

National High School Examination in question: Self-assessment Reference or Subject Evaluation Procedure?¹

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Resumo

Avaliação em larga escala criada em 1998, com o intuito de aferir o conhecimento dos concluintes do Ensino Médio, o Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio (Enem) passou por alterações em 2009. Assim sendo, este artigo deriva de pesquisa cujo objetivo principal foi compreender, a partir da Análise do Discurso Materialista, relações de forças em jogo nos discursos de “textos fundadores” do Novo Enem – Portarias que correspondem ao *corpus* de via arquivista. O trabalho analítico-discursivo possibilitou reconhecer o Enem como campo de disputas políticas e pedagógicas, uma vez que os documentos apontaram para um sentido não exclusivo de protagonismo do participante, denotando posições ideológicas em tensão entre o entendimento do Exame como referência de autoavaliação ou procedimento de avaliação do sujeito.

Palavras-chave: Análise do Discurso Materialista. Michel Pêcheux. Enem. Ensino Médio. Educação.

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Abstract

The National High School Examination is a large-scale evaluation created in 1998 to measure high school graduates' knowledge. The National High School Examination (known in Brazil by the acronym Enem) underwent changes in 2009. Thus, this article derives from research whose main objective was to understand, from the Materialist Discourse Analysis, relations of forces in clash in the speeches of the “founding texts” of the New Enem – Ordinances that correspond to the archival corpus. The analytical-discursive work made the recognition of the Enem as a field of political and pedagogical disputes possible since the documents pointed to a not exclusive meaning of the participant's protagonism, denoting ideological positions in tension between the understanding of the Examination as a reference for self-assessment or subject evaluation procedure.

Keywords: Materialist Discourse Analysis. Michel Pêcheux. Enem. High school. Education.

¹This study was conducted with the support of Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel – Brazil (CAPES) - Funding Code 001. The study stems from a longer investigation described in the dissertation entitled Interfaces between subjects, meanings, and society in the New Enem: a discursive analysis (Souza, 2019), resulting from research that, conducted from 2017 to 2019, has been resumed and expanded since 2020.

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Introduction

In the early stages of the National High School Examination (Enem), the test, mandatory for students in public institutions, was a tool for evaluating teaching and schools. The Examination did not provide access to higher education institutions (HEIs). However, some did allow the use of the essay grade in the entrance exam. A change in perspective occurred in 2009 as part of the actions carried out by then-President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and the Minister of Education at the time, Fernando Haddad.⁴

When exploring what was produced about the Examination between 2009 (the transition to the New Enem) and 2019, we came across research that refers to positive and negative points about the test's methodology, application, and implementation.⁵ However, little is said about the evaluation, considering its production conditions from a discursive perspective. Furthermore, there is a great deal of silence as to the link between the Enem tests and a desired project for society, as well as a desired young person or adult for the achievement of such a project.

In line with the commitment to conduct the study in light of the Materialist Discourse Analysis founded by Michel Pêcheux, these findings were articulated with the primary objective of the research: to understand the power relations at play in the discourses of two "founding texts" of the New Enem – Ordinance No. 109, from May 27, 2009, from the National Institute of Studies and Educational Research Anísio Teixeira – INEP (Brasil, 2009a), and Ordinance No. 807, from June 18, 2010 (Brasil, 2010), which establish the purposes of the Exam.

The analyses revealed a protagonist meaning in conflict with a commitment to return to practices that see Education as being engaged in training students for the job market. This underscores the relevance of a study that, by understanding the historicity of the Enem, can promote discussions about its constitution and commitments. Similarly, research that aims to

⁴In 2009, the Examination became known as the "New Enem" due to the implemented changes.

⁵For further information, see: Ana Paula Hey (Professora da USP [...], 2009), Andrade (2023), Andriola (2011), Carneiro (2014), Dourado an Sales (2023), Duarte (2023), Fernandes and Freitas (2007), Lopes (2019a, 2019b, 2019c, 2021), Nogueira (2015), Silva and Hypolito (2021), Silveira and Medeiros (2012), Souza and Bittar (2013), and Travitzki (2013).

consider the functions of evaluation in the Enem considering its production conditions, can help better understand not only this large-scale standardized examination but also changes in/from the high school system that stem from it.

Research Methodology

This study consisted of quantitative and qualitative research divided into two interrelated stages. The first stage was bibliographical⁶, focusing on mapping research that sought to understand Enem from a discursive perspective. Four repositories (Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations - BDTD, Scientific Electronic Library Online - SciELO, Digital Repository of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul - LUME/UFRGS and Seminar of Studies in Discourse Analysis - SEAD) were consulted, considering the time frame that extends from 2009 to 2019. Four indexers were mobilized for this systematization of productions: Enem; Enem and discourse; Enem and discourse analysis; Enem, discourse analysis, and Michel Pêcheux. The results of the consultation of the repositories were grouped by indexer/year of publication, indexer/reading support, and indexer/repository, respectively, and are organized in Tables 1 to 3 below.

⁶Based on Silveira and Córdova (2009) and Gil (2007), the first stage of the study can be characterized as quantitative-qualitative bibliographic for two main reasons: (1) although numerical representativeness is relevant to understanding the problem being discussed, the study is not and cannot be limited to it; (2) the investigation consisted of a search for theoretical references published over a significant period of time (2009 to 2019) in order to gather information or prior knowledge regarding the problem to be answered.

Table 1 - Quantitative results of the consultation based on the relationship between indexers and year of publication of the studies

Indexer	Year										
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	Quantity of studies										
Enem	9	11	19	13	29	30	29	37	18	83	43
Enem and discourse	3	2	4	5	8	7	8	0	1	17	9
Enem and discourse analysis	2	0	2	1	3	2	2	1	0	11	5
Enem, discourse analysis and Michel Pêcheux	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0

Source: prepared by the authors.

Table 2 - Quantitative results of the consultation based on the relationship between indexers and reading support

Indexer	Enem	Enem and Discourse	Enem and Discourse Analysis	Enem, Discourse Analysis and Michel Pêcheux
	Quantity of studies			
Studies				
Papers	103	14	12	2
Master's Degree Dissertations	196	39	15	3
Undergraduate Final Projects	19	3	0	0
Specialization Final Projects	1	0	0	0
Doctoral Theses	32	13	8	0

Source: prepared by the authors.

Table 3 - Quantitative results of the consultation based on the relationship between indexers and repository

Indexer	Enem	Enem and Discourse	Enem and Discourse Analysis	Enem, Discourse Analysis and Michel Pêcheux
	Quantity of studies			
Repository				
SciELO	96	9	7	0
BDTD	226	50	23	3
LUME	22	6	0	0
SEAD	5	5	5	2

Source: prepared by the authors.

During the survey, it was possible to see Enem as a recurring theme in research and analysis carried out in higher education institutions in different regions of the country. There are various dimensions to the analysis of this topic, such as educational, social, and management policies, among others, which means that the exam is not just a significant research interest for education researchers.

