

Ecolinguistics, Speciesism, Emotion and Transposition in Multimodal Texts: Official Narratives in Youtube

Diego L. Forte

National Food Quality and Health Inspection Service, Argentina

Article information	Abstract
DOI : 10.25077/jds.2.2.98-110.2025 Correspondence : dforte@senasa.gov.ar	<p>Narratives play a central role in our daily lives. They organize to the possibilities of our culturally bounded material world by teaching the roles, processes and emotional parameters of our particular community. Through social life, we acquire a framework of references to interpret our experiences and negotiate meanings (Bruner & Haste, 1990). But narratives do not stand still in a material support. Since their oral origins, they have move to stone, codex, books, digital formats and countless material ways to transmit them. This is to say they transpose from one media to other and from one genre to other, adapting itself to the possibilities each support/genre offers. Modern media and genres involve nowadays multimodal texts, which means that there is also a movement from one mode to another (Lim and Tan-Chia, 2023: 90). By definition legislative and legal genres constitute a part of the legal framework established by government officials to address complex societal issues (Dimok, 2012: 338). As discourse, they involve a discursive and a social practice but, unlike many other genres, they provide material resources to protect the representations they include. Nevertheless, in their spirit of enforcing behaviours, legislative and legal genres present limitations. The same feature that grants them a high hierarchy also constrains their reach: normative language does not sell; it is not suitable for a mass audience. So, these meanings must be re-written into a broader construction for non-expert auditoriums. In this work we use ecolinguistics as main theoretical framework to investigate the construction and transposition of emotional meanings in food legislation regarding the 2019 Bird flu outbreak in Argentina. We adopt the systemic-functional tools proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2005) for image analysis; Ekman & Friesen (1978, 1986) and Ekman (2003) for facial expressions of emotion and Forte (2023a) for music analysis.</p>
Submission Track	
Submission : May 29, 2025 Final Review : July 06, 2025 Accepted : July 08, 2025	
Keywords	
Multimodal transposition, legislation, speciesism, emotion, ecolinguistics	

INTRODUCTION

Narratives play a central role in our daily lives. They organize to the possibilities of our culturally bounded material world by teaching the roles, processes and emotional parameters of our particular community. Through social life, we acquire a framework of references to interpret our experiences and negotiate meanings (Bruner & Haste, 1990). This is why we can say stories are never naïve; they establish meanings by both mention and omission. The context, the state of affairs in the world where a story develops, is always taken for granted. For example, the context of Little Red Riding Hood’s world when she goes to see her grandmother (Bruner, 2003) assumes a social structure that makes it possible for a little girl to travel alone through the woods, a world-view in which a wolf represents danger and in which lumber jacking is a possible activity, etc. Therefore, stories present a context in absence that we, as members of a society, learn to reconstruct because those elements appear overtly in other stories, playing a central role rather than being peripheral elements.

In a few words, narratives can be defined as sets of meanings assigning roles and unfolding processes in particular circumstances. But narratives are much more than that. According to Stibbe, narratives are how we understand the world, how we construct our vision of the world: our locus of concern, embracing our family, friends, our local environment, other people and places that are salient to us in some way,

and stretching into the past as far back as is relevant for us, and as far into the future as we have the imagination to care about (Stibbe, 2024: 14). They constitute the way we organize our experience and they materialize through different discursive genres.

But narratives do not stand still in a material support. Since oral origins they have moved to stone, codex, books, digital formats and countless material ways to transmit them. This is to say that, so-to-speak, a set of meanings moves –transposes – from one media to other and from one genre to other, adapting itself to the possibilities each support/genre offers. Modern media and genres involve nowadays multimodal texts, which means that there is also a movement from one mode to another (Lim and Tan-Chia, 2023: 90). This movement from one media to other and from one mode to another is the common way we experience narratives today (Lim and Tan-Chia, 2023: 89).

Most of our discursive experience is nowadays dominated by multimodal texts: we process verbal material but is often shaped or influenced by other modes such as visual, extra-verbal auditory, etc. In fact, unlike what happens to other species, let's say dogs for instance, sight is the dominant sensory mode in humans. Sight influences all we hear, smell, sense through our tactile system, etc. (Hutmacher, 2019). The visual and linguistic features of advertisements are designed to appeal to the emotions or impulses of the viewers, for success, health, beauty, etc. Persuasive techniques, such as the use of emotive words, convincing buyers' reviews, endorsement by a popular artist or public figure, cost savings and discounts, are designed to encourage the viewers to take action. (Lim & Tan-Chia, 2023: 39).

