

Questões metodológicas da pesquisa de campo em comunicação organizacional: um olhar a partir da microsociologia de Goffman

Methodological questions of fieldwork in organizational communication research: an approach from Goffman's microsociology

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Resumo: *Este artigo discute aspectos metodológicos de uma pesquisa de campo realizada de agosto de 2018 a fevereiro de 2019, como parte de um estudo sobre a comunicação face a face em uma empresa. Foram estudados episódios interacionais durante 12 reuniões de um comitê de projeto, focalizando as interações em microescala. Durante o período de observação, no entanto, surgiram várias questões metodológicas, discutidas aqui a partir dos trabalhos de Erving Goffman, uma das referências da pesquisa: (a) existe um método “goffmaniano” para micro-observação? (b) Como observar os eventos de microescala quando se faz parte dela? (c) Como elaborar uma descrição válida do que foi visto? Estas questões são pensadas como parte de uma discussão epistemológica sobre métodos de pesquisa em comunicação.*

Palavras-chave: *comunicação organizacional; metodologia; pesquisa de campo; Goffman.*

Abstract: *This paper discusses some methodological aspects of a field research conducted from August 2018 to February 2019, as part of a broader study about face to face communication in a company. It studied interactional episodes during 12 meetings of a project board, focusing on the micro-scale interactions. However, during the study, several methodological issues have arisen, some of them stirred by the works of Erving Goffman, which had provided some initial insights for field research: (a) is there a*

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'goffmanian' method for micro-observation? (b) How to observe the micro-scale events and simultaneously being part of it? (c) How to register the observation findings' in a valid description of what have been seen? This paper addresses these questions as part of a epistemological discussion on communication research methods.

Keywords: *organizational communication; research methods; fieldwork; Goffman.*

Introduction

This article was created by a practical question of research, arriving still during the first stages of their planning and realization. It is a post-graduate research on organizational communication, focusing on face-to-face interactions in meetings and social encounters in the work environment. The goal was to watch the modalities of communication in the organizational environment through face-to-face interactions between employees of a company in the electricity sector, discussed in other moments – for instance, in Santos (2018).

Among the many authors that could be brought into a study of this type, and understanding, with Braga (2011), the research process as “decision-making”, we chose, from the beginning, an approximation with the studies of Erving Goffman, especially due to the methodologic perspective adopted, the observation in micro scale. This option, if on one hand seemed coherent in terms of the dimension of the research object, on the other raised a series of questions about the practical aspects of the research.

The field research, performed between August 2018 and February 2019, created a couple of tensions between the daily lives of observations and the methodological questions studied, which can be expressed in the form of three questions: (1) Is there a “Goffmanian” method for micro-scale observation? (2) How to observe the microscale events and be a part of it? (3) How to register the findings of observation in a valid description of what was seen? In the following sections, this text seeks to delineate these questions – more than indicating any closed answer – articulating the practical problems that arrived during the research field with methodological indications thought from Goffman’s work.

It is important to see some notes.

There are several works related to the observation and the participating research, such as Brandão (1999), Lüdke and André (1986), Gajardo (1986) and Vianna (2003), among others, that dimension important points on methodologic practices, offering a conceptual support and practice around procedures of this type of research without addressing,

however, questions related to the communicational aspect of micro-interactions. This text does not seek to make a discussion of this type of method in itself, but only about the approximation of the research performed.

There is no pretention in the newness of bringing Goffman's analysis for the study of communication in organizational contexts, something that was already done in other works. As Maria Gabriela Gama indicates (2005, p. 1885), "just like society, companies are realities that are socially built. Because of that, they can be understood as micro-societies where we can study the processes of social interaction". As an example, thinking about Goffman in an organizational context, Flecha and Machado (2008) show the interaction between company and consultant is developed in a posture of a highly ritualized representation and self-representation. In turn, Ferreira (2017, p. 9) indicates that this type of approach "for the understanding of processes of communication in the organizational context it is possible and viable through the micro-sociological bias" of Goffman, characterized by its analysis of the infinite interactions building the daily life", developed in another text by Ferreira (2018), analyzing a publication made by the employees of a company.

