

**AVALIAÇÃO NACIONAL DO ENSINO MÉDIO E INDÚSTRIA CULTURAL: DA  
COMPETÊNCIA LEITORA À CRISE DA LEITURA**

**EVALUACIÓN NACIONAL DE LA ENSEÑANZA MEDIA E INDUSTRIA CULTURAL:  
DE LA COMPETENCIA LECTORA A LA CRISIS DE LA LECTURA**

**NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL EVALUATION AND CULTURAL INDUSTRY: FROM  
READING COMPETENCE TO READING CRISIS**

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**RESUMO:** Mediante a Teoria Crítica da Sociedade, especialmente o conceito de indústria cultural, objetiva-se analisar a competência leitora avaliada pelo Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio (Enem), tomando como exemplo uma questão da prova da área de Linguagens, Códigos e suas Tecnologias (LCT); o texto, os enunciados e as alternativas da questão são objetos dessa análise. A leitura precisa envolver a reflexão crítica, no entanto, o Enem enfatiza uma leitura de mundo mais voltada à identificação de informações explícitas no texto e à resolução de situações-problema. Nesse sentido, as capacidades linguísticas e de comunicação são subjugadas a competências que acabam reduzindo o ato de ler a aspectos da formação que contribuem para reiterar o mundo existente.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Indústria cultural. Enem. Leitura. Teoria Crítica da Sociedade.

**RESUMEN:** Mediante la Teoría Crítica de la Sociedad, especialmente el concepto de industria cultural, se tiene el objetivo de analizar la competencia lectora evaluada por el Examen Nacional de la Enseñanza Media (Enem), teniendo como ejemplo una cuestión de la prueba de Lenguajes, Códigos y sus Tecnologías (LCT); el texto, los enunciados y las alternativas de la cuestión son objetos de este análisis. La lectura necesita involucrar la reflexión crítica, sin embargo, el Enem enfatiza una lectura de mundo más volcada a la identificación de informaciones explícitas en el texto y a la resolución de situaciones-problema. En este sentido, las capacidades lingüísticas y de comunicación son subyugadas a competencias que por fin reducen el acto de leer a aspectos de la formación que contribuyen para reiterar el mundo existente.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Industria cultural. Enem. Lectura. Teoría Crítica de la Sociedad.

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**ABSTRACT:** *Through the Critical Theory of Society, especially the concept of cultural industry, the objective is to analyze the reading competence assessed by the National High School Evaluation (Enem), taking as an example a question of the Languages, Codes and their Technologies (LCT) evaluation; the text, the statements and the alternatives of the question are objects of this analysis. Reading needs to involve critical reflection, however, Enem emphasizes a world reading more focused on identifying explicit information in the text and solving problem situations. In this sense, language and communication skills are subjugated to competences that eventually reduce the act of reading to aspects of formation that contribute to reiterate the existing world.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Cultural industry. Enem. Reading. Critical Theory of Society.*

## Introduction

In 2018, the National High School Exam (Enem, Portuguese initials) completed 20 years. This is an evaluation that is strengthened as a result of reforms and public policies implemented since the 1990s, with the aim of measuring the performance of students at the end of basic education, with a view to improving the quality of teaching. In 2009, Enem became a criterion for access to higher education, technical courses and scholarship programs, such as the University for All Program (ProUni, Portuguese initials) and the Student Financing Fund (Fies, Portuguese initials), as well as well as for admission to higher education institutes (HEIs) in Portugal, which signed interinstitutional cooperation agreements (BRASIL, 2013) with the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (Inep, Portuguese initials). In this sense, it presents itself as a mechanism of democratization and inclusion.

Enem demands from its participants the reading competence also called “archicompetence”, since it covers all the evaluated areas, including both the multiple-choice items of the test, as well as the essay (MURRIE, 2005, p. 59). The candidate must make a strategic and efficient reading in order to arrive at the correct answer and prove to be a “reader of the world” (BRASIL, 2002, p. 14), that is, he must know how to read and interpret texts in verbal and visual languages, as maps, photos, paintings, graphics, among others; he must be able to recognize, select, organize and relate. The reading competence outlined by these actions mentioned here, in fact, is subjugated to a single act - that of identifying. Although identification is essential in the reading process, critical understanding of the content of the text must be the central objective, however reading through skills reveals its crisis, which is also the crisis of training and language itself.