Thus, this operation of transposing meanings has consequences in the way we perceive a narrative because it introduces emotional elements, new meanings, making easier for the readers, viewers, hearers, etc. to relate with the meanings unfolded in the story.

THE NARRATIVE OF FOOD LEGISLATION

By definition legislative and legal genres constitute a part of the legal framework established by government officials to address complex societal issues (Dimok, 2012: 338). As discourse, they involve a discursive and a social practice but, unlike many other genres, they provide material resources to protect the representations they include. They are aimed to regulate behaviours and social contexts (Budassi & Cao, 2021) and to enforce different kinds of measures in the case of failure, deviation, transgression, etc. All discourses have an impact in social practices and regulate, in one way or another, behaviours; but legal and legislative also include the explicit use of force to do it.

In democratic systems, legal genres entail a certain degree of public acceptance: a legitimacy that comes from the fact that their pass involves discussion or, at least the public elections of the officials in charge of elaborate it. Although they can regulate arbitrary behaviours – and often they do – they still can be accepted because of the social convention involved in democracy. And once in force they are the parameter of what is right and what is wrong in legal terms and, for many people, in moral terms. So, in short, these discourses -legal forms for Foucault- define subjectivities, knowledge, and power relations (1978: 5). As a discursive practice, legislation constructs a social view of the world, this is, the particular representation a social group holds. But, as we have mentioned, as a social practice, it provides the resources to stimulate, favour and even force behaviours and actions in the material world. Its very existence guaranties the possibility of punishment in case of transgression. Considering the food industry, legislation has the power of transforming speciesist views in the official narrative, making them more difficult to challenge because of their official status.

At the beginning of the 21st century the food industry has become the cornerstone of the current state of capitalism. Climate crisis has put under scrutiny all industrial production and food processing practices are in the eye of the storm due their impact on the ecosystem and because it is the starting point of many other industries. Social conflict, understood as a process involving humans and non-humans is at the root the climate crisis and even though it is heavily questioned, the degree of legitimacy food industry

still holds remains substantial compared to, for example, pharmaceutical or textile industries (Barruti, 2013: 36). This legitimacy seems to be related to its own nature: food is a basic element for survival. We have to eat something. This sense of basic resource makes us to consume first and question social processes involved later.

In addition, a big part of the Western diet includes non-human animal origin products. The Western world has based its alimentary habits in meat and so-called animal products while in the East the opposite has occur (Haudricourt, 2019: 29). In Europe and European tradition territories non-humans have been commonly used also as working force, clothing, and entertainment (Hribal, 2012: 13). With the technological development of industrialism, during the 20th century, non-humans have gone from labour force and raw material to just raw material (Hribal, 2012; Forte, 2025). In early 21st-century capitalism, animals no longer work; they are merely processed to become food, clothing, and basic materials for the pharmaceutical, cosmetics, and other industries. Unlike what was common until the end of the 19th century, at the beginning our century, in the West, very few animals work. These are part of the entertainment industry or work for small food producers, rather than giant industries. The majority of non-humans not living in the wilds are processed for the various products industries can get from different parts of their bodies. Therefore, food industry is the foundation of several other industries such as textiles, synthetic rubber production, pharmaceutical supplements, cosmetics, jewellery, etc.

In terms of ideology and discourse, the situation above depicted is part of the common sense of the Western society (Raiter, 2003: 98). These speciesist representations have been moulded by Christian tradition, some currents of Greek thought (Newmyer, 2011), Cartesian mechanism and several others, and these meanings have become the dominant discourse on non-humans in the West. This is the food industry narrative and the correspondent legislation enforces it.

Nevertheless, in their spirit of enforcing behaviours, legislative and legal genres present limitations. The same feature that grants them a high hierarchy also constrains their reach: normative language does not sell; it is not suitable for a mass audience. So, these meanings must be re-written into a broader construction for non-expert auditoriums. In this rewriting, the hard structure of the genre is decomposed and some elements of the new genres allow for emotion and empathy.

