voice, a brilliant theater actor, had a life of his own* (Cury, 2016), *English actor Alan Rickman, Professor Snape from “Harry Potter”, dies* (Morre, 2016) and *Study reveals that Alan Rickman had the perfect voice* (Moreira, 2016).

In Review: Alan Rickman’s Vozeirão

In this section, an investigation is carried out into what is said and how voice is treated in the discourse of media success, taking into account, for this purpose, the interpretative application of the notions of production conditions, discursive formation and interdiscourse. Below there is an excerpt from *Vozeirão* by Alan Rickman, a brilliant theater actor, he had a life of his own (Cury, 2016), published on January 17, 2016, in the Brazilian newspaper Folha de S. Paulo, in his Ilustrada section, authored by João Wady Cury. This object is available on the website that contains the newspaper’s virtual collection. In order to highlight the lexical item *voice* and its surroundings in the matter, it is outlined by single quotation marks as a focusing typographic resource². In addition to these explanations, it is important to highlight, as a component of the production conditions of the text in question, that it was made public three days after the death of Alan Rickman, the actor described in the following text.

Alan Rickman’s voice, a brilliant theater actor, had a life of its own

Get ready, here comes soup. The lights go out. The audience is immersed in the darkness that precedes the great revelations. The silence is interrupted by those ridiculous coughs and clearing of throats. It would be the same if people shouted “this dark is suffocating me”. Little did they know that things would get worse.

The man enters. The reflector shines a beam of light. Take the entire stage. No, rather, your “voice”. His “voice” takes the stage, rips through the air, and enters our bodies. We are all that “voice”; we can’t get rid of

² This expedient facilitates the perception of textual appearances of voice within the material under analysis.

it. Fortunately. Nice to meet you, Ms. “voice”, this is how we recognize and greet you: his name is Alan Rickman.

His “voice” had a life of its own. It could pay tax, with the right to its own ID and CPF. But not. Fortunately.

That stage is located in the City of London, and it was one of those freezing nights in April 1986. The Barbican theater had just premiered the play “Mephisto”.

And now we’re sold again. Rickman wears the same character that Klaus Maria Brandauer played in the movies. His name is Hendrick Hoefgen, and he is a theater actor who goes over to the Nazi side in exchange for his ambition. Things end badly for him, but we emerge avenged: Rickman is king and we will lack nothing.

Forget Snape from “Harry Potter.” Leave aside Hans Gruber from the first “Die Hard” or even the sheriff from “Robin Hood”. He, as a brilliant actor, played many characters that are opposite to him. Let his performance in the sweet “Love Actually” say so.

It was little. He starred in several romantic films and broke hearts. Posts with declarations of unrestrained love can take you around the sun a few times. But he was a good guy, despite the look of uncontained boredom. He had lived with his teenage sweetheart, Rima Horton, since 1965.

[...]

But, note, it is possible to hear it from here: Rickman’s “big voice” still echoes in the Barbican (Cury, 2016; italics and double quotation marks are by the original author; single quotation marks are ours).

It should be noted that the tone, besides being somewhat poetic, is quite flattering towards the figure of Alan Rickman, as it briefly portrays the most striking points, from the author’s perspective, of the career of someone who stood out on stage and screen for notable performances, especially for his voice acting. It can be seen that the enunciative formulation falls on the effect of external production conditions caused by the death of the actor, so that at this juncture it is difficult to find words that do not sound like eulogies. In this way, in every moment whose voice emerges as a bringer of meanings, it receives determinations aligned with the supposed “theatrical genius” with which Alan Rickman played his roles. According to Piovezani and Soares (2018), these sayings “contribute to the perpetuation of stigmas, but more fundamentally constitute them, whether dealing with the vices of the voices of speakers from certain groups or mentioning the virtues of the vocal productions of certain speakers from some other communities” (Piovezani; Soares, 2018, p. 63). In this tone in which the sayings about

certain voices are confined to paradigms, the conditions of production which are internal to the enunciative process of the matter evoke pre-constructed elements that work within the text, according to Robin (1977), as “[...] the construction that allows what functions as pre-constructed to “pass” without discussion as a basis on which consensus rests” (Robin, 1977, p. 118-119; author’s quotation marks), since “the pre-constructed seems to be of the order of each DF [discursive formation] or those with which each one is in a position of open alliance” (Possenti, 2009, p. 156).