By systematizing the data collected from the repositories and reading the texts in full or in part, we could see the relatively large number of papers on Enem, in contrast to the scarcity of studies that approach the Examination from the perspective of Materialist Discourse Analysis. This finding reinforced the relevance of the research and justified the analytical-discursive work of reading the “founding texts” of the New Enem that characterize the second stage of the investigation. At this point, the research methodology was developed by analyzing selected documents. We considered Ordinances and Announcements from the Ministry of Education (MEC) referring to the New Enem from 2009 to 2016⁷. Nevertheless, due to the purposes of the research carried out, the analytical-discursive approach was directed towards the objectives of the Examination, as set out in the Announcements that “inaugurated” the New Enem in 2009 and 2010, respectively. Therefore, the *corpus* was delimited from an archival perspective.

In Materialist Discourse Analysis, the constitution of the *corpus* is part of the analysis process. Its delimitation is based on theoretical criteria and is done through an archivist or experimental route (Courtine, 2014; Orlandi, 2015; Pêcheux, 1994). The archivist route can include relevant and available documents concerning a given issue, that is, pre-existing materials that will be subjected to the analyst’s reading gestures. In the case of this investigation, the *corpus* consisted of two “Founding texts” of the New Enem, namely, Ordinance No. 109/2009 (Brasil, 2009a) and Ordinance No. 807/2010 (Brasil, 2010c).

Ordinance No. 109/2009 presents objectives for the exam that were taken as discursive sequences (DSs) to be analyzed:

⁷ Ordinance No. 109, of May 27, 2009; Ordinance No. 217, of October 28, 2009; Ordinance No. 807, of June 18, 2010; Announcement No. 4, of September 24, 2010; Announcement No. 8, of December 8, 2010; Announcement No. 7, of May 18, 2011; Normative Ordinance No. 16, of July 27, 2011; Announcement No. 3, of May 24, 2012; Announcement No. 1, of May 8, 2013; Announcement No. 12, of May 8, 2014; Announcement No. 6, of May 15, 2015; and Announcement No. 10, of April 14, 2016.

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- ✓ DS1 - to offer a reference so that each citizen can carry out their own self-assessment with a view to their future choices, both in relation to the world of work and continuing their studies.
 - ✓ DS2 - to structure an evaluation at the end of Basic Education that serves as an alternative or complementary modality to selection processes in different sectors of the world of work.
 - ✓ DS3 - to structure an evaluation at the end of Basic Education that serves as an alternative or complementary modality to entrance exams for vocational courses, post-secondary Education, and Higher Education.
 - ✓ DS4 - to enable participation.
 - ✓ DS5 - to create conditions for access to government programs.
 - ✓ DS6 - to promote the certification of young people and adults at the level of completion of High School, following Article 38, § 1 and § 2 of Law No. 9,394/1996 - Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDBEN).
 - ✓ DS7 - to promote the evaluation of the academic performance of students entering higher education institutions.

In Ordinance No. 807/2010, the Enem is established as an evaluation procedure whose objective is to ascertain whether the participant demonstrates mastery of the “scientific and technological principles that govern modern production and knowledge of contemporary forms of language.” This document condensed the purposes into one that also constituted a DS to be analyzed:

- ✓ DS8 - to assess whether the participant in the Examination, at the end of high school, demonstrates mastery of the scientific and technological principles that govern modern production and knowledge of contemporary forms of language.

For the interpretation of the highlighted DSs in the two legal documents, it was essential to read them using the lens of Materialist Discourse Analysis – which demanded the mobilization of notions specific to this intermediate discipline⁸.

⁸ In a text authored by Michel Pêcheux and Catherine Fuchs (2010), Discourse Analysis was defined as the theoretical field established in the space between three disciplines: Historical Materialism, Linguistics, and Discourse Theory, intersected by Psychoanalysis. It inherits these three knowledge regions and, for this reason, is understood as an intermediate discipline. However, even though it inherits these three knowledge regions, it is not servilely so. On the contrary, it proposes questions to each of these areas. Ferreira (2005) clarifies that the epistemological concepts of Discourse Analysis, although they are brought from other areas of knowledge – Psychoanalysis, Marxism, Linguistics, and Historical materialism – end up expanding their strict meanings to integrate into the theoretical body of discourse, adjusting to the specificities and order of this discursive network.

Theoretical framework: Materialist Discourse Analysis

Materialist Discourse Analysis is formed in the space where language necessarily has to be referred to as its externality, aiming to understand how the symbolic produces meanings. Its fundamental mark is the constitutive relationship between language and externality, that is, between speech and the conditions of its production. The object of study of Discourse Analysis (DA) is the discourse, which, as Zandwais (2009, p. 28) synthesizes, corresponds to “[...] one of the material aspects of ideology.” There is no way to dissociate subject and ideology, nor is there discourse without subject. It is akin to claiming that a word, such as “Enem,” is part of one discourse and not another, given the position (socio-historical-ideological position) of those who utter it, since it is

[...] through discourse that we will understand how symbolic material produces meanings and how the subject is constituted. By situating itself as a privileged place of observation between language, ideology, and the subject, discourse provides, like a good observatory, the visualization of the properties of the complex theoretical-analytical device (Ferreira, 2003, p. 195).

The production conditions of a discourse fundamentally involve the subjects and the situation; however, within this concept, the memory of speech is also encompassed. As Pêcheux (2010, p. 77) elucidates, in Automatic Discourse Analysis (AAD-69), a discourse “[...] is always pronounced from given production conditions,” and it is indispensable to consider:

- the power relations that can be associated with the hierarchies from which society is constituted;
- the meaning relations that can be listed as a drift of meaning and opacity of language;
- the anticipation relations that can be translated as the experience that the subject lives in, placing themselves in the position from which their interlocutor hears their words, resulting in the fact that they will enunciate in one way or another according to the effect they imagine producing on the listener.

By proposing the concept of “production conditions,” Pêcheux shows that discourse is an effect of meanings among interlocutors. The individual is not free to deliberately choose their speech in a given situation, as what is said is affected by the “already-there” by the meanings that have historically been constructed from power relations. Furthermore, the author elucidates that the “material character” of meaning is only possible because “[...] the concrete materiality of the ideological instance exists in the form of ideological formations, which, at the same time, have a ‘regional’ character and encompass class positions” (Pêcheux, 2009, p. 146).

In addressing Ideological Formations (IF), Pêcheux refers to the concept of Discursive Formation (DF) as a component of the IF. It is worth remembering here that the concept of DF was coined by Michel Foucault (2012). For this author, a set of statements is related to a system of standard rules determined historically:

[...] if it is possible to describe, among a certain number of statements, a similar dispersal system, and in the case where among objects, types of enunciation, concepts, thematic choices, regularity can be defined (an order, correlations, positions, and functions, transformations), we will say, by convention, that it is a discursive formation (Foucault, 2012, p. 47).

Discourse in Foucault, as explained by Zandwais (2012), is an empirical unit, a system of references to other discourses as a node in a network, being affected both by external contingencies and by rules. Pêcheux resignifies the notion of DF in the field of DA. DF is understood, then, as a matrix where the meanings formulated through discourse are articulated. It reveals different positions assumed by the subject and can be defined as that which,

[...] in a given ideological formation, that is, from a position in a given conjuncture, determined by the state of class struggle, determines what can and should be said (articulated in the form of a harangue, a sermon, a pamphlet, an exhibition, a program, etc.) (Pêcheux, 2009, p. 147).