ECOLINGUISTICS AS A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Although Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) claims to focus on the discursive construction of prejudices, most of their representatives seem to be more involved with those that affect humans directly: racism, xenophobia, gender discrimination, migrants and social class hate. It devotes most of its work to human social conflict and although its theory allows analysing speciesism and ecology, its theorists often chose not to do it. In this sense, ecolinguistics has picked up the gauntlet thrown by discursive studies about the relation between language, ecosystems and social conflict (Forte, 2024).

As a subdiscipline of linguistic studies, ecolinguistics positions itself as a transversal discipline in two senses: 1. It crosses different subfields such as sociolinguistics, pragmatics, discourse analysis, glottopolitics, ethnolinguistics, etc. and 2. binds together researchers from different geographies, which contributes to a heterogeneous perspective over the relationship between nature and social conflict. This heterogeneity can be sometimes conflictive because it allows including side by side ecological and environmental approaches along with speciesist views of nature. But this is not privative of ecolinguistics. Pezzeta has pointed out that many authors detail several conflicts between ecology and animal rights, for example, most of them related to the food industry (Pezzeta, 2018: 75-76).

In this work we distinguish between *environmental* (human centred, speciesist) and *ecological* (ecosystem centred) perspectives. In these terms, we use ecolinguistics as main theoretical framework to build an intersectional device to approach different social conflicts that can impact on nature and our human relation with other species and the ecosystem. We follow an ecological perspective to analyse the

way speciesist meanings transpose from a rigid written genre, legislation, to more flexible genres, audio-visual dissemination texts, and how emotion is involved in the process. We adopt the systemic-functional tools proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2005) for image analysis; Ekman & Friesen (1978, 1986) and Ekman (2003) for facial expressions of emotion and Forte (2023a) for music analysis.

Multimodal analysis and the textual construction of emotion

As we have previously mentioned, this investigation focuses on the transposition of meanings from legislation to dissemination texts. This means the transposition from a unidimensional -written -media to multimodal – audiovisual – ones. Transposition is a social-semiotic operation through which meanings change from one medium to another (Bermúdez, 2008: 2). If we think in books and their transposition to films, the process shows an expansion of meanings due to the multimodal resources audiovisual media can provide. For example, in *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* Joel and Ethan Cohen's film that constitutes a version of the Iliad and the Odyssey by Homer, the concept of transposition implies a series of transformations over different elements: time, setting, the nature of the journey made by the protagonists, etc., and all these changes have a visual impact but also affect the narrative. In this case, transposition moves from a medium constituted by one mode (written text) to a medium with multiple modes (visual, auditory, written). Figure 1. O

When considering transposition in multimodal texts, meaning transposing from one mode to another, it adopts the form of different containers by appropriating them (Lim & Tan-Chia 2023: 89). Different semiotic modes construct different features of meaning, this is, meaning is not just represented by a different “channel” but rather a channel materializes one aspect of a particular meaning. In a politician's words, for example, we can identify verbal constructions of anger or hate towards particular people or groups of people. But in his/her/their face what we can see is a personal emotional reaction. We cannot find a mark of the recipients of those words of hate in that face, just the expressions of the person who is speaking. In this sense we may say that every mode constructs just a part of the global meaning.

Some features are common in certain modes while other features appear in other modes granting different possibilities for the collective construction. In the case of a song, the tone and quality of the voice, instrumentation, tempo, particularities of the melody and harmony, etc. can provide an emotional frame, an idea of process or movement that frame the words in the lyrics and makes us interpret them in a certain way: as an agitated process in which tension is taking over, or a romantic atmosphere in closeness with a lover, etc. In sum, two meanings are associated to the concept of transposition:

1. Change of medium: from one text to another of a different kind. This may include intertextuality, as in the case of *O Brother, Where Art Thou?*
2. From one materiality (mode in terms of Kress & van Leeuwen 2005) to another, in a single multimodal text. In this case, meaning is built through features of different nature: visual, auditory, tactile, etc.).

Note that case 1 includes the possibility of case 2, given that audio-visual material constitutes multimodal texts.

On the other hand, in visual communication, emotion is constructed in a more or less conventionalized way using different resources; nevertheless, the most common features are facial expression, body language (Feng & O'Halloran, 2012: 2068) and music (Forte, 2023b). They complement the verbal channel by adding elements that allow relating with the participants and processes involved in the words and visual action. Facial expressions and body language let us know that the participants are like us, they live and feel as we do. Music puts us in emotional moods, frames the action in particular emotional atmospheres.