The aim here, however, seeks to concentrate in the methodological issue which, although connected by the mentioned researches, does not seem to be directly addressed.

The same way, it isn't the objective to make an interpretation of Goffman's texts or even a study on their methodological issues. It is an attempt to understand and forwards some questions created in the daily practice of research along with some aspects of his work.

Finally, the text seeks to put a method in discussion, employed in a research of limited reach, and not proposing a methodological practice, or, even less, a "how to". It is how participants in the field, in a dialogic concern with the questions of method, which share these questions.

The micro scale method

To what extent is it possible to talk about a “methodology”, from the works of Goffman? The apprehension of his concepts in Communication research seem to be relatively consolidated, as indicated by Gastaldo (2004), Ytreberg (2004). And Leeds-Hurwitz (2004). However, to this conceptual appropriation of Goffman it does not seem to follow, in the same proportion, a properly methodological discussion of his work, which could allow to act on some of his procedures in research practices.

Even a commenter on Goffman’s production, like Winkin (1999), considers what it seems to be a paradox in his work: despite his relevance, dissemination or even popularity – if we can use this term – on social sciences, there are few people carrying on his work, or even researches based on his methods.

If, on one hand, he can certainly be related with certain posture from Goffman himself (according to commenters like Winkin (2004), a great professor, but not exactly interested in forming researchers according to his methods), it may seem excessive to credit to a question of personal style the absence of people directly carrying on his work.

Is it worth it, at this point, to advance the original restlessness of this work: to what extent is it possible to act a methodological point of view from Goffman in a research in Communication? That refers to another question: to what extent is it meaningful to talk about a “method” or “methodology” of Goffman (or, in an possibly more problematic wordplay, a “Goffmanian” methodology?). In practical terms, how can we work with Goffman in a Communication research? What is his approach of reality to the articulation with the practice of research? Finally, a basic question: which would be the methodologies used by Goffman himself?

The answer to this last question presents an additional difficulty: the absence of methodologic writings from Goffman. Presumably, there isn’t, in his production, works of reflection and commentary about his procedures, indications on methodology or more extensive

theoretical-epistemological considerations. Therefore, talking about a Goffman methodology also means to make an exercise of abstraction and methodologic reconstruction from his published work.

Or, in this case, “methodologies”, plural: it is possible to observe the presence of a few themes throughout his body of work, particularly a preoccupation with the infinitely small, as reminded by Bourdieu (2004), research techniques vary from field observation (in “Presentation of Self in Everyday Life”, “Behavior in Public Places” and “Interaction Ritual”), institutional immersion (“Asylums”) to document analysis (“Frame Analysis”, “Gender Advertisement” and parts of “Forms of Talk”).

Therefore, following some methodological questions raised by Braga (2010; 2011), in the sense of taking communication as a “indication discipline”, we can look for “Goffmanian indications” in the reflection on a practice of research oriented – maybe the right expression would be “inspired”, less precise, but more realistic – by some of his propositions. It is about a reflection on methodological procedures made during and immediately after a period of field research, intertwined by the relations between research and orientation. It is a gaze to what Bourdieu (1983, p. 128) calls the “kitchen of sciences” – in this case, the metaphor stand, during the “preparation” of research, with the research in action.

Observer and participant in scene: the shock between personas

In August 2018, methodologic issues were a doubt that surrounded the formulation of a case study on the interactions performed among employees of an organization in the electricity sector. In that year, the company began a process of change in the management model, here entitled “Program”. The initiative, according to the company, sought to reformulate processes, create new practices and transform the organizational culture, changing the way people worked and connected with one another inside and outside the institution, with the objective

of making the action of the company more oriented towards the needs of the external clients.

This process would be implemented from a series of meetings, conducted preferably by the project manager, with his main team, followed by adjacent participations. The success of the project was, therefore, linked to the conditions, moments and contradictions existing in various moments, but focused mainly during the meetings – hence the methodologic choice of observing this interaction and some others that gravitate around this one, such as breaks (“coffee break”) and encounters in the hallway.

