

8 - Scientific Literacy and Socio-scientific Issues | Empirical

SP - (16650) - SARS-COV-2 METAPHORS: A SOCIAL SEMIOTICS ANALYSIS OF THE NEW VIRUS REPRESENTATIONS IN STREET ART

Judith Bautista (Brazil)¹; Edite Silva (Brazil)¹; Miriam Struchiner (Brazil)¹

1 - Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro

Short Abstract

This study analyzed visual representations of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in Street Arts around the world, identifying the metaphors created to provide meaning about this scientific phenomenon that tremendously affected the whole planet. For that, we adopted the social semiotics approach and its basic principle that signs are motivated and originated from social interactions, being constantly re-signified. Coronavirus related street art images were collected between July and September 2020, in sites, online newspapers, Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter pages of both unknown and world-famous artists, resulting in 860 Street Art pieces that fulfilled the initial inclusion criterium of addressing the thematic of the COVID-19 pandemic. The final corpus of the present study focused specifically on representations of the virus itself, obtaining a total of 48 street art images from 26 different countries. Images were analyzed based on Forceville (1996, 2008), considering the criteria of the domain of origin and the domain of the recipient to compose a metaphor. They resulted in six metaphor categories: Character (n = 17), Agent (n = 10), Object (n = 8), Politician (n = 5), Beliefs (n = 3), Natural Phenomena (n = 5). These results evidenced a diversity of social, cultural, political, and beliefs aspects of everyday life in the pandemic represented on the walls of the world. Thus, Street Art can contribute not only to visual literacy but also to scientific literacy based on the potential of semiotic modes and metaphors adopted to represent the SARS-CoV-2 virus.