In this perspective, the analysis of reading competence assessed at Enem requires an understanding of society and the “essential laws” (ADORNO, 2008a, p. 86) that govern it, such as exploration, mathematization and functionality. Why do we turn to society, if the object to be known is the reading skills evaluated by a large-scale exam? Because Enem expresses the formation content that is expected of those who have completed basic education; Since the school is an institution located historically, the content taught and officially evaluated reveals both itself and the society in which it is inserted. This means that “[...] essential are the objective laws of the movement of society regarding decisions about the destiny of men [...]” (ADORNO, 2008a, p. 87).

Understanding these laws requires a theory that, like society, has movement and history. Through the Critical Theory of Society, as a theory that seeks the movement and contradictions of society and the knowledge that is produced in it, we can confront concepts that reveal the non-identification and contradictions of the object to be deciphered. In the relationship between cultural industry and language, we seek elements to support our reflection on awareness - critical self-reflection on formation - and, therefore, on the possibility of resistance and formation for non-identity. This means confrontation, whose gaps contain emancipatory elements. That said, it remains to be clarified that in the confrontation between cultural industry and language, we hope to find the objective laws expressed in social phenomena and, thus, understand the reading competences evaluated by Enem in its relationship with the objective laws - not static - of the developed industrial society, which is also in motion.

We cannot deny the relevance of large-scale assessments, but when the main concern is to train the student to obtain a good score in this exam, its function becomes to strengthen the society that classifies and excludes. They are forms of the exercise of total integration and of the democratic one not developing as promised. Enem, in presenting itself as a right that replaces the right to education, is also undemocratic.

### **Cultural industry and the language of competences**

The term Cultural Industry was coined in 1947 by Adorno and Horkheimer, in the work *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception*. The authors highlight the differences between the cultural industry and mass culture. These are concepts that, side by side, allow us to identify that there is no culture for the bourgeois elite; neither is this opposed to the culture

produced by the people or for the people, but that there is only one culture in the bourgeois world (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 1985).

The cultural industry strengthens rationalization and submits the individual to a society founded on controlled freedom, that is, on false freedom, a society that is characterized by the need for some to exercise strength and domination over others, which cannot reproduce without permanence exclusion, as well as creating needs and ways to satisfy them. Marcuse (1973, p. 26) states that "the intensity, satisfaction and even the character of human needs, above the biological level, become preconditioned". In the exchange society, everything becomes merchandise, including culture, which is put on display, as objects to be coveted and purchased, regardless of the amount to be paid for them. Subdued to the cultural industry, as well as art, culture loses its aura, depriving itself of its immaterial value.

The cultural industry is not only part of a managed society, it also constitutes and forms the body, mind, soul and heart of the individual. In today's society, "[...] the manipulation of needs by vested interests" prevents the emergence of opposition to the whole (MARCUSE, 1973, p. 25). Adjustment to reality has its strength in the organization of society by the cultural industry, which makes knowledge reproduce what exists, strengthening adaptation and pseudo-knowledge; instead of reality being denied, its exaltation is experienced. Consciousness is shaped and conditioned by economic values. Adorno and Horkheimer (1985) explain the contradiction of late capitalism that promises a good life for those who attend society. For the authors, it is a culture with patterns that repeat themselves forming a common aesthetic, focused on consumption.

It must be clear that the cultural industry, as explained by Galuch and Crochík (2018, p. 25), "is a system, [and] it should not be identified with the mass media - television, cinema, radio, newspaper - nor with the products of these media - television programs, films [...]". It is a system, because what happens in one means of communication reverberates in others, a successive chain of images, music, texts that expand and reach people in various ways. One of the ways of this reverberation is through education, whose example of how it represents the same contents and forms that reproduce the reality set can be found in the evaluation. At the same time that the individual becomes equal in the face of consumption, the cultural industry, contradictorily, applies its other face to strengthen itself, when each one must behave according to their "level", that is, level "[...] previously characterized by certain signs, and choose the category of mass products manufactured for its type" (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 1985, p. 116). Groups of people become types of classes - A, B or C - that are highlighted on a map used by marketing that identifies what the consumers' incomes are, which makes it easy to instill in

everyone what they deserve. This classification refers to the fact that Enem has its questions divided into easy, medium and difficult, which facilitates the control over the participant according to their level of performance, that is, this way ratifies the differences between the classification of the participants that, “democratically”, will refer them to universities, to technical courses, and is also a criterion for the granting of scholarships.

