

Diplomatic discourses: are they an object of Political Communication research?¹

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Abstract

The main characteristics of any strategic narrative developed by diplomatic discourses involve persuading, dissimulating and convincing. Diplomatic discourses are, thus, one of the elements that contribute to the creation of nations' public images and position them in the world. What is the emphasis given by the Political Communication field to the analysis of such discourses? Aiming at understanding whether diplomatic discourses can be taken as an object of research, we mapped seven national and international databases. As a result, we highlight that given the power struggles entangled in international relations, diplomatic discourses emerge as part of a broader strategic process of international communication by states and governments. Although we understand these discourses as an object of Political Communication research, we noticed the scarce literature regarding this object in the area of Communication and therefore we make suggestions for further researches.

Keywords: Political Communication. Diplomatic Speeches. International Communication. Public Image.

Introduction

A growing trend of researches in which the main goal is to list the Communication field has been observed since the 1990s. Such studies aim at investigating the scientific production about certain objects, enabling to diagnose, delimit, classify and comprehend what the (un)privileged dimensions in certain periods or regions are (FERREIRA, 2002, GOMES, 2016).

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According to Gomes (2016), scientific attention indicates the level and the intensity which involve a field of study. Therefore, by understanding diplomatic discourse as one of the possibilities of international communication sent by different nations, and based on the diagnoses made by Carvalho (2011), Gomes (2011), and Oliver (1950), authors who claim that there is scarcity in the studies regarding this discourse genre, the objective of this study is to assess how this object has been approached in the field of Communication, and especially in the Political Communication.

Therefore, we conducted an inventory on seven scientific databases - national and international - to list the existent studies on diplomatic discourses and to explore the main applications given to them in different scientific fields. Based on this inventory, we highlighted some of the researches aiming at identifying and describing the main concepts, methods, and analytical approaches onto them. Finally, we used these elements to answer whether it is possible to treat diplomatic discourse as an object both constructed and constituted within the field of Political Communication.

Thus, structurally, this article is divided into five sections. After this introduction, we present diplomatic discourse as a means for the effectuation of communication in the international sphere. Then, we investigate the object itself, that is, we observed the academic production on diplomatic discourse. In the next section, we reflected on how to place these speeches as an object of Political Communication. Finally, we present the final remarks on the findings.

International communication and diplomatic discourses

Regarding the relations among nations, diplomatic discourse emerges as a means through which world leaders develop narratives and plots giving meaning to their actions, which echo and have their reach amplified in the media. Additionally, through the lens of political communication, these discourses articulate games of disputes and/or power maintenance. For this reason, it is possible to observe the individual expression of a given State, capable of dealing with myriads of fragmented interests regarding collective issues that will be either negotiated or imposed by relations of power (FOUCAULT, 2001, MATOS E NOBRE; GIL, 2013, PUTNAM, 2010).

Diplomacy integrates decisions of foreign policy which, by its turn, are manifested by the discursive act. Consequently, diplomacy goes beyond mere diplomatic grounds and integrates, whether implicitly or explicitly, into journalistic and political discourse, giving colors to the images of domestic politics (SANTOS, 2014). Once delivered, diplomatic speeches set a territorialized arrangement of argumentative disputes. That is, when it comes to certain interests and goals, it entails disputes for both the elaboration and prevalence of certain frames of meaning in which different fields of power-knowledge are articulated and disjointed.

International communication through diplomatic discourse encompasses disputes in which there are iterative articulations among at least two levels of interests and objectives;

those concerning domestic policy discussions among domestic groups, and those related to bargains among international negotiators, as Putnam (2010) points out. Regarding liberal democracies, on the one hand, the pressure from a constellation of fragmented actors – national or transnational – needs to be accommodated under different institutional arrangements. On the other hand, these actors are going to be represented through a diplomatic discourse addressed by a national leader in any international setting. This discourse, however, will be also conditional to the power of bargaining power of one State over others.

Thus, the discourse of a country's representative allows the understanding of a given logic developed to praise, criticize, or even remain neutral when facing the international conjuncture and/or the actions of his/her pairs. Given this, different circumstances shape the creation of an idea that once introduced in the diplomatic discourse becomes a circumstance delimiting diplomatic activity itself (SANTOS, 2014). In other words, diplomatic activity will always be contingent on domestic or foreign interests that are both presented and articulated in and through diplomatic discourses.