The systemic-functional approach to the study of images proposed by Kress and van Leeuwen (2005)

presents a re-elaboration of Halliday's perspective based on cinematographic and visual languages. In their construction, ideational, interpersonal and textual metafunctions convey visual meanings dealing with the construction of the narrative in terms of processes and participants, circumstances; the relationships among participants, the subjective construction of that relationship, power relations, modality and the distribution of information. Ekman and Friesen's model (1975, 1985) provides a taxonomy of facial expressions, hand gestures and body movements to describe emotional manifestations. Finally, Forte (2023b) provides a systemic-functional approach to the study of music in multimodal contexts. In systemic-functional terms, emotional elements are mostly present in the interpersonal metafunction.

CASE STUDY: ARGENTINA AND THE BIRD FLU OUTBREAK

In order to present our analysis in a more specific way, the corpus was chosen to focus on legislation issued within the framework of a specific problem and its dissemination through official social media. We focus on the 2019 Bird flu outbreak and Argentina's Food control agency measures regarding it.

Bird flu is a highly infectious disease produced by a virus related to Orthomyxoviridae viruses that mainly affects domestic and wild birds. Occasionally humans and other species – as horses, pigs and dogs – can contract it (<https://www.argentina.gob.ar/SENASA/influenza-aviar>). Due to wild birds can carry it, farmed birds can get infected easily and industrial production can be compromised. Argentina has been declared free of Highly Pathogenic Bird flu (HPAI) by the World Organization of Animal Health (WOAH). Official reports state that outbreaks in farmed birds are controlled and just some wild birds remain positive to the infections. From 2017 small outbreaks in wild birds have been detected by the authorities and legislation has been passed to avoid the spreading to farmed animals.

The National Agri-Food Health and Quality Service (SENASA by its initials in Spanish: Servicio Nacional de Sanidad y Calidad Agroalimentaria) is the national agency in charge of food production control and, therefore, the regulator of social practices involving Bird flu (Argentina.gob.ar, 2023).

The corpus gathered for analysis involves three texts:

1. Disposition 1699/2019: the written text that belongs to a legal genre
2. Press release 1: Bird flu surveillance in Wild Birds. Short audio-visual text.
3. Press release 2: Preventing Bird flu in Backyard Birds. Short audio-visual text.

Disposition 1699

Due to the nature of the genre, the narrative unfolded in the text presents a rigid structure. Resources and the possibilities for meaning construction are limited. There is no room for creativity: recipients must follow the rules detailed; otherwise there will be consequences, also detailed in the text: disqualification for exporting to particular markets, confiscation of merchandise –birds – and even be prosecuted for causing harm to humans. If they stick to the rules they can continue business as usual. In other words, the narrative resembles a threat: do as I say or something bad will happen.

The ideational metafunction of the text constructs human and institutional participants:

- Human actors: owners and responsible of the farms. They must carry out processes over the birds and the facilities.
- Institutional actors: SENASA and the different government agencies involved in the process of granting licences.

The birds, although affected participants from a non-speciesist ecolinguistic point of view, are constructed as goal, this is, raw material; they are the product to be handled. In fact, they are not mentioned as beings; they are mainly present through the mention of the facilities used to process them; barns, growing farm, reproductive farm, egg classification room, slaughterhouse, etc. The processes

involved are mostly material and behavioural: to maintain, to clean, to build, to assure, etc. They are all impersonalised: *it must be cleaned; it must be assured, ought to be authorized, etc.*

The interpersonal metafunction addresses the recipients in imperative mood, when detailing the requisites for licences, and in the subjunctive, when describing the possible transgressions and sanctions. There is no place for negotiation. It is a matter of black or white, they follow the rules or they do not. This is an inherent feature of the genre.

The textual metafunction has also features genre-based in its structure: in the first pages the disposition enumerates the “considering” arguments and in the second part of the text it mentions the “disposing” measures. In terms if a given/new structure, the first part is the given and the resolution part is the new. But also, the structure of the narrative follows this logic: 1. Conditions for authorization, duties of those responsible, sanctions in case of non-compliance. In short, the resolution establishes participants, attributes and processes in a rigid structure.

Press release 1

This audio-visual, titled *Vigilancia de Influenza aviar en aves silvestres* [Bird flu surveillance in Wild Birds] was published by SENASA in its official YouTube channel, SENASA comunica, on March 10, 2022. The video constitutes a declaration of Dr. Tatiana Aronowicz, veterinary specialized in birds, detailing the situation of the disease in the country and explaining what to do to avoid its spreading.