Being aware of how the cultural industry acts on subjects allows us to think about the relationship between subject and object, as well as understanding that there is the possibility of human dignity, but it is the opposite that is established in a system that establishes harmony in the brutalization and in functionality; that prevents reflection and everything turns to acceptance. This reflection takes us back to the principle of enlightenment reason and helps us to understand why the freedom of the individual is subjugated to the demands of society. Marcuse (1999, p. 75) explains that the individual was converted into the “[...] fundamental unity as well as in the end of society [...]” by representatives of the bourgeois revolution. He upheld values contrary to the prevailing society and was considered to have standards and values aimed at developing human consciousness and skills. These standards and values were the truth of existence, both individual and social. The individual of bourgeois society was able to reflect on these truths, was able to make them a reality, because he had freedom of thought.

Reason, whose principle was the ideal of liberation, ended up being stripped of its critical potential, becoming itself its opposite. Its obfuscation represented the loss of the revolutionary ideal of the Enlightenment. From an emancipatory reason, it gradually changed to an instrumental reason, in the society that, due to its form of organization and production, became one-dimensional. In this society, reason takes on an instrumental function (HORKHEIMER, 2002). Thought then comes to be presented in measurable, quantifiable forms, at the service of social progress, rather than at the service of men themselves. In this context, the dynamics of power are overshadowed, so it is necessary to know the mechanisms that subject people daily to a process of molding meanings in which “[...] technical rationality [...] is the rationality of domination itself [...]”, that is, irrationality (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 1985, p. 114).

This reflection on the reason and why the individual's freedom is objectified and mediated, leads us to the understanding of how this occurs in different instances of society, with education and the Enem being one of them. Thus, when we start from the assumption that Enem is one of the rationalized forms of thought, a form of control, we understand that domination appears, even, in the very hierarchy that the evaluation promotes. The discourse is in the formation of skills that enable the individual to be autonomous, to know how to proceed in

situations of pressure, which, contradictorily, means to be a well-adapted subject to reproduce the society of domination.

In this sense, we emphasize that education must resist these impositions, understanding that clarification, by itself, is not capable of surpassing the exploitation society; but, therein lies the possibility of shedding light on what, in this society, impedes their potential for freedom. The Exam's methodological foundation proposal states that the reader must overcome the limits of linguistic deciphering, emphasizing the need to read and interpret texts with different verbal and visual languages, as well as the utterances, that is, “[...] identifying and selecting central and peripheral information; inferring information, themes, subjects, contexts; justifying the adequacy of the interpretation; understanding the implicit elements of text construction [...]” (MURRIE, 2005, p. 59).

It is essential to understand that these actions that promise to overcome linguistic deciphering, as well as the essential role attributed to reading by Enem, have their limits in the fact that they disregard the content conveyed in the text of the question whose answer is often in the statement itself, demanding reader just the search for explicit information. In this sense, what is the relationship between subject and object, when it is intended to “master language” as an end in itself?

Linguistics, as stated by Marcuse (1973, p. 163), comes with the purpose of freeing thought and words from “ghosts”, therefore, from metaphysics; it also comes with the objective of correcting abnormal behavior, both in thought and in words, removing illusions, extravagances and obscurities. Marcuse's discussion presents elements by which we understand that, in some matters of Enem, the reader does not need to understand the message of the text, as in them the content is always similar, presenting itself as a limit for the language itself.

The effort, fundamental to knowledge, separates from the subject to fixate on the object that allows itself to be easily pseudo-known, giving the impression that there is interaction between the reader and the text. In the same way, it occurs in questions that present important texts from the literature, but that are placed in the background when what is asked for is only the identification, reiterating the culture from the perspective of the cultural industry, which leads the subjects to the identification of what must be consumed. Art, religion and science, which would serve for freedom because they meant the means by which men criticized society, became products of the cultural industry and mechanisms for the reproduction of society, subjugating and imprisoning themselves, for example, in a large-scale evaluation.