This aspect of the diplomatic activity brings several argumentative and rhetoric techniques that are strategically applied to position a country in the world to bring it closer or further away from other nations, transnational or non-governmental agents. Still, the development of a diplomatic narrative has in its logic the course by which they become legible and visible through the circulation in different media and platforms. Speech, therefore, presupposes persuading, dissimulating and convincing. It is in the amalgam between rhetoric and the logic of visibility devices that a state is dimensioned on the international scene and that it develops both its identity and its public image.

The study of the construction and the dispute over narratives involving the manifestation of foreign policy permeates disciplines such as International Relations, Political Science, Linguistics, History, and Communication. Regarding the research stream that encompasses the intersections between Communication and Politics, different disciplines and methodologies articulate and promote exchanges between various fields of knowledge (MARQUES; MIOLA, 2018, PANKE; CERVI, 2011).

Given the argument of this work, that the positioning of diplomatic discourses as object of research in Political Communication, it is possible both to observe convergences with this field of research and to fill the gaps observed in works reflecting on the state of the art of Political Communication (ALDÉ; CHAGAS; BASTOS DOS SANTOS, 2013, FRANÇA et al, 2018, MARQUES; MIOLA, 2018).

Given our main argument, that is possible to understand diplomatic discourses as an object of inquiry for Political Communication research, it is possible to observe convergence with the field. Specifically, it even fills some gaps observed in previous papers whose objective is to present the State of Art in the Political Communication research (ALDÉ; CHAGAS; BASTOS DOS SANTOS, 2013, FRANÇA et al, 2018, MARQUES; MIOLA, 2018).

As convergences, we understand diplomatic discourses as a genre that illustrates and enables political negotiations, and that allows the identification of alliances and bargaining

games. Not only that, but also the strategic use of discourses addresses issues of identity and public image in a complex set of meanings shared by various political subjects (GOMES, 2004, FRANÇA et al, 2018).

Concerning the gaps of the field, given the scope of the investigations and the difficulty in delimiting the objects of study (MARQUES; MIOLA, 2018), we advocate and justify the existence of diplomatic discourses as an object of study throughout this paper. Additionally, we verified that is possible to place the use of diplomatic discourses by different agents in some of the thematic categories proposed by Aldé, Chagas and Bastos dos Santos (2013), such as *Institutional Communication and Public Image, Propaganda and Political Marketing, Politics of Communication*, or *Communication and Democracy*, for example.

Given different epistemological and ontological approaches concerning the terms communication and discourse (JIAN; SCHMISSEUR; FAIRHURST, 2008, MARCHIORI et al, 2010, PUTNAM, 2008), we understand that discourses are one of the available resources that both enable and constitute communication as a social process of meaning construction. Therefore, we understand that discourses are dynamics and that the meanings within them are being constantly constituted by the interrelations among the process members, the context, the signs, the intonation, and the social and cultural backgrounds. It is the case of a diplomat who refuses to negotiate with a counterpart of inferior rank, which is both a symbolical and rational choice that is interwoven with several elements mentioned above (PUTNAM, 2010).

Even though the speech act provides opportunities for establishing connections and, hopefully, reciprocity among actors, those are not exempt from the flow of powers of political and historical contexts (JIAN; SCHMISSEUR; FAIRHURST, 2008). Consequently, it is precisely in the negotiations of meaning between constellations of actors and interests that tensions and contradictions are evidenced. They derive from the discursive act since the relational dimension of power is presented as an inherent aspect of all these exchanges (FOUCAULT, 2001).

These relations enable the investigation of eventual interactions between different discourse genres – where the diplomatic discourse belongs - with a set of theoretical and methodological approaches. The assessment of discourses would not only highlight flow and dynamics of control but would enable to understand that diplomatic actors are political agents of transformation immersed in social practices constituted by these exchanges (BERGER; LUCKMANN, 1985, JIAN; SCHMISSEUR; FAIRHURST, 200).

Regarding the international scope, Donahue and Prosser (1997) explain that communication occurs essentially in two ways, which act in specific and complementary forms. The authors define the first as communication between groups, shared by collective cultures. The second form of international communication, also intercultural, is performed by individuals who speak on behalf of a state and, for that, they make use of discourses.

In an international setting, states present themselves as the main political actors in the interaction processes (CASTRO, 2012, MEARSHEIMER, 1995, 1994). The processes

through innumerable relations that “permeate, characterize and constitute the social body and [...] cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without production, accumulation, circulation, and functioning of a discourse” (FOUCAULT, 2001, p. 101). Hence, diplomatic discourses overcome the physical barriers of international forums or occasional stages, for they imply power relations in the context of political struggles.