DF corresponds, thus, to the place of the constitution of meaning. And IF, the basis for discursive formation, is determined by the state of class struggle.

For Pêcheux (2009), the subject of discourse is not master of themselves; they are constituted by forgetting what determines them. The individual is interpellated as a subject by

identifying with a dominant DF. By considering a subjected subject and the non-transparency of language, Pêcheux (2009, p. 160) states that the meaning of words and statements depends on the “[...] entire complex of ideological formations,” with such dependence being explained through two theses:

1. The meaning of a word, expression, or proposition is determined by the ideological positions at stake in the socio-historical process in which they are produced or reproduced. Pêcheux (2009, p. 146-147) summarizes this thesis as follows: “[...] words, expressions, propositions, etc. change meaning according to the positions held by those who use them.”
2. According to Pêcheux (2009, p. 161-162), “[...] the essence of every discursive formation is to conceal, in the transparency of the meaning formed therein, the contradictory material objectivity of the interdiscourse that determines this discursive formation as such.” Thus, within a DF, a universal subject is constituted, bearing what everyone knows and understands, with which the enunciating subject identifies and is, therefore, interpellated.

Every subject occupies a determined position within the social formation in which they live. This position, or social place, is marked in discourse and establishes what can (and cannot) and what must (and must not) be said. In other words, the DF corresponds to a determined way for the subject, interpellated, to “express” their worldview. The individual, by inscribing themselves in a DF, becomes subjected. Every statement produced inserts itself into a DF, and it is from it that we “extract” its meaning. Discursive formations thus point to the ideological contradiction relations existing in social formations. Therefore, social and ideological contradictions are reflected in DFs.

In summary, ideology is marked in language and in the different material bases that support the production of meanings, assuming a specular structure due to the system of interpellation itself, since “[...] being neither entirely free nor entirely subjected” (Brandão, 2012, p. 65), the space of subject constitution is tense, and meaning is historically produced through use. Moreover, two essential ideas are associated with DA:

1. Meaning and subject are constituted in discourse; therefore, discourses must be considered based on their socio-historical processes of emergence.
2. The subject is decentered and ideologically interpellated, making it possible to recognize the presence of more than one subject position in a statement. As Brandão (2012, p. 49) reminds us, the historical and ideological subject “[...] positions their discourse in relation to the discourses of others. Others that involve not only the addressee for whom they plan and/or adjust their speech (intradiscursive level), but also other discourses historically constituted and that emerge in their speech (interdiscursive level).”

These arguments establish a connection with the subsequent sections of this paper. Within them, reading gestures will be articulated, underpinned by the premise that individuals become subjects to the extent that they participate in Discursive Formations (DF), which in turn shape de Ideological Formations (Ifs). This understanding adds to another: the need to think about the analyzed DSs without forgetting the conditions of production of the Enem discourse (mediate and immediate historical context, political-ideological situation, and IFs of the promoters of the test⁹, namely, Inep and MEC, directly involved in defining its purposes and particularities in each edition).

Conditions of production of the Enem

Established in 1998, during the tenure of Education Minister Paulo Renato Souza under President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the Enem, a large-scale assessment, was initially designed to gauge the academic proficiency of high school graduates nationwide and “[...] contribute to enhancing the quality of education at this level” (Inep, 2002, p. 5). The Enem’s role in evaluating high school students was established in alignment with the provisions of Law No. 9.394, dated December 20, 1996 - the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDBEN), specifically in its

⁹ The dense activation of the notion of imaginary formations, as understood by Pêcheux (2010), is not part of the purposes of this work. However, reference is made to it in this section of the article, due to the connection between power relations and imaginary formations. The position occupied by the subject of discourse in the discursive game is constituted concurrently with the effects of meanings from the crossing of power relations that interfere with imaginary formations.

article 4, item IX, which stipulates that the State's obligation to public school education shall ensure "[...] minimum standards of teaching quality defined as the minimum variety and quantity, per student, of inputs indispensable to the development of the teaching-learning process" (Brasil, 1996). A watershed moment in the annals of public education policies, the Enem represented Brazil's inaugural comprehensive assessment of the education system. In its initial phase, preceding 2009, the Examination primarily served as a yardstick for driving modifications in high school curricula.

The first model of the Enem (1998 to 2008) was a 63-question test taken on a single day. Commencing in 2004, the evaluation took on an additional role as a gateway to higher education programs, particularly for students seeking scholarships in private institutions via the University for All Program (ProUni), utilizing their Examination scores. In 2009, the new model was introduced, with the proposal to unify the entrance exams of Brazilian federal universities. The New Enem became a two-day exam containing 180 objective questions and an essay. The Examination also began to be used to obtain financing through the Higher Education Student Financing Fund (Fies). Until 2016, Enem served as a certification of completion of High School in Youth and Adult Education (EJA) courses.

Enem gained notoriety and greater visibility after its reformulation and linkage to the Unified Selection System (SiSU). As a public policy of the State, new purposes were incorporated. However, the National High School Examination has not been able to evade criticism and divergent opinions about it. On the one hand, scholars such as Andriola (2011) consider that the selection process has undergone changes that have made its adaptation to social demands possible, constituting a promoting factor in evolution regarding access to Higher Education and an effective tool for democratization by enabling such access to economically less privileged individuals. On the other hand, researchers like Ana Paula Hey (Professor at USP [...], 2009), Carneiro (2014), Silveira and Medeiros (2012), Souza and Bittar (2013), and Travitzki (2013) argue that Enem has not contributed to changing the unequal social reality regarding opportunities for further studies after High School.

In this sense, studies like those of Andrade (2023), Dourado and Sales (2023), and Silva and Hypolito (2021) add arguments by emphasizing that some discourses about Enem constitute

strategies of neoliberal governmentality through which the governance of teaching in the New High School (NEM, in the Portuguese acronym) occurs in a context of privatization of Education. According to these researchers, besides not promoting democratization through access to training and job opportunities, Enem is being signified from “[...] the neoliberal discourse, as a salvational and entrepreneurial discourse of education” (Silva; Hypolito, 2021, p. 159). Therefore, the Examination cannot escape submission to a context of neoliberal advancement that invests in the privatization of public services accompanied by a “[...] withdrawal of the State, a withdrawal made by the State itself, after all, to impose the neoliberal model, it is known that the state action is fundamental; however, the action of the State is against itself, favoring the market” (Andrade, 2023, p. 11).¹⁰

Both favorable and unfavorable arguments regarding the Examination reinforce the indispensability of considering the “Founding texts” of the New Enem since they constitute conditions of production of the discourse about the Examination, which is why they will be addressed.

Ordinance No. 109/2009, the first document of the transition proposal to the New Enem, lists general information to the participant and preliminary assessment criteria. Among them, we highlight the non-obligatory participation of 2009 High School graduates. Ordinance No. 109/2009 also presents the objectives of a test that was being institutionalized as a tool to assist the participant in deciding about his or her future “[...] both regarding the job market and further studies”, according to its article 2, item I (Brasil, 2009a).

