

(RE)CATEGORIZATION OF AFFECT IN PANDEMIC TIMES: INVESTIGATING MULTIMODAL TEXTS



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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic and social isolation imposed resignifications in the way of expressing affection. What attributes of a perceived reality have become most salient in the restructuring of the AFFECT category? This article investigates the issue in multimodal productions (Forceville, 2008) in a predominantly qualitative-interpretative way, although it resorts to quantification to mine the data (Creswell, 2007). To this end, he configured a corpus of 263 cartoons published between March 2020 and March 2022 by the newspaper Folha de São Paulo [online] in which he identified 16 that flee from ironic or humorous allusions to the positions of the Bolsonaro government and trigger the dominance of AFFECTION. As an example, the article presents four of the 16 cartoons and analyzes them in the light of Kress and Van Leeuwen's Visual Grammar (2006), the concept of multimodal metaphor (Forceville, 2008) and concepts from Cognitive Linguistics (Lakoff, 1987; Langacker, 2008) in a social-cognitive-discursive approach (Musolff, 2020; S). Unlike the other cartoons published in the same period, the selected ones assume a communicative purpose aimed at moral agency (Johnson; Lakoff, 1999) and inspires new contours to AFFECTION. In the cartoons, physical contact becomes mediated by objects; Vaccination and the use of masks are now seen as a moral agency. Such (re)categorization is anchored in the interactional and socio-cognitive contexts of the pandemic period.

Keywords: (Re)categorization. Affection. Multimodality.

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INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

During the COVID-19 pandemic, perspectives on we, the other, life and death, care and affection underwent transformations imposed by health protocols, including social isolation. It was necessary to resignify ways of being, of living together and of expressing affection. Our eminently intersubjective nature was no longer on fertile ground to nourish it (Fultner, 2012). Understanding how we interact with the complexities of life in times of coronavirus involves understanding how we resignify the category OF AFFECTION.

This article investigates how AFFECT has undergone (re)categorization during the pandemic, in multimodal productions (Cavalcante; Gomes Júnior, 2021; Forceville, 2008). To this end, it configured a *corpus* of 263 cartoons, published between March 2020 and March 2022 by the newspaper Folha de São Paulo [*online*], ³on the various themes that populated the COVID-19 scenario (denialism, isolation, mask use, deaths, chaos in the health system) and identified among them 16 that avoided ironic or humorous allusions to the positions of the Bolsonaro government, reason for the death of more than 700 thousand people in Brazil⁴. Unlike other cartoons published in the same period (n=519) in the same newspaper, the selected ones seem to assume a communicative purpose aimed at moral agency (Johnson; Lakoff, 1999) that inspires solidarity and gives new contours to the category OF AFFECTION, from the perspective (Langacker, 2008; Talmy, 2000) and the ideology of cartoonists.

Categorizations and recategorizations result from the interaction of the perspectiver with his or her lifeworld (*lifeworld*, Habermas, 1987), responsible for anchoring the processes of signification in the interactional context, through clues from the "socio-cognitive environment", including those inferred (Lima, 2016, p. 66). We conjecture that the need to remain connected to the other affectively, taking for oneself the perspective assumed by the interlocutor (Fultner, 2012), is one of the possible motivations for the (re)categorization of ⁵AFFECT. After all, it is social practices that explain how "affections, values and tastes are negotiated and appreciated" (p. 461) to sustain affective bonds.

³ Available at: <https://fotografia.folha.uol.com.br/charges> Accessed on: 04 March 2023.

⁴ Data from the Ministry of Health (2024), available at https://infoms.saude.gov.br/extensions/covid-19_html/covid-19_html.html. Accessed on April 15, 2024.

⁵ Following the notation adopted by research in Cognitive Linguistics, the article writes in small caps textual references to cognitive representations, whether they are categories, metaphors, metonymies or imagetic schemes.

Against the backdrop of these conjectures, we aim to understand how AFFECT is (re)categorized in these cartoons.

By way of example, the article presents and analyzes four of the 16 cartoons based on the social-cognitive-discursive approach (Musolff, 2020; Saliés; Soares da Silva, 2023), adding concepts from Cognitive Linguistics (LC), Pragmatics, Gender Studies, Multimodality, and Cognitive Psychology, as developed in the following sections.

CATEGORIZATION AND (RE)CATEGORIZATION

One of the foundations of CL (Taylor, 1989) is the intertwining of language with knowledge of the world, generated in and by the interaction with the environment and with the other. To organize such knowledge, information is separated and grouped into categories, according to a given *construct* (Langacker, 2008; Talmy 2000) or perspective. The process leads the perspectiver to illuminate certain features of the experience to give them prominence over others, which remain on the *ground*. The pioneering works of Rosch and Mervis (1975) and Rosch (1978) had already associated *the constructal* with the principles that govern categorization. For example, the judgment on an odd number made by laymen differs from that made by experts (Armstrong *et al.*, 1983). For the layman, the number three is a more prototypical example⁶ of the "odd numbers" category than the number 801. Mathematicians, however, would hardly agree with this judgment. In other words, the boundaries between the categories are fluid. "It is the social and discursive context that guides the conceptualization and perspective of the conceptualizer" (Croft; Cruise, 2004; p. 87), as well as the "bodily relationship of the experiencers with the events of the world" (Johnson, 2007, p. 136).