As the communications mediated by the technologies count with a diversified theoretical-methodological apparatus to support the investigation of phenomena, what do we have in our power to apprehend the communicational process when humans meet face to face? Goffman seems to be, above all, a researcher of face to face interactions. Within the common procedures of orientation, when the research proposal was defined as “the place of face to face communication” in situations of the universe of Organizational Communication, the Choice of vocabulary itself seemed to refer to Goffman.

As Winkin (1999) observes, in a curious arc, Goffman’s production begins and ends with texts titled “Social Interaction”. The expression appears in a chapter of his doctorate thesis about the Hebrides, in Scotland, and it is also the title that would be the inaugural conference as president of the North American Sociological Association – Goffman died before he could make his speech. The concept systematically reappears in numerous moments of his work, either explicitly, as in the book *Interaction Ritual*, or as an implicit foundation of his procedures, such as *Behavior in Public Places*, *Relations in Public* or *Encounters*. The concept of “social interaction” seem to be coated, therefore, by a big importance for Goffman, interested in understanding, in the smallest terms, the elements present in each one of these situations.

Methodologically, this type of preoccupation seems to be translated in the observation and analysis of different environments where

interactions are processed, and, apparently, there isn't effectively a necessity of choosing a "micro" scale in quantitative terms". The sociology of groups and institutions, developed at the time by many other sociologists from the most diverse matrixes, from social psychology to quantitative sociology, could comprise similar objects if the issue were the dimension of the group or the situation.

The case study was proposed to respond the following question: when there is a movement of change in the management model of an organization, how do the interactions among individuals come about in that setting? More specifically: what are the goals, strategies, relations established between participants, power networks, conflicts, negotiations and adjustment tactics, and how these discourses gain strength from these interactions?

In *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman (1985) presents the results of an ethnographic research he performed for his doctorate thesis in the 1950's, in which he analyzed face to face interactions of an rural community in the Shetland Islands, in the United Kingdom.

Goffman creates a series of concepts from theatre metaphors to study everyday social life, casting light on details of interactions among individuals and their dynamics. "The common relationship is mounted as a theatrical scene, resulted from an exchange of actions, oppositions and conclusive responses dramatically distended" Goffman explains (1985, p. 71).

With Goffman in hand, we choose the ethnographic methodologic procedure of participating observation to perform the case study. The option seemed absolutely necessary, since this research works in the company and is a part of the program, working as an analyst of institutional communication.

Schegloff (1988, p. 101) also indicates this proximity between subject and object in the center of Goffman's methodology, especially in the sense of allowing to invoke, during our reading, our own experiences. This methodologic question is also made by Blitvich (2013, p. 9) in a

study about face and identity, highlighting not the “method” aspect, but a “practice” of Goffman’s theories.

The moment of observation and immersion in the field seem to present themselves to Goffman as an opportunity to find meanings initially invisible in exchanges and interactions, but that are shown as fundamental in the elaboration of daily relations as markers of meanings, positions and actions in the social world.

The identification of meanings reveals what everyday life hides. A game of signals, indications, anchorages, elaboration and re-elaboration of arguments, strategies to build the desired perceptions about oneself (and avoid any element that ruptures with this previously defined “script”), delimitation of territories, attributions and self-attributions of value and importance expressed in the smallest gestures and attitudes.

Thus, within Goffman’s perspective, it would be possible, for instance, to find expressions of power – or resistance to power – in the act of crossing arms and lying on the chair during a meeting, breathing deeper during a dialogue or systematically directing your gaze to other targets that are not your interlocutor throughout a conversation.

The first step was to obtain formal consent of the legal manager of the organization, the president of the Board of Administration of the Company, from the manager of the program to be observed, the executive manager of service, and the executive manager of Communication. All of them signed an Authorization Term.

