



“Troca de galhardetes”¹. For the study of verbal violence in polemical discourses concerning the orthographic agreement in Portugal

“Troca de galhardetes”. Para o estudo da violência verbal na polémica sobre o Acordo ortográfico em Portugal

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Abstract: The main goal of this study is to show the use of aggressiveness and verbal violence in polemical discourses, from a *corpus* composed by opinion essays on the Orthographic Agreement of 1990, taking in account the perspective of Discourse Analysis, Pragmatics, Rhetoric, Argumentation and Interactional Linguistics. The study is mainly based on the notions of *ethos* and Face Threatening Acts, in order to verify which are the dominant linguistic-discursive strategies that convey aggressiveness and verbal violence. The *corpus*' analysis allows us to conclude that the speakers develop several strategies in the construction of their arguments, always with the intention of provoking and perpetuating the dissensus. Frequently, speakers confront their opponents, disqualifying them and, by extension, their supporters, instead of discussing the difference of opinion.

Keywords: discourse analysis; pragmatics; orthographic agreement of 1990; polemical discourse; verbal violence.

Resumo: O presente estudo tem como principal objetivo refletir acerca do uso da agressividade e da violência verbais na construção da polémica, num *corpus* de textos de opinião sobre o Acordo Ortográfico de 1990 (doravante AO90), nas perspetivas da

¹ In European Portuguese, the idiom “troca de galhardetes” means exchange of opinions, mainly controversial and/or aggressive, and temporally distanced as a rule.

Pragmática, da Retórica, da Argumentação e da Linguística Interacional. O estudo parte, fundamentalmente, das noções de *ethos* e *Face Threatening Acts* (“atos ameaçadores da face”) com o intuito de verificar quais as estratégias linguístico-discursivas dominantes que veiculam a agressividade e a violência verbais. A análise do *corpus* permite concluir que os locutores manipulam diversas estratégias na construção da sua argumentação, tendo sempre a intenção de provocar e perpetuar o dissenso. Recorrentemente, os locutores atacam os seus interlocutores ao invés das suas ideias, por um lado, desqualificando-os e, por extensão, denegrindo também os seus apoiantes.

Palavras-chave: análise do discurso; pragmática; acordo ortográfico 1990; polémica verbal; violência verbal.

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1 Introduction

This study is aimed mainly at verifying which linguistic-discursive strategies are used in the construction of a polemical and aggressive discourse, in a corpus of opinion essays on the 1990 Portuguese Language Orthographic Agreement (AO90), in Pragmatics, Rhetoric, Argumentation and Interactional Linguistics perspectives.

Since the AO90, like other linguistic reforms, is understood by many as an attack on an untouchable heritage – language –, the expectation is that the research work that is proposed here may contribute to the reflection on how the construction of the polemical discourse is transmitted in opinion essays on the AO90, written in European Portuguese, and how using verbal aggression and violence help accomplish this purpose.

Taken into account that the polemical discourse surrounding the AO90 lies, to a large extent, and as presented by Gomes (2008, p. 26), in arguments of a linguistic, but also political, nature, and which are related to Portugal’s prestige and the spoken language in Portuguese territory – with special emphasis on the *almost* generalized idea that the AO90 is synonymous with Portugal’s subjugation to Brazil –, it will be demonstrated that many of the arguments presented as justification for not adopting the new agreement are easily contested by those who wish so, even if without linguistic competence for such evaluation and appreciation.

The 1990 Orthographic Agreement² is a controversial and fracturing theme in Portuguese society, which has caused rivers of ink to flow, especially in the written press, and the focus will be on this polemical discourse.

Focusing on the study of polemical discourse, it is therefore important to highlight the relevant contributions of Rodrigues (2008) and Gil (2018), who carried out the investigation, within the scope of doctoral research, into referential discourse and political discourse, respectively. It is also important to highlight the study by Ramos (2000), which deepened the study of the characteristics of the polemical nature of written opinion discourses, and the joint text by Cavalcante, Pinto and Brito (2018), which focused essentially on a socio-cognitive-discursive perspective for the study of argumentation in texts, aimed to reflect on the ways in which the polemical discourse, in its argumentative aspect, emerged in political media texts.

