

## **Un acercamiento a la investigación cualitativa en la disciplina del diseño**

*An approach to qualitative research from the point of view of the  
discipline of design*

*Uma abordagem à pesquisa qualitativa na disciplina de design*

**María Gabriela Villar García**

Facultad de Arquitectura y Diseño, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México,  
México

[investigacion.fad.villar@gmail.com](mailto:investigacion.fad.villar@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7182-5833>

**María del Pilar Alejandra Mora Cantellano**

Facultad de Arquitectura y Diseño, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México,  
México

[mora\\_pilar@hotmail.com](mailto:mora_pilar@hotmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2548-3470>

**Ana Aurora Maldonado Reyes**

Facultad de Arquitectura y Diseño, Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México,  
México

[eurekaana@gmail.com](mailto:eurekaana@gmail.com)

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5619-6781>

## Resumen

Desde la disciplina del diseño, resulta importante reconocer una serie de necesidades en torno a los aspectos metodológicos que están relacionados con una práctica laboral que, por años, ha correspondido a un ejercicio poco reflexivo sobre la aplicación metodológica en el quehacer conceptual y de desarrollo de proyectos. El campo académico y de investigación en el área ha comenzado a ocuparse de difundir y divulgar los procesos que le han llevado a una práctica con resultados favorables. Lo anterior con la intención de generar conocimiento sobre la disciplina, pero, sobre todo, proponer marcos metodológicos para el ejercicio de la profesión. En el contexto descrito, el objetivo de este artículo consiste en reconocer la importancia de la investigación de orden cualitativo en la profesión del diseño, al exponer los marcos referenciales interpretativos del interaccionismo, la hermenéutica y la etnografía como coadyuvantes para la praxis profesional.

Como discusión, se presenta la investigación cualitativa como paradigma que busca comprender las interacciones y los significados subjetivos en los grupos cuando se acercan a los textos del diseño en contextos que se establecen como marcos referenciales interpretativos. Se reconoce al objeto o producto del diseño como un texto —con capacidad discursiva—, por lo que su discurso estructura una realidad social y cultural. El texto diseñístico se puede definir como una entidad con un discurso propio, como una obra con un estilo, un género y con una composición. La investigación cualitativa en el área del diseño se enmarca en un ejercicio de orden incluyente, reflexivo, holístico y de apertura a nuevos conocimientos, además de presentarse al marco de referencia del interaccionismo simbólico —como una posibilidad para entender cómo se construye la interpretación en los textos y, por tanto, cómo se puede orientar la significación de los mismos en un contexto de colectividad—. Se reconoce la hermenéutica como herramienta para la interpretación y se presenta la hermenéutica analógica como campo de acción para el ejercicio del diseño. Se exhibe la etnografía como estrategia para acercarse a los grupos o comunidades con rigurosidad metodológica.

Desde la perspectiva descrita en los párrafos anteriores, el texto y su contexto se convierten en unidades de análisis para la interpretación del discurso del diseño, en el que los marcos referenciales interpretativos son los espacios para la apropiación, interpretación y significación de los objetos creados.

**Palabras clave:** diseño, etnografía, hermenéutica, interaccionismo simbólico, investigación cualitativa.

### **Abstract**

From the discipline of design, it is necessary to acknowledge the needs that surround the methodological aspects of this profession, which are related to a labor practice that, for years, has fallen to a little reflective exercise on methodological application in the conceptual work of project development. The methodological follow up in the discipline of design has been subordinated to other areas and is incorporating recently its own methods. The academic field research and design have begun to address, spread and disseminate the methodological processes that have led them to a practice with favorable results. This, with the intention of starting to generate knowledge about the discipline but, above all, methodological framework for the exercise of the profession. In this context, the objective of this text is to recognize the importance of research of qualitative nature in the course of the design profession by exposing the interpretative reference frames of interactionism, hermeneutics and ethnography as spaces of interaction of the actors involved in the communication process design exercise. Therefore, it is important to emphasize the presentation of qualitative research as a paradigm that aims to understand the interactions and subjective meanings in groups, as they approach the written texts of design in contexts that are set as interpretative frames of references that can be interpreted.