The title of the article itself, *Alan Rickman’s voice, a brilliant theater actor, had a life of its own* (Cury, 2016), brings within it the response to the pre-constructed linguistically analyzable “who is” the holder of “vozeirão” and, at the same time, discursively replicates such a pre-constructed “who is” Alan Rickman, from a social point of view, the answer to which involves receiving a kind of tribute in a large circulation periodical in Brazil. It occurs via the relationship between interdiscourse and intradiscourse, that is, through the constitution of meanings in its formulation (Orlandi, 2012) of contiguity of meanings arranged in the writing, the effect of media legitimacy of both the actor and his voice, which initially already acquires, through the morphological construction of suffixal addition, the status of distinctive success from other voices, reinforced by the textual-argumentative texture surrounding the voice. It is on the axis of verticalization of the continuity of the first pre-constructed that voice is treated as an entity with autonomous principles, just like an individual, in excerpts like these: “The man enters. The reflector shines a beam of light. He takes over the entire stage. No, rather, his “voice”. His “voice” takes the stage, rips through the air, and enters our bodies. We are all that “voice”, we can’t get rid of it” (Cury, 2016; quotation marks are ours). The ratification of the autonomy effect of Alan Rickman’s voice occurs precisely in: “His ‘voice’ had a life of its own. It could pay tax, with the right to its own ID and CPF” (Cury, 2016; quotation marks ours).

The pre-construction of the independence of Alan Rickman’s voice reflects the effects of meaning in the discursive formation in which the structuring composition of the matter is inserted, according to the capitalist society nuclearized in the individual of the performance, who in this case is an actor. In other words, the pre-constructions seen above provide evidence of the liberal discursive formation in which the voice, as a working instrument as “free” as the subject who possesses it seems to come to life to compete with others in the theatrical voice market. However, the voices that are not big enough to take the stage at the Barbican in the competition process for media prominence still need to be improved, since the neoliberal market logic works through the meritocratic efficiency of its members. In line with this perspective, when describing the ultimate consequences of conducting this system of unequal forces, Han (2017) states that “the subject of performance is realized in death” (Han, 2017, p. 86). Now, the production conditions of the matter under analysis corroborate, without any counter-argumentative obstacles, Han’s (2017, p. 86) assertion, given that Alan Rickman passed away three days before the publication of *Alan Rickman’s voice, a brilliant theater actor, had a life of its own* (Cury, 2016), in Folha de S. Paulo.

With such pre-construction functioning based on liberal discursive formation, interdiscourse, in its stability recoverable from the sayable (Orlandi, 2007), provides an important materiality of meanings since, in this case, it can be traced by sayings about one's own voice by Alan Rickman, like those in the report *British scientists identify formula for the perfect voice* (Cientistas, 2008). It contains the formulation that, among other things, operates as an interdiscursive producer in utterances produced later in other texts, as it qualifies, by extension, Alan Rickman's voice as "perfect", as can be seen in: "among men, the actors Jeremy Irons, from Gemini, Morbid Resemblance, and Alan Rickman, Professor Snape in the Harry Potter film series, were those who came closest to the 'perfect voice'" (Cientistas, 2008; author's quotation marks). Given the statement made by British scientists, an index of competent authority (Ferreira, 2010), the media in general, through its publications, in its various niches of circulation, ends up reproducing certain effects linked to the description of Alan Rickman's voice, such as, for example, that *Vozeirão by Alan Rickman, a brilliant theater actor, had a life of its own* (Cury, 2016) and *Study reveals that Alan Rickman had the perfect voice* (Moreira, 2016) whose elaborations already make reference, from a prominent perspective, to the actor's voice.