In the pragmatic-discursive realm, every perspective implies a given intention. The pragmatic aspects (intentionality, implicatures, inferences) emerge from the articulation of knowledge of the world with the social context and discourse. By highlighting certain aspects of the reality perceived in the communication process, the perspectiveist promotes a certain ideology or morality (Entman, 2007, p.164) or claims it from potential interlocutors. Lakoff and Johnson (1999), in the context of CL, suggest that this is a moral

⁶The member of a class that is most commonly associated with it because it possesses the most typical attributes of that class occupies the categorical center in a radial structure, with fluid boundaries between the members that constitute it. Belonging to the category is thus a matter of degree: some members are more representative and are closer to the categorical center and others more distant. All, however, share some similarity with the prototype.

action, a reflection of individual or collective ways of thinking, which interact with the process of categorization, structured by our *frames* or networks of encyclopedic knowledge (Fillmore, 1982), stored in long-term memory. It is a process that motivates metaphors, understood as constructs of thought evoked by linguistic-discursive clues (Lakoff; Johnson, 1980), including pictorial ones. Metaphor emerges whenever one understands a category of a more abstract domain (NATION) in terms of a more concrete domain (CONTAINER). For example, NATION IS CONTAINER is a metaphor in which nation is conceptualized as a region delimited in space: a CONTAINER (source domain).⁷

The theoretical-analytical category of particular interest in the investigation is MORALITY (Lakoff; Johnson, 1999), conceptually related to the cultural model of physical and social well-being by Lakoff and Johnson. It is conjectured that MORALITY is associated with the (re)categorization of AFFECTION, because if there is affection for the other, there is also interest in his or her well-being; compassion is nourished by him/her. In other words, the relationship between AFFECT and MORALITY in the pandemic context under investigation seems to have emerged from the METAPHORICAL SYSTEM OF MORALITY, as proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1999, p. 290-234). For the authors, MORALITY, as a category, is conceptualized from a metaphorical network in which moral ideals such as justice, compassion, virtue, among others, result from human experiences about what we must have or do to live well. By observing that this well-being has different values as the source domains are changed, the authors propose a metaphorical system (LAKOFF; JOHNSON, 1999, p.292) which includes, among others, the following metaphors:

- a. MORALITY IS WEALTH: it is based on the metaphor of moral accounting, in which WELL-BEING IS WEALTH. In this sense, when well-being increases, there is gain, and when it decreases, there is a loss, which allows us to say that in the pandemic there was a loss of well-being.
- b. MORALITY IS AUTHORITY: it is based on two types of authority, the legitimate, which is deserved, and the absolute, which is imposed. Fiocruz, for example, emerges discursively as a legitimate authority to talk about epidemics and vaccines, since it is a health science and technology institution, linked to the Brazilian Ministry of Health.

⁷See Musolff (2020) for other metaphors in the realm of political discourse. The source domain is a cognitive structure of the conceptual system in which experiential and more concrete knowledge is found. It's part of our long-term memory. It is opposed to the target domain, which is more abstract in nature. In metaphorical processing, the target domain is understood as a function of the attributes of the source domain; For example, we understand MORALITY in terms of attributes of the source domain COMPASSION.

Its mission is to promote health and social development as well as to build and disseminate scientific knowledge in the health area.

- c. MORALITY IS LIMIT: it proposes to be moral action, that which respects the prescribed limits to reach a goal. In the pandemic, leaving home could be considered a moral act for essential professionals, or immoral, for other professionals (assuming an anti-negativist position here).
- d. MORALITY IS NURTURING: it is based on empathy and compassion for the other. It is about the responsibility to take care of oneself and others. By staying at home, the population took care of themselves and everyone at the same time, according to the health protocols established by the WHO.

The theoretical framework in place allows us to assume that the pandemic has opened spaces for (re)categorizations of AFFECTION motivated by MORALITY. In them there are more prototypical attributes of AFFECT that seem to have been displaced and other conflicting attributes incorporated. The perceptual selection of what is salient to cognition stems from cognitive principles, such as proximity (Kövecses; Radden, 1998), and of communicational principles, such as the principle of relevance (Sperber; Wilson, 1995). According to Sperber and Wilson, attention is directed to events in focus in everyday life and aspects that stand out in the situational context of communication are taken as relevant, aiming at a minimum cognitive cost in the processing of information, in minimum time. In other words, in the view of CL, there are cognitive and communicational principles that define the route of the categorization process. They can explain why there is (re)categorization and why changes in meaning can undergo sometimes conflicting reorganizations. The central problem is how this restructuring takes place in the face of an already existing conceptualization, if they are contradictory.