It is important to clarify that, from the perspective of this approach, the object or product design is recognized as a text —with discursive capacity—, so its speech structures a social and cultural reality, therefore, the prospect focuses on both theories of text and discourse analysis, where the construction of the meaning of the message is not done by the sender, but by the receiver. It is the enunciation, narration and

configuration where the speech of the design text becomes a particular idea of reality. (The design texts can be defined as an entity with its own speech, with a style, a genre with an original composition. From this perspective, the text and context become units of analysis for the interpretation of the design speech,. in which interpretative frames of reference are the spaces where the interpretation of design texts is generated, owned and signified.

**Keywords:** design, ethnography, hermeneutic, symbolic interaction, qualitative research.

### **Resumo**

A partir da disciplina de design, é importante reconhecer uma série de necessidades em torno dos aspectos metodológicos relacionados a uma prática de trabalho que, durante anos, correspondeu a um pequeno exercício reflexivo sobre a aplicação metodológica no desenvolvimento conceitual e projetos. O campo acadêmico e de pesquisa na área começou a disseminar e disseminar os processos que levaram a uma prática com resultados favoráveis. O exposto com o intuito de gerar conhecimento sobre a disciplina, mas, acima de tudo, propor marcos metodológicos para o exercício da profissão. No contexto descrito, o objetivo deste artigo é reconhecer a importância da pesquisa qualitativa na profissão de design, expondo os referenciais interpretativos do interacionismo, da hermenêutica e da etnografia como coadjuvantes da práxis profissional.

Como discussão, a pesquisa qualitativa é apresentada como um paradigma que busca compreender as interações e significados subjetivos em grupos quando abordam textos de design em contextos que se estabelecem como referenciais interpretativos. O objeto ou produto do design é reconhecido como um texto - com capacidade discursiva -, de modo que seu discurso estrutura uma realidade social e cultural. O texto do design pode ser definido como uma entidade com seu próprio discurso, como um trabalho com um estilo, um gênero e uma composição. A pesquisa qualitativa na área do design faz parte de uma ordem inclusiva, reflexiva, holística e aberta a novos conhecimentos, além de se apresentar ao referencial do interacionismo simbólico - como possibilidade de compreender como a interpretação é construída no meio textos e, portanto, como o significado deles pode ser orientado em um contexto de coletividade. A hermenêutica é

reconhecida como uma ferramenta de interpretação e a hermenêutica analógica é apresentada como um campo de ação para o exercício do design. A etnografia é apresentada como uma estratégia para abordar grupos ou comunidades com rigor metodológico.

A partir da perspectiva descrita nos parágrafos anteriores, o texto e seu contexto tornam-se unidades de análise para a interpretação do discurso do design, em que os quadros interpretativos de referência são os espaços para a apropriação, interpretação e significado dos objetos criados. .

**Palavras-chave:** design, etnografia, hermenêutica, interacionismo simbólico, pesquisa qualitativa.

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## Method

The text presented suggests a reflection generated from recognizing the importance of qualitative research in the design profession by exposing the interpretative frameworks of interactionism, hermeneutics and ethnography as coadjutants for professional praxis. Therefore, it does not establish a methodological process; In his discussion, qualitative research is presented as a method to practice the praxis of the profession with certainty from the exposition of the referential frameworks exposed.

## Introduction

If the research methodology is perceived as a possibility to direct or structure a project in a timely manner and achieve optimal results, you will be given possibilities to consider it a strategy.

The term methodology refers to the way in which we approach problems and look for answers. It involves reflection on how to obtain knowledge, what should be done and how to do it. The purposes, assumptions and interests determine the methodology to follow in an investigation (Sánchez, 2015, p. 21).

One of the most common approaches in the field of social research is the qualitative one, which finds in subjectivity one of its strengths. From the design area, it allows explaining and understanding the meanings and interactions of the receivers in the communication processes generated from their products. The effort that distinguishes itself in this type of research, and that is of interest for this discipline, focuses on the flexibility it offers. It is recognized that the questions that are generated in this type of research do not require a scientific rigor; arise or are born from empirical experience, the interaction of subjects with design texts, which offer a possibility of knowledge to the area from their interaction as objects in a group.