In terms of narrative, Aronowicz sticks to the basic meanings meanings in disposition 1699: there is an industry and things that must be done in order to keep it free of the disease. But there is a micro narrative regarding her words: there are migratory birds that can infect poultry and interfere with the poultry markets. This is not a micro-narrative in Stibbe sense (2024: 166), but is a story underlying Aronowicz words. It is a narrative embedded within a larger text in the sense that it materialises a narrative inside the narrative: there is an industry that must be kept free of the disease to keep functioning. And now the disease is close, therefore we must take this measures to avoid it. This has the effect of transforming a set of written rules in a real thing: we can see now how those words impact in the world we know. This immediacy is what allows for emotional connection.

The ideational metafunction constructs a human participant –Aronowicz- as actor in a verbal process (Fig. 1). There is no other participant in the scene where she is. Therefore, her words are unequivocally directed to viewers. While she speaks, her image is alternated with bird images, most of the wild birds. Just a few roosters are shown but they appear as modelling: they are free, walking in the nature and we can see their whole bodies in moving cinematographic shots (Fig. 2) or close shots of their faces with full colour and detail (Fig. 3). In those images, the birds are participants in conceptual processes, they mean for what they are and not for what they are doing, as in the case of the human participant.



Figure 1: Verbal process



Figure 2: Conceptual process



Figure 3: Conceptual process and close shot

The wild birds shown in the video are sparrows, parrots and hummingbirds; all birds generally accepted and liked by humans. We can see even marks this, of the relationship between both species: the drinking fountain. The hummingbirds seem to be involved in a material process: drinking. But the fountain is the mark of a previous process, of an actor not present explicitly in the image but that we can restore: humans that put the fountain for the birds to drink.



Figure 4: Erased human participant

Birds are the main characters in the narrative (they are the topic, they have more presence on the screen and they are more in number compared to human participants) but they are subordinated to humans according to the verbal narrative. This is a counterpoint construction: they are the most important thing in visual terms but, in verbal terms, human behaviour related to them takes the lead.

In the interpersonal metafunction we must consider, in the first place, that Aronowicz is addressing a general public and she is doing it in a kind way. Although she is still speaking from her role as civil servant she puts the requirements in a kind way: she does not remember them they are required by law to report if they see sick birds. She is saying that to report benefices everyone because no one wants the disease to spread.

Visually, the shot of Aronowicz is a close-up of her face. We can see her hands holding a microphone. Her facial expressions are mostly neutral. No facial expressions that can be identifiable as one of the seven basic emotions (Ekman and Friesen, 1975, 1986). Nevertheless, her eyelids seem to be tightened. This can be an indication of stress. If we consider what is happening in the verbal dimension, her tone of voice and some small mistakes in pronunciation, we can tell she nervous, perhaps for facing the camera.

Vertical perspective is built with the camera at her sight level so we, as viewers are in an equal power relationship in relation to her. But the camera takes her slightly on her left side. This means she is not facing the camera and therefore, some detachment is configured: we are watching her from the outside, we are not invited to the world represented on the screen. This is linked to the gaze act the participant

creates. She is not looking at the camera, this is, she is not making eye contact with the viewer. So, there is no demand, no asking the audience to involve with the image. There is only information offered for interactive participants that are not part of the represented world.

In the case of the birds, only a few of them make eye contact with the camera. But as they are subordinated to the humans in the narrative (the words of Aronowicz, the texts on the screen) their act of demand goes unnoticed (Fig. 5).



Figure 5: Unnoticed act of demand

Music also contributes to the emotional construction in the interpersonal metafunction. The piece in the video is non-diegetic music; not part of the world of the represented narrative. It is an up-tempo in major tonality song with techno-logic features that introduces the sense of dynamic and modern procedures to the narrative. The electronic instruments heard in the background construct a frame of technology that, combined with the up-tempo, add sense of dynamics to the concepts explained by Aronowicz. The social distance constructed through the volume of the instruments is a public distance. The music sounds as we would hear it in a public space. No close relationship between the music and the audience. The melody goes from tonic to dominant and resolves back in the tonic. Therefore, there is no big tension; no waiting for a resolution because the tension in the melody is resolved almost immediately.

The textual metafunction alternates images of Aronowicz with the birds, creating an interleaved given/new system that states the birds as the given and Aronowicz as the new.

