

About the Discourse of the Necessity of Military Intervention in Brazil for the "Restoration of Order in the Country": Analytical Notes

Roberto Baronas

Federal University of São Carlos, Brazil

Tamires Bonani

Federal University of São Carlos, Brazil. LEEDiM / FAPESP

Abstract

In this work, based on the analysis of the French orientation discourse, we aim to reflect on a discourse that is becoming increasingly common in Brazil: the request for the Armed Forces to take control of the country by force. Although a recent past full of suffering, death and torture stamped the pages of the history books when telling about the Military Coup of 1964, research indicates the support of more than 40% of the population for a supposed military intervention in Brazil in 2018. In a quick survey of major newspapers in the country and in social networks, we noted that often some statements are associated with the demand for seizure of power, such as: "We are going to sanitize the country", "establish order", "in the name of God and the family, Brazil will be a serious country". Such relations between this "semantic universe" makes us question whether there is a discursive "order" that governs and sustains this need for military intervention in Brazil. Therefore, we will use a theoretical-discursive approach based on the concepts of Alice Krieg-Planque (2016), Dominique Maingueneau (2014) and Marie-Anne Paveau (2015), more specifically of small phrases and discursive virtue, respectively. The latter guides us in the sense of answering a question that the author herself asks: "Will there be good statements in the moral sense of the term? If so, what then is a statement capable of receiving a judgment of moral value? And how does moral value manifest itself linguistically?" (p. 24). This is because, for her, this notion "functions at the core of an ethics of values and supposes an intersubjective negotiation within a given group or given society" (p. 26). For the constitution of our corpus, will be analyzed especially statements published in newspapers and magazines of great circulation in the country.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis; Military intervention; Moral Discourse; Small Phrases.

Introduction

Images such as the one shown below illustrated the Brazilian newspapers during 10 days of May 2018. The strike of this year's truck drivers made, in addition to the demands of the class, demonstrations in favor of requesting military intervention in Brazil.

Figure 1 – "We want military intervention"



Available on: <<https://www.boletimdaliberdade.com.br/2018/05/26/exercito-comeca-a-intervir-nos-bloqueios-de-estradas-antes-parte-dos-grevistas-pediam-intervencao-militar/>>. Access in: 20 jun. 2018.

Although a recent past full of suffering, death and torture stamped the pages of the history books when telling about the Military Coup of 1964, research indicates the support of more than 40% of the population for a supposed military intervention in Brazil in 2018. In a quick survey of the country's leading newspapers and social networks, we note that often some statements are associated with the call for seizure of power, such as "let's sanitize the country," "order," "in the name of God and the Brazil will be a serious country." It is from these discursive materialities that we will have the constitution of our corpus of analysis.

Theoretical-Methodological Resources

The phenomenon of "small phrases" has been the focus of attention since the 1970s, 1980s, which included changes in the French and world media, along with the professionalization of journalism. Before that period, the creation, retaking and circulation of short statements, such as adages, proverbs, sentences, dictates in a context that was not only political, but also entrepreneurial, was known - although it was politically that the posting won certain vitality. However, the specificity of the "little phrases" of which we refer here consists of their construction based on the social actors (Krieg-Planque, 2016, p. 21, our griffin):

the "small phrase" emerges as an object coproduced by the media (ie not only by journalists, but also by the media as mediation and mediatization devices) and

politicians (and by communicators who are its auxiliaries). **It is therefore necessary to refer to the socioemiotic frameworks and the categories of actors, to specify the reflection on the "small sentences" and to relate other types of production practices and the recovery of outstanding statements.**

For Krieg-Planque (2016, p.17), "small phrase" can then be defined as follows:

"Small phrase" is a non-scientific term (and more precisely: it comes from the other appropriate discourse) that designates a statement highlighted by social actors and presented as intended for resumption and circulation.

According to the theoretical assumptions of Dominique Maingueneau, from studies on enunciative detachments and assessments, we can better understand the questions about the enunciative support of "small sentences". It is from these studies that we can understand the fabrication and think of the over-assertion of political speeches, which, in our view, is an operation capable of creating "small phrases", leaving its co-nano text to "jump" certain statements. Apart from these discussions being present in the next topic to this, as we have just pointed out, it is more interesting to confine ourselves to the discussion of "small sentences", considering that issues of detachability go beyond the theme concerning them. In the words of the French author (Krieg-Planque, 2016, 21):

The specificity of "small phrases", in relation to other statements about social situations, which we are going to evoke quickly, lies in the modalities of its construction by social actors: the "small phrase" appears as an object coproduced by the media (ie not only journalists, but also by the media as devices of mediation and mediatization) and political (and by communicators who are its auxiliaries). It is therefore necessary to refer to the socioemiotic frameworks and the categories of actors, to specify the reflection on the "small sentences" and to relate other types of production practices and the recovery of outstanding statements.