Therefore, as seen above, it is through the constitutive relationship of the conditions of production with the pre-constructed ones, of the discursive formation integrated with the interdiscourse that certain functionings of meanings and their effects can be understood, as in the architecture of the last section from the text published in Folha de S. Paulo in which it is said: "but, note, it is possible to hear it from here: Rickman's 'big voice' still echoes in the Barbican" (Cury, 2016; quotation marks ours). The conditions of production, already mentioned above, are present there, while the construction of the nominal phrase "Rickman's voice" impacts the effect generated by the verbal phrase "still echoes in the Barbican", as the diffusion of the metaphor existing in this phrase, the result of extensive polysemic of the paraphrastic movement of meaning production, guides the effect of continuity of filling both the theatrical space, Barbican, and others occupied by "the big voice of Rickman". In view of the chain of pre-constructed features of a prominent actor and the autonomy of voice, the effect of continuity is generated by the simultaneous pulsation of production conditions, the recent death of Alan Rickman, and the pre-constructed engendered in the use of the meaning of the verb *echo* by pointing to the allegorical fact that the voice of Professor Snape's interpreter from the Harry Potter saga (ROWLING, 2000) will still continue to be heard.

It is especially in the interdiscourse that Alan Rickman's voice echoes. In resuming the framework in which interdiscourse acts on the functioning of certain effects of meanings, we find precisely the conservation of "the perfect voice" in *Alan Rickman's voice* (Cury, 2016), also verified in *British scientists identify perfect voice formula* (Cientistas, 2008), since the liberal discursive formation, from which the meanings outlined in the Folha de S. Paulo text come from, constitutes the socioeconomic game of merit, which, in turn, preserves types of voices (Piovezani; Soares, 2018) considered ideal for the entertainment industry and, consequently, supports prejudices against

marginalized voices. The interdiscursive spread of such discursive formation integrates the unity of vocal discourse, whose main structuring feature seems to be the exaltation of good or pleasant types of voices, and, through this expedient, the discourse of media success can sell them in different types of entertainment products and conserves them by ensuring in their statements how “perfect” they are or at least how close to perfection they are. Thus, legitimizing this view, since media discourse, especially this specific media, has a considerable influence on the circulation and maintenance of these meanings, the continuity of both virtues and prejudices regarding voices within the social circuit is constructed, as well as its commodification.

Under review: *English actor Alan Rickman, Professor Snape from “Harry Potter”, dies*

Further on, the article *English actor Alan Rickman, Professor Snape from “Harry Potter”, dies* (Morre, 2016), published in the periodical *O Popular* on January 14, 2016, is examined in light of the same concepts operationalized in *Vozeirão by Alan Rickman, a brilliant theater actor; had a life of his own* (Cury, 2016). It is important to highlight, before closer scrutiny, that the text was published in the Magazine section of the virtual newspaper *O Popular*, and does not have a specified author. Unlike the Folha de S. Paulo article published three days after Alan Rickman’s death, the *O Popular* article was published on the same day as the event. It can be said that the external production conditions of this publication are relatively close to those of *Vozeirão by Alan Rickman, a brilliant theater actor, who had a life of his own* (Cury, 2016). Having made these initial explanations, it is worth noting, and then moving on to the entirety of the matter, that the focal point of the lexical item voice continues to be the typographic resource of single quotation marks in the text under analysis.

English actor Alan Rickman, Professor Snape from “Harry Potter”, dies

The news was confirmed by his family this Thursday (14). He suffered from cancer.

One of the most beloved and admired actors in the United Kingdom for his performances in TV series and theater, Rickman became best known to new generations for his performance in the “Harry Potter” series as the strict professor Severus Snape.

Among several important works, Rickman performed “Romeo and Juliet” and “Dangerous Liaisons” in the theater in the latter, playing the role of Valmont. On television, he did several BBC series and won the Golden Globe for “Rasputin” (1996).

Long before joining the wizard’s teaching staff, Rickman was already collecting notable roles in Hollywood, many of them as villains.