Aronowicz nervousness – although perhaps not calculated - and the dynamic feature with immediate resolution added by the music make the narrative more human and easier to accept. The nervousness of the human participant brings the audience closer because it makes possible a personal identification. Music, on the other hand, posing not big tension, builds an emotional situation that closes quick and without complications.

Press release 2

This audiovisual material was published on December 19, 2022. It is titled *Prevención de la Influenza aviar en aves de traspatio* [Prevention of Bird flu in backyard birds] and in it, then vice-president of SENASA, Dr. Rodolfo Acerbi, gives recommendations to people that keep backyard birds in order to avoid the entering of the disease into the country and affect industrial production.

The ideational metafunction analysis shows human and non-human participants involved in different processes (Fig. 6). The video starts with this images and a middle-tempo background folk music that keeps on until the end. In the first seconds we can see a human participant feeding farmed birds; this is, an human actor involved in a material process with several non-human affected participants. As in the case of Aronowicz, the flow interlays images of the human participants with images of the birds. Here birds

present some kind of salience too; they are the main characters in the narrative but they are subordinated to humans according to the verbal narrative. Again we have a counterpoint construction: birds are the protagonists in visual terms but the verbal narrative subordinates them to humans. Therefore, as in the disposition, they are not participants but goals.



Figure 6: Humans in material processes

In 00:04, the main human participant, Rodolfo Acerbi, starts talking but we must wait until 00:11 to see his face in camera while it configures a verbal process (Fig. 7).



Figure 7: Rodolfo Acerbi, actor in verbal process

In figure 8, birds in the barn are, in a speciesist interpretation, participants in a conceptual process; the matter for what they are and not for what they are doing. Nevertheless, a deconstruction of this perspective allows to think of an erased participant that transformed those birds in farmed birds by putting them in the barn (birds do not live naturally in barns).



Figure 8: Conceptual process

However, what reinforces the speciesist construction is the fact that they are constructed as a collective participant in this image. We cannot see their faces or details of their bodies. Actually the image is very blurry and we just identify them as birds because of the context that dictates that those

white spots on screen are birds.

On the other hand, Figure 9 shows wild birds such as swans, ducks and sparrows in conceptual and more benevolent processes:



Figure 9: Swans in conceptual process

This alternation of participants and processes puts humans in the centre due to the nature of their behaviour: humans feed, talk and, in the words of Acerbi, they have an impact over birds. Birds, on the other side, are just shown standing, walking or swimming; not carrying out actions affecting anyone.

Music also has its role in the structure of the narrative. It is a guitar based acoustic folk music, middle tempo and in major tonality. It is not part of the diegesis of the video, participants do not hear it and it is not attached to any participant in particular rather to the narrative as a whole. In this sense, music seems to be constructing an institutional identity; a collective participant that contains all we see in those images: SENASA.

In the analysis of the interpersonal metafunction we can note that Acerbi's images are medium shots, leaving enough space to see the movement of his hands. The birds, on the other hand, are taken mostly in whole shots, we can see his entire body. Only a rooster shot -presumably a stock image because is the same in Aronowicz's video- is a non-human close-shot.

In the analysis of the perspective, humans shots are at eye level, there is not difference of relative power between the represented participants and the viewers. But this is not so in the case of birds. Wild birds and the rooster shot - images constructed with resolution detail, colour and free movement of the participants - are at eye level. In birds in barns images camera is in high angle: birds are taken from above and we can see them as inferior in terms of relative power. The only case in which farmed birds are taken at eye level is when they are caged (Fig. 10):



Figure 10: Camera at eye level

Here, the camera angle has no influence in the construction of relative power because birds are shown as a collective participant: stored raw material. An interesting detail is that bird shots are frontal takes while human shots are slightly side shots. The viewer is directly connected with the bird images but detached from the humans. And this is linked to the use of gaze: Acerbi does not look at the camera; he is talking to someone on the side. There is no act of demand. Considering that this also happens in Aronowicz video we can think of a visual strategy adopted by the agency in the construction of its visual identity. He asks owners to not let their birds go out of the barns without looking at them. In his own words:

En el ámbito del traspatio yo le pido a todos los productores que tienen sus veinte treinta gallinas para tener su huevito o sus veinte treinta pollos para las fiestas para comer con la familia y para comer con algún vecino, que evite que los animales estén en libertad el mayor tiempo posible. Que estén en los gallineros porque de esa manera evitan tener contacto con cualquier ave silvestre.