Later, we’ve sent an e-mail to all the participants of the meeting informing the participative observation. In this communication, we requested the manifestation of those who eventually did not feel comfortable with the procedure. There was not any type of objection. On the contrary, mostly we have received friendly comments, making themselves available to help whenever possible.

In every request, we have sent an attachment with the summary of the project with the research goals, so that the participants would know more about the case study and their purpose.

At first sight, the fact that one of the authors of this text works in the company seemed a facilitating element, and, at the same time, making it harder to make a participative observation. The fact she was an employee of the organization for more than a decade may have facilitated the consent, by possible bonds of trust resulting from the professional relationship she had with the executives that authorized the study; and also because other employees of the institution performed previous research involving the company in Master's and Doctorate dissertations. There already was, therefore, a disposition in allowing employees to perform that type of activity.

On the other hand, that implied an issue of distancing in relation to the object, a problem apparently very explored in texts on methodology – for example, Corazza (1999), Martinelli (1999), Martino and Marques (2018), Martino (2018) – about the double approach of the research as a subject of the situation we seek to investigate. In this case, having a double function of meetings, from field observer and, at the same time, communication analyst of the Company, may have made harder, to a certain extent, the observation itself, since the researcher needed, at the same time, to observe the scene and act professionally, dividing her attention. We faced, ironically, with a Goffmanian dilemma given by the crossing of academic and professional personas.

Strategies of observation: thinking with Goffman

A strategy to cope with this question was to create an instrument of collection that would direct the gaze for the questions to be investigated. The need of a specific instrument also happened due to the challenge of observing the communicational flows on face to face interactions. There is a multitude of simultaneous phenomena occurring in direct communication, from setting, objects, clothing, gestures, postures, mood, tone of voice and many other elements. It is easy to get lost, hence, the importance of knowing where to look.

Not losing sight of the investigative purposes of the case study was also a concern. Before entering each meeting, we would write in the

notebook the guiding questions of research. In the affinity of micro-events, we could not forget the goal of apprehending the role of each participant in the interaction and their communicational tactics, if they were successful or not; how did the reaction affected or changed the other's tactic; which were the moments of tension and, finally, which bonds were formed by the end of an interactional dynamic.

The option for the observation of a closed situation seeks to take into consideration the delimitation of a specific situation, defined in a similar manner by the people participating in it, hence the option for studying interactions relatively limited in time and space, looking to see how, in the fragment of interaction, emerge changes, meanings, expectations, turns of interaction, elaboration of representations, reveal of the backstage or sharing inferences between participants – and these affirmations are based partially on Sanders (2012). As Marta Dynel (2011, p. 463) indicates, Goffman is focused in the big picture of social situations, looking to see the whole as a composition of details.

The observation lead by Goffman in his analyses seem to involve, firstly, a long field period, with a partial immersion, when not whole, in his research universe. It is about thorough long-term observations, looking to find forms of interaction in the most mundane situations, being carried away by the dynamic of the research project in that moment.

An epistemological problem in the definition that could be Goffman's methodology (in other words, a "Goffmanian" methodology) implies in what seems to be a constant refusal of making a previous methodological preparation for the time of field research. Before, he seems, in each research, to get involved by the specific conditions of each research space, reviewing his categories of analysis in a way not to try to apprehend the object in previous interpretations – because they were built and directed to other projects. The specificity of his researches, it seems, had direct methodologic implications in the extent that the understanding of social interactions in each situation corresponded to the formulation of their own categories that comprised what was being observed.

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Not fortuitously, as also signaled by Winkin (1999), Winkin (1999) and Leeds-Hurwitz (2013), or Nizet and Rigaux (2016), rarely Goffman transposes concepts from a book to another, which does not mean, on the other hand, the absence of coherence in his analyses: Goffman seems to refuse to find “general properties” of situations – in the sense that Bourdieu (1983, p. 89) speaks of “general properties of the fields” –, but finds common elements that repeat themselves in diverse social interactions that can, because of that, be transposed, but not “applied” in any situation.