It was like that in 1988, as Bruce Willis' antagonist in the first film in the "Die Hard" franchise, the best of the series.

After his success in *Police*, Rickman was also the Sheriff of Nottingham in "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves" (1991), with Kevin Costner in the lead role.

In the 21st century, he became the feared Professor Snape in "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" (2001) and continued with the role for the eight films in the franchise.

He also lent his distinctive "voice" to the little robot in "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" (2005) (Morre, 2016; italics and double quotation marks are by the author; single quotation marks are ours).

The textualized construction of the history of Alan Rickman's main performances in the news of his death can be noticed. In the same vein as *Vozeirão by Alan Rickman, a brilliant theater actor, had a life of its own* (Cury, 2016), the effect of praise continues to permeate the material above from beginning to end and, through this expedient, is responsible for creating the conditions for production internal to the formulation of meanings of the text in focus. One of the most significant effects for this analysis is generated, namely: the ratification of the "remarkable voice". In this direction, the set of roles highlighted, "among several important works", "Romeo and Juliet", "Dangerous Liaisons", "Rasputin", "Die Hard", "Robin Hood - The Prince of Thieves" and "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" – all films in the Harry Potter series – leads to the effect of corroborating the success (Soares, 2020a) of Alan Rickman and, consequently, the success of his voice, noted in the final section as a "remarkable voice". Therefore, within the predominantly liberal discursive formation, the holder of so many relevant performances, paraphrasing the journalistic article itself, becomes the subject of the performance (Han, 2017) of the prominent voice on the international scene, to the point that his death engenders a foundation of "his remarkable voice".

Professor Snape's voice, in *Harry Potter*, for being the interpreter of so many other characters, in the circuit of media appreciation of success, receives the expression whose biography other competitors have not yet achieved the same prominence. This directionality of meanings and, above all, the structuring demarcation of the story of Alan Rickman's success constitute the liberal discursive formation according to which the right to free market competition enables - in filigree, the democratic aspect of the voice, the majority possesses, it seems to translate into the possibility of equal competition between it and others that are different to it. In view of this critical observation regarding the argumentative-enunciation proposition of the functioning of the discursive formation present in the journalistic article of *O Popular* (2016), it is clear that, according to Soares (2020b), "in the space of success, the voice is seen as a means of achieving celebrity status. Therefore, the voice, within the "products" of

symbolic capital, represents one of the great ways of becoming salable on the market” (Soares, 2020b, p. 58; author’s quotation marks). In this scenario in which the voice, especially Alan Rickman’s “remarkable voice”, is an asset upon which the valorization of media discourse falls through sayings about voice, it is possible to verify that part of the architecture of the unity of vocal discourse in which it is found returns to the regiment of liberal discursive formation whose core regimenting effects of meaning is meritocracy.

The “marking voice”, which makes up the circularity of the liberal discursive formation, allows the echo of the interdiscourse also present in *British scientists identify a formula for the perfect voice* (Cientistas, 2008), because in the latter, not only the singularities of Snape’s actor’s voice in Harry Potter are outlined, but also so-called scientific arguments are presented to corroborate the success of the “perfect voice”. To validate the investigation of the interdiscourse about the words concerning Alan Rickman’s voice, it is said that: “the research was conducted by linguist Andrew Linn, from the University of Sheffield, and sound engineer Shannon Harris. The formula is based on a combination of tone, speed, frequency, words per minute and intonation” (Cientistas, 2008). In this way, preserving the instance of discursive authority (Ferreira, 2010) conferred both by the names of researchers and by the terminology used in the text *British scientists identify perfect voice formula* (Cientistas, 2008), it is necessary to indicate the mobilization of its effects in other matters, like *Alan Rickman’s Voice, a brilliant theater actor, had a life of its own* (Cury, 2016), *English actor Alan Rickman, Professor Snape from “Harry Potter”, dies* (Morre, 2016) and *Study reveals that Alan Rickman had the voice perfect* (Moreira, 2016), since its connection with texts produced under the aegis of discursive formations fostered within is a characteristic of interdiscourse functioning. Therefore, the consecration of the actor’s voice, in the circuit of media success, seems to precede the news of his death, while this ensures him a prominent place and, simultaneously, engenders an aesthetic of the successful voice (Soares; Boucher, 2020).