Cosejo *et al.* (2009), in the context of Cognitive Psychology, in an experimental study, illuminate the issue. The authors examined the (re)categorization of "oxygen resistance" in the face of the presentation of contradictory attributes, which modified the initial understanding of the category and restructured it. With the participation of 278 undergraduate students, the researchers created 64 images of a Martian bacterium, listed six of its attributes, and asked participants if the attributes could predict oxygen resistance. However, before clicking yes or no on the computer, the participants went through several training phases in which the attributes that characterize the category "oxygen resistance"

were completely modified. At the end of the experiment, the participants did not replace the initial definition of "oxygen resistant" with the target definition, but simply gave different weights to the attributes of the restructured category in relation to those of the initial one. Both remained in coexistence, that is, the knowledge prior to the experiment remained active, despite having a lower weight in the conceptualization. The authors also show that continued exposure to categorical attributes in their new contours influences the results.

Bringing the research of Cosejo *et al.* (2009) for the investigative agenda of this article, the results presented by the authors allow us to say that if immersion in the pandemic context implied living with isolation, the risk of death, and antagonistic positions regarding vaccination, it may have equally impacted categories related to MORALITY and EMOTION, such as AFFECTION, provoking its (re)categorization.

AFFECTION

Whenever threatened by impactful situations such as COVID-19, human beings tend to take polarized positions, motivated by beliefs and emotions aimed at preserving health and social well-being (Nir *et al.*, 2022). In the case of the pandemic, we suffered from the imminent risk of death, which changed our perspective of time and, consequently, of affections that began to guide our actions in the present with a view to the future – "above all, fear and hope" (Fusaro; Feldens, 2021, p. 271). Our awareness of the evolution of time is related to emotional factors. In a longitudinal study, Cravo *et al.* (2022) show that, at first, time expanded with isolation and home *office*, as hours previously dedicated to social events and commuting to work were free. With the prolongation of the days of isolation, time has shrunk due to the stress and agony generated by the absence of social contact, the number of deaths and the anxiety to protect oneself and stay alive. Daily statistics with the number of deaths or related to the efficacy of the vaccine and drugs and socioeconomic losses affected our evaluations of time, vaccination, relationships with others, and the demonstration of AFFECTION (Fusaro; Feldens, 2021, p. 271). People began to live both under the aegis of the fear of death and under the aegis of hope for better days. Fusaro and Feldens define the experience as follows: "our present has come to be colonized by expectations in which the association of risk with behavior affects a moral field" and "many of the issues that act on fear take place in the field of imagination, of speculation, not of reality" (Fusaro; Feldens, 2021, p. 272). In other words, emotions were contaminated by fear and hope, because our perception of the world was clouded by these

two feelings. As much as the numbers regarding vaccination and the reduction in the risk of contagion by COVID-19 proposed some light, everything was uncertain until the end of 2022, and fear continued to guide "promises, threats, and speculative discourses" (Fusaro; Feldens, 2021, 272). After all, it was only on May 5, 2023, that the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the end of the pandemic⁸.

Emotions such as fear and hope also varied as a result of the polarization of points of view in relation to isolation, the vaccine and the use of masks as protective and public health measures. On the one hand, there were the defenders of chloroquine and herd contamination, positioning themselves against isolation and vaccination, and on the other, the defenders of masks, vaccines, and social distancing. In other words, affective behavior varied between two extremes (Van Bavel *et al.*, 2020): (1) it provoked greater hostility and conflict among advocates of different perspectives and (2) it provoked greater union, cooperation, and affection in others. The embodiment of cognition and emotion is key to understanding this behavior (Weingand, 2012), as it is the connection with the other that explains how reason is influenced by emotion and why, consequently, the behavior of some motivates others to align themselves with them, in a dialogical relationship.

Illuminated by the theoretical understandings developed, the article seeks to understand and illustrate how the affection category undergoes (re)categorization in the face of the loss of pre-pandemic ways of life and the health protocols that guided actions against the imminent risk of death in the light of scientific discourse and statistical data. Details of the methodological and analytical procedures, as well as considerations about the cartoon genre and multimodality are found in the following sections.

METHODOLOGY

This article is predominantly qualitative-interpretative, as it interprets phenomena "in their natural scenarios, trying to understand, or interpret, the phenomena in terms of the meanings that people attribute to them" (Denzin; Lincoln, 2006, p.17). However, it also resorts to quantitative aspects (CRESWELL, 2007), because in order to arrive at the 16 cartoons that thematize AFFECTION, it followed procedures that grouped and quantified the cartoons published in the newspaper Folha de São Paulo [*online*] during the period from

⁸ Information available at: <https://brasil.un.org/pt-br/230307-chefe-da-organiza%C3%A7%C3%A3o-mundial-da-sa%C3%BAdede-declara-o-fim-da-covid-19-como-uma-emerg%C3%Aancia-de-sa%C3%BAdede> Accessed on April 20, 2024.