With regard to the AO90, it is Herculean the task of listing all the studies produced that focus on the linguistic discussion of the orthographic changes proposed. It is worth highlighting the important contribution of Ribeiro (1994), from the perspective of Communication Sciences, to the reflection on the polemical discourse surrounding the Orthographic Agreement, and the publication of Seara and Marques (2015), which analyzes polemical discourse in two opinion essays on the Orthographic Agreement in a linguistic-discursive perspective.

Therefore, this study aims to understand how the polemical discourse is constructed in the opinion essays on the 1990 Orthographic Agreement, identifying the regularities of the organization and functioning of the written polemical discourse and how it depends on its speaker and/or its interlocutor, and the type of publication in which it appears, but also to analyze the extent to which these opinion essays published resort to verbal aggression and/or violence, used in higher or lower level of explicitness.

² In December 9, 2019, the Council of Ministers approved a Resolution that determined the application of the Portuguese Language Orthographic Agreement in the educational system in the academic year 2011-2012 and from January 1, 2012 to the Government and its all services, bodies and entities, as well as to the publication of the *Diário da República (Official Gazette)*.

2 Research Questions

At a macro level of analysis, the research proposal is to answer the following question:

- What are the reasons for dissensus and what are the arguments used by those who defend the AO90 and those who attack and denigrate it?

At a micro level of analysis, the research proposal is to answer the following questions:

- What are the strategies for building a polemical discourse?
- What are the discursive mechanisms underlying the construction of the author's ethos?
- What are the predominant defense and attack discourse strategies (FTA)?
- What defense and attack strategies resort to verbal aggression and/or violence?
- What ethe are constructed in polemical debates held by the two groups?

3 Corpus

Given the limitations, a documentary corpus was created for this exploratory study, with two opinion essays on the 1990 Orthographic Agreement, published in the Portuguese press, more specifically on the *Expresso*, weekly Portuguese newspaper.

The two essays are by Miguel Sousa Tavares³ and Daniel Oliveira, two figures from the Portuguese political scene, who stand at opposite poles with regard to the controversy over the 1990 Orthographic Agreement.

Both essays are the result of an action by Vasco Graça Moura, who, in February 2012, as President of the *Centro Cultural de Belém*, ordered the use of the previous orthography in all texts produced by the institution.

³ It will be presented in more detail in point 8 of this paper.

4 Methodology and analysis perspectives

This work will analyze, from the discursive-pragmatic point of view, a documentary corpus consisting of two opinion essays on the 1990 Orthographic Agreement, published in the Portuguese press, as presented in point 3 above.

In order to pursue the research objectives, the essays were labeled taking into account type of publication they are associated with, date, and its author.

The analysis of the corpus is part of the theoretical framework of Discourse Analysis (MAINGUENEAU, 1991, 2002; CHARAUDEAU; MAINGUENEAU, 2002, among others).

Considering that an opinion discourse – whatever the genre to which it belongs – is a dialogical practice (*in absentia*, in the case of the essays of the corpus), the study will equally resort to the contributions of the interactive theories of Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1980a, 1992, 2001, 2005, among others), as well as the theories of argumentation in the discourse in a rhetorical perspective (AMOSSY, 1999, 2012), in which the notion of ethos will be privileged. Amossy, in a pragmatic and argumentative perspective, considers not only that the ethos is the construction of the enunciator's image in the discourse, but that the efficacy of the discourse depends both on the conjugation of the social image that the enunciator has and on the discursive construction in the interactional framework, relevant perspective in the analysis proposed.

Still contemplating the notion of construction of the image of the speaker/receiver, the notion of *face*, proposed by Goffman (1967), will be addressed. According to the author, the term *face* designates the image that interlocutors have of themselves and that is built from socially accepted attributes (GOFFMAN, 1967, p. 5). Goffman (1967, p. 7) adds that, given the attributes of a given interlocutor and the conventionalized nature of a given interaction, the participant is aware of having a small group of possibilities of intervention and a small group of *faces* that can be adopted. Generally, maintenance of an intervener's face is a condition of interaction, not its objective, and figuration, like gaining *face* for oneself, giving space to expression to one's beliefs, introducing depreciating opinions about others, solving problems, performing tasks, etc. are actions carried out to ensure consistency with the face that has been adopted (GOFFMAN, 1967, p. 12). The most frequent ways to defend/

protect the face are: to avoid a certain theme or the correction process. Failure to comply – often intentionally – with face protection principles generates the so-called Face Threatening Acts (FTA), predictably very frequent in polemical discourse.