In societies where there is wide access to the media, politics is also made by considering that any event could be commented on and analyzed by the supporters and opponents of a political subject. The apogee of this movement would be when “the leader of a nation, or a candidate to become that leader, speaks in any public forum” (WILLIAMS; YOUNG; LAUNER, 2012, p. 1744 – Our translation). This is the moment when the public eyes are turned to the spokesman or the spokeswoman.

Whenever the chancellor, president or prime minister of a given nation goes to the tribune of an international organization or speaks directly to the media, he/she is embodying the voice of the country represented by him/her (PANKE, 2010). The elimination of one’s self and the representation of another subject takes place as a practice that is inherent to the diplomatic activities (SOFER, 1997).

Therefore, it is possible to observe what Castro (2012) calls as *individually-based statehood*, that is, the embodiment of a state through a person commissioned for determined functions. Whenever a diplomat delivers a speech, his/her main intention cannot be presenting him or herself. Instead, the diplomat must achieve a prudent representation of the position to which he is designated, the objectives and political positions of his nation, even if it is not entirely possible to dissociate the corporeality of the subject from the statement, the form of enunciation or the linguist skills.

The varying levels of bargaining among political actors in international negotiations are constituted of discussions about high or low politics². Moreover, the interactions provided through discourses, by the exchange of ideas and the antiphonic word, enable conflict resolution instead of solving issues by the physical annihilation of opponents (FIORIN, 2015). Negotiations in the political sphere present intersections with how arguments are articulated with reality. In the case of diplomatic discourse, we understand that it departs from what exists and it is socially constructed. Once it can be understood as an object of political communication, when rhetorical arguments and strategies are used to articulate disputes or struggles for the maintenance of power, the discourses occupy institutionalized spaces for decision-making and reverberate in the media (MATOS E NOBRE; GIL, 2013).

Following Riorda and Elizalde (2013, p. 9 – Our translation), we understand that without the use of different levels and communication devices, it is not possible to put in operation and transform any strategy into something real or effective. There are sets of elements that must be taken into account for a successful discursive strategy; understanding

² Although Ripsman (2006) explains that these concepts are contested for their malleability, as a rule, high politics involves the sovereignty of states (power, war, and peace), whereas low politics deal with aspects regarding peoples’ welfare, justice, environment, etc. (BEITZ, 1999)

the idiosyncrasies of the nation represented by the speaker, who are the interlocutors, what is the speaker's place of speech, what is the platform that is being used, and how different codes of communication may echo.

Then, political power is manifested as a result of the dialectics between two components of the human activity; the first involves the debates of ideas in the public sphere, the place where opinions are shared, and the second is the political action, that is restricted to a political space, where decisions are made and acts instituted (CHARAUDEAU, 2015). Following Riorda (2013), communication cannot be considered more important than management decisions, but it is *sine qua non* for doing politics. In other words, politics cannot be done without communication.

Discourses are designed and developed to produce effects within the public opinion; therefore, they will always be deliberated. Monasterio (2013) ponders the relevance of discourses as strategies of political communication once they could either raise one to the top of power or bury in a mud pit. Furthermore, it is necessary to recognize that speakers' postulates defend the interests of the nations they represent by sharing their priorities and affirming their sovereignty. They will always position their nations in relation to other states and institutions (CARVALHO, 2011).

According to Panke (2010), political discourses are the public and linguistic manifestation about the polis or the public space, they are performed by individuals, parties, governments, institutional subjects, or organized groups. The author also mentions the following characteristics concerning to this genre of discourse: (1) they deal with issues related to life in society; (2) they may present problems and point to solutions; (3) they can be presented orally; (4) the speakers are entitled to address on behalf of an ideological group; (5) they are spouted towards the future and take the past as a point of reference; (6) they are essentially persuasive.

Diplomatic discourses, therefore, are not only a diplomatic tool, but they can be also understood as a form of political discourse (PANKE, 2010). In fact, what marks the diplomatic discourse is its political gesture: it rhetorically addresses an official stance, aiming at exercising dissents through dialogue to favor the speaker's biases.