Álvarez-Gayou (2003), mentions that qualitative research is generated from approaches that are based mainly on currents such as sociology, psychology, anthropology and linguistics, whose results show a social reality in which behaviors are inscribed and human actions. At the same time he recognizes social constructivism, ethnography, phenomenology and hermeneutics.

Álvarez-Gayou (2003), appointment to Ivonne Szasz and Susana Lerner mentioning that:

It is about approaches that start from different theoretical productions, such as social constructivism, ethnography, phenomenology, the search for interpretations and meanings, as well as the use of various techniques for collecting and analyzing information, such as observation participant, the interviews, the analysis of texts and testimonies etc. (p. 41).

It is, following Serbia (2007) of an investigation that:

does not look for a fact that is waiting to be collected in a world of objects and states of pure consciousness, but a production of the researcher on a perspective of a social actor that from its meanings is situated and interprets a social world already pre-interpreted (p. 123).

Qualitative research, from the discipline of design, finds its foundation in social reality: a reality constructed by a series of social, political, cultural and economic conditions, which, from the symbolic level, strengthens or promotes a series of values and ideologies through the language of the design text.

With respect to the analysis of the social, researchers can not adhere to an inflexible and anachronistic strategy that considers only the measurable, external and / or conscious aspect of social phenomena. The role played by meanings, organized as ideologies, in discourses and social practices would be ignored. It is in the interaction between materiality and subjectivity that we find the configurations of which each one calls reality (Serbia, 2007, p. 127).

From the above, there is a need to establish the importance of the use of qualitative research in the design discipline, as well as to recognize some of its referential frameworks -interaccionism, hermeneutics and ethnography- as spaces for interaction in the communication process of the exercise in the discipline as the main objective of the text presented.

## Development and discussion

The qualitative study, from the position described in the introduction, represents a strategy to understand and interpret the products, the images and the representations generated by the design; the meanings and the emotional aspects that guide from the deep, in the words of Serbia (2007), the behavior of the social actors. Qualitative research is distinguished because it is open and flexible. It allows the researcher to analyze and interpret subjectivity in order to record data. This type of research is oriented to the search of the comprehension of the individual or group (collective) discourses that the subjects express in contexts to texts. This is where the beliefs, desires, values and patterns of meaning are manifested.

Since qualitative research is a process open to chance and to the unexpected, in its apparent weakness lies its greatest power, it can perform readings in different planes of what has been said, what would escape in standardized studies is entered as a plus of information (Serbia, 2007, p. 132).

In a generalized way, qualitative research -from the discipline of design- must recognize:

- a) The qualitative researcher from this area must develop concepts from data that enable him to establish an intellectual exercise that goes beyond the myth of a purely technical profession, allowing it to be placed within a scheme and a reflexive, creative and methodological collective capable of solving any situation of the socio-cultural order that requires its work.
- b) The qualitative design researcher must observe with a holistic perspective. The context, the history of life, the emotional situation and the particularities of the recipients should be considered as elements that form a frame of reference for research of this type. The actors that intervene or intervene in the design process should be viewed from this perspective.
- c) Designers have long offered a connotation of sensitive collective in situations that require their participation. Therefore, they move away from their beliefs,



perspectives and predispositions to give way to a vision in which all perspectives are valuable, so that all scenarios, texts and people are subjects of research for the conformation of texts (objects) of design.

The qualitative research in the design supposes an exercise of inclusive, reflexive, holistic order and of opening to new knowledge. From this perspective, a scheme is presented on the steps and criteria to carry out this type of research, as well as the interpretative frames of reference suggested for its exercise.