At a macro level of discourse, and at the rhetorical level, the work will focus on argumentation as a constituent dimension of discourse, according to the works developed by Amossy (2007, 2012), Maingueneau (2011), and Plantin (1996), among others.

At a micro level, the analysis will also be based on the contributions of Fonseca (1992a), Carreira (1997), and Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1992).

From pragmatics, since polemical texts have a strong emotional charge, the study will be also based on contributions related to the theory of speech acts, anchored in authors such as Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). The types of expressive illocutionary acts, proposed by Palrilha (2009) will be followed, which, in turn, follow the assumptions of Searle (1969), and Norrick (1978). According to Palrilha (2009), expressive illocutionary acts can be divided into two areas: emotive expressive acts, which are performed in expressing tastes, emotions, feelings; and expressive evaluative acts, which are performed in expressing favorable/unfavorable opinions, and value judgments (PALRILHA, 2009, p. 117-118).

Since it is expected that polemical opinion essays may start from a reaction to a previous essay,⁴ the research will also resort to the notions of illocutionary acts of negotiation of meaning, highlighting the initiatives (such as statement, question, inquiry) and reactive acts (such as criticism, denial, refutation, contestation, counter-argument, denial, opposition).

Considering that emotion is not only present but also characterizes the polemical discourse and differs from the controversy, this analysis will also be founded on the notion of polemics addressed by Amossy (2008a, 2010a, 2011), although other theoretical contributions can be mobilized.

⁴ The existence of a Third Party (“Tiers”) “is felt even in situations where this presence is not physical through the ‘argumentative question’ that drives the confrontation and configures it textually/discursively: the argumentative discourse is organized globally around two semantic-pragmatic poles, articulating a discourse and a counter-discourse around which the interlocutors are aligned, who adhere to or revise themselves in the arguments advanced by Proponent and Opponent. That Third Party often assumes a ‘goal’ position in relation to the discourses in confrontation (PLANTIN, 1995, p. 122)” (GIL, 2018, p. 92).

Finally, this work will have as a starting point the theorizing works on polemical discourse and verbal violence, presented in more detail below.

5 Socio-historical framework of the 1990 Orthographic Agreement

According to Teyssier (1990), it is only in the twelfth century that the beginning of the history of the Portuguese language is officially recognized, as a consequence of the discovery of what is believed to be the first (known) document written entirely in Portuguese – *Notícia de Fiadores* (1175). In the first centuries of the Portuguese language existence, according to Fonseca (1985), its written form was variable, a phenomenon that can easily be explained by the fact that it was, at the time, a vernacular language that coexisted with Latin – the standard and education language.

Since language is a living instrument that changes over time (SILVA NETO, 1960, p. 18), the Portuguese language, since it is fixed as such, also undergoes numerous variations over the years – evolving from Galician-Portuguese to modern Portuguese (refer to TEYSSIER, 1990) – and also its written representation.⁵

It is in the sixteenth century that the first grammar of the Portuguese language appears, by Fernão de Oliveira, followed by the *Grammatica da Língua Portuguesa*, by João de Barros (1540), but it is only in the nineteenth century that “the first linguistic steps towards a deeper grammatical concern about our language are taken” (PALMA, 2010, p. 6) by Viana de Gonçalves, and according to Palma (2010, p. 6), its demand continues to be met in the twentieth century.

It is, then, from 1911, that Portugal takes the first effective step towards standardizing the way of writing the language to be used in official publications and teaching. The need to create a credible orthographic standard (CASTRO; LEIRIA, 1987, p. 103) leads to the creation of a reform that foresees a return to the phonetic orthography of the Middle Ages, more simplified, changing “the written aesthetics of the Portuguese language” (PALMA, 2010, p. 8). Such movement causes

⁵ For a chronological perspective, until 2009, access: <http://www.portaldalinguaportuguesa.org/?action=acordo-historia>.

a great conflict, although it has names of high prestige as Adolfo Coelho, Leite de Vasconcelos, Cândido de Figueiredo and Gonçalo Viana.

For the aforementioned reasons, the agreement does not succeed immediately. And if the depreciating voices are heard in Portugal, they are much more pronounced in Brazil.