March 2020 to March 2022. Theoretical aspects, such as minimizing the effects of the production context (Duque, 2016), guided the data mining. In this way, the article examines cartoons by a single author, published in the same newspaper. It is, therefore, an inductive and empirical research, which allows the data of the micro context (the multimodal discourse of the cartoons) to converse with the macro context, in the social, discursive-pragmatic and cognitive spheres.

CONTEXT: CARTOON, MULTIMODALITY AND THE FOLHA DE SP

As a genre, the cartoon aims to criticize events or happenings in the socio-political, economic and cultural scene of the current world (Ramos; Carmelino, 2020; Lima, 2015; Duque, 2021). He usually does so with humor, exaggerations, and satire, represented by the cartoonist in the form of caricatures or "distortions of reality" (Duque, 2021, p. 108; Branches; Carmelino, 2020). In order for there to be a co-construction of meaning, it is necessary that the interlocutors (cartoonist and readers) share the knowledge of the world represented in the cartoon. Its "hybrid configuration of language (verbal and non-verbal) or just pictorial (visual elements are mandatory) produces a differential with regard to the explicitness of the referents" (Lima, 2015, p. 379). It is only possible to recover them and understand the communicative purpose if there is knowledge of the immediate sociocultural reality. This context is situated in space and time, which explains why the discursive categories represented in and by the cartoon tend to be transformed, as argued by Duque (2021, p. 114): since the cartoon is a social and discursive practice, its identification and formalization in different cultures varies according to the prototypes of each discursive community (each newspaper/magazine, each cartoonist) "as social practices are transformed through the discourses of their users" (Duque, 2021, p. 114).

The genre, despite having the objective of generating humor, provokes reflection (Duque, 2021; Branches; Carmelino, 2020), 'moves others to act' (Weingand, 2012). Hence they are authorial, signed texts, which appear in the policy notebooks or in the spaces reserved for opinion texts in which news and analyses of greater importance are published by newspapers and magazines, including in their *online versions* (Ramos; Carmelino, 2020).

In the analysis of cartoons, Duque (2021) signals the criticality of the demarcation of the context of production, aiming at the interpretation of a corpus of the genre. The author points out that the cartoonist tends to align himself with the political and ideological

purposes of the magazine or newspaper in which he publishes the cartoons, as there are corporate and financial interests involved. The analyst's interpretation, therefore, should take into account the context of production and in it not only who the enunciator is, but also the profile of the journalistic institution in which he publishes his work. In our case, Folha de São Paulo (FSP).

On its website (www.folha.com.br), FSP defines itself as a plural, nonpartisan newspaper that practices critical and independent journalism and keeps clear the difference between news and falsehood. During the pandemic, however, his editorials were firm in their criticism of the Bolsonaro government's stance and in defense of the WHO's health protocols (Rebouças; Patrício, 2022). In a study of 147 editorials published by FSP in the first half of 2021, Rebouças and Patrício conclude that the editorials used the pandemic as a backdrop to highlight the conflict and controversies experienced by Brazilians and maintain the political agenda as the guiding principle of the editorials. The cartoons selected here follow the editorial line of the FSP, without any interest in making any value judgment about the position of the newspaper or the cartoonist, safeguarding only the analyst's mission of characterizing the context of production. It is a selection and, as such, carries a pragmatic bias linked to the research objectives: to understand the categorization of AFFECT and identify whether there have been changes in its conceptualization in the pandemic period.

For the reasons already exposed, four cartoons by the same cartoonist, Jean Galvão, who always publishes works in the same section of the FSP, the "Opinion" section, were selected. Jean highlights the political biases of everyday issues in the world and in Brazil. His cartoons are published on all of Folha's digital platforms, not just in the *online version* of the newspaper, used here as a source of data. Even though they are linked to the *online* world, cartoons maintain their characteristics: they constitute a visual genre (Arbach, 2007) that is intertextually related to the news, in verbal, visual or verbal-visual form, as a genre.

Multimodal texts conjugate by definition more than one semiosis (Cavalcante *et al.*, 2014; Kress; Van Leeuwen, 2006). The cartoon, by plucking the color, the image, the gesture, the movement, the direction of the gaze, among other aspects (Carvalho, 2022; Branches; Carmelino, 2020), is considered multimodal. However, Ramos and Carmelino point out that the color has not always deserved the watchful eye of analysts of the genre. They argue, for example, that the color yellow played an informational role in the critical

and humorous reading of the cartoon that alluded to the *golden shower episode* at Carnival 2019, with former President Bolsonaro. The expression *golden shower* refers to the act of urinating on a colleague or in their vicinity. It went viral with two posts by former President Jair Bolsonaro, one of them suggesting that sexual acts such as those in the video posted on X (a platform at the time called *Twitter*), in which a man put his finger in his anus while a colleague urinated on him, were common at Carnival parties. The expression circulated on Social Networks and prompted a new post with the question: "what is a *golden shower*?" (Ramos; Carmelino, 2020, p. 40). The question, in turn, motivated the cartoon analyzed by Ramos and Carmelino (authored by Benett and published *online* on March 6, 2019), in which the former president takes a jet of yellow liquid over his head. In it, the color yellow is an index of significance: urine.