That is, the political gesture in the diplomatic discourse occurs because the dissent and the conflict are inherent in the political activity (LEBRUN, 1981). Understanding this rationale leads us, then, to realize that the existence of biases will always favors the exploitation of certain kinds of conflicts (SCHATTSCHEIDER, 1975). The diplomacy, as a matter of state, combines the technique and the art of negotiations, pressures, coercion, and persuasion (ALMEIDA apud CASTRO, 2012, p. 28).

Other features of diplomatic speeches listed by Oliver (1950) show that the rationalization of discourse gives room for ambiguity and self-contradiction, elements that should be present in case of changes of policies and government positions on different issues. Alike political discourse, the speaker of a diplomatic speech is deprived of its own identity when he speaks in the name of a government. For the author, diplomatic speeches are not

necessarily conciliatory for their language may be abrupt and drive changes. Therefore, the speaker must be able to express the exact degree of hostility, friendship or indifference concerning other states.

The power of diplomatic discourse as a means of transmission, dissemination, and amplification of messages is due to its use for the mediation of relations between nations (HUNT, 2015). In this way, we can observe the intersection between political and diplomatic discourses, since the latter can be considered a subcategory of the former if we consider the so-called “three Rs”: representation, rationality, and reference.

Firstly, the speaker of both discursive genres is a legitimate representative of a given social group to speak about issues related to life in society, either pointing out problems or posing solutions. Secondly, biases of these groups are expressed through the rationalization of the act of speech aiming at guaranteeing that one’s point of view wins. Thirdly, the discourses are founded on the references that the speakers and their groups have in each context.

Supported by this theoretical apparatus and given the relevance of diplomatic discourses to international political communication, the following section presents the state of the academic production on this theme.

The academic production on diplomatic discourse

In 1950, Oliver (1950) affirmed that the field of study that encompasses diplomatic discourses was largely undefined and neglected both by linguists and by International Relations scholars. Thus, whilst Gomes (2011) stated that the analysis of such discourses by the International Relations’ studies was unexplored, Carvalho (2011) recognized that diplomatic language was not receiving proper attention by linguistic or historical research.

Given the relevance of this genre of discourse for Political Communication, we sought to assess whether this diagnosis is also confirmed in the field of Communication. For this reason, we mapped national and international scientific databases to list the researches that study diplomatic discourses. Based on Gomes (2016), we took as the premise for researching the state of art of such discourses that the academic attention indicates the interest in a field of study.

We adopted the following procedure to collect the metadata. We choose the following seven scientific databases in which publications were released between 1980 and 2018: (1) Capes’ theses and Dissertations Catalog (*Banco de Teses e Dissertações da Capes – BTDC*)³; articles published and indexed in the platforms (2) EBSCOhost⁴, (3) ScienceDirect⁵, and (4) SciELO⁶; and conference proceedings from three of the main scientific congresses in the Communication field that are held in Brazil: (5) the Brazilian Association of Researchers

3 Available at <http://bancodeteses.capes.gov.br/banco-teses/>. Accessed on: August 19, 2017.

4 Available at <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/search/>. Accessed on: August 19, 2017.

5 Available at <http://www.sciencedirect.com/>. Accessed on: August 19, 2017.

6 Available at <http://scielo.br/>. Accessed on: August 19, 2017.

in Communication and Politics (*Associação Brasileira de Pesquisadores em Comunicação e Política - Compolítica*)⁷, (6) the National Association of Graduate Programs in Communication (*Associação Nacional dos Programas de Pós-graduação em Comunicação - Compós*)⁸, and (7) the Brazilian Congress of Communication Sciences (*Congresso Brasileiro de Ciências da Comunicação - Intercom*)⁹.

To be considered in our sample, the articles had to contain on the title, keywords or abstracts at least one of the following expressions: (1) *discurso diplomático*; (2) diplomatic discourse; (3) diplomatic address; and (4) diplomatic speech. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 – Publications on diplomatic discourse by database and coverage period

Database	Number of publications	Coverage period
BTDC	22	1997-2018
EBSCOhost	63	1988-2018
SciELO	5	1998-2018
ScienceDirect	16	1980-2018
Compolítica	-	2006-2017
Compós	-	2000-2018
Intercom	-	1994-2018

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Although there are publications prior to those collected in these databases, the amount of scientific research on diplomatic discourse is still low, especially in the area of Communication in Brazil. Three of the most important scientific congresses in Brazil - Compolítica, Compós, and Intercom – do not have any research indexed in their proceedings since their first meetings. Researchers studying discourses on these congresses have their focus on epistemology of communication, and different genres of discourse, such as political, electoral, media, journalistic, and advertising, and gender issues. Still, all these studies simply ignored diplomatic discourses as a discourse genre.