The eyes, ears, hands, tastes, touch and also the soul are trained. It is possible to imagine how the film ends, so the imagination is no longer itself; it is possible to know who deserves

the reward and who deserves to be punished; the same songs, the same artists and the same content disguised in appearance prevail; details, actors and characters can be replaced; content must be maintained, to be recognized, so it is not content, but form. They are "[...] clichés ready to be used arbitrarily here and there and completely defined by the purpose that fits them in the scheme [...]" (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 1985, p. 118).

Language is one of the mechanisms that contribute and strengthen the cultural industry system through standardization. We can say, therefore, that the new human qualities are “a widespread way of thinking” that sets standards for judgments and attitudes. The qualities related to perception and knowledge become competencies and training ordered in a standardized performance. As the author says, they are changes linked to the soul (MARCURSE, 2001, p. 44). The soul is indispensable for the control of individuals, it is one of the forces mobilized to contribute to social cohesion. It is in the culture of the soul that human qualities such as talent, versatility, solidarity, kindness, competence, employability, joy, truth, and so many other terms are absorbed. They are desires endowed with an affirmative characterization that become qualities that magnify the individual, that demonstrate superiority to those that possess them.

With the increasing technical rationalization and language in this context, concrete interactions are reduced, since everything is virtual, flexible and global, at the same time that this form of relationship between subjects and the language that accompanies it, presents innovative and utopian alternatives (MARCUSE, 2001). The forms of instrumental reason that shape language in late capitalism prevail. An example is in what has become the act of reading, for example, in the questions of Enem. In it, the participant needs to have the reading competence, which does not mean to understand the text in its entirety, nor to realize that the meaning of the word is lost in the way it is presented, that is, it does not necessarily need the understanding of the word and the text itself; the focus is on organization and identification, important stages of the reading process, however insufficient for a reader who wants to be aware, who must understand the relationship between the form of the text and its content, as well as perceiving a language involved in communication which indicates what to read.

Social mechanisms consume language; the expression that once belonged to him now follows the dominant directions intensified by the cultural industry. Literary texts are subject to meticulous "automatic prediction" by their producer, editor or copywriter. For Adorno and Horkheimer (1985, p. 13), making their functions superfluous would be the ambition of the educational system, since the depreciation of theoretical thought organizes the path towards political alienation. Even people, according to the authors, who have not yet surrendered to

dominant and alienating thinking are deprived of the possibilities of opposition due to censorship mechanisms. The viewer's own thought and personal effort are avoided; the individual's imagination, spontaneity and intellectual activity are stunted. The thought process is changed to automatic mode, not by knowledge, but by its negation, since it becomes a procedure.

The separation of the functions of language itself expresses the domination of man by man; in this sense, forms of thought come close to scientific language and put an end to metaphysics; ideas are emptied and, with that, the possibility of expression and critical self-reflection that “[...] was nothing more than the hypostasis of hardness and exclusivity that concepts had to assume wherever language gathered the community of dominants for the exercise of command” (ADORNO; HORKHEIMER, 1985, p. 35). In this sense, to critically analyze the reading competence evaluated by Enem is to understand the language subjugated to the one-dimensional language under the dictates of the cultural industry.

### **From reading competence to the reading crisis**

As indicated in previous moments in this text, Enem is an assessment that requires the reader to be able to identify information in the text, which requires knowing how to draw the difference between formal and non-formal language. This aspect can be better explained with the following idea by Adorno (2008b, p. 97): “[...] only the truly alienated, the word marked by commerce, touches it as a familiar. [...]. Anyone who wants to escape it must consider all advice to take care of communication as a betrayal of the communication”.

For Adorno and Horkheimer (1985, p. 48), “[...] the instruments of domination intended to reach everyone - language, weapons and, finally, machines, must be allowed to be reached by everyone [...]”. This is clearly observable in the assessment. Generally, the meaning of the language is emphasized, be it that of the people or that of the machines, but the identification for the communication without paying attention to the content of the communication. This makes us think that the reason that should be in the language becomes irrationality and uses the language itself for control purposes. Thus, knowledge lends itself to pseudo-formation. For Adorno (1995a, p. 64-65), language is a form of “strict expression of the object”, which differs, for example, from Enem's ability 26 (BRASIL, 2013, p. 19) that guides the need for "Relate linguistic varieties to specific situations of social use".