These interactions occur in the moment of meetings intermediated by diverse situations: not fortuitously, throughout his intellectual journey, Goffman will bring this methodologic gaze for the study of very diverse situations, such as social meetings, the behavior of people locked down in institutions or even advertisements. The “micro” to which Goffman directs his gaze does not seem to be effectively the delimitation of a space or a group, but the focus on interactions that happen within a delimited situation – a gathering in a bar table or an activity in an institution. “Micro” is not the size of the field, but the cut-out of the gaze on the object – social interactions – in a given situation.

Therefore, Goffman’s categories were essential in the construction of this instrument of collection, in which we would combine concepts that the author presented in the texts *Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1985) and *Behavior in Public Places* (2010).

A few specific elements were added to apprehend the power relationships and how the environment influenced the dynamics. A part of the instrument that did not have direct relation with Goffman, but we deemed important to investigate the formulated questions. We used the table 1 below to suggest the path of observation in each encounter and conduct notes which, together, formed the field journal of this study:

Table 1 - Propositions of methodologic observation of interactions

Moment →	Objective →	Interactions to observe
Preparation → 01: Shape	Know the formal contradictions of realization of the group interaction	Date: Type of interaction: () Meeting (→) Event () Workshop () Coffee Description: Communication objective declared from the interaction:
Preparation → 02: Environment, scenario and participants	Locate the immediate “scene” in which they are going to develop the interactions	Data of the environment (scenario): Participants and their position / hierarchic level (social façades): Level of formality: 1 - very informal 2 - informal 3 - neutral 4 - formal 5 -very formal
Beginning of the interaction	Observe the initial moves defining the interactions	Opening move Leaderships and forefront Audience level Divergences and negotiations
Development of the situation	Understanding the dynamics of the moment from the interactions of the participants	Gestures/postures of the participants Ritualistic standards Failures in scenery, façade and representation (revelation of the backstage or other noises) Attempt of interaction (declared and tacit interactions, if possible, to apprehend) Communication strategies chosen by the team/actor that leads the interaction Power relations between the participants of the interactions Group Ethos (level of interest of the audience, actors performance, predominant dynamics, atmosphere created)
Closure of the situation of interaction	Dynamics of the interaction: Strategies of closure Opening of resulting meanings	Results of the interaction: Strategies were successful? Strength of the physical environment and its settings (how they concretize the communicational attempt?)

Source: created by the authors

In a certain way, the density of Goffman's writings may be credited to this systematic refusal for previous conceptualization that seeks to elaborate a conceptual plot at the same time it describes situations of interaction. Hence, within a key, a characteristic of his texts: at a first glance, it is nothing more than the description of everyday, ordinary situations, without interest, described in an apparently simple manner.

From the field experience it is important to reinforce that, despite having an instrument of collection, the notes were taking freely, without the constraint of the form. During the observation of an episode, we would register what we considered relevant in the notebook: in fact, what was possible to write down in these moments, since the research also had a professional role in the interaction and did not have full availability to make notes. Only after the observation we would transfer the information to the instrument, exercise that provoked us to remember more detail, complementing with data that were not previously written.

The characteristics of situations of interaction

Between August 2018 and February 2019, we observed 12 episodes of interaction among participants, performed in the scope of the program, distributed in the following manner: three meetings of the "Committee of Change", a meeting from the management group, a conversation at the café, a workshop for managers and key-employees involved with the project, a work meeting with the consultancy, three internal events for the whole organization, a participation in a meeting with the director board and a presentation for employees of a department. Some items were easier to capture than others, such as ritual patterns, well defined in business organizations. The meetings, events and workshops observed, for instance, always began similarly, with a participant making a presentation. The same happened in the capture of façades: the hierarchic positions and roles of the participants are well established in this type of social environment. It was possible to notice, thus, an intense repetition in the interactions.

In turn, other elements generally linked to micro-observation were difficult to capture. It is the case of gestures and postures of the participants: although the researcher had registered some manifestations and such capture had helped later analyses, we had the feeling that a good part of these non-verbal expressions went unnoticed. As mentioned, we believe that the difficulty results from the double function: the observer that, at the same time, belongs at that organization and plays an active role in the interaction.