However, the perception of color and its sociocultural interpretations varies between peoples and cultures. Its symbolic meanings, as the authors say when rescuing the voice of Silveira (2015, p. 2018), derive from the sharing of cultural visions by the collective, the materialization of these visions in color dictionaries and the psychological effects they exert on those who use them. In the case of pink⁹, one of the colors that appears in the cartoons of *the corpus*, Laura Aida's (<https://www.significados.com.br/cores-2/>) dictionary of the meaning of colors in Brazilian culture indicates that it refers to the feminine universe in which tenderness, affection, naivety and romanticism appear. "It is the color of emotions, affections, understanding, companionship and romance. It represents the feelings linked to the heart" and to welcoming (according to Taysa Coelho's popular dictionary, *online*; <https://www.dicionariopopular.com/significado-das-cores/#anchor-rosa>)¹⁰. Spiritually, it dispels negative thoughts and motivates hope, security about the future. Proof of this is that, in its metaphorical sense, the Dictionary of Portuguese *On-line* still refers to the meanings of joy and prosperity as in "pink dream" and "pink future". In journalistic discourse, Ramos and Carmelino (2020) point out, based on Guimarães (2003), color is consistent with the communicative purpose of those who use it (author and institution that publishes a work), assuming the value of information.

Still based on the values assumed by iconic and plastic semiosis, we rely on the Multimodal Theory of Communication or Grammar of Visual Design by Kress and van

⁹ Pink in other sociocultural contexts can take on other values. We refer to the Brazilian context.

¹⁰See also the dictionary of symbols in <https://www.dicionariodesimbolos.com.br/significado-cores-ano-novo/> Accessed on: June 04, 2023.

Leuween (2006). For the authors, the way in which these semioses are represented, their combination, and the regularities in the composition structure function as syntactic structures that can be analyzed, as we do with verbal language. They are visual statements about cultural meanings open to rational judgments and analysis, from the point of view of the enunciator (p.20). As meaning is a function, there are three metafunctions on which this methodology of image analysis is based: representational (syntax of images, textual-narrative and conceptual); the interactional (relations between the represented image, readers and the world; is there proximity or distance between them?) and the compositional (informative value, salience and informativeness of the elements present, visual and verbal).

Kress and van Leuween (2006) underline that what appears at the top of an image has added ideological value and is classified as *ideal*. What appears at the bottom, on the other hand, inhabits the *real*, such as the number of deaths during the pandemic, if it appears pictorially represented at the bottom of the cartoon, and the slowness of the vaccination process, if it appears at the top. On the compositional level of the image, Kress and van Leuween (2006, p. 177) illustrate how the positioning of visual and/or verbal elements in the foreground or background, relative size, tonal contrast (or color), distinctions of sharpness determine what is salient to perception. The greater the weight of a certain element in the composition, the greater its relevance in the construction of meaning.

THE STUDY

There are three research questions to answer: (1) how is AFFECT (re)categorized in the selected cartoons? (2) What attributes of a perceived reality have become most salient in the category? (3) How do these attributes meet those present in THE AFFECTION category in the lived world of Brazilians in the period before the pandemic?

Thus, in an exploratory analysis, we started to identify the most frequently activated cognitive domains in the *corpus*, according to the following steps: (1) data compilation and familiarization; (2) domain coding; (3) review of domains; (4) selection of cartoons on the theme "COVID-19 pandemic"; (5) coding of subdomains within the theme "COVID-19 pandemic"; (6) review of the domains triggered. The most frequent subdomains within the theme "COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020, were government mistakes, isolation, vaccine, masks, deaths, reopening and affection; in 2021, government mistakes, vaccine, deaths,

isolation, affection, reopening, and masks; in 2022, deaths, masks, misconceptions, vaccine, and affection, in that order.

We understand that both the explicit and implicit clues (visual or verbal) that have been recurrent form a pattern capable of unifying what happens in several cartoons. The year 2021 was the one that presented the most clues evoking AFFECTION, A fact that seems natural to us, since it was the second year of isolation and the one in which deaths accumulated. In 2020 (n=6) and until March 2022 (n=2), the occurrences of the category are consistent with the beginning and end of the isolation process.