**Tabla 1.** Esquema metodológico para la investigación cualitativa en el diseño

1. Detectar la necesidad o un fenómeno sociocultural que requiera de la intervención de la disciplina del diseño para ser resuelta en su totalidad o en lo específico, es decir, la resolución de alguna arista desde esta disciplina.	2. Definir la pregunta de investigación. En su redacción deberá existir una correspondencia con el fenómeno o necesidad a resolver. El qué, el cómo y el para qué, deberán ser las guías para la redacción.	3. Definición del tema; la redacción de este rubro permitirá la concientización de las variables detectadas en la necesidad y la pregunta de investigación.
4. Viabilidad del proyecto. Se refiere a la revisión sobre la realidad circunstancial del diseñador para resolver la necesidad o intervenir en el fenómeno. Esta revisión permitirá la recomposición de los tres primeros puntos.	5. Definir el objetivo general de la investigación, considerando los puntos anteriores. Este esquema permite al diseñador verificar sobre el “hilo conductor” de la investigación. Considerar en la redacción del objetivo general iniciar con un verbo, de preferencia con terminación en infinitivo (-ar, -er, -ir).	6. Definir los objetivos específicos. Estos deberán corresponder a las variables ya explícitas en la temática redactada.
7. Búsqueda y revisión de fuentes bibliográficas, hemerográficas y otras. Elaboración de un primer marco bibliográfico, hemerográfico y mesográfico.	8. Elección y fundamentación sobre el paradigma cualitativo de investigación.	9. Definición del marco referencial o paradigma interpretativo de la investigación.
10. Definición y revisión del grupo al que se dirige la investigación. Hacer énfasis en sus características ( <i>target group</i> ).	11. Definir sobre las herramientas y procedimientos para la obtención de la información	12. Aplicación de las herramientas para la recolección de datos necesarios.
13. Revisión de la información obtenida en todas sus partes	14. Análisis de la información desde una perspectiva holística	15. Síntesis de la información, verificando y corroborando los objetivos correspondientes.
16. Implementación de la propuesta	17. Revisión de la propuesta	18. Elaboración del reporte y propuesta final.

Fuente: Elaboración propia (Villar, 2018)

Now, every design exercise presupposes a framework or context of interaction of the actors or subjects that intervene in the design process or communication of this. Some of the frames recognized from the paradigm of qualitative research, and that can be considered for the exercise of design, are those that are presented in a generalized way and contextualized in and for the exercise of this discipline.

### **Symbolic interactionism: a referential framework for the interpretation and meaning of design text in a context of collectivity**

One of the precursors of this interpretative framework is G. H. Mead, who argued that meaning is found in symbols, not in acts. He stated that objects would not exist except through the context of social relations in which the symbolization takes place. Therefore, from this position is recognized the construction of symbolic meanings only in the community. Emphasis is placed on design objects as texts, subjects of interpretation and, consequently, of social significance.

Mead (1964), precursor of the proposal of symbolic interactionism, establishes that cultural objects -which, for this reflection, are called texts- are susceptible of symbolic internalization and their meaning emerges from a social situation that involves the interaction of several people ( community). Poses that the meaning of a behavior is formed in social interaction. Its result is a system of intersubjective meanings, a set of symbols whose meaning the actors start from. This proposal emphasizes the importance of meaning and interpretation as essential human processes, in which actors create shared meanings through their interaction: these meanings transform their reality. Mead insists on the existence of an active subject determined by the experiences of social interaction, that is, of the experiences shared by the group. In this sense, the designer must be sensitive to the context of his receiver and the set of characteristics that determine the group to which the products are designed creations.

Mead argued in favor of the autonomy of meaning in the face of action. The meaning is found in the symbols, not in the acts. Mead believed that supra-individual symbolic systems are the most important creators of the meaning of an individual's objects. The "symbolization," he wrote, not the individual in itself, is what constitutes objects. He insisted that objects [...] would not exist except for the context of social relationships where symbolization occurs (Jeffrey, 1992, p. 169).

Hence the importance of reviewing the context in which the design products will be implemented, but also the care of understanding how the groups to which the exercise of the design disciplines are related are collectively related. Subsequently, Blumer (2008) invites to use the direct study of the empirical social world to understand the subjects within their frame of reference (context).

Tardivo and Fernández (2014) define symbolic interactionism as a sociological current that arises in the United States with a controversial meaning, but which, without a doubt -from the qualitative approach- offers the possibility of understanding how interpretation is constructed in texts and , therefore, how can the meaning of them be oriented.