Even though we have made notes freely in a notebook, at the end of the field research we got the feeling that the instrument of collection was an important help to guide the research, but at the same time it constrained us: different moments of the participants and details of the interaction may be ignored due to this direction, which possibly pre-framed the exercise of apprehension.

It is also important to highlight the continuous effort to, as far as possible, distance oneself and observe the scene, even though we were in it. In the field diary, we were registered as participant, writing our own manifestations and roles taken throughout the interaction. It is as if the persona “observer” was registering the movements of the persona “communication analyst”: that was what we tried to do.

Certainly, in his works, Goffman reserves a considerable space dedicated to the description of situations, interactions, attitudes and behaviors. This procedure seem to be always linked to the possibility of immediate critical apprehension, to, then, build an analysis: it may not be so wrong to notice in that a certain phenomenological inheritance, although indirect, related to the condition of thinking the description of phenomenon as the first step in its apprehension, going to the critical reflection on the empirical.

This procedure seems to take considerable space in each of Goffman’s texts: with the exception of Frame Analysis, Goffman rarely develops a work from a more thorough conceptual elaboration, preferring, mostly, to build a conceptual weave from what is shown in an analyzed situation. Goffman’s methodological perspective seem to be

based on, among other factors, the perception of phenomena, mediated, the whole time, by the analytical work of abstraction from which concepts are built, which, in turn, contribute to the interpretation of the object.

However, as Goffman is directed to the detail of these situations, the descriptive is coated in an analytical character, and, after that, conceptual, revealing unknown nuances, or even left aside, in the initial moment or in the a-systematic observation. That leads us to see other angles of the object, reworking it to exhaustion in each one of its researches until a more comprehensive apprehension are completed.

The production of communicational meanings, in Goffman, seem to develop in terms of a global apprehension of situations through the sewing of the smallest elements present in a situation of interaction, which does not exclude the interaction of reading – beyond the preface mentioned, this type of micro reading of the production of meanings also happens in *Gender Advertising* or *Forms of Talk*.

The description, in these cases, is problematized in relation to a bigger set in which are inserted – in other words, the research developed by Goffman in a certain moment, either in the delimited space of a hospital or in the delimitation of a specific type in the interaction.

Observing an episode of face to face interaction, it was surprising to notice how Goffman's categories work well as an instrument of observation. The separation between the team of actors and the audience, the elements of the physical space configured in a scenario, people taking on façades, the levels of interaction of the audience (active or passive), the engagement of face and the ethos formed in the group; all of these concepts frame what is being observed in the scene.

By the façades, we can apprehend power relationships among participants and how each behavior is, in a certain way, given by the role taken. For instance, while managers felt more comfortable to speak, diverge and negotiate, analysts acted as “choir” from their bosses, complementing their points of view. As affirmed by Velho (2008, p. 146), “individuals playing roles are always looking to express themselves, and, in order for

it to have social-psychologic success, it is necessary that the actors with whom they are interacting are impressed with what is transmitted”.

Finally, the combined analysis of the scenes enabled us to identify some regularities, in the sense indicated by Bourdieu (1990), which, not without anything oxymoronic, singularized the set of interactions. Table 2 seeks to identify these observations: Table 2 - Methodologic perceptions of the observed interactions.

Moment	Interactional Characteristic
Ritual	There is a ritualistic process well defined in each type of interaction, that repeats in the interactions
Physical space regulates the level of interaction	In the meeting room, the conversation/dialogue is more intense than in the spaces organized in auditorium.
Hierarchy doses the expression.	Implicit social rule determines who can express more (president/managers) and who can express less (other employees).
Ethos	Each interactional episode forms an unique ethos or spirit. Even if the scenario or actors are the same, one interaction is never the same.
Strategy	Despite having a ritualistic opening move, communicational strategies acted by the participants are singular in each episode, because they are formulated and applied through the reaction of others.