Portugal adopted the new reform in 1911, while Brazil remained with its old rule until 1938 – the year in which the Brazilian Academy of Letters managed to get approved the reform in force in Portugal.

The divergences, however, are felt with great intensity over the years, leading to the creation of the Luso-Brazilian Orthographic Accord, adopted in 1945 by Portugal, which remained in force until a few years ago. Following Brazil's refusal to ratify the agreement accepted by Portugal, other attempts to bring Portugal and Brazil closer are made, but it is only in the early 1970s that a change takes place. In 1971,

[...] the Brazilian Government took a very big step in the path of orthographic unification, namely with the suppression of the circumflex accent in the distinction of homographs (ESTRELA, [n.d.], p. 145)

Despite all attempts, divergences continue to resist. Thus, according to Palma (2010),

[...] in 1975, in order to reduce dissimilarities, the Lisbon Academy of Sciences and the Brazilian Academy of Letters prepared a new agreement draft, which was never officially approved, for reasons of a political nature. (PALMA, 2010, p.13)

Thus, in 1986, a meeting was held by representatives of Portugal, Brazil and five new Portuguese-speaking African countries – former Portuguese colonies. In this meeting there is no consensus either, with “major divergence focusing on the word accentuation issue” (PALMA, 2010, p. 13).

In 1990, the Lisbon Academy of Sciences adds an Explanatory Note to the original agreement. This last version is approved simultaneously by Portugal's and Brazil's governments, but its entry into force is postponed, as only the two countries and Cape Verde ratify its application (CRISTÓVÃO *et al.*, [n.d.], p. 24).

It was only in 2008 that the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal ratifies the Second Amending Protocol (already authorized by the

Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, in 2004). In the same year, detrimental reactions to the new agreement proliferated. Even so, Brazil signs the implementation decree, which came into effect from 2012.

Nevertheless, consensus on this rule tends to take long. Thus, in 2017, in Portugal, a working group is created to evaluate the arguments of defenders and detractors of the AO90.

Many parliamentarians understand that the AO90 does not fulfill the objective of unifying the Portuguese language, and until January 2020, it has only been adopted by Portugal, Brazil, Cape Verde and Sao Tome and Principe (Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Timor-Leste have not ratified it yet). For this reason, many recommend a new round of negotiations between CPLP member states.

The amendments proposed to the AO90 provide for the integration of the Lisbon Academy of Sciences' recommendations, which include restoring accents, as in *pára* (stop), eliminating consonants in some words, as *espectador* (*spectator*), and hyphens, as in *fim-de-semana* (weekend).

In addition to the working group's proposals, the *Iniciativa Legislativa de Cidadãos contra o Acordo Ortográfico* (Citizens' Legislative Initiative against the Orthographic Agreement) delivers, in April 2019, more than 20 thousand signatures to the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal. This initiative is thus transformed into a bill to repeal the New Orthographic Agreement.

The history of the implementation or revocation of the Agreement seems to have no end, but it is from the texts produced by the defenders and detractors that this work will be built.

6 The construction of the polemical discourse

The countless reactions to the AO90 implementation and the lack of consensus on the subject produced a number of polemical written texts.

In order to better understand the following, it is necessary to explain, first of all, the difference between polemics as a discursive action ("*du*" *polémique*) and polemics as an interactional exchange ("*de la*" *polémique*) (AMOSSY, 2003). According to Jacquin (2011), it is the participants in the interactions that evaluate certain behaviors as part of polemics and decide to act in the face of the polemical situation, including themselves in it.

If it seems true that all the polemical discourse – in the sense that will be presented below – is argumentative, and the opposite does not seem to be the case. Most definitions of argumentation and rhetoric are based on the principle that a consensus is to be reached. Consensus, that is, the result of effective persuasion, does not seem to be a necessary condition, however, for the definition of argumentation.

According to Plantin (2011), the argument is the management of different points of view and representations, leading to consensus in the middle of dissensus. Thus, the argument is an agonal, provocative, and subjective activity. The argumentative-persuasive discourse is, then, and according to Fonseca (1992, p. 205), a subtype of the polemical discourse. Charaudeau (2017, p. 23) argues, however, that polemical discourse is unlikely to be a genre, being yet another form of enunciation.