From the perspective of describing the interdiscursive functioning in which the unity of vocal discourse, especially of a successful voice (Soares, 2018a, 2020a), brings into its interior the dissymmetrical game of social forces, the extensive verticality found by Soares and Boucher (2020), on the operationalization of voice aesthetics by media discourse, when stating that “the voice about which a statement is made is” (Soares; Boucher, 2020, p. 114), as it is possible to see from the analysis undertaken here, “[...] based on an aesthetics of the voice, through the repetition of what is said in the market of voices (the pre-constructed ones) and their regime of media appearance” (Soares; Boucher, 2020, p. 115). Therefore, in the collective circuit of voices, there is the standardization of prominent voices whose circumscription refers to a set of physical traits capable of receiving textual registrations from successful media discourse such as “vozeirão”, “striking voice” and “perfect voice”, among others, to, at the same time, substantiate the distinction that these have within the target of media relevance – even to promote the various productions of the cultural entertainment industry (Adorno;

Horkheimer, 1985) – and create the aesthetic ballast that divides the voices, due to similarities and differences, whose success can endorse and, thus, continue in the manufacture of their consumer objects. This discursive segmentation of voices³ deepens the asymmetries between them within the collective space. Therefore, the argumentative-textual construction of the matter *English actor Alan Rickman, Professor Snape from “Harry Potter”, dies* (Morre, 2016), as well as that of *Alan Rickman’s Vozeirão, a genius theater actor, had a life of its own* (Cury, 2016), favors, as it was possible to verify, the maintenance of prejudices, through the expedient of signaling the virtuous voice (Piovezani; Soares, 2018), about voices that do not have a certain media success and, consequently, are devoid of social prestige.

Under review: *Study reveals that Alan Rickman had the perfect voice*

In the article *Study reveals that Alan Rickman had the perfect voice* (Moreira, 2016), published on the virtual platform of *Galileu* magazine, on January 14, 2016, as in the previous *English actor Alan Rickman, Professor Snape from “Harry Potter”, dies* (Morre, 2016), practically the same external production conditions relating to the death of the British actor can be found. Based on this observation, added to the results of previous analyses, one can understand part of the meaning effects generated by such production conditions in the *Galileu* article now in the investigative focus, since, within the media broadcasts, celebrities, with exceptions, “receive” tributes, as a result of death, texts in which they are designated for their supposed talents, virtues and skills apparently cultivated in life. It is also worth pointing out, relating the text and its circulation space as an integral part of its production conditions, that *Galileu* magazine has been a monthly edition since 1991 (at the time under the name *Globo Ciência*) belonging to the publisher Globo. As it is one of the few magazines with national circulation on scientific themes accessible to the public and has both print and virtual dissemination, the environment from which it was extracted *Study reveals that Alan Rickman had the perfect voice* (Moreira, 2016), it can be considered an exemplary of propagation of sayings with some connection to scientific discourse, so that this additional element that conducts meanings makes up the conditions for the production of the following text.

Study reveals that Alan Rickman had the perfect voice

2008 research shows that the actor’s “voice” was one of those that came closest to ideal standards

³ To exemplify the continuity of the phenomenon of discursive segmentation of voices, we can take the functioning of sayings about voice (in which a consolidated voice of media success validates another on the rise) in the following article, published on January 4, 2018 in website of *Veja* magazine *Ed Motta praises Pablo Vittar: ‘True and genuine talent’* (Da redação, 2018), in which there is “a technical opinion mixed with a subjective aesthetic that makes up Ed Motta’s words about Pablo Vittar’s voice” (Soares, 2020b, p. 54).

A study carried out at Sheffield University, in England, reveals that Alan Rickman has one of the most perfect male voice combinations. The British actor, known for his roles in *Die Hard*, *Sense and Sensibility* and the *Harry Potter* saga, passed away this Thursday (14).