Given this diagnosis, we wondered what the reasons for the low adherence to this research stream would be. Could it just be the result of a lack of interest from the researchers in the field? Thus, we present in Figure 1 the national and international production by area of study. As for national production, Political Science and International Relations are the fields that presented the highest number of publications on diplomatic speeches at the BTDC database, representing a total of 68%. Regarding the SciELO platform, only five articles

7 Available at <http://www.compolitica.org/>. Accessed on: August 19, 2017.

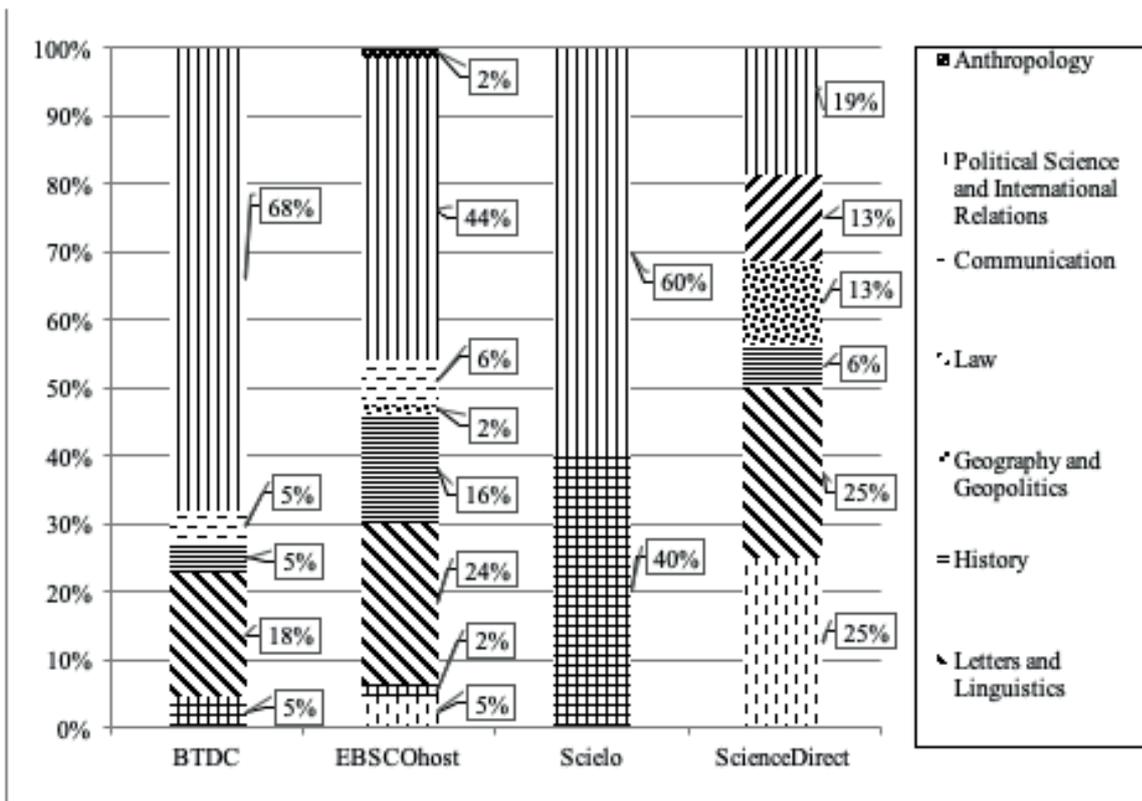
8 Available at http://www.compos.org.br/anais_encontros.php. Accessed on: August 19, 2017.

9 Available at <http://portalintercom.org.br/>. Accessed on: July 11, 2018.

containing the above-mentioned expressions were scraped, three of them in Political Science and International Relations and the rest in Sociology.

Among international publications, we found that 63 articles were published between 1988 and 2018 and indexed in EBSCOhost, the platform with the highest number of publications. Among these, the areas that produced the most were Political Science and International Relations (44%), followed by Languages and Linguistics (24%). On the other hand, ScienceDirect had 16 pieces of research published in more diversified fields of knowledge (Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Publications on diplomatic discourses by database and field of knowledge



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Important to notice that the emphasis of publications indexed in BTDC database is on Political Science and International Relations. The possible explanation is that these discourses are studied as mobilizers of political concepts and practices in the international scene. This is the case of Brazil’s diplomacy which has an active voice in international fora like the United Nations.