It is undeniable, however, that many discursive activities are anchored in dissensus, and the participants are aware that their discourse will not change the other's perspective.

Thus, Rodrigues (2008) defines polemics as

[...] a discursive practice of verbal interactions marked by two constant coordinates: dissension between speakers in relation to a subject and argumentation/refutation dimension determined by persuasive objectives. In addition to polemics, controversy,⁶ dispute, discussion, and quarrel, for example, are part of this discursive practice (RODRIGUES, 2008, p. 30)

⁶ According to Rodrigues (2008, p. 30), “Controversy, associated with rationality and truth, is currently described by aspects such as: objective of persuasion of the interlocutor and demonstration of the truth, rigorous and honest argumentation, serene and moderate tone – features strongly contrasting with those of polemics, more appropriate to the resolution of aesthetic problems (literature, music, arts in general), where the dispute focuses on matters of taste.” Although the notion of controversy seems incompatible with the notion of polemics in the perspective of Rodrigues (2008), Dascal (1989, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1994, 1995a, 1995b) proposes that the controversy is a third mode of polemics. According to the author, in controversies, the parties remain committed to their initial positions, even though they accept the existence of other positions. For the author, the controversy can be resolved, even if dissensus remains, without victory or recognition of the error – which allows compatibility with the idea of polemics and its illogical nature. Still according to Dascal, most of real polemics are controversies. See also, in this regard, Engelhardt Jr. and Caplan (1987) and Granger (1985).

Based on the theoretical framework presented, the polemical discourse based on its organization into two antagonistic poles will be approached, in which WE and THEY/the OTHER face each other (MAINGUENEAU, 1983, p. 20). In this sense, polemics is therefore an argumentative activity in which the speaker seeks to reinforce his/her thesis, making it impenetrable, without necessarily intending to convince the other (DOURY, 2012). Verbal conflict management gives rise to what Amossy (2010) classifies as the coexistence in dissensus.

In this sense, and according to Burger (2005, 2008, 2011), it is in dissensus that the participants agree to disagree, engaging in a collaborative negotiation work, although aware of the impossibility of a consensus. The interaction subjects collaborate to oppose themselves better, marking not only the coexistence of opposites, but also, and above all, their communicability. The author also mentions that dissensus works as a kind of antidote to verbal violence, until effective conflict, which is, according to him, the breakdown of communication.

Polemical discourse is thus covered by warmongering isotopy, in which the weapons are words. These weapons serve to disqualify the receiver's discourse or the opponent himself /herself (with *ad hominem* attacks).

The dichotomy between agonal positions is constructed through discursive strategies of aggressiveness and even verbal violence, as well as through axiological assessments that polarize the discourses and their stakeholders around topics such as GOOD/EVIL, FAIR/UNFAIR, LIFE/DEATH, etc.

The agonism found in the opinion discourse highlights the polemicist character that constitutes the act of counter-arguing.

Marc Angenot (2008, 2015) opportunely refers to polemics as a dialogue of the deaf or an antilogical rhetoric. In fact, for the author, defining Rhetoric as art and persuasion is to start from a wrong premise, since the objective of persuasion is rarely achieved. And it is in dissensus, in the absence of a communion of rationality, that the actors are led to a strong emotional charge, coated with indignation and anger.

In the case of the opinion discourse, widely discussed by Fonseca (1992b, 1998), a polemical relation is built where a second discourse is opposed to a previous one (MAINGUENEAU, 1984), and there is a provocative character which is – maybe – dialogical in absentia. In the press, interventions frequently appear as an opinion essay, often

seeming like answers to a question that has circulated for months: “Are you in favor of the orthographic agreement?” In this sense, polemics is understood as an argumentative modality in which dissensus paves the way for consensus or, at least, for a deliberative exercise.

Amossy (2010, p. 209) also notes that the polemical discourse has as its main objective the disqualification of the other’s discourse, accentuating the divergences. Thus, there is no polemics without a counter-discourse. The nature of polemics is provocative, but not necessarily dialogical, since the media is the support of many polemical discourses.

Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1980a) believes that polemics is part of a context of passion and violence, a type of interaction qualified as aggressive, violent or, in a more mitigated way, alive. According to Rodrigues (2008, p. 178), polemics can be generated as a *polemics of ideas*, but also as *personal polemics*, by using several *ad hominem* attack strategies. Jacquin (2011) stated that, among the possible strategies, it is possible to highlight, for example, the insult, the attack on morality, the reformulation of comments made by the *other*, and the contradiction. The author also recalls that polemics can be constructed with “effect” – as in a snooker game [*our proposal*]: it can be revealed by an attack on the thesis through an attack on the human being, or even its opposite. The formulas manipulated in the construction of polemics, according to Hekmat (2011), can thus be simultaneously polymorphic, that is, they contest the statement considering it problematic and/or inadequate to reality, and polyfunctional, causing agonism and/or attacking the interactional adversary. It should be noted, however, that

if verbal emotions/passions and violence abound in polemical discourse, this does not mean that they constitute the polemical discourse: they are not, therefore, elements that define polemics, and it is necessary to distinguish between violence and conflict (the latter being a feature of polemics, unlike the first) (GIL, 2018, p. 111)

But how does the polemics dissensus appear in linguistic-discursive terms? According to Gil (2018),

The citation or inscription of the opposing discourse in the speaker’s discourse, through resumption or reformulation, is a privileged strategy in polemics: on the one hand, the speaker retakes the Other’s discourse, often deforming it, in order to serve

his objectives; on the other hand, presenting as presupposition a given object of discourse constitutes a way of presenting it without assuming the enunciative responsibility – the Opponent has two hypotheses of some cost: either ignore the opponent, which can be understood as a sign of agreement (strategically disadvantageous), or he will have to deny the assumption, to a greater or lesser level of violence, at risk of accusations of weakness or deviation from the essential of the debate. (GIL, 2018, p. 111)

Direct discourse, indirect discourse and free indirect discourse, direct quotations or reformulation also constitute, according to the same author, forms of retaking the opponent's discourse with a strong argumentative and polemical tendency, through which there are manifestation of “acts of textual/discursive composition with a prominent metalinguistic/metacommunicative nature” (FONSECA, 1994, p. 127-128). According to Gil (2018)

If it does not lead to a solution, polemics at least opens the way for the adoption of a position that prevents endless dissensus. Polemicizing is, in this sense, an activity that is at the service of a participatory community and that recognizes otherness. (GIL, 2018, p. 120)

The disputes are, therefore, and as defended by Dascal (2005, p. 30), informative, since presenting arguments allows a better and clearer identification of the differences between the parties.

In view of the multiplicity of possible strategies in manifesting polemics, it will be easy to recognize and accept, also, the multiplicity of voices. This polyphony allows reinforcing the bonds and the identity between the different actors – speaker and receiver. In this perspective, the audience at which the discourse is directed is a discursive construction, since the speaker's discourse has to be based on *doxal* knowledge,⁷ commonplace and representations shared with his/her receiver.

In this field, it is also important to mention the notion of “silent majority,” proposed by Le Bart (1998, p. 46), regarding the polemical

⁷ The notion of *doxa* is proposed by Pragmatics Linguistics and consists of “knowledge of the world” or beliefs shared by a given community. According to Fonseca (1992b), in addition to enabling interpretation of the statement and its implicit *doxa*, it allows for a shift in the agent, since it is faceless knowledge.

political discourse. In turn, Brilliant (2011) defends, that it is often through this “public opinion” that there is support for arguments that do not really provoke confrontations in antagonistic theses, but that present themselves as a game of chess, translating as strategies of positioning more than into ideological confrontations.

It is in this context, then, that Grize’s “scheme” or Amossy’s “stereotype” comes into play. According to Fonseca (1994),

starting from the pre-existing image of the receiver, the speaker bases his speech on premises (of a social, cultural, historical order) that he believes are those that correspond to the knowledge of his audience. The degree of difficulty of this task varies depending on the heterogeneity of the audience; the speaker cannot, however, avoid this discursive construction, since the receiver is an integral part of the enunciation device. (FONSECA, 1994, p. 124)

Amossy (2001) stresses, however, that the receiver’s discursive construction is an argumentative strategy in itself, since it is possible to make the receiver want to be the favorable image in which he/she sees himself (AMOSSY, 2002, p. 469). The presence of the receiver in discursive terms, however, can be revealed either explicitly or implicitly. According to Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1980b, p 158-161), forms of treatment, indirection in calling the receiver or the use of certain pronominal forms are some of the most explicit ways of materializing the receiver in the discourse, that is, reference strategies. On the other hand, according to the same author, this materialization can be done implicitly through the image that the speaker makes of his/her receiver, the choice of the discursive strategy, and the linked contents. The two modalities depend on the “contract” established between speaker and receiver.