The different forms of language are related to social expression, however, it is necessary to pay attention to the simplification of language promoted both by the market interest and by political interests. In language, it is necessary to highlight the individual's right to go beyond what is used in his daily life, to know the ways of speaking and thinking through “[...] terms that are meaningful, rational and valid precisely because they are other terms [...]” (MARCUSE, 1973, p. 170). It is not the formal or informal language that are at stake, but the need to think that the two forms of language contain the irrationality about which it is necessary to become aware. It is not a matter of focusing on the nuances of speech, but analyzing and understanding the context in which people not only speak, but act and, therefore, mean their way of speaking; thus, they also mean the word. This way of thinking about the context in which the particular expresses the universal, and vice versa, is left aside when the analysis is guided by positivism, says Marcuse (1973). At Enem, this means losing content in favor of different forms of language.

For irrational communication, it is essential that what is beyond the immediate, of common use, does not disturb the “ordinary universe of the voiceover”. Critical analysis requires that philosophical terms be different from ordinary terms; that such terms clarify and bring to the surface the fact that individuals are driven to certain actions, to certain nuances of language, because guided by the society in which, to live, they are subjected to created needs. The individual is impelled to “[...] identify the 'thing' (including the person himself, his mind, his feelings) with his functions. How do we know that? Watching television, listening to the radio, reading newspapers and magazines, talking to others” (MARCUSE, 1973, p. 182).

Speech is both an expression of the individual and a context in which others make them speak as they speak. The knowledge, feelings and desires of individuals are also those of others who use words, which dictate their economics, politics, consumption and advertising. “When describing the political situation for themselves, [...] they (and the term 'they' also include us intellectuals who know the situation and criticize it) describe what 'their' means of mass communication tells them [...]” (MARCUSE, 1973, p. 182, authors' highlights).

The words used do not match only the mother tongue, such as identity, as linguistic marks that distinguish the social, regional and registration linguistic varieties, as required in the competence of area 8 of the Language Test, Codes and their Technologies of Enem (BRASIL, 2013, p. 20), but are consistent with words from advertisements, politics, cinema. Standardization and stereotyping allow communication to be globalized, losing the culture that could, for example, differentiate between love, hate and joy - feelings are standardized on screens. Marcuse says: “[...] it necessarily has to be this way, because language has nothing

particular and personal, or, rather, because the particular and personal is mediated by the available linguistic material, which is social material [...]” (MARCUSE, 1973, p. 183).

Still for Marcuse (1973), linguistic analysis that boils down to empirical accuracy, examining everyday and superficial situations, disregarding the state of affairs that entangles the individual, is subject to the restriction of a disappointing voiceover. Thus, the unidimensional language that silences the history of the word is revealed; there is no room for different meanings, nor for those that conflict. They are kept separate, so that the reader does not interpret them.

When referring to the instrumentalization of reason, Horkheimer explains that the more thought becomes automatic, instrumentalized, the less it will have its own meaning. In this, language plays a fundamental role because it has become an instrument for the “production apparatus of modern society”, so that the sentence must be equivalent to a meaningless operation (HORKHEIMER, 2002, p. 27). In the foreground is the function of the word or its performance in the world of things, that is, the function surpasses the meaning.

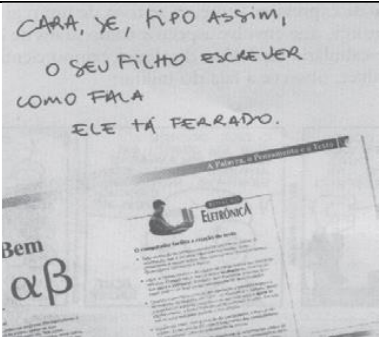
In this sense, the administered language is an instrument for the orientation of the masses; it serves to store and communicate. As the author explains, it becomes his magical stage, whose word has strength and can destroy society, making the speaker responsible; therefore, there is no difference between thought and action - thinking is an act. The individual is scolded for what he says or for what he does not say; is classified and labeled, and the values that make it human, such as justice, equality, happiness and tolerance, lose their intellectual roots, becoming objectives and ends, “[...] but there is no longer a rational force authorized to evaluate them and link them to an objective reality [...]” (HORKHEIMER, 2002, p. 27).

When we understand the unidimensionality of thinking through language, we realize that readers are not passive in relation to the evaluated content; however, this ‘reader of the world’ is directed to see already defined aspects, that is, there is a pre-selection, a pre-attention; he is trained to act through administered skills and abilities. Nor can we forget that the reader, as a participant in an evaluation that classifies him, may be less concerned with the content conveyed and more with the need to mark the correct option for obtaining good scores.