The international databases – EBSCOhost and ScienceDirect presented heterogeneity in the studies and prioritized publications in Political Science and International Relations, and Languages and Linguistics. The need for comprehending linguistic issues of the object may be an explanation for such emphasis. Similarly, anthropological, sociological, and legal approaches still lack studies, as they present a very incipient number of researches in the databases.

Regarding studies on Communication, we scrapped only one (5%) and four (6%) researches on BTDC and EBSCOhost, respectively. It shows that this field of study is not only still underexplored, but it also indicates the potential for the development of researches and the application of different methodologies. However, this low adherence in Communication studies may be justified for the scope taken by national and international research groups that work with Political Communication.

Aiming at understanding how researches have been dealing with diplomatic discourse and promoting further development of researches, we describe some of the existing publications hereafter. Donahue and Prosser (1997) claim to have published the first piece of research that poses manifold possibilities for the analysis of diplomatic discourse specifically at the United Nations. The authors reviewed different methods and made ways for the application of Discourse Analysis and Rhetoric Analysis. Considering their work as a pathfinder, it shows possibilities for further studies without defending a thesis other than the importance of this kind of investigation.

However, there are studies prior to Donahue and Prosser's, such as those written by Robert T. Oliver in the 1950s (OLIVER, 1950, 1951, 1954) and by Claudio A. Cioffi-Revilla in the late 1970s. Oliver (1950, 1951, 1954) essays four prognoses for future researches. The first of them is assessing diplomats' speeches to (1) evaluate different perspectives surrounding a given theme, (2) observe methods for appealing to different audiences, (3) evaluate how successful a speaker is to judge and attract the audience towards his/her objectives, and (4) define and delimit what was the speaker's rationale.

The second possibility presented by the author is to analyze discourses regarding any diplomatic issues. For instance, peace efforts between North and South Korea may present a fruitful ground for this stream of research. It is also possible to compare how discourses were translated for the official languages of a given international organization. This could be the case of the United Nations with its six official languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and/or Spanish.

The third venue for researches is Frame and Reception analysis of different discourses in different countries and contexts. At present, scholars could assess international media coverage and repercussion. The fourth possibility is analyzing a given government policy since its presentation by and to policymakers, passing through its development and flowering, culminating in its promulgation or renounce, as stated by Oliver (1950).

Cioffi-Revilla's (1979) study on diplomatic discourses takes instrumental lens to bring three main perspectives: channels, signals-messages, and networks. The author presents a

complex model to describe the communication flux produced by diplomatic discourse, which is described as a nonlinear phenomenon that may undergo distorted by noise disturbances. Albeit the international communication realized through diplomatic discourse is interpreted and judged by different actors, two processes have important implications and must be considered: the encoding which is carried out by the sender and the decoding by the target.

Gorenc (2011) analyzes diplomacy as communication and language as an active means to create ideas. By doing so, he assesses the differences between political and diplomatic discourses advocating that the former employs a *colorful* language rich in metaphors, but the latter should use neutral and less implicit language to avoid misunderstandings between the interlocutors. Unlike Oliver (1950), Gorenc (2011) does not consider the possibility of contradictions and the use of a conflict-oriented language in such discourse. However, the author understanding seems detached from the reality in which speeches are delivered to provoke, disqualify or even destabilize political opponents using only words. As an illustration, we remind when Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed in his UN General Assembly speech that Iran had secret atomic warehouses¹⁰.

Yang's (2014) study argues that the favorable image of a country is an intangible asset that strengthens the trust and cohesion of people. Thus, the author presents the Chinese national image construction through cultural elements and assesses different platforms on which this image was built, including diplomatic discourses. Wiethoff (1981), in turn, evaluates the most relevant practices of diplomatic discourses described by Political Science's classic Niccolò Machiavelli, emphasizing key characteristics and rhetorical strategies in political communication.

Some authors Almeida (2006) and Cervo e Bueno (2012) make use of Brazilian discourses as elements of reference throughout their studies on Brazilian Foreign Policy. Their analysis is qualitative and unstructured. Similarly, Corrêa (2007) presents the Brazilian discourses at the United Nations between 1946 and 2006. We recommend his work for a historical view of Brazil's diplomacy once the author transcribed, contextualized and analyzed each discourse. This publication brings a valuable contribution to Brazil's historiography because it contextualizes both internal and external circumstances in which Brazil was immersed along those years.