Four of the seven proposed objectives are linked to future academic and/or career propositions, predominating the perspective of commitment to the future of high school students. Starting in 2009, the Examination began to be structured based on the following documents: Curricular Guidelines for High School (Brasil, 2006) and Enem Reference Matrix 2009

¹⁰ These studies will not be analyzed further as they are not part of the main purpose of the research. However, besides Andrade (2023), Dourado and Sales (2023), and Silva and Hypolito (2021), we highlight investigations that, supported by the materialist analytical-discursive framework, worked with the discourse of the Common National Curricular Base (BNCC), the legal framework of the New High School, and textbooks from the National Program of the Book and Didactic Material (PNLD) 2021, drawing attention to the rhetoric of entrepreneurship produced by these materials. The studies we mention, which were part of our reading inventory, are as follows: Duarte (2023) and Lopes (2019a, 2019b, 2021).

(Brasil, 2009b). In the Guidelines, the knowledge areas are stipulated as follows: Languages, Codes and their Technologies; Natural Sciences, Mathematics and their Technologies; and Human Sciences and their Technologies. The Enem Reference Matrix is a document that describes the competencies and skills required of students and lists the program content of the Examination. These determinations promote an indirect change in the High School curriculum. In the same year, MEC issued a new Ordinance, No. 244, of October 22, 2009 (Brasil, 2009c), which amended the previous Ordinance, updating dates and procedures due to the second application of the test that year. After the fraud reported by the newspaper *Estadão*¹¹, more items were added to the participant's exclusion conditions.

In the following year, 2010, Ordinance No. 807 was issued, which established Enem as an assessment procedure aimed at ascertaining whether the participant demonstrates mastery of “[...] scientific and technological principles that govern modern production and knowledge of contemporary forms of language” (Brasil, 2010c). In 2010, Announcement No. 4, of September 24, was released, which presented two aspects already foreseen in Ordinance No. 807/2010: the possibility given to individuals deprived of liberty and young people undergoing socio-educational measures for taking the Examination; assistance for people with disabilities, as well as differentiated assistance for these participants (Brasil, 2010a). In addition, a section is dedicated to using Enem results for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) selections as an alternative or complementary mechanism through SiSU. Although the objectives of the test were not expanded, they were reduced in Announcement No. 4 of 2010; however, this does not mean that the importance of the Examination has been diminished. Policies for using the test results as a selection criterion in HEIs have been intensified. Also, in 2010, a new Announcement (No. 18, of December 8, 2010) was published due to the need to reapply the test (Brasil, 2010b).

As for Announcement No. 7, of May 18, 2011, it refers to the administration of the Examination in the year 2011. Two items were added in the section explaining the test results' uses: the implementation of public policies and the establishment of participant access criteria to government programs (Brasil, 2011a). The evaluation criterion of the institutions, established in 2009, is not present in this Announcement. This is significant because, from 1998 until this

¹¹ Retrieved from: <https://educacao.uol.com.br/ultnot/2009/10/01/ult105u8763.jhtm>. Accessed on: Jan 2nd 2020.

Announcement, the Enem test was used as a large-scale evaluation instrument that created a parameter regarding contents and learning in High School. Another change in the evaluation was the calculation of proficiency results in the objective tests, which became based on Item Response Theory (IRT). The new essay correction model was also presented in Announcement No. 7/2011, specifying the correction format between two independent correctors, with the textual production being evaluated by a third corrector in case there is a difference of more than 300 points between both corrections. The criteria for invalidating the essay test are set out in this document.

Normative Ordinance No. 16, of July 27, 2011, informs the criteria for certification of High School completion based on Enem (Brasil, 2011b). Announcement No. 3 of May 24, 2012, which repeats that of 2010, presents the guidelines for participation in the Exam in 2012 (Brasil, 2012). Specificities of differentiated assistance offered in this edition were added (people with low vision, blindness, physical disabilities, hearing impairment, deafness, intellectual (mental) disabilities, deafblindness, dyslexia, attention deficit, autism, pregnant women, breastfeeding women, elderly people, students in hospital classes or other disabling conditions) (Brasil, 2012). Specific assistance is also offered to Sabbatarians. Subsequent Announcements— No. 01, of May 8, 2013 (Brasil, 2013), and No. 12, of May 8, 2014 (Brasil, 2014) – do not change the 2010 Announcement, except for information on the date and time of the test administration. In 2015, Notice No. 6 of May 15, 2015, included the option for transgender or transsexual participants to be attended by their chosen name (Brasil, 2015). The presence of human rights violations within the proposal of textual production in the essay is described as an elimination criterion of the Examination. Announcement No. 10 of April 14, 2016 (Brasil, 2016) does not amend the previous ones.

From the first approach to documents related to the institutionalization of the New Enem, it was noticed that it gradually became a tool of greater inclusion, given the care regarding the participation of different groups. Likewise, individuals who underwent their Education under conditions of deprivation of liberty or compliance with socio-educational measures, as well as individuals with disabilities, were considered. Such care reveals a concern with expanding the possibility of taking the Examination in such a way as to include different individuals without their histories or conditions being configured as impediments.

Allowing participants to use their chosen names during the test solidifies the inclusive nature of the evaluation, facilitating the involvement of historically marginalized groups, who have the right to be acknowledged by the names they identify with. Moreover, by stipulating the presence of arguments violating human rights as an elimination criterion in the essay test, Enem aligns itself coherently with the National Plan of Education in Human Rights. (Brasil, 2007)¹².

Every discourse is a complex of processes that point to different conditions. If the New Enem is thought of from the intersection of its “Founding texts,” we can assert that the conditions of production of the discourse of the New Enem correspond to a particular historical period considered here (2009 to 2016), in which a series of decisions and political options proposed not only the increasingly comprehensive inclusion of different social groups but also revealed concerns with the attention to the singularities of such groups. Moreover, when the results were used to classify high schools, the Examination slid into another field of meaning. It became articulated in the participants’ decisions about the path to follow – the world of work, the continuation of education, or both.

Paradoxically, this same Examination is not immune to the determination of conditions of production that, as elucidated by Duarte (2023) and Nogueira (2015), also reveal the alignment between Education and the market. As a standardized large-scale assessment that fulfills certain functions, the Enem was created and maintained in a political-ideological conjuncture in which governments are associated with

[...] political practices subservient to globalization (which erases differences) that have regulated local relations in school, in the company, at work, in the family, in short, in different social institutions, producing an alignment of local and national policies with global agendas, often to the detriment of local priorities and community needs (Duarte, 2023, p. 83-84).

¹² The National Plan of Education in Human Rights (PNEDH), established in 2007, is “[...] the result of the State's commitment to the realization of human rights and a historical construction of organized civil society. While deepening issues of the National Program of Human Rights, the PNEDH, incorporates aspects of the main international human rights documents of which Brazil is a signatory, adding old and contemporary demands of our society for the realization of democracy, development, social justice, and the construction of a culture of peace” (Brasil, 2007, p. 11).

The objectives analyzed below emerged in such a time and, thus, are also constituted by this externality. It is imperative, therefore, to consider the discourse of the Enem and the power relations at play within it.