From the dialogue between the authors reviewed in the subject, convergences are observed that point towards understanding symbolic interactionism as the way to understand how people perceive, understand and interpret the world in society. The importance of this frame of reference for qualitative research in the area of design is its emphasis on the importance of signs and symbols, and the fundamental of interpretive processes -generated on the basis of interactions- to understand the significance and its repercussion in human behavior based on the interaction of the collectives (receptors) of the design texts.

The meaning of a thing for a person originates from the ways in which other people act towards that person in attention to the thing. Their actions allow defining the thing for a person. In this way, symbolic interactionism understands meanings as social products, as creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people when they act (Blumer, 1969, pp. 4-5).

In the stated sense, the objects -texts of design- are social products with which the receptors interact and in which-observed, analyzed or reconfigured from the perspective of qualitative research- opens a possibility of approaching objects as texts from communication and design in a sensitive and holistic way. Symbolic interactionism, then, allows, in the process of research for design, to study social phenomena and, in this context, texts and discursive narratives can be the object of study.

Summarizing briefly, from the position of symbolic interactionism, the interpretation of narratives or texts allows to give a sense to the messages emitted by the media with a reflective posture. In an exercise of interpretation and meaning -from symbolic interactionism-, it allows to understand in the deconstruction of messages the strategies by which the recipients, in communication processes, adhere to messages and, therefore, to cultural products by means of which societies are recreated. It is recognized that the designer, when generating or recognizing a framework of symbolic interactionism, can study social behavior by taking the object as a text, analyzing and interpreting the symbolic interaction exercise of that moment with certain actors. That is why the importance of interpretation through hermeneutics is recognized, which will allow, from another context, the exercise of interpretation of cultural meanings.

### **Hermeneutics: the interpretive variable of the design text**

The hermeneutics -located in the context of design- is considered as a theory and tool that enables the interpretation of the objects of the discipline. Ricoeur (2001) places the study of hermeneutics as older than phenomenology. However, he recognizes that this becomes a philosophy of interpretation when addressing the condition of the interpretation of a general theory of meaning. Therefore, the hermeneutics is established for the interpretation of the design text.

Likewise, Ricoeur (2001) defines hermeneutics as the theory of comprehension operations related to the interpretation of texts (the meaning); assumes the speech as text. Castro (1993) establishes that the situation between the sender and the interlocutor that interprets is of dialogical order. This presupposes that the hermeneutic process can not separate the meaning of a text from the concrete situation of its reader (context).

Understanding, therefore, is not just an abstract moment isolated from its application. "To dialogue with a text, we must recognize our tradition, our past (admit our historicity and even recognize ourselves in our personal history) to be able to compare it with the chosen text," says Castro (1993, p.59). In this sense, the text of the design can not be interpreted outside of a context. The characteristics of the receiver as an individual and as a group, among them the cultural, economic, social, etc., context should be considered for their interpretation and putting into circulation in media.

Gadamer (1977), considered the precursor of contemporary hermeneutics, considers understanding and interpreting as activities of the human experience about the world. Hence, we return to understand the construction of meanings from the discipline of design. Hermeneutics, as understood by the author -as the understanding of historicity-, mentions that the experience of art and historical traditions are the starting point for understanding, since lived experiences are those that allow interpreting. This position is important to the review of the contexts of the recipients for the design exercise. For Gadamer, the true hermeneut is that of being open to new experiences, because whoever wants to understand a text must be at the beginning willing to be allowed to say something for him.

The contemporary positions, which link hermeneutics to the field of communication, express that it has to do with the interpretation of a dogma. There lies its potential: in the determination of a thesis that allows speculation and diversity of interpretations that seek, from different angles, to reach the phenomenon of understanding (Oliva, 2017).