Machado (2006), in turn, identifies ideological operations regarding Brazil's international participation. Thereto he makes use of the Brazilian's diplomatic speeches delivered in José Sarney's and Fernando Henrique Cardoso's governments between 1985 and 1999. The author concludes that there was continuity on how Brazilian foreign policy was conducted over fifteen years in terms of ideological operations, especially regarding the support of neoliberal policies and the discourse of legitimation of the country's economic opening.

¹⁰ Available at <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-un-assembly-israel-iran/netanyahu-in-un-speech-claims-secret-iranian-nuclear-site-idUSKCN1M72FZ>. Accessed on: January 16, 2020.

The Discourse Analysis method instrumented by Santos (2006) in Brazilian diplomatic discourses assesses processes of identity construction, social relations, and social representations. The author analyzes discursive formations in the statements delivered in South American presidential summits and released in the written press. As a result, it is verified that there is a narrative resignification of the “South America” phenomenon as a kind of new region of the world, different from Latin America. Hence, South America is part of a regional integration project involving economic, physical, political, and cultural aspects.

Using qualitative descriptive analysis of Brazilian diplomatic discourses during the Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva’s administration, Rodrigues (2015) ponders how diplomatic discourse established a plot for national identity and contributed to the construction of a country narrative. Aiming at demonstrating the interrelationship between discourse and national identity in the development of the Brazilian national myth, the author develops his research on four categories: (1) Latin America, (2) African Brazil, (3) Emerging Brazil, and (4) Self-esteem. These would be the four main axes found by the author in the discourses concerning Brazilian identity.

Also making use of qualitative analysis, Barbosa (2011) investigates the importance given to *South-Americanism* in Brazil’s foreign policy throughout the diplomatic discourses in Lula da Silva administration (2003-2010). The author concludes that, according to the government understanding, the consolidation of South America is a key process for the quality of Brazil’s international insertion (BARBOSA, 2011).

By way of illustration, Brazilian diplomatic speeches can be classified into two periods marked by the international performance of the Lula da Silva government. On the one hand, the discursive emphasis was on neoliberalism until the end of Cardoso’s administration. On the other hand, since Lula da Silva’s government, the emphasis has been on emerging countries, especially those in South America, Latin America, and the African continent, and Brazil has been presenting itself as a regional power and the spokesperson for these regions.

Furthermore, from the inventoried studies, we realized the authors’ preference for qualitative methods, such as the French or North American Discourse Analysis. In our database mapping, we found only one work that made use of quantitative analysis. Castro (2015) conducts a Content Analysis to study the use of the word peace in the speeches delivered by the Egyptian President Anwar Al-Sadat concerning the Peace Treaty between Israel and Egypt in 1978. The author reveals that changes in the use of the term were conditioned on the intentions of President-in-Office’s policies.

Diplomatic discourse: a proposal for research

Political communication comprises articulation processes to attain or maintain power and, theoretically, so that decision taken benefit society in general. We highlight the expression *theoretically* because although we refer to liberal democracies, political elites are kept in key positions by the system resulting in private interests being favored over public

interests. Eventually, when such democracies advance to effective systems of deliberation other voices may be heard and represented.

Either way, political discourses interfere in negotiations among these groups. It is a practice inherent to social activities like governmental and electoral actions, the media industry including journalistic, advertising, propagandist, and entertainment products on varied platforms, and the third sector. Following this, diplomacy is incorporated as one of the necessary formations for political negotiation, not only internationally, but also in the aforementioned spheres.

In the theoretical field, however, diplomatic discourses constitute the specificity of the analysis of the interactions among nations. These discourses act not only as mediators in case of conflicts, but also articulating interests. Thus, understanding diplomatic action in the field of political communication needs to consider factors such as economic, social, and cultural contexts of the involved parties, the macro positioning of the country, the location, and the occasion where speeches are addressed. The fundamental factors of communication analysis comprise verifying whether they are mediatized by journalistic frames or made entirely available through government or international organizations' communication channels.

Therefore, we suggest the follow methodological procedure to analyze such discourses: corpus selection: (1) *country or countries to be analyzed* (history and contexts must be included); (2) *timespan* (a justification must be provided taking as reference a conflict, an episode, event or alliance changes, for instance); (3) *the source of the discourse* (a government institution or a political leader as the spokesperson, whether diplomat, head of state or head of government); (4) *media placement* (journalist framing, transcription or full delivering); (5) *outlet* (ceremony, government headquarters, neutral venue, popular event), *discourse content* (themes that were dealt with¹¹) and argumentation.