AFFECTION IN TIMES OF COVID-19

Cartoon 1 makes explicit reference to the first Mother's Day in the pandemic period, which took place on May 10, 2020. By doing so, it leads the interlocutor to activate the *event* FRAME that presupposes the participation of at least two people, mother and child. In this EVENT, children buy gifts for their mothers, have lunch and spend the day with them, among other possible actions in an Idealized Mother¹¹'s Day Cognitive Model. In this same model, it is implicit that the relationship between children and mothers is permeated by positive affections – kisses, hugs, gifts and cuddles: closeness. In the cartoon, this conceptualization of AFFECTION is indexed by the color pink, a plastic sign (Carvalho, 2022; Branches; Carmelino, 2020) which refers to tenderness and affection in Brazilian culture. However, from the perspective of cartoonist Jean Galvão, the verbal message that emerges from a cell phone screen in the form of a little balloon is in the foreground (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2006), in the upper part of the cartoon, and evokes the (re)categorization of AFFECTION. The mother, as represented in the cartoon, directs her gaze to the screen that is on a tripod, instantiating a habit that many of us experienced during the pandemic: staying connected for an extended time. The semiotic elements that make up the cartoon also include the mask personified with a smile, in white, standing out from the pink tones already used; the son, who appears in the video call, also wears a white mask; and the textual elements (the theme "Mother's Day" and the phrase "I sent a mask. I wanted to give you a hug..."). In the frame on the right, there are only visual elements: a mask in the foreground, in white. She explains how her son wants to hug his mother. If in the cartoon

¹¹Idealized Cognitive Models (Lakoff, 1987) are social-cognitive constructs that organize knowledge in long-term memory. They are relatively stable, constituted in sociocultural practices and reflect the world as the construction of a perspective and not as a reflection of an absolute reality. They can be propositional or imagetic and accommodate metaphors, metonymies, imagery schemes, among others.

there was only the first statement (in the foreground) – "I sent a mask" – the mask would symbolize the gift of the son to the mother; However, the subsequent statement and the ellipsis – "I wanted to give a hug..." – associated with the image of the personified mask, with eyes, smile and two arms that wrap around the mother's ear, in the frame on the right (in the foreground), opens an inferential space in which the mask represents the child himself, embracing the mother. The contrast between the pink color in the background and white that illuminates the balloon with the word "hug" keeps "hug" salient to perception. Likewise, it keeps the personified mask prominent.

Cartoon 1 – MASK IS HUG¹²



Source: Jean Galvão (2020)

"Embrace" and "mask" form a multimodal metaphor (Forceville, 2008): MASK IS EMBRACE in times of pandemic that evokes the metaphors MORALITY IS NUTRITION and MORALITY IS LIMIT (LAKOFF; JOHNSON, 1999). That is, instead of a full house, we have an empty house. The physical proximity between mother and child is replaced by social distancing and contact via cell phone. The gifts are replaced by the mask, which replaces the physical touch and demonstrates the child's affection and concern for the mother's health and well-being, as well as respect for WHO standards.

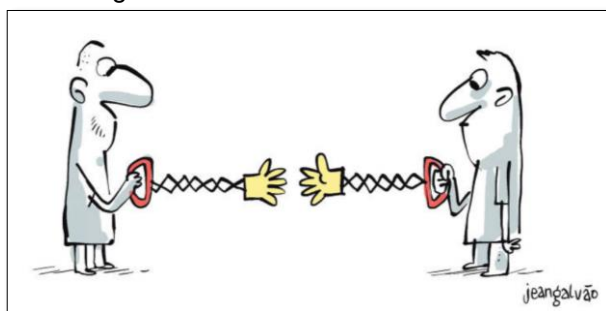
Cartoon 2 is pictorial (Forceville, 2008), as it is composed only of visual signs. In the scene, two characters want to shake hands. The background is white and leaves a mechanical hand in profile and its ends in yellow and red. However, the handshake – a common greeting in Western countries, became prohibited in the pandemic due to the risk of contagion by the virus, according to the WHO's health protocols. During this period, new forms of greeting were observed, such as touching the elbows, making "fists" with the hands, among others. To recategorize the handshake, an object emerges in the center of

¹²Cartoon by Jean Galvão, published on May 10, 2020 in Folha de São Paulo.

the scene – the mechanical hand, a typical toy of the 80s and 90s. Each caricatured character wields a mechanical hand, holding in his hands the red ring that makes up the toy.

The object replaces physical contact and allows the maintenance of distance and socio-affective activity. The stare fixed at the object, and not at each other, indicates a certain strangeness in simulating a handshake without real physical contact. The pictorial metaphor (Forceville, 2008) evoked is MECHANICAL HAND IS PROXIMITY and, like cartoon 1, it encourages the target audience to respect distancing, following the WHO guidelines, to act morally (Lakoff; Johnson, 1999), from the anti-denialist perspective. Here, AFFECTION IS KEEPING YOUR DISTANCE; MORALITY IS THE LIMIT.