Analysis

As for the two “Founding texts” of the New Enem that make up the *corpus*, we cast a discursive look at the objectives expressed in the documents under analysis, paying attention to the verbs used – “offer,” “structure,” “enable,” “create,” “promote,” and “assess” (discursive marks). For the reflection on the highlighted marks, we were inspired by a trajectory outlined by Pêcheux and Fuchs (2010) based on three interdependent movements: they are explored from what the dictionary says about them, from a syntactic point of view, and from the point of view of Materialist Discourse Analysis.

All the verbs that comprise the objectives are in the infinitive verbal-nominal form, without conjugation marking. This verbal form is mainly used when there is no defined subject and/or to define, and the clause focuses on expressing the action, not on who performs it. DS1 – “to *offer* a reference so that each citizen can carry out their own self-assessment with a view to their future choices, both in relation to the world of work and continuing their studies” – encompasses the verb of the Examination’s first objective: “to offer.” Some possible definitions for the phrase “to offer” are:

To present or propose, as a gift or loan; to offer, to give voluntarily, to obtain something in return; to submit; to make or say with religious intent; to expose. To agree with something; to accept; to offer or propose to do something. To provide the conditions for obtaining something; to allocate something to someone, with affection; to offer as a sacrifice; to make something available or in service of. To offer to view; to make oneself known; to present oneself; to demonstrate sexual interest in someone. To throw a party, a reception, a lunch, etc., to honor someone, celebrate a date, gather friends, etc. (Definition of Offer, 2015).

Through what is offered, structured, enabled, created, promoted, and assessed? Through Enem. Who has this intention? Government policies that proposed changes to the Exam from

2009 onwards. Although grammar allows us to think of these verbs as uninflected since the subject is not stated, and the focus of the clause is on expressing the action, not the agent of it, considering the conditions of production of the discourses of the New Enem, we can affirm that there is an unsaid subject. The State, represented by the MEC and, by extension, by the INEP, is the unsaid subject that uses the Enem to achieve the stated objectives. The choice of the aforementioned verbs, not others, resonates with specific intentions articulated with such policies.

Passing through the surface of language allows us to recognize stabilized meanings of words without the work ending in this movement. From it unfolds the desuperficialization of language through its consideration as a discursive object since language is not transparent, and the relationship between words and things is not natural or direct. Language is opaque. And it is impossible for the subject to control the meanings, even though they are deluded by ideological and referential forgetting¹³.

Thinking in terms of the discursive process and the effects of meanings produced, it is necessary to insert a perspective that allows us to consider these relationships at the utterance level. What meanings are produced? The meanings behind a proposal and the creation of conditions for something to happen. For what to happen? A “[...] self-assessment with a view to [...] future choices, both in relation to the world of work and in relation to continuing studies” (DS1). In other words, the subject can analyze their possibilities and make decisions about the design of their future itineraries. The meaning of evaluation as self-assessment reverberates; a learning task through which the subject can think about the paths followed and to be followed. If we were to play a game of substitutions, considering all the definitions, we would have the objective set out in Chart 1 below.

¹³ Forgetting No. 1, or ideological forgetting, denotes the subject's illusion of being the origin of what he says and is of the order of the unconscious. Forgetting No. 2, or referential forgetting (of the order of enunciation), corresponds to the establishment of a natural relationship between words and things (Pêcheux; Fuchs, 2010).

Chart 1 - Paraphrastic relations: *offer*

To offer	a reference so that each citizen can carry out their own self-assessment with a view to their future choices, both in relation to the world of work and continuing their studies.	
To present or propose		
To voluntarily give	a reference	With the objective of getting something in return.
		so that each citizen can carry out their own self-assessment with a view to their future choices, both in relation to the world of work and continuing their studies.
To provide conditions	a reference [which involves taking the Examination]	to achieve something.
		so that each citizen can carry out their own self-assessment with a view to their future choices, both in relation to the world of work and continuing their studies.
to provide	a reference so that each citizen can carry out their own self-assessment with a view to their future choices, both in relation to the world of work and continuing their studies.	
To put something	a reference	at the disposal or service of
		so that each citizen can carry out their own self-assessment with a view to their future choices, both in relation to the world of work and continuing their studies.

Source: prepared by the authors.

The substitution of the word “offer” invites us to ask questions. What does the New Enem present or propose? It is possible to deduce that the Examination proposes to be a reference at the disposal or service of the subject so that they can consider their future choices based on the tests and also that the reference (in this case, the Examination) proposes to provide conditions for the participant to carry out their self-assessment based on the results obtained. What does the New Enem present or propose? For whom? The Examination will serve to inform the future choices of each participant.

The New Enem is more than a test taken by a participant and is not limited to a single, isolated act. This Examination is part of a larger process that involves continuing the education journey, entering the job market or, perhaps, both - which is reiterated in the following two objectives: “*to structure an evaluation at the end of Basic Education that serves as an alternative or complementary modality to the selection processes in the different sectors of the world of work*” (DS2) and “*to structure an evaluation at the end of Basic Education that serves as an alternative or complementary modality to entrance exams for vocational courses, post-secondary education, and Higher Education*” (DS3).

As stated in the fifth objective, these possibilities are linked to other government actions and programs that the subject can benefit from and/or participate in, “*to create conditions for access to government programs*” (DS5). It is possible to see an opening for each individual to take a leading role in their future choices. The conditions of production of the Examination point to the fact that it is linked to government programs and actions, such as ProUni, which enables individuals in poor social situations to access higher Education insofar as the result is used as a selection criterion for students who intend to apply for a scholarship.

Through this process, it was possible to identify a *network effect of meaning* since the conditions of production of the New Enem discourse point to a potential link between the Examination and government programs and initiatives aimed at reducing distances between students through access to spaces that are usually occupied by a still small part of society. In addition, we perceive the *protagonism effect of meaning* since the first objective refers to the subject’s choices about their future. According to the results obtained in the tests, possibilities of study, work, or study and work are brought by government programs.

The effects of meanings produced by DS1, DS2, DS3, and DS5 lead us to think about the relationship between the New Enem discourse and the discursive formation(s), seeking to understand the links between these and ideology. This link allows us to conclude that these effects of meaning can be brought together in the same DF - the *Enem Discursive Formation (DF Enem)*. How are the discursive processes responsible for the effects of meaning produced by the symbolic material whose formulation we are analyzing constituted? If ideology, as Pêcheux (2010) explains, is constitutive of subjects and meanings, how is it working? Which ideological formation is the DF Enem part of?

In this context, we pay attention to the relationship between ideologies and discourse, with the discursive being understood as one of its “material aspects” (Courtine, 2014). It follows that an IF comprises one or more Dfs. In this analysis, it is possible to speak of the DF Enem as a material aspect of an IF - the *Political-Educational Ideological Formation (PEIF)*. As we can see, in the “Founding texts” of the New Enem, the expansion of the offer and the care taken to make the Examination accessible, we can perceive a citizen nature in the evaluation - which is clearly expressed in the Announcements that were characterized by an effort to bring together groups

previously not mentioned in the documents that guide and organize the New Enem as a whole.