An example of what we have just mentioned can be found in a question from the 2009 Enem, which evaluates the competence of area 8, regarding the identification of the language, seeking “to understand Portuguese as a mother tongue, a generator of meaning and an integrator of the organization of the world and its own identity”. The related skill is H 27, that is, that which concerns “recognizing the uses of the standard norm of the Portuguese language in different communication situations” (BRASIL, 2013, p. 20). Despite being linked to

identification and social and communication use (important aspects of language), they are not enough to lead the reader to reflection.

**Figurae 1** - Question no. 125, Enem, 2009.



The image shows a handwritten note on a piece of paper. The text is written in capital letters and reads: "CARA, XE, TIPO ASSIM, O SEU FILHO ESCREVER COMO FALA ELE TA FEARADO." Below the note is a newspaper clipping. The clipping has the word "Bem" and the Greek letters "αβ" written on it. The newspaper text is partially visible and includes the word "fornocá".

**Veja**, 7 may 1997. (Handwritten: Dude, if, like, your child writes like he speak, he is screwed)

At the top of the ad, there is a handwritten commentary that addresses the issue of linguistic activities and their relationship to the oral and written modalities of the language. This comment makes evident a critical position regarding the uses made of language, emphasizing that it is necessary

A - implement speech, with a view to greater resourcefulness, naturalness and safety in the use of language.

B - to know more formal genres of the oral modality to obtain clarity in oral and written communication.

C - master the different varieties of the oral register of the Portuguese language to write with adequacy, efficiency and correctness.

D - use appropriate vocabulary and use rules of the standard language norm when it comes to writing.

E - use more expressive and less worn resources of the standard variety of the language to express yourself with some security and success.

Source: Brasil (2009, p. 14).

The **question** presents a **text** with a notice whose language is informal, generally used by teenagers and young people. Regarding the content that is intended to be evaluated, in light of competence 8, we can say that the objective of the question is not to evaluate knowledge about the written language, even the reader does not need to read the ad located below the annotation to relate its content to the comment recorded by hand. Through non-formal language, the message of the need to write well is conveyed; using the resource of metalanguage, language is used to talk about language itself. The metalanguage, in this text that evidences the writing of an uncultivated norm to talk about the need to write correctly, can be considered to belong to the “universe of the voice in which the opposites are reconciled... this union is expressed in the smooth conjunction of parts of the conflicting voiceover”. Although Marcuse (1973, p. 96-97) refers to words and expressions, the text contemplates this same configuration: “the unification of opposites that characterizes the commercial and political style is one of the many ways in which the voice and communication become immune to the expression of protest and

refusal”. For this reason, the discrepancy that - in this matter and in so many others - Enem evaluates, only the informal language.

In *Sopa de Pedras*, Adorno (2008b, p. 97) states that “[...] only speech that subsumes writing frees human speech from the lie that it is already human”. This idea is fundamental to understand that speech is controlled. When the bourgeoisie uses language to oppose the determinations of its masters, it brings independence and self-discipline, but the language of the subordinates is determined, and justice flows out with it. Cultural inequalities directly imply training. Interesting how Adorno (2008b) refers to the fact that material poverty reverberates in the language itself and, through it, the one who is denied macular social wealth, demeaning the culture (cultured language), that is, the poor “kills” language in the way he speaks, as if, in this way, he could face the death of his body imposed by the impossibility of nourishing it with material bread which, despite participating in its production, is denied. “[...] Proletarian speech is dictated by hunger. The poor man chews the words to get enough of them [...] he fills his mouth, which has nothing to bite. In this way, he takes revenge on the language [...]” (ADORNO, 2008b, p. 98).

The handwritten text is probably addressed to an adult recipient, a parent, taking into account the possibility of inference to be made through the expression 'your child'. The slang ‘dude’ is used for people regardless of gender, therefore, father, mother or guardian. The expression “screwed” works as a warning that blames those who cannot write correctly, for example, for not finding a job. Although it can function as a threat, there are no explicit elements for the reader to perceive this.

Decoding is the most rated capability; once again, the immediate facts outweigh their factors; functional speech puts itself at the service of subordination. As Marcuse (1973, p. 102) points out, it is an “[...] irreconcilably anti-critical and anti-dialectic language. In it, operational and behavioral rationality absorbs the transcendent, negative and opposing elements of Reason”.