Charge 2 – MECHANICAL HAND IS PROXIMITY¹³



Source: Jean Galvão (2020)

Cartoon 3 highlights an attribute of negative AFFECT, sadness, in a multimodal representation. Pictorially, it consists of a syringe and a drop, in the left frame, and a tear, running melancholically down the face of the caricatured character, in the right frame. The drop that flows from the syringe is metaphorically mapped onto the drop that runs down the character's face, visual signs that corroborate the verbal ones, constituting the foreground of the cartoon "I miss you". It was published in February 2021, the second year of the pandemic, marked by another wave of infection via new lethal variants, the collapse of our health system, and several mismatches in obtaining the vaccine, due to the successive errors of the Ministry of Health. ANVISA's approval came on January 17, 2021, and vaccination only began in May, three months after the publication of this cartoon.

In a multimodal way, cartoon 3 portrays sadness and anguish, evoked by the expression "to miss it" and by tears, which inhabit the domain of AFFECTION, as opposed

¹³Cartoon by Jean Galvão, published on March 15, 2020 in Folha de São Paulo.

to positive affect. The referent of the deictic "your" appears in the left frame – the vaccine. At the same time, the sadness and anguish signaled by the tear and the expression "I miss you", refer to the consequences of the absence of a vaccine, such as social isolation, which prevents human contact; fear and lack of hope for the future (Fusaro; Feldens, 2021). In other words, the absence of the vaccine causes sadness, as it does not allow the return of socialization, the exercise of intersubjectivity, part of the human essence (Zlatev, 2012). The emerging multimodal metaphor is ABSENCE OF THE VACCINE IS A CAUSE OF SADNESS.

There are, therefore, between the two paintings, causal relationships from which the cartoonist's communicative purpose can be inferred: to defend vaccination and point to it as the hope of ending sadness, in the midst of a month marked by an overwhelming death rate. In February 2021, according to data published by the consortium of press outlets¹⁴, there were more than 30,000 deaths, an average of 1,500 deaths per day.

Charge 3¹⁵. ABSENCE OF VACCINE IS A CAUSE OF SADNESS.



Source: Jean Galvão (2021)

In the context of plastic signs¹⁶ (Carvalho, 2022; Branches; Carmelino, 2020), the background of the syringe with the vaccine is lilac, signaling the necessary reflection for the development of the vaccine. The tear running down the face is green, a color associated with health, often used in hospital environments for a calming effect, according to the color dictionary of Laura Aida and Taysa Coelho. The defense of vaccination is the cartoonist's way of exercising his moral agency (MORALITY IS NUTRITION; Lakoff; Johnson, 1999).

¹⁴ G1 news portal. Available at: <https://g1.globo.com/bemestar/coronavirus/noticia/2021/03/01/brasil-tem-30484-mortes-por-covid-19-em-fevereiro-2o-maior-numero-em-toda-a-pandemia.ghtml>

¹⁵ Cartoon by Jean Galvão, published on February 28, 2021 in Folha de São Paulo.

¹⁶ The plastic sign includes color, shape, and texture in an autonomous signic unit. Its meaning is based on experiences lived and shared collectively. In the case of yellow and golden *shower*, the color yellow assumes an informational function, as it refers to the jet of urine that falls on the caricature of President Bolsonaro, in Benett's cartoon, analyzed by Ramos and Carmelino (2020).

The fourth cartoon is equally multimodal. Published in August 2020, it makes explicit reference to the vaccine as an instrument for returning to normality, considering that the greater the immunization, the lower the mortality rates, in the view of the cartoonist and the WHO. In addition, cartoon 4 foregrounds the urgency of resuming physical contact as a form of AFFECTION. This urgency is outlined by the expression "a hastia", the title of the cartoon that is divided into two frames. The one on the left represents the urgency of resuming affective relationships in person, expressed by the hope placed in the vaccine, leaving aside considerations such as the development time of a vaccine (until then this cycle was 10 years, according to Fiocruz¹⁷) and the immunization cycle, as history has taught us, given the various recurrences of coronavirus infection.

Charge 4. VACCINE IS HOPE¹⁸



Source: Jean Galvão (2020)

In the frame on the right, the "haste" is symbolized by the representation of the unknown, present in a vaccine developed in record time and without the proper testing process. The arm separated from the body signals the still unknown effects of the COVID-19 vaccines in circulation. Verbally, the "unknown effects" are signaled by the caricatured health professional, when he enunciates "it is too early to know"; Its complement, in the inferential space, would be "whether the vaccine will in fact immunize" and "what its side effects are" is not yet known. However, the need to recover health, put an end to contamination and resume physical contact with others, made the vaccine emerge quickly and work as an index of AFFECTION. The term "touch", used in the cartoon, is an attribute of dominance as much as "hug" in cartoon 1 and "greet" in cartoon 2. Both actions happen with PHYSICAL CONTACT. In other words, the vaccine brought hope for the resumption of

¹⁷ Fiocruz (2020). Available at: <https://portal.fiocruz.br/noticia/processo-de-desenvolvimento-de-vacinas-e-destaque-na-revista-radis> Accessed on: April 15, 2024.