In the backyard, I ask all farmers who have 230 hens for eggs or 230 chickens for holidays to eat with the family or with neighbours to avoid let their animals free as much as possible. Keep them in coops because that way they avoid contact with any wild birds (Author's translation).

This verbal request in kind terms goes in line with the construction of the interpersonal metafunction the visual and auditory modes make. In this regard, music also adds some important features. First, it is a simple melody in major tonality that goes from tonic to dominant and back to the tonic, resolving the tension almost immediately, creating a nice background for a narrative directed to country people. The acoustic instruments create a feeling of closeness, of familiar context. The social distance constructed through the volume is personal; close but not intimate; again, suggesting a familiar context. Voice quality of the instruments is soft and bright with a relaxed and clean, realistic modality. This musical environment provides a smooth emotional atmosphere to what, basically, the imposition of the law. But in this way it looks kinder.

Acerbi's face remains neutral during the whole video. His hands move, making some illustrator gestures during his speech. And when he finally ask owners to not let the birds go out of the barns, although his words are kind, he makes a regulator with his left hand (Fig. 11), raising his index. This movement has the syntactic function of indicate the importance of his words in that moment. And, as a visual gesture marks the important moment of his allocation.



Figure 11: Neutral face and manual regulator

In terms of micro-narratives this video constructs something similar to the previous one. There is no micro-narrative in strict sense, no story told as such during the development of the video; but there is a kind of sub-narrative that is part of the big industrial one: Acerbi is addressing common people that has a few birds in the backyard, not big industrial producers. So, his words, although keeping the parameters fixed by the legislation, are nicer, smoother, as if he is talking to a friend or a relative. He ask them –

the people who has a few birds in the backyard for Christmas, to have dinner with family a friends – to follow his recommendations to avoid the disease enters the country and become a big sanitary problem. This is not a narrative *per se* but it takes the concepts from the general abstract discussion to a small, tangible, everyday case. In this sense, Acerbi's attitude constitutes a way to reach an emotional spot in the audience.

The textual metafunction, as in Aronowicz's video, constructs a system of given/new through the use of the interlay: farmed birds are the given while Acerbi's words are the new. In this case, wild birds function as transition images: they are not part of the given element – the main object of SENASA – but they are the infectuous agent following Acerbi's words. Therefore, they connect farmed birds with Acerbi's images. While Acerbi speaks, the interlaying of images change from his shot to birds, wild and farmed, constructing the idea, not constructed visually in the Aronowicz video, that sick wild and backyard birds can interfere with industrial production.

The rigidity of the legislation is still present in the text on the screen, supporting the idea that behind the kindness the rigidity of the law is still present.

In this case, the verbal mood - the friendly request -, the hand gesture and the music allow the emotional connection. They all configure a friendly atmosphere for the viewer.

CONCLUSIONS

Narratives that rule our everyday lives are complex constructions in terms of contents, structure and resources. Legal and legislative genres present rigid forms with few possibilities of change. Their resources are pre-formatted: they are punctual and succinct descriptions and elaborations are permitted only when needed. Consequently, an expansion of their meanings can be expected when transposing to multimodal genres. In this transposition, narratives add features and meanings that make the audiences to relate with them, accepting meanings in a passive, sometimes unconscious, way.

Speciesism is embedded in most narratives in the West. National epics, political campaigns, medical recommendations and even legal discourses manifest representations that conflict with the human – non-human relations and the ecosystem as a whole. Nowadays, social media and the multiple digital channels available, make the circulation of meanings very fast. And as the move, they change their form, they transform in different ways. Multimodal resources provide resources to add subtle elements as voice colour, hand movements or a four-bar musical line. They construct feelings, making possible for the viewer to connect with the text. Ecolinguistics as critical perspective must approach multimodal construction and transposition of emotion in relation to nature topics in order to understand how people relate to this kind of narratives and why. Analysing the construction and circulation of meanings is not enough to generate a social change. What ecolinguistics needs to deconstruct is the emotional connection with industrial capitalistic narratives.