As shown in Figure 1, in the Enem test, the statement of the question determines:

At the top of the ad, there is a handwritten commentary that addresses the issue of linguistic activities and their relationship to the oral and written modalities of the language. This comment makes evident a critical position regarding the uses made of language, emphasizing that it is necessary (BRASIL, 2009, p. 14).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Na parte superior do anúncio, há um comentário escrito à mão que aborda a questão das atividades linguísticas e sua relação com as modalidades oral e escrita da língua. Esse comentário deixa evidente uma posição crítica quanto a usos que se fazem da linguagem, enfatizando ser necessário (BRASIL, 2009, p. 14).

The statement is used so that the reader completes it with one of the alternatives that emphasize the use of language. What critical position would be possible with the statement presented? The reader's eyes, based on this **statement**, are directed to commenting on an advertisement whose image, even, is unreadable. The text only fulfills the role of referring to a context. It is evident that the phrase “dude, if, like, your child writes like he speaks, he is screwed”, would be familiar to the participants, promoting in them the feeling that the text is part of their real life.

In the **statement** there are no elements for the reader to reflect on the message; it only allows its decoding. The statement serves as a warning to young people in relation to their use of language, in this case, that of the written language, closing the thought through the following statement: “emphasizing be necessary” to know that it is required to write correctly. Regarding **the alternatives**, when choosing the answer considered correct - D -, the reader must understand that it is a manuscript that criticizes the way young people write as they speak. Again, the standard norm of writing is exalted as a necessary fit. The alternatives do not require the reader to reflect on why people rely on orality to produce writing, as it is a way that can present itself as natural. It may seem that writing well depends only on the individual, without involving teaching, as the alternatives are limited to the understanding of having “greater resourcefulness”; “safety”; “The knowledge of more formal genres”; “Use appropriate vocabulary”; “Use more expressive and less worn out resources of the standard variety”. It is also observed that the advertisement was not mentioned in the alternatives.

### **Final considerations**

The 2009 Enem question analyzed here outlines the strength with which the cultural industry affects the conduct of thought and language in different instances, therefore it is linked to the human formation in which training prevails. The rationalized forms of thought are conducted in a unidimensional format, therefore, in view of this format, the reader is interested in knowing how to identify the type of language; not the content that is communicated. The conception of competent reader proposed by Enem requires the development of strategies that lead him to be efficient in order to know how to act in the face of a problem situation that starts from the family reality, that is, a way that does not admit a “certain distance before the empirical reality” and, therefore, does not allow reflection (BUENO, 2009, p. 42).

Emancipation would be in the possibility of a wide movement for the “few interested people” to direct their energy “so that education is an education for contradiction and resistance” (ADORNO, 1995a, p. 182-183). Adorno outlines the possibility of resistance through self-reflection, which means denying life as it presents itself, that is, the reified life that imposes itself as the essence of the individual. This is in line with Marcuse's (1973, p. 125) claim that what is cannot be true; so it is necessary to look at what is behind, search, “subvert” the world in which we live in order to understand what it really is. But the possibility of knowledge is not in the mere transmission of contents, “[...] whose characteristic of a dead thing has already been more than highlighted, but [in] the production of a true conscience [...]” (ADORNO, 1995a, p. 141). The possibility is related to letting in evidence, in the first moment, what deprived the knowledge and also the reading of its emancipatory principles.

Adorno uses immanent criticism as a way to elevate the truth; through the words of the texts, he criticizes language. Thus, awakening the conscience of this “world reader” means bringing the content that is present in the text. What language expresses this content? What aspects are necessary for its unveiling? “[...] The antidote against the illusory sovereignty of the knowing subject [...] consists of 'aiming beyond the object', in such a way that, through a certain distance in the face of empirical reality, the *stricto sensu* reality can be reflected” (BUENO, 2009, p. 42).

Bueno (2009) highlights, therefore, the tension between the knowing subject and the object. In this relationship, the subject incorporates and faces the object so that, through mediations, knowledge can be enriched. Going beyond imitation, with a view to reaching the essence of language, is in understanding the senses and meanings expressed in the texts; this means understanding the content, the rigor, not just the identification of the different forms of communication.

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