In 2008, linguist Andrew Linn began working on a mathematical formula from which he could find the ideal combinations of female and male voices. He asked a group of people to rate 50 voices and selected the best-scoring ones to be analyzed by an audio engineer.

Considering aspects such as tone, speed, frequency and intonation, Linn discovered that the ideal voice should be able to speak 164 words per minute and pause for 0.48 seconds between sentences that change intonation. From this, the linguist concluded that the ideal female voice would be a mixture of those of journalist Mariella Frostup and actresses Judi Dench and Honor Blackman. The “voices” of actors Alan Rickman, Jeremy Irons and Michael Gambon were considered those that came closest to the ideal standards of the male voice.

“We humans instinctively know which “voices” give us goosebumps and which disgust us. The emotional responses study participants had to the voices we used were surprising and served to explain how radio presenters and voice actors are chosen or why “voices” of some celebrities are loved”, explained Linn (Moreira, 2016; italics and double quotation marks are by the author; single quotation marks are ours).

Both the mention of roles played by the actor and the 2008 research, in which Alan Rickman’s voice is highlighted as “one of the most perfect combinations of a male voice”, structure the main internal production conditions to the functioning of liberal discursive formation which, also observed in the architecture of *Alan Rickman’s voice, a brilliant theater actor, had a life of its own* (Cury, 2016) and *The English actor Alan Rickman, Professor Snape from “Harry Potter”, dies* (Morre, 2016), conforms to the market value acquired by a successful voice and, for this reason, engenders the effect of merit, within the social circuit, to the voice of the interpreter of Professor Snape, from *Harry Potter*. In this case, scientific discourse was called upon to corroborate the merit of Alan Rickman’s voice, from the title of the article, constructed to state that study reveals that Alan Rickman had the perfect voice (Moreira, 2016), through lexical items operators of this type of discourse, namely, “research”, “study”, “Sheffield University”, “linguist”, “mathematical formula”, among others, reaching the use of citations from the 2008 research. In view of this argumentative-textual movement, it can be asserted that the main difference between the *Galileu* magazine article and the others previously examined is precisely the mobilization of scientific discourse for the meritorious ratification of

Alan Rickman's voice, however, this procedure does not occur by chance; it occurs through the activation of interdiscourse (Orlandi, 2007).

The interdiscursive functioning verified in the articles in the newspapers *Folha de S. Paulo* and *O Popular* about the voice of Alan Rickman is somewhat different from that present in the article in the magazine *Galileu*, as in the latter the textual-argumentative processing is based on the publication, on the portal *Universa uol*, titled *British scientists identify formula for the perfect voice* (Cientistas, 2008) whose marking is given by the use of quotation marks which says, among other things, that "by using quotation marks to mark what is not his, the writer constructs the discursive ethos of someone who respects ideas, concepts and foreign constructions. Even more than that, he builds the image of someone knowledgeable about other authors with whom he dialogues" (Soares, 2018b, p. 198). If this procedure were not combined with the enunciative transfer highlighted in excerpts such as "Research from 2008 shows that", "Linn discovered that", "explained Linn", *Study reveals that Alan Rickman had the perfect voice* (Moreira, 2016) would be a text with high plagiarism index, however, as this is not the case, there is a very relevant incidence of the 'generating text' of the meanings once again enunciated, generating both the ethical effect of using sources and the effect of ratifying what is said about the British actor's perfect voice. Therefore, the circularity expressed by interdiscourse in structuring the effects of meanings existing in news that addressed Alan Rickman's death has direct and indirect repercussions to such an extent that it becomes a guideline for what should be said about his voice.