Having identified the DFs and IFs, we still have to ask ourselves: When “offer” is mentioned in the first objective analyzed (DS1), what is stabilized? What returns? What breaks with the already given? In the history of education in our country, discourses circulate about how education is associated with the promise of social mobility. By proposing the New Enem as a reference for self-assessment, from which the citizen will be able to regulate future choices and be included in actions that allow access to the world of Higher Education and the world of work, meaning of Education committed to something better returns, given that, through it, the individual may gain other opportunities.

By proposing that the participant makes a choice about their own future, taking into account their individual interests, we reiterate DS1 produces a *protagonism effect of meaning*, in which the participant can opt for the alternative that suits them. In addition, DS1 proposes that the Exam be “a reference for each citizen to carry out their own self-assessment,” which suggests that the participant can autonomously regulate their self-assessment based on a parameter (the test itself). Self-sufficiency is given to the participant, who can diagnose their performance, considering the path they want to take, and access opportunities regarding their future choices.

These possibilities are linked to a network of governmental actions and programs that were part of the political contexts surrounding Brazil in the period coinciding with the New Enem: Programa de Ensino Tutorial (PROEX), de 2003; ProUni, de 2004; Programa Incluir, de 2004/2005; Programa Nacional de Integração da Educação Profissional com a Educação Básica na Modalidade de Educação de Jovens e Adultos (Proeja), de 2005; Programa de Ensino Tutorial (PET), de 2005; Programa de Apoio a Planos de Reestruturação e Expansão das Universidades Federais (REUNI), de 2007; Programa de Formação Inicial em Serviço dos Profissionais da Educação Básica dos Sistemas de Ensino Público (Profucionário), de 2007; Plano Nacional de Assistência Estudantil (Pnaes), de 2008; Programa Instituições de Educação Superior - Ministério da Educação/Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico (IES-MEC/BNDS), de 2009; Rede Nacional de Certificação Profissional (Rede Certific), de 2009; Bolsa Permanência de 2010; Programa Nacional Mulheres Mil em 2011; Programa Nacional de Acesso ao Ensino Técnico e

Emprego (Pronatec), de 2011; Programa de Estímulo à Reestruturação e ao Fortalecimento das Instituições de Ensino Superior (Proies), de 2012; Pacto Nacional pelo Fortalecimento do Ensino Médio, de 2013; Idioma sem Fronteiras, de 2014. Not all of them are directly related to Enem. Still, they are all the result of decisions and choices that affect public services such as Education as much as the Examination.

From this, a new effect of meaning is derived: an examination as a promoter of citizenship due to the possibility of some articulation between specific government programs and actions and the access arising from the communication between them and the test. This effect of meaning leads to the prospect of an examination that promotes the autonomy of the participant, an emancipatory evaluation. According to Ana Maria Saul (2010), emancipatory evaluation has two basic objectives: to illuminate the path of transformation and to benefit audiences in the sense of making them self-determined. Committed to the future, this process can allow the individual, through critical awareness, to give direction to their actions in the contexts in which they find themselves. For the author, the subject, subjected to emancipatory evaluation, emerges as capable of participating and building in the social environment in which they are inserted in a process of total autonomy. However, when we combine the *assessment as a promoter of citizenship effect of meaning* with the concept of emancipatory evaluation, we can see that the latter is updated in the light of the former. By requiring the evaluation to be articulated with public policies, it presupposes establishing a relationship between the school and other social institutions. It is, therefore, an *emancipatory evaluation in a network*.

The effects of meanings identified from the analysis of DS1 - *network, protagonism, evaluation as a promoter of citizenship, and emancipatory evaluation in a network* - start from a protagonist subject position (SP). However, when we return to DS1, we see, as previously stated, that the reference offered is the Examination itself. Therefore, an already-said returns: the conception of evaluation, and even of Education, as an instrument or lever for promoting better living conditions and, consequently, social mobility.

The discourse returns to a concept that has taken deep root in our country, established in the 1980s, and links education to social mobility and better possibilities. The issue of returning to school can also be seen as being surrounded by another myth, that of the idealization of school

or the “fruitful illusion,” as elucidated by Marília Sposito (2010). The author demonstrates the need to know expressed by the working classes who saw and possibly still see, the opportunity for social ascension through schooling. By fighting for school and education, the working classes aim for better qualifications and, by extension, greater chances of entering the world of work with fair wages. This “illusion” is important because of the mobilization for respect for the right to Education and, contradictorily, insufficient, revealing itself as a kind of “bait,” since the relationship between Education and better living conditions is not confirmed so often in a capitalist social formation tensioned by class struggle and unequal income distribution.

This analysis reveals an antagonism between subject positions within the *DF Enem*. The *protagonist SP*, an agent of their own choices, is confronted by a *patient SP* who suffers the effects of the evaluation. The litigation recognized in the *DF Enem* provokes us to think about what the political aspect means in DA. According to Orlandi (2015, p. 68), the political aspect is “[...] the symbolization of the power relations present in the text”. It is, therefore, thought of from the point of view of the power relations between subject positions and rival meanings at play in the DF. From the discursive analysis of SD1, subject positions and meanings in dispute were identified, authorizing the assertion that the New Enem is a field of both educational conflicts, as it involves the clash between controversial paradigms, and political disputes, as it embodies the confrontation between different worldviews and proposals for society.

During the analytical process, we noticed that from DS2 to DS7, there is detail on how the Examination results will be used, thus complementing DS1. Through this, it is possible to understand what the New Enem wants and what the New Enem is - which could lead us to think of DS2, DS3, DS4, DS5, DS6, and DS7 as part of the same field of meaning. Considering the document’s structure that presents the objectives, we understand that the first objective can be assumed to be the general objective of the section, which produces an *effect of meaning related to the purpose or justification of the exam*. Objectives 2 to 7 would be the specific objectives of the test, which complement the first and show how Enem will achieve what it sets out to do. They produce a *condition of possibility effect of meaning*. As we highlighted earlier, the 2010 document modifies the structure of the objectives and concentrates them in a single article. According to this Ordinance, the New Enem is responsible for (DS8) assessing whether the

participant in the Examination, at the end of high school, demonstrates mastery of the scientific and technological principles that govern modern production and knowledge of contemporary forms of language.

What is the New Enem? An “evaluation procedure”. The term “reference” (DS1) is replaced by “evaluation procedure” (DS8). The exchange of lexical elements leads us to the perception that the Examination changes the perspective of the test present in the objectives of the 2009 document because, by being qualified as an “evaluation procedure” and no longer as a “reference,” a process of summarization of the referent takes place. The Examination, once described as an instrument that enabled the participant to self-assess, is now defined as an evaluation whose purpose is to test the participant.

The *evaluation as a reference effect of meaning* is maintained in the objective of the 2010 document since Enem does not cease to be one, both because of what was said in the previous document and because there is still concern about how the exam results will be used. However, other power relations are at play in DS8, allowing us to speculate on tensions and clashes between the evaluation as a reference effect of meaning for the participant and the evaluation as a way of examining the participant effect of meaning.