REFERENCES

- Barruti, S. (2013). *Malcomidos. Cómo la industria alimentaria argentina nos está matando*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI Editores.
- Bermúdez N. (2008). Aproximaciones al fenómeno de la transposición semiótica: lenguajes, dispositivos y géneros, in *Estudios Semióticos*, No.4, available online: [www.fflch.usp.br/dl/semiotica/es] (Accesed: 10/14/2024).
- Bruner, J. (2003). *La fábrica de historias. Derecho, literatura, vida*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- Bruner, J., & Haste, H. (1990). *Making sense: The child's construction of the world*. New Jersey: Methuen.
- Budassi, I, & Cao, H. (2021). Parlamento y políticas públicas en la Argentina. Estado Abierto. In *Revista Sobre El Estado, La Administración y Las Políticas Públicas*, 4(3), pp. 63-88.
- Dimock, S. (2012). Parliamentary Ethics. In Ruth Chadwick (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics*

- (Second Edition). Academic Press, pp. 338-348.
- Ekman, P. & Friesen, W. (1975). *Unmasking the face*. New York: Prentice-Hall Books.
- Ekman, P. & Friesen, W. (1986). A new pan-cultural facial expression of emotion. In *Motiv Emot* 10, pp 159–168.
- Ekman, P. (2003). *Emotions revealed*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Feng, D. & O'Halloran, K. (2012) Representing emotive meaning in visual images: A social semiotic approach. In *Journal of Pragmatics*, 44 (2012) 2067–2084.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *La verdad y las formas jurídicas*. Barcelona: Gedisa.
- Forte, D. (2023a). *El rostro y el lenguaje verbal en la construcción de significado discursivo: una aproximación desde el análisis del discurso multimodal*. Tesis de Doctorado, Universidad del Salvador. [<https://racimo.usal.edu.ar/8710/>] (Accessed: 04/12/2025).
- Forte, D. L. (2023b). Music and discourse: A systemic-functional approach for music analysis in multimodal contexts. In *Multimodality & Society*, 3(1), 69-81. [<https://doi.org/10.1177/26349795231153963>] (Accessed: 01/12/2025).
- Forte, D.L. (2023c). Latin American ecolinguistics: deconstructing discourse studies, coloniality and industrial environmentalism. In *Journal of World Languages*. [<https://doi.org/10.1515/jwl-2023-0052>] (Accessed: 01/12/2025).
- Forte, D. L. (2024). Colonialismo, especismo y ecocrítica en el análisis del discurso latinoamericano. Notas sobre la hegemonía humana y el cambio de paradigma. En *Refracción*. Número 9.
- Forte, D. L. (2025). Climate Crisis and Animal Exploitation. Historical Materialism and the Reformulation of Industrial Discourses. In *Framing Sustainability in Language and Communication*. New York: Routledge.
- Haudricourt, A. (2019)[1949]. *El cultivo de los gestos. Entre plantas, animales y humanos*. Buenos Aires: Cactus.
- Hribal, J. (2012). *Los animales son parte de la clase trabajadora y otros ensayos*. España: Ochodocuatro.
- Hutmacher, F. (2019). Why is there so much more research on vision than on any other sensory modality? In *Front. Psychol.* 10:2246. [doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02246]
- Kress, G. & van Leeuwen, T. (2005). *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. London: Routledge.
- Lim, F. V. and Tan-Chia, L. (2023). *Designing learning for multimodal literacy. Teaching Viewing and Representing*. London: Routledge.
- Newmyer, S. (2011). *Animals in Greek and Roman Thought*. London: Routledge.
- Pezzeta, S. (2018). Derechos fundamentales para los demás animales. Especismo, igualdad y justicia interespecies. In *Lecciones y Ensayos*, Nro. 100, pp. 69-104.
- Raiter, A. (2003). *Lenguaje y sentido común. Las bases para la formación del discurso dominante*. Buenos Aires: Biblos.
- SENASA Official Webpage.2023. [<https://www.argentina.gob.ar/SENASA>]
- Stibbe, A. (2024). *Econarratives. Ethics, ecology and the search for new narratives to live by*. London: Bloomsbury.

Corpus

- SENASA (2019). Resolución 1699/2019. Habilitación de establecimientos avícolas de producción comercial.
- SENASA comunica (2022). *Prevención de la Influenza aviar en aves de traspatio– Rodolfo Acerbi, vicepresidente del SENASA*. [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OY6a-8cr988>] (Accessed 08/20/2023).
- SENASA comunica (2022). *Vigilancia de Influenza aviar en aves silvestres*. [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tb-cqevmO8g>] (Accessed 04/07/2024).