In the horizon of the relationship between the conditions of production, the discursive formation and interdiscourse perceived in the composition of the *Galileu* magazine article, it can be said that the merit of the voice chosen to appear in the media discourse of success promotes a greater possibility of continuity of voices with similar characteristics, since their aesthetics, both subjective and objective, are constructed through multiple placements in the most varied artifacts of the cultural industry (Adorno; Horkheimer, 1985) in which the voice is used, as well as in the unity of the vocal discourse within which words about the voice regulate virtues and, therefore, discriminate vices (Piovezani; Soares, 2018). In view of such an operation carried out by the media discourse of success, *Study reveals that Alan Rickman had the perfect voice* (Moreira, 2016), *Voice of Alan Rickman, genius theater actor, had a life of its own* (Cury, 2016) and *English actor Alan Rickman, Professor Snape from "Harry Potter" dies* (Morre, 2016), it is possible to ensure that the success of Alan Rickman's voice is not only due to his talent as an actor but, above all, to the fact that his voice and performance seem to have competed in the voice market and thus "won" to receive sufficient media attention of numerous media outlets. In this way, the propagation of sayings about the voice of the interpreter of Professor Snape, from *Harry Potter*, constitutes a significant portion of the thread of the unity of vocal discourse, whose echo, as a conductor of successful voices, is found in the externalization of prototypical voices that, to some extent, carry characteristics of "perfect voice", "remarkable voice", "big voice" among others, to grant them social prestige.

Final considerations

In order to achieve the objective of describing and interpreting the process of production of meanings regarding the successful voice in *Vozeirão* by Alan Rickman, a brilliant theater actor, had a life of its own (Cury, 2016), published in the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* (2016), *English actor Alan Rickman, Professor Snape from "Harry Potter", dies* (Morre, 2016), published in the newspaper *O Popular*, and *Study reveals that Alan Rickman had the perfect voice* (Moreira, 2016), published in *Galileu* magazine, and, at the same time, elucidating the functioning of media performance when promoting the discourse of success of certain voices, it was possible to detect, through the instruments selected from Discourse Analysis, the production conditions, the discursive formations and the interdiscourse involved in the construction of the vocal discursive unity of Alan Rickman's media success present in the chosen texts. The predominance of production conditions external to each of the subjects focused on the actor's death was found, while internal ones focused on his professional history whose purpose proved to justify its success; the discursive formations located in the structuring of the subjects under analysis were driven by the liberal logic of the market, which translates, roughly speaking, into the possibility of equal competition between existing voices in a fair and meritocratic social constitution; the movement of interdiscourse, based on the analytical observation of both production conditions and discursive formations, established the regime of sayings, in its recoverable stability (Orlandi, 2007), according to which the voice of Professor Snape's interpreter, in *Harry Potter*, is positive in the circuit of voices as "close to perfection", so that the recursiveness of this effect of meaning ends up crossing and sewing the constitution of the sayings about the media success of Alan Rickman's voice.

In the wake of investigating the discursive properties included in the words referring to the British actor's voice and, consequently, its media success, the same procedure, previously implemented, can be extended to examine the manuscript *Actor Alan Rickman, Professor Snape in Harry Potter, died* (Mourinha, 2016), published in the virtual newspaper Portuguese *Ípsilon*, and find relatively similar results, since, considering the differences of the various conjunctural elements between Brazilian and European vehicles, the conditions of production, the structuring core of the discursive formation and the extensive influence of interdiscourse architect the process of manufacturing meanings as the components of the following excerpt taken from the article : "his aquiline face and his perfectly modulated "voice" seemed to shelve him in the career of a villain in Hollywood – and his best-known roles on the other side of the Atlantic, in fact, they belong to villains" (Mourinha, 2016; single quotes ours). In this excerpt, in simultaneous operation with the interdiscourse in which the recoverable of the sayable (Orlandi, 2007) takes up "the perfect voice" (Cientistas, 2008) paraphrased in "perfectly modulated voice" (Mourinha, 2016), we find both the conditions of production linked to the professional's work, ratifying his success, and the conduct of the liberal discursive formation, highlighting a voice within the competitive market of voices.