When enunciated in DS8 as an “evaluation procedure,” the New Enem makes it possible to suspect that greater importance is attributed to measuring the participant’s skills and competencies by means of a test, with the sense of articulating the results with the participant’s future choices fading. Given this, what is the imaginary young person desired by the New Enem? DS8 presents the desired participant as competent in scientific and technological areas. They must also prove their knowledge of multiple languages. Because of this perspective, that the participant needs to demonstrate their competence in the areas determined by the Examination, an *evaluation as a measurement of the subject’s knowledge effect of meaning* is produced. By proposing itself as a tool that will measure how much the participant has mastered, or not, in specific areas, not only a particular effect of meaning is constituted, but also a *competent subject-position* (CSP) to which a participant is subjected and from whom the assertion of the capacities considered necessary in the established components is expected.

The evaluation as a measurement of the subject’s knowledge effect of meaning and the

CSP produced by “measuring” provoke us to think about “what is said there, but also in other places,” linking these statements to the discourses of the High School Reform and the National Common Curriculum Base (BNCCC), in which Lopes (2019c, p. 75) found a constitutive contradiction:

[...] at the same time as the document recommends that “historically constructed knowledge” be valued, with “value” implying a meaning of importance, it also makes it clear that the subject needs to learn how to use it, i.e. apply it, with the word “use” implying a certain meaning of useful knowledge and a subject that will be valued if he or she is useful in the competent performance of tasks involving this useful knowledge. The concept that knowledge is constructed and evolves over time due to its historical nature is juxtaposed with the emphasis on practical utility, as articulated extensively in the ten competencies and throughout the BNCC. This emphasis tends to diminish knowledge not as a realm of understanding, but as a mere tool for application, thereby reducing the individual to a mere “implementer” of these tools.

If knowledge is taken as things-to-implement and the subject as an implementer of these things, a particular meaning of evaluation as *a procedure through which things-to-implement/apply are measured* circulates in Enem’s discourse, resulting in a measurement whose criterion is the subject’s ability to implement these things. What has already been said about assessment, about Education, the educational, pedagogical, and political sayings that have signified (and continue to signify) the meanings of assessment and Education, to a certain extent, are signifying DS8 as well as the other DSs. Meanings that have already been said by someone, somewhere, come back in DS8: “They are meanings summoned by the formulation” (Orlandi, 2015, 2015, p. 31). The *interdiscourse* (the already-said) prompts us to contemplate the idea of categorizing DS8 (what is currently being articulated) as a collection of discourses, acknowledging its historical context and emphasizing political and ideological commitments that appear to view Education as “a means by which working with practical knowledge can empower individuals to be utilitarian” – an aspect to be assessed through the “evaluation process” in which the New Enem is formed.

The New Enem proposes a test that no longer aims to enable the participant to take it as a resource for self-assessment but instead assesses something, someone, or both. The New

Enem becomes a classification exam according to the results obtained. The Examination evaluates the participant and, in doing so, once established as an evaluation procedure, its function is to estimate the participant's mastery of certain knowledge. This condition is expressed in Ordinance 807/2010 (Brasil, 2010c).

According to Althusser (2008), in a capitalist social formation, the workforce must not be produced blindly but with the appropriate "skills" so that it is able to move the system of the production process, diversifying and qualifying the workforce for its different "posts" and "jobs." The New Enem acts to regulate the school system and other social institutions so that these "competencies" are guaranteed. The New Enem, therefore, acts in solidarity with a neoliberal agenda which, as Duarte (2023, p. 94) points out, presupposes a minimum State and a maximum subject who is "[...] solely responsible for their own happiness, all they have to do is agree to do what they have to do".

What is the subject supposed to do? Demonstrate "mastery of the scientific and technological principles that govern modern production" and "knowledge of contemporary forms of language" in order to obtain a successful result in the standardized large-scale assessment whose purpose is to measure these competencies of the participant. Ideologically interpellated into a subject-participant of the Examination, the identification-interpellation seems "strangely familiar" (Pêcheux, 2009, p. 144). In formulating the concept of the "strangely familiar," Pêcheux refers to the illusion of the subject thinking of himself as the origin of discourse. If taken from Althusser (2008) and his understanding of the mechanism of the subject's constitution through interpellation by ideology, it will also be possible to think about the game behind the reproduction of exploitative relations. These relations need to be reproduced to maintain the social formation. For this to happen, it is equally fundamental to realize that one is "free" and that everyone is "free" - even more so, that it is impossible to have a subject without "freedom."

The rituals experienced by the participants, from preparing for the exam, taking it, waiting for the result, and, if they get a significant score, celebrating it, correspond to ideological practices that result in a certain capture of the subject. From a given moment, under the evidence of belonging to a group, the participant who was uncertain/unsure of the result

becomes the participant who passed, thanks to their effort and competence. It could be said that the test taker has the experience of being “free,” at the center of initiatives, and responsible for their actions. However, this experience is subject to an authority, implying both the loss of “freedom” and the “free” acceptance of submission. Ideology, therefore, works by interpellating the individual as a “free” subject so that they submit, also in a “free” way, to orders that are external to them and imposed through ideological practices such as the rituals to which they have “freely” submitted.

All ideology exists by the subject and for the subjects because the functioning of ideology depends on the existence of the subject. The subject is the means by which ideology materializes into practice. The subject category exists in all ideologies; man, therefore, “[...] is, by nature, an ideological animal”. This nature prevents us from questioning the very possibility of not being subjects. Placing ourselves as subjects in an obvious way is what Pêcheux (2009) calls the “elementary ideological effect.”

To explain why the category of subject is constitutive of ideology, Althusser (2008, p. 212) states that “[...] all ideology interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects through the functioning of the category of subject”. With this statement, the philosopher explains that the action of ideology consists of “recruiting” concrete subjects from among concrete individuals or “transforming” individuals into subjects. The recruitment of subjects among individuals, or the transformation of concrete individuals into concrete subjects, takes place through the act of interpellation, which is represented by the author through the banal action of interpellation carried out by the police when they say: “Hey! You!” Pêcheux (2010) uses this assumption of ideology as the interpellation of the individual into a subject, thus as a determining concept in the formation of discourse and the subject.

These analytical gestures allow us to talk about another *SP - that of the submissive participant*. The participant is finishing basic Education and is challenged by a certain “Hey! You!” from which they perceive themselves to be recognized. To paraphrase Pêcheux (2010), this same high school student hears that “a participant in the New Enem does not back down.” As a result, they recognize themselves as subject (ideology tells them what they are) and are interpellated not to give up (ideology tells them what they should be and how they should act). They will

submit themselves to a classificatory assessment in which they will be judged based on the quantification of their knowledge, perhaps establishing an order among all the subjects taking part in the Examination. With the recognition of this SP, we return to DS1 and the subject-positions identified earlier - the *protagonist SP* and *the agent of choices SP in conflict with the patient SP*.

In DS1, it is stated that the subject-student sees themselves through the assessment, as they self-assess and “choose” what to do with their results, even if they are subjected to a “fruitful illusion”, according to which Education can be a lever for a different future. The *effect of the subject’s submission to something* returns in DS8: the participant takes an exam in order to perhaps be the protagonist; however, in order to be the protagonist, they need to demonstrate their competence without necessarily playing the most important role. In DS8, the evaluation speaks of and thinks of the participant, which creates a barrier between the subject and their leading role since it does not recognize the leading role as a primary possibility. The leading role is played by the Examination.