Each of these steps deserves further study for further adequacy of the research. However, we highlight that, methodologically, the idiosyncrasy of diplomatic discourses incorporated in the field of political communication refers to the fact that they emphasize both the international scenario and a wide array of elements aiming at understanding diffuse interests entangled in international relations.

Final remarks

Diplomatic discourses can spread and broaden messages within public opinion and, at the same time, project the public image of a country in the international scene (GOMES, 2004, HUNT, 2015, PANKE, 2010, WILLIAMS; YOUNG; LAUNER, 2012). Therefore, we verified the state of knowledge on the investigations in the field of political communication and place diplomatic discourses as an object of research.

11 We suggest the categories used by the Electoral Communication Research Group, which are available in <http://www.comunicacaoeleitoral.ufpr.br/index.php/metodologias/>. Accessed on: 7 January 2020.

The disputes of narratives in the international scene provided by diplomatic discourses is yet an incipient issue that still demands deeper investigation. Consequently, the understanding that diplomatic discourses can be assessed as political actions and part of international disputes raises the need for an understanding under the Communication lens and especially Political Communication.

As a preliminary diagnosis supported by bibliographic references (CARVALHO, 2011, GOMES, 2011, OLIVER, 1950), we found out the scarcity of studies analyzing this discourse genre in several fields of study, such as Linguistics, Political Science and International Relations, History or Anthropology. In order to verify whether this diagnosis is confirmed in the Communication field, we scrapped seven different databases, namely Capes' theses and Dissertations Catalog (BTDC), EBSCOhost, SciELO and ScienceDirect, and conference proceeding from three of the major Brazilian congresses: Compólítica, Compós, and Intercom.

We confirmed that studies regarding diplomatic discourses in the field of Communication represent only 5% and 6% of the publications in BTDC and EBSCOhost databases, respectively. Out of which, the methodological emphasis is qualitative, and the most used method is the Discourse Analysis. We also ascertained the inexistence of researches on diplomatic discourse in all scientific conferences assessed.

On the one hand, it reveals the lack of scholars' interest in the analysis of international communication made by different political subjects, such as countries, presidents, prime ministers, and ambassadors. On the other hand, a field of studies that is still incipient in Communication theories and analysis emerges. Especially in Political Communication, we understand that diplomatic speeches are extremely relevant as an object of study given the intertwined power struggles and the international scenario that is increasingly dependent on good relations. Moreover, this scarcity also brings the possibility to approach this object under other methodologies, such as quantitative analyses that go beyond mere data description.

Still, beyond the quantitative, we glimpse several ways to be taken and questions to be answered in future research. By thinking diplomatic discourses as the object of Political Communication, it is possible to investigate the argumentative techniques that structure these discourses and compare them with other institutional and social discourses. Then, would it be possible to identify the interaction between the two levels proposed by Putnam (2010)? Not only that, is it possible to verify the elimination of the self (SOFER, 1997) when the speaker is presented as the representative of his/her country? Would diplomatic speeches be configured as a matter of state or government communication?

We also question whether it is possible to identify the ideological tensions brought by speakers of diplomatic speeches. How would repertoires of actions and demands for recognition and legitimacy be articulated beyond merely persuading and convincing? Is it possible to identify dialectical processes that articulate different actors, texts, and contexts? Therefore, the historical evolution of different discourses from the same country can be

investigated in conferences that deal with specific themes, such as the United Nations Summit on the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, and the United Nations Climate Action Summit.

Not only that, but by contemplating discourses from a broader perspective than the speech act it is possible to investigate different codes of communication that constitute a message. In addition to linguistic enunciation mechanisms, the possibilities of analysis may include, for instance, assessing the speaker's intonation, movements, and physical expressions when one is positioning in the pulpit, the organization and use of the physical space during the speech, visual contact with the interlocutors, and visual aspects of the speaker (appearance, physical type, gender, and dress).

Finally, given the necessary articulation of Political Communication with other fields of knowledge (MARQUES; MIOLA, 2018), we hope that this work can effectively contribute to the development of further research by using diplomatic discourses as an object of study. And more broadly, we hope that this initial effort points to horizons that collaborate with the eventual improvement and consolidation of the area.

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