As a result of the spectacularization of successful subjects (Soares, 2016, 2018a, 2020a, 2020b, 2021), created as an effect of a mirage by the media discourse itself through its multiple communication platforms, there is a growing profusion of texts in various modalities, whose guiding purpose for their propagation seems precisely to feed back, as seen in the analyses undertaken here, the value system attributed to the celebrities who are part of it. It is in this perspective that *Alan Rickman's voice, a brilliant theater actor; had a life of its own* (Cury, 2016), *English actor Alan Rickman, Professor Snape from "Harry Potter", dies* (Morre, 2016) and *Study reveals that Alan Rickman had the perfect voice* (Moreira, 2016), examined here, in addition to others such as *The actor Alan Rickman, Professor Snape in Harry Potter; dies* (Mourinha, 2016), by highlighting the voice of a certain subject in an environment in which the effects of the discourse of success manufacture images riddled with socially prestigious virtues due to the systematic proposition of feedback of the discourse of media success itself, according to which the best voices and, therefore, the best performances are rewarded with visibility and fame, making it possible, through this expedient, to achieve the ballast of success through which more voices and, consequently, more subjects will be susceptible to the fitting of the properties defined by this discourse.

It is under such a logic of social functioning that the discourse of media success theatricalizes the sayings about voice, according to its own needs for propagation and continuation, by being formatted by the capitalization of work carried to exhaustion (Han, 2017) with a view to the place of prominence proposed by the engine of success, largely derived from media success. Within this social configuration, liberal discursive formation, as perceived in the objects of investigation, demonstrates its predominantly meritocratic potential to present power relations unilaterally, via selective erasure (Orlandi, 2007) of historical conditions of existence, to, among other things, substantiate the following individualizing argument of success: "I am entirely responsible for my destiny and thus no one can be accused, not God, not capitalism, not my blood, and not Brahma or Vishnu, or Shiva" (Karnal, 2017, p. 174). Now, the core of the discourse of media success addressed to the dispersion of meanings linked to the discursive construction of famous, prestigious and/or prominent voices promotes, as it was possible to understand through the achievement of the objective outlined for this article, both the confirmation of the performance recursive analysis of the merit of these voices regarding the aesthetics of the successful voice responsible for generating recognition for virtuous voices (Piovezani; Soares, 2018) and bringing in tow the promotion, to some degree, of prejudice about voices whose success they cannot achieve.

SOARES, Thiago Barbosa. *Vocalidade de sucesso: uma análise dos dizeres sobre a voz de Alan Rickman, o professor Snape da saga Harry Potter*. *Alfa*, São Paulo, v. 68, 2024.

- *RESUMO: Empreende-se neste artigo, com o objetivo de descrever e interpretar o processo de produção de sentidos acerca da voz de sucesso, a análise de três textos extraídos de seus*

domínios virtuais, formulados e circulados pela imprensa brasileira: Vozeirão de Alan Rickman, ator genial do teatro, tinha vida própria (Cury, 2016), publicado na Folha de S. Paulo; Morre o ator inglês Alan Rickman, o professor Snape de “Harry Potter” (Morre, 2016), veiculado em O Popular (2016); e Estudo revela que Alan Rickman tinha a voz perfeita (Moreira, 2016), divulgado na revista Galileu (2016). Os procedimentos teórico-metodológicos, de cunho qualitativo-interpretativista, aqui adotados possuem como base estruturante o arcabouço procedimental da Análise do Discurso. Em categorias mais específicas de emprego, são mobilizados os conceitos de discurso, de condições de produção, de formação discursiva e de interdiscurso. Ante a aplicação teórica aos textos selecionados, compreendeu-se que, ao destacar a voz de um determinado sujeito em um ambiente no qual os efeitos do discurso fabricam imagens eivadas de virtudes socialmente prestigiadas em função da propositura sistemática de retroalimentação de sentidos, a consecução do lastro de sucesso recompensa, com visibilidade e fama, os sujeitos submetidos ao encaixamento das propriedades definidas pelo próprio regime de sucesso midiático das vozes.

- **PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Voz; Sucesso; Mídia; Discurso do sucesso; Alan Rickman.

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