The DF Enem, which constitutes the *Political-Educational IF*, indicates “what can and should be said” (and also what cannot and should not be said) at a certain juncture with regard not only to large-scale assessment processes, such as the New Enem but also in relation to the curricular practices through which the subjects participating in the Examination and secondary school students will be trained.

Althusser (2008) proposes that society interpellates, “calls” through ideology. It highlights the subject as singularly valuable. It calls this subject by name, identifying them among the mass of individuals. Its effectiveness is guaranteed by the state to the extent that it generates mechanisms aimed at perpetuating/reproducing the material, ideological, and political conditions of exploitation in a society subject to the demands of the global market, which regulates educational policies and curricular practices. Added to this process is a regulation that is taking shape determined by the “[...] reorganization of labor relations” (Nogueira, 2015, p. 59). Such regulation is consolidated thanks to ideas having secured material existence through the practices that these ideas entail. These practices convince subjects who, ideologically interpellated, are signified by discourses that position them in a place of possibility of

achievement, success, and recognition consistent with the neoliberal rationality from which Education has been forged.

Conclusions

In order to map out the paths that led Enem to become a national public policy present in various spheres of our society, the process of institutionalizing the test was detailed by looking at the documents that supported it from 2009 onwards - a moment characterized as the emergence of a “New Enem.” This detail referred to the conditions in which the discourses analyzed in this paper emerged. In addition, concepts were mobilized to understand the discursive processes determined by these production conditions.

When producing an utterance, the subject also produces a gesture of interpretation that inscribes him/her in the interdiscourse (historically repeatable), founding meanings in which other meanings have already been installed. The subject is affiliated to a discursive formation, and the analyst can identify convergent or divergent subject positions in the discourse. Assuming this work commitment, from the position of discourse analysts and inspired by Pêcheux and Fuchs (2010), we explored the discursive sequences that make up the corpus from their dictionary meanings, passing through the syntactic point of view until we arrived at the perspective of materialist discourse analysis.

From the analysis of DS1 to DS7, we initially identified the *evaluation as self-assessment that promotes citizenship and emancipation in a network and protagonism effects of meanings*: the participating subject is given the opportunity to make future choices based on the Examination because it is not an isolated practice but in connection with government programs and actions that aim to reduce educational and social disparities. The *subject-positions of the protagonist* and the *agent of choices* were constituted by these effects of meanings. Therefore, considering the relationship between what is said and what is not said (but means) in the materiality, we can understand that the objectives of the New Enem, as expressed in Ordinance 109/2009 (Brasil, 2009a), lead us to believe that it would be possible for students to choose their future based on the results of the Examination. Based on the analysis of the DSs and the effects

of meanings and subject-positions produced by them, we can group them into the same DF: the DF Enem, which, in turn, is inscribed in a *Political-Educational Ideological Formation (PEIF)* that determines it.

Returning to DS1 shows us that the *DF Enem* is not characterized by homogeneity. There is a situation of dispute between meanings and subject-positions. DS1 points to the Examination as the sole reference for evaluating the participant, with the result depending exclusively on whether or not the participant gets opportunities to study, work, or study and work - which diminishes the protagonist role of a participant who then becomes discursive based on the regulation exercised by the test. The *assessment as a promise effect of meaning* brings back a memory that associates Education with personal progress, implying that better alternatives and prospects depend on the Examination, or rather, on adequate performance in it. This not only takes up a discourse linked to the myth of the “fruitful illusion” (Sposito, 2010) but updates it: schooling is not said to guarantee success because the focus is shifted to a certain type of large-scale assessment that establishes the place to be occupied by the participant and the (im)possible movements for them in the future.

The analysis highlights an antagonism between the effects of meaning inscribed in the *DF Enem: evaluation as self-assessment, promoter of citizenship and emancipatory in a network, and evaluation as a means of social mobility and/or life improvement and as a promise. The subject positions of protagonist and agent of choices* contrast with those of *patient and competent*, with the secondary school student being seen as the one who, perhaps deluded, suffers the effects of the evaluation. A clash emerges between rival educational and social conceptions. The discursive analysis of DS1 reveals a dispute between subject positions and meanings, indicating that the New Enem is a field of educational disputes, with clashes between controversial paradigms, and political disputes involving conflicts between different worldviews and proposals for society.

Both meanings and subjects are being constituted in a constant movement of the symbolic and history as a function of power relations. It could be said that the position occupied by the subject of discourse - for example, *protagonist subject-position, agent of choices subject-position or patient subject-position, competent subject-position* - unfolds in effects of meanings

in struggle through the relations of force imprinted by the discursive sequences isolated in Ordinances No. 109/2009 and No. 807/2010. This contentious relationship is reinforced in the continuity of the analysis.

In DS8, it is possible to infer tensions and clashes between the *evaluation as a reference for the participant effect of meaning and the evaluation as a way of examining the participant effect of meaning*. Thus, the New Enem, proposed as a self-assessment tool, has come to be discourses as a classifying exam through which mastery of certain knowledge is estimated and, according to the results obtained, the participant is classified. As a result, the participant is summoned by the discourse to establish a particular way of relating to the Examination, because, in the relations of force, as they are presented in a hierarchical society, the position they reach depends on whether or not they are socially legitimized and valued.

The participant depends on the Examination and is fully responsible for his or her success or failure. The production of the meanings of the Examination takes place from the place where the sayings are constituted: in the case of this study, the place of the legal acts that deliberate on curricular practices in the country, the place of the representatives who promote educational policies (politicians, businessmen, managers). And the power relations are as much backed by the power of these places as they are present in the Enem discourse. Therefore, the way in which power relations are symbolized can be observed in the discourse of Ordinances No. 109/2009 and No. 807/2010 because the play of these relations is signified in the discourse and by the discourse.

Furthermore, just as no subject is immune to ideology, no discourse is unaffected by an ideological formation. Thus, the Enem discourse is linked to an ideological formation - *PEIF* - which, from the documents through which educational policies are manifested and executed, makes education work in a way in which the practice of instrumentalizing students for the successful performance of tasks predominates.

Finally, by theorizing about subjection and interpellation, based on Althusser (2008), we discuss another subject position: the submissive SP, which subordinates itself to be evaluated and judged based on the measurement of its knowledge. Thus, conflicting subject positions were identified - *protagonist SP, agent of choices SP, patient SP, competent SP, and submissive SP*.

They are inscribed in the *DF Enem* and due to the relationship of alliance and antagonism they maintain, they authorize us to affirm the heterogeneity of a discursive formation in which different discourses are present. Discourses that establish relationships with each other. Discourses that intersect with others.

The New Enem discourse includes other discourses - the discourse of Education as a promise, the “discourse of opportunity” (Silva; Hypolito, 2021), and the discourse of entrepreneurship - with which it establishes alliance relationships that support a neoliberal rationality that contributes to the construction of the entrepreneurial subject and a society focused on competition. However, it also includes the discourse of the protagonism of the subject. For this reason, the *DF Enem* authorizes knowledge that gives meaning to the evaluation in a tense place between the practice of self-assessment produced by the subject and the instrument of regulation used on the subject.

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