In this sense, it was from the period in which the media (more specifically from the French) began to become the closest to what we know today (1970s, 1980), along with the recognition of the professionalization of specialists in political communication, which was to favor the production of "little phrases". This was done for certain reasons, such as the more or less fixed formatting of certain genres that would circulate in the newspapers (printed and digital), for example.

Following this approach, the use of the journal's semiotic space, with a tendency to be fragmented, moves toward "decreasing the volume of content units ... imposing shorter article formats and composed of many paratextual elements: titles, subtitling, intertitles, slogans, keywords, epigraphs, captions", which ends up making the blocks of texts more complex to be read and optimizes the making of outstanding statements" in the sense that it makes in advance a place "(idem).

There is also the fabrication of the discursive event by the categorizations made by the newspaper headings. Such categories, also justified by the fragmentation of the newspaper we have explained earlier, are often perennial and have a reserved place in the semiotic division of the newspaper (such as "Phrases of the Week", "The Little Phrases of ..."). But in all cases categorization presupposes that social actors have the means to act on the devices that make these headings possible. "(Krieg-Planque, 2016, 24)

The preference for "small phrases" is also due to the inclination of the subject journalist to prefer to highlight a judged passage important of the political speech, since this reduces risks of commitment with the error on the part of the journalist and time of elaboration of summarization of the whole content. This access by journalists to these types of texts already prone to the detachment is also due to the imperatives to which they are submitted. According to Krieg-Planque (2016, p. 25):

Regarding these discourse production frames, the "little phrase" is integrated into the narration because it is constructed as an event, and it is so constructed because it is associated with an intention, a position, a doctrine, an ideology, a personality trait, an opinion, a strategy, an ambition, interests or a project that the "little phrase" supposedly condenses or of which it is supposed to be a symptom.

Such a construction of the "little phrase" as an event, on the one hand, is given by the contribution of the communicators, who in turn have purposes to be reached and foci to be given (or even disguised). This is the case with political slogans, for example. On the other side are the political actors, who try to shape their speech, since they work with a controlled political saying, objectifying, above all, visibility and highlighting what also interests him, being represented by the press. According to Krieg-Planque (2016, p. 27):

The production of "small phrases" does, in fact, participate in these actions of concealment and put themselves in the spotlight, whether they are to give visibility to a proposal that was not intended to be, or to make visible a proposal that was already destined to be noticed. In this context, journalists and, more broadly, the media, make politicians the object of a complex instrumentalization to circulate the messages. For each of these two groups of actors, who are politicians and communicators, the production of "little phrases" falls within a field of identifiable expertise and practices.

The ability to circulate the desired proposal through a "small phrase" by politicians is a communicational competence, or, in the words of the author, it is "the professionalization of politicians in their communication functions" (Idem). Krieg-Planque (2016, p. 29) proposes that in order to study the "small phrases" from a Discourse Analysis point of view,

it is necessary to reflect in the bigger picture of three issues together: the control of the agenda, according to a problematic of the agenda, setting; the imperative of visibility, in the complex mediatic framework previously mentioned; the injunction to create events and including those of the day of "scandals" or "business". The study of "small phrases" unites other contemporary questions about the relation of politicians to their mediatization.

In spite of all Krieg-Planque's contribution and theoretical-methodological arsenal, it is in the company of Maingueneau (2010, 2008) that we reflect on a common practice in contemporary media communication - the practice of highlighting statements and circulating them in new arenas. Maingueneau (2010, p. 9) states that "few people today would dispute the idea that the text is the only empirical reality with which the linguist deals: units such as sentence or word are necessarily removed from texts." And the texts, in turn, refer to genres of discourse, which function as frames of reference for all communication thinkable in a given socio-historical formation.

Also as a theoretical-methodological subsidy of our work, we resort to the theoretical assumptions of Marie-Anne Paveau (2015), especially about virtuous discourse. In her work entitled "Language and Morals: An Ethics of Discursive Virtues," the author seeks to reflect on the relationship between morality and language. Such an approach interests us as we aim to think, in the words of the author: "Will there be good statements in the moral sense of the term? If so, what then is a statement capable of receiving a judgment of moral value? And how does moral value manifest itself linguistically?" (p. 24) This is because, for her, this notion "works at the core of an ethics of values and supposes an intersubjective negotiation within a given group or given society" (p.26). Even if we are to our liking, we do not propose to be exhaustive in our theoretical and analytical expositions.

For Marie-Anne Paveau, virtuous discourse is the discourse adjusted to the current values: adjusted to reality; adjusted to the agents and to the set of the verbal productions that constitute the discursive memory of the society. The researcher affirms that virtuous discourse is the discourse adjusted to the current values: adjusted to reality; adjusted to the agents and to the set of the verbal productions that constitute the discursive memory of the society. In the set of users of a language, taken in the cultural, historical and social contexts, there really are criteria for discursive production ... The question of the moral dimension of the statements emerges from a moral discursive event, that is, from a set of comments and reactions in a given social group, about a statement or image ... Thus, the question of the moral dimension of the statements emerges from a "moral discursive event".