Hermeneutics - following the position of the aforementioned authors -, as a dialogical form, is considered as a constant listening and dialogue with the other. From the fields of communication and design, the circle of communication is closed. In this sense, Eco (1992) has defined univocism as the way to interpret a text that can only be written, spoken, thought out of what it means to the author, while the error is in the position that considers that all interpretations may be valid). In the contemporaneity, from the Latin American context, there is a tendency on the analogical hermeneutics, proposed by Emilio Beuchot, that appeals to a dialogue starting from the search of analogies that allow the convergence of the actors in the hermeneutical processes. In the texts of the

design, taking up the aforementioned positions, they should -as a recommendation- present a tendency towards analogical hermeneutics as a strategy that guarantees the interpretation and understanding of the texts, as well as achieving the communication circle.

Velázquez and Nava (2014) explain the advantages of a hermeneutical approach, based on an analogy that allows maintaining a balance between univocity and equivocity. Univocity is understood as a mining of truth, where one and only one meaning is valid and acceptable; in the other sense, equivocation is understood as a very open interpretative construction that depends on the situational or historical context of the person who interprets it. The application of this methodology has allowed the construction of an hermeneutical analog reference, consisting of a range of valid interpretations for this case study.

It is important to clarify that, from the exercise of design, the act of interpretation does not aspire to a faithful reproduction of the author's intention. It is enough -metaphorically and following Ricoeur's school- that the text be kept alive, that is, that it continue to speak despite the spatio-temporal circumstances that were mentioned. Searching in analogies, as Beuchot (2000) mentions, will make it possible to communicate in a sense - partly identical and partly different - with diversity prevailing. In this sense, in the area of design, it is recognized that every text is subject of interpretation and, therefore, the hermeneutic exercise is inherent both for the issuer and the receiver. For the practice of design -as a discipline that generates discursive texts-, it would pretend to recognize the analogical hermeneutics as a possibility to achieve an interpretation of the texts, based on the recognition of diversity, seeking confluences in the referents to elaborate the design texts and that they achieve their positioning.

### **Ethnography: tool for the approach and interpretation of groups**

According to Martínez (2014), the purpose of the ethnographic approach in qualitative research is to establish an image or perception of the social group studied, with the aim of establishing parameters that could be used in communities. It is about understanding the realities of groups (collectivities), including their communication relationships, their social and psychological qualities, their aesthetic and semiotic capacities. The former,

through the study of fragments of his life, of stories that express his ideas, perceptions and beliefs about his world. This approach strives to safely present fragments of life of the subjects that are studied from the researcher's interpretation.

Ethnographic work -from any discipline- implies high technical and methodological rigor, coupled with a flexibility and openness to observe and analyze the situations that arise during the field work and that may not be explained from the previous theoretical frameworks of the researcher. From research to design, it implies an opening for the interpretation of empirical data -from the possibilities of design texts or for design in fieldwork in communities-, so it is important that it be carried out under an immersion in the cultural context and the daily life of the groups, communities or collectives.

The ethnographic approach privileges the description as a cognitive object. According to Ander-Egg (2003), the assumption is that there is a peculiar way in the way of seeing the things of each individual, and in each concept there is a common cultural meaning that organizes the experiences, according to similar symbolic dimensions, regardless of language or culture. From the design discipline, the symbolic dimension becomes important, since it is done from or from the design texts, which require using techniques to measure meanings. Ethnography, in this context, is a method of observation and measurement of the meaning that things have for an individual or group and, particularly, the concepts that determine the variables inscribed in the context in which the social groups under study are developed. . From here lies its importance for qualitative research in the discipline of design. García-Huidobro (2016) argues that through this technique emerge stories and meanings that arise from the reflections as a whole. It is recognized as a practice of dialogical knowledge, a space of mutual recognition where the knowledge is incarnated and moved, which, later, can be a reason for the professional exercise of design.

Ethnography considers relevant to frame research within a socio-historical framework, highlighting the stories about the culture and the demographic profile, as well as the resources and socio-economic potentials from the local development approach. Galindo (1998) proposes a documentary review of the sources of information



such as monographs, censuses or reports of official institutions, breaking them down as follows:

- a) Exploration of the social composition, making a tour of the locality for the selection of intensive work places, as well as correspondence of the map of the area with the observation in the place.
- b) Exploration of the private social composition, that is, the ethnographic description of the domestic units and the possible social actor. This description will be made according to an observation and interview guide.
- c) Exploration of the life route, in which one comes into contact with the historical memory of the social actor. An interview is developed to obtain a first pattern of key situations in the life of the possible informant, as well as their daily activities and their life goals. Special emphasis will be placed on key situations, needs and perceptions.