Source: created by the authors

That allows maybe to take back what was said above about their conceptual creation: if there is what it seems to be a unity in the methodologic gaze, which aims to cast a light on social interactions, the specificity of each one of them challenges the formulation of a general theory at the same time it allows an observation, in each new research, from new nuances of what is being seen. Using a epistemological definition formulated by Vera França (2014), it would be possible to say that Goffman’s gaze casts a light on different empirical objects – communities, institutions, public places – in the sense of enhancing and perfecting aspects of his object of knowledge, social interactions.

Concepts such as “stage” and “backstage”, “frame” or “full institution”, employed in some of his main works, return sporadically, but they do not constitute as a conceptual and hermeneutic repertoire open to be perfected as it become present, or at least visible, in specific situations.

It seems that, in Goffman’s work, concepts are in constant shock with a reality that is shown as generally intangible, but, at the same time, reveals some repetitions, similarities and even “standards” – word used carefully here, referring to an inheritance of the anthropology of origin in Goffman – in his scale of observation, the micro-social space.

Final Considerations

Goffman’s micro sociology does not seem to refer properly to the size of the situations analyzed, but to the methodologic gaze directed to moments of interaction, outlining each one of its threads, nuances and details responsible for the construction of meanings – communication – in relation with others. In Goffman, there seems to have a whole world to unveil in the insignificant – category, in turn, that seems to cease from existing within his methodologic perspective, since details become, most times, the lead characters of situations of interaction.

That leads us to another question: what constitutes, effectively, the delimitation of space for observation in Goffman? It is relatively common to see Goffman’s name associated to the idea of “micro sociology”, which he would be the creator, and, for considerable time, only representation. It is possible to question, in methodologic terms, what could effectively exist of “micro” in his analysis. To do so, it is important to remember a few aspects of his elaborations and theoretical interests.

As these concepts are born from a systematic field research, and through them are formed, taken back and corrected, there could exist, in an initial reading, the attempt of classifying Goffman as an empiricist without an interest in the elaboration of a theoretical-critical

-Repertoire in relation to the reality observed. However, that search for the empirical does not end in terms of what could be considered a story of the moment or the material observed.

The observation of the methodological questions involved in the observation of micro interactions does not cease to present itself within a wider perspective revealed in this scale, as reinforced by Maria Teresa S. Garraza (2001). Similarly, Camila P. Castro (2012, p. 204) raises some questions as guiding questions of the work created from Goffman: “Which structural principles inform ritual contacts in interactions? Or even, how do characteristics in the order of interaction can be connected to social structures?”. The analysis of interactions in micro scale in the organizational context, in Goffman’s perspective, seem to require a methodologic discussion that is always renewed, especially as the method, as remembered by Lucrecia D’A. Ferrara (1996), does not constitute as a set of techniques or recipes, but the composition of questions raised facing the reality that is sought to study. Therefore, we do not speak here about “a method in Goffman” or a “methodology” from the author but thinking “with” some of his perspectives.

Carlos B. Martins (2008, p. 140) reinforces that “such relations in which individuals create with each other in concrete social situations constitute a analytically distinguished dominion of investigation – the order of interaction – which has specific structures, processes and regularities, not being reduced to macro-social situations and whose appropriate method of investigation lies on microanalysis”.

Goffman’s methodologic practice seem to offer a methodologic perspective where knowledge is built by the respect to the characteristics of each situation, articulated with his proposition of seeing, then, procedures of social interaction.

There isn’t, therefore, what can be seen as a type of solipsism of the empirical object in Goffman’s analysis, something that would impede any posterior development, but the search of a methodologic care that respects the characteristics of interactions present in each research situation at the same time it allows you to observe, in contrast and tension, some of the elements pointed by him in his researches: therefore, it doesn’t seem to be possible to “apply Goffman’s theories”, something that he never did, as suggested by his refusal in transposing concepts

between works, but building a methodologic gaze” from Goffman” as an epistemological procedure in the research practice in Communication.

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