More Theoretical Input and Analytical Notes

As part of our corpus, we selected some images that circulated in Brazilian newspapers when the truckers strike of 2018. According to the aforementioned, such

a class claimed, among other things, the adjustment in the price of fuel that they used for transportation in trucks, fact illustrated by the following figure.

Figure 2 – Strike Warning Range of Truck Drivers



However, even after the government had made agreements with the claims claimed, the strike continued, giving visibility to small phrases in banners and in trucks, which called for the seizure of power by the military. This fact sounds in principle controversial if we look at the history of Brazil, a country that suffered a coup d'état in 1964 and even after the 21 years of military dictatorship, is still agonizing with the spills of its consequences. This narrative, although crude and simplistic compared to the complexity of the situation, has the objective of presenting a panorama perhaps paradoxical lived in Brazil. Let's look at the following image.

Figure 3 – Trucks with the tracks "Military intervention already"



Figure 3 illustrates the aforementioned request for military intervention in Brazil, where democracy is only about 30 years old. If, for Paveau, discursive virtue "functions at the core of an ethics of values and supposes an intersubjective negotiation within a given group or given society" (p. 26), could we say, then, that this group, in the case of the truck drivers, is being misrepresented? In addition, the

author brings to her analysis the fact that there are legal norms that "regulate speech", as is the case of texts on Human Rights and laws, for example. In this sense, asking for military intervention, with its history of massacre with human rights, would corroborate the fact of the misrepresentation. But then, how to explain the support of a large portion of the population to this claim?¹

In order to propose on the definition of discursive virtue, concept notion that we aim to support in order to understand this situation a little, the author sought to define morality (and chose not to distinguish moral and ethical - anchored choice in R. Ogien, in the work *L'éthique aujourd'hui: Maximalistes et minimalistes*), saying that "it is moral what concerns the virtue of agents" (p.34). Such a concept was thought from the notion of intellectual or epistemic or cognitive virtue (strands represented by J. Greco, 203).

For Paveau, it would not be enough to think as a solution to the emergence of this type of small phrase or of outstanding statements the difference between a linguist and an extralinguistic, since in these aspects there is no concern with the context. The researcher defends a reflection in a kind of continuous mind-world and world-language, in which "meaning is not referential, and that linguistic and discursive materiality is not purely intellectual but constituted by realities of our environment" (p. 194). Thus, for the researcher, "ethics co-construct in the environment, and is not imposed from the outside" (196), which opens space for the concept of discursive virtue to integrate the ethical within the linguistic. For her, then, virtuous discourse is a "discourse adjusted to the values that prevail in the complex and unstable reality of agents and their environments" (p. 214).

In this sense, we could think that the pronouncements and small phrases that circulated in the truckers' strike would be non-virtuous statements, unadjusted in relation to agents and their relations and to the set of verbal productions that form the discursive memory of societies.

Figure 4 – 7th day of strike and request for military intervention



¹ We can observe as an example the article in the newspaper El País. "Strike of the truck drivers has support in the streets: It is a necessary evil". Available in: <https://brasil.elpais.com/brasil/2018/05/29/politica/1527550010_174130.html>. Access in: 10 jun. 2018.

On the other hand, Paveau explains that "if virtuous discourse is defined, among other things, by an adjustment to the discursive memories in action in the fabric of societies, it is necessary to define the forms of mismatch precisely by evaluating the relation between discourses and memory: a phenomenon of amemory or of dementia is not necessarily a break in adjustment, but, on the contrary, it may be a factor of it " (241). For her, "memory is rebuilt, and the meaning of history is reversed by hindsight, a frequent procedure of memory in general: interdiscourse is seen as derived from dialogism, affiliation contradicted by chronological reality, which dates well to Pêcheux's interdiscourse, Culioli and Fuchs, 1969-1970, in an Althusser-Lacanian tradition" (p. 272).

It is through this oblivion, or amemory, that we try to assimilate the paradoxical situation that we present at the beginning of this work. Not justifying that these productions of statements do not have as base a knowledge about the existence of the recent military dictatorship in Brazil, but rather that this memory has already resigned, is no longer disadjusted for certain groups. Moreover, not only did the memory of the historical fact re-signify itself, but also the relation between the statements "military intervention" and "military dictatorship", the latter being erased to the detriment of the former, as if there was a possibility of salvation by this without the provisos of a totalitarian government.

Results

In this work, closer to an essay or an application reflection that mixes theory and a little bit of analytical notes, we try not to exhaust analytically a whole previously selected corpus, but above all to highlight a political-discursive restlessness. For this reason our text does not necessarily follow a traditional article division, nor does it provide a thorough linguistic analysis, since we are more concerned with dropping questions than answering them fully, tying all the nodes of this problem. In this way, we thought, it would be possible to open fruitful dialogues with our peers, exchanging theoretical and practical experiences of our geographies.

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