According to Galindo's proposal (1998), an exploration of the life history of the interviewed actors must be prepared, in the first instance, by means of a spontaneous record of their primary vision and, in general, of the own story. The researcher should guide the interview to link the personal, family and community history.

In order for the deep interview technique to be effective, basic elements such as the actor's experience, the memory, and the expectations that must be used to motivate the interviewee must always be considered. Thus, when processing, the patterns of situations and vital objects will be searched, that is, the chain of events that make up the lifeworld of the actor. With this registry, we proceed to the exhaustive description of vital situations for the conformation of the searched categories. In order for the life story to be completed, the details of cultural elements of the context in subsequent records must be specified, in which the story will be enriched and the actor will be invited to participate in the recording of the topics relevant to him. From the material compiled from the stories, the constitutive elements of the life of the community will be obtained -case of study-, for which discourse analysis techniques are applied with the purpose of concluding in regularity schemes, in order to provide feedback to the Ethnographic

material and carry out a final analysis that allows a greater description in time, composition and historical relationship.

It is concluded that ethnography, as a tool to know and deeply recognize the public that receives design objects, must be considered with its techniques for creative processes, since it allows obtaining key data in the creation process of these, making possible their functionality in the context of the object.

## **Conclusions and results**

Recognizing the importance of qualitative research in the design profession allows us to observe the research methodology as a possibility to structure a project in an accurate manner. When design is understood as a social discipline and that is inserted, therefore, in research of this type, it is necessary to understand how the perception and meaning of design objects is configured. In this context, the interpretative referential frameworks of symbolic interactionism, hermeneutics and ethnography become the ideal frameworks from which the profession can be framed.

The research of qualitative order shows the social reality that, from the plane of the symbolic, strengthens or promotes values and ideologies from the language of the design text. Therefore, research should be considered a strategy to approach the recipient's world, understand how the meaning of objects is generated in groups -and, thus, enable products that can be interpreted in a better way, also helping to develop concepts in a socio-cultural context, as well as to observe with a holistic, reflective and open to new knowledge perspective.

In particular, the frame of reference of symbolic interactionism is exposed as a possibility to understand how interpretation is constructed in texts and how one can guide the meaning of them in a context of collectivity. The framework of symbolic interactionism is presented as a referential framework for the interpretation and meaning of design texts in which they are understood as social products with which the recipients interact. The particularity of what is in the collective and, by common referents, the interpretation of the texts emanating from the design is possible.

Hermeneutics is presented as a tool for the interpretation of design texts. The contribution of its predecessors is recognized and dialogue with contemporary authors who observe the tool from the field of communication is promoted, concluding on the importance of using analog hermeneutics as a strategy to achieve the contextualization and interpretation of design objects.

Ethnography is presented as a way of approaching groups with high technical and methodological rigor and as a field work or investigation, which allows the opening for the interpretation of empirical data from the possibilities of design texts or for design. This tool allows to know the audience from key data that facilitate the functionality of the design objects.

Starting from the above, the premise is reinforced on the need to recognize, from the discipline of design, a series of pending around the methodological aspects of this profession -recognizing that this exercise has been subject to areas of the social sciences, humanities and others-, so it is necessary to disseminate the methodological processes that have allowed favorable results in this discipline. Qualitative research is established as one that allows explaining and understanding the meanings of design texts and, in which, the referential framework of symbolic interactionism, hermeneutics and ethnography have allowed it to approach recipients to obtain products that resolve pertinent needs that require design disciplines.

The qualitative research in this area is part of an exercise of inclusive, reflective, holistic order and openness to new knowledge. It is, therefore, to recognize this type of research as a guide to conduct an exercise from the practice of design. Alternatives of how to act in everyday life are presented to respond to socio-cultural needs that require the exercise of design as a discipline to offer solutions to today's society.

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