¹⁸ Cartoon by Jean Galvão, published on August 16, 2020 in Folha de São Paulo.

physical contact with other people. This hope is represented by the color blue, which, together with white, are plastic signs that symbolize tranquility and confidence in the results of the vaccine.

In the light of Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar, the division of the cadres implies political and ideological positions towards the vaccine, corroborating Marchon and Antunes (2021). The trust placed in the vaccine as an index of AFFECTION appears in the left frame, a political-ideological position defended by the anti-negationists; doubts and unknown effects were the argument used by the denialist discourse against vaccination. According to them, the vaccine could cause unimaginable unforeseen events (for example, the loss of the arm by the caricatured character). However, once again, the cartoonist's communicative purpose was to move others (Weingang, 2012) to rely on vaccination as the hope of a return to normal. The cartoonist exercised his moral agency (Lakoff; Johnson, 1999).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

In the selected cartoons, the cartoonist encourages distancing and vaccination and leaves the use of masks, greetings mediated by objects and vaccination itself in the foreground, even if the effects of these measures were still uncertain at the time of publication. The absence of closeness emerges as an attribute of AFFECTION, which is characterized by the use of the mask that gives the hug, through the arm, which metonymically activates the hug domain, if vaccinated. For example, in (1) the idea of physical proximity gives way to distancing; in (2) physical contact becomes mediated by objects; in (3) the short time for manufacturing the vaccine is conceptualized as positive due to the conditions imposed by the virus and the consequent social isolation, as it is what will allow the hug; in (4) the vaccine emerges as an index that will allow touching the other. In other words, in the cartoonist's perspective, attributes previously present in the domain of AFFECTION (hug, physical proximity, physical touch, greeting) are displaced outside the category. In their place, distance, isolation, masks and vaccines appear with greater weight as effects of moral agency, according to the theoretical framework proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1999), in their SYSTEM OF MORAL METAPHOR.

At the same time, the cartoonist makes an implicit criticism of those who did not respect the distance and insisted on hugging their mothers and greeting the other using their hands, or even not getting vaccinated, exposing friends and family to the virus. He

makes this criticism or moral position with a softness that differentiates these cartoons from other customary cartoons of the genre, characterized by irony and/or exaggerations.

In other words, the pandemic period resignified the way of expressing AFFECTION FROM THE perspective of Jean Galvão and many who aligned themselves with the anti-denialist discourse. As categorization is subjective and is marked by the social and discursive context (Croft; Cruise, 2004), the aspects that were profiled (Langacker, 2008) in the cartoons were the mask, distancing and the vaccine. We believe that the emphasis given to these aspects results from the alarming rate of deaths in the years 2020-2023. As Johnson (2007) says, it is the events of the lived world that motivate the (re)categorizations. The affection category, therefore, has undergone restructuring in pandemic times.

Pragmatically, Jean Galvão seems to us to aim at the promotion of general well-being, condoning the metaphors of MORALITY, especially that of NUTRITION and limits. It is a "moral agency" (Lakoff; Johnson, 1999), because in the light of the anti-denialist ideology, he would be promoting the health of the other; respecting limits established by health authorities (WHO), with self-discipline.

Thus, two of the conjectures previously enunciated are confirmed: there is in the cartoons a list of actions considered "moral", as well as the displacement of attributes that previously figured in the category OF AFFECTION (with emphasis on PHYSICAL CONTACT), to the inclusion of others (mask, distance, vaccine) as a consequence of the author's moral agency, in an anti-negationist political-ideological framework. These changes are structured by multimodal and pictorial metaphors that reflect the complex experience with the pandemic. They are: A MASK IS A HUG; A MECHANICAL HAND IS PROXIMITY; THE ABSENCE OF A VACCINE IS A CAUSE OF SADNESS; A VACCINE IS HOPE. On the other hand, the clues for the (re)categorization of AFFECT are found both in the discursive plane (in the images, colors, positioning of the images) and in the sociocognitive-pragmatic sphere (ideologies, perspective, emotion, inferences) that acted in the cartoonist's choices (see Entman, 2007; Gonçalves, 2012; Lima, 2015). It was the cognitive and communicational principles that defined the route of the (re)categorization of AFFECT (Wen; Fu, 2021; Kövecses; Radden, 1998; Sperber; Wilson, 1995).

Other interpretations are naturally possible since they are linked to perspective. The (re)categorization of AFFECT proposed here comes from the anti-denialist bias assumed by the author of the cartoons. In addition, in a qualitative-interpretative research, the analyst's

perspective is intertwined with the analysis process. The theme could also be illuminated by other procedures, such as interviews with readers and with the cartoonist himself, which are for future studies.

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