Charaudeau (1995b, 1995a, 2006) argues that this “contract” allows structuring the discursive practice according to the constraints imposed by the identity of each of the interveners, as well as by the objectives, circumstances (context), *topoi*, and *doxa*.

The speaker’s image also depends on discursive and social constructions, to which the notion of *ethos* is not alien.

Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2000) articulates *ethos* with a concept of collective *ethos*, that is, the perception that the audience has of its speaker, and the success of his/her intentions depends on the way members of a community present themselves in a verbal interaction, the encyclopedic

knowledge and the values they share. Micheli (2011) adds, in this regard, that the legitimacy of the speaker's ethos, during the so-called polemical interaction, can be built by the contrast between the insensitivity/contempt of his/her opponent in relation to a given subject and the consequent idea of sensitivity which the speaker automatically joins.

In summary, the studies mentioned above make it clear that the polemicist character is a specific dimension of texts of an argumentative nature, whose main objective, more than leading to consensus, is to disqualify a particular side and make the thesis impenetrable to the adversary.

The study of polemical discourse, following Rodrigues (2008), implies the analysis of speech acts, illocutionary face threatening acts, marks of subjectivity, axiological assessments, retakes and the Other representation, and it will be in this sense that this study will be developed. Polemicist character, according to the same author, is, then, a multidimensional phenomenon "that can constitute a feature that shapes discourse in a generalized or localized way" (RODRIGUES, 2008, p. 70).

7 Verbal aggressiveness and violence

Verbal aggressiveness and violence, also referred to by some authors as 'flaming,'⁸ have been the object of study from numerous perspectives of analysis, within the scope of language studies, in which those focused on polemical discourse are privileged.

According to Antonio Balandrón Pazos, aggressiveness is the first stage of violence (BALANBRÓN PAZOS, 2004, p. 42). For the author, the difference between aggressiveness and violence is purely cultural, and can be summarized as follows: aggression aims to dissuade the other, while violence intends to intentionally cause physical or psychological harm to the interlocutor (BALANBRÓN PAZOS, 2004, p. 48).

Nevertheless, there is no way to ignore, and as Rodríguez and Lara (2008) add, that, regardless of the underlying intention, those who interact resort to rudeness strategies, seeking to denigrate their opponent's social image (RODRÍGUEZ; LARA, 2008, p. 18).

⁸ The term 'flaming,' according to O'Sullivan and Flanagin (2003), refers to negative verbal behavior, used fundamentally in the scope of digital communities.

The rudeness appears as the reverse of courtesy, the side that intentionally questions its opponent's image, with the aim of destroying it for its own benefit. And, according to Bousfield (2008) and Culpeper (2005), it is not possible to identify rudeness without knowing its opposite.

It is important, therefore, to retake the proposal of Goffman (1967), who argues that the main purpose of effective and, therefore, courteous communication is to create a good image of oneself to the other and fulfill what is expected of this image. Therefore, it implies, according to the author, a commitment to the social image that the speaker has of himself/herself (GOFFMAN, 1967, p. 101). It is important to emphasize, however, that the face adopted by the speaker is a projection of a self-image on the other, a virtual self that may not coincide with reality (GOFFMAN, 1959, 1961).

And if it is true that being courteous induces courtesy, it is also true, as Rodríguez and Lara (2008) opportunely state, that not always the rules of courtesy are those which govern conversation or communication in general (RODRÍGUEZ; LARA, 2008, p. 16). There are communicative situations whose main objective is centered on the desire to denigrate and destroy the other's image, producing intentional discourteous contexts, in conflicting and polemical situations.

In such contexts, rather than seeking agreement and harmony, those who interact aim to highlight differences and take rudeness as the rule, converting it into a new form of courtesy: respect for the interactive conflict pact. Thus, the interlocutors strive to feed dissensus, deliberately looking for the imbalance between each other's social images (RODRÍGUEZ; LARA, 2008, p. 16-17).

Bousfield (2008) and Culpeper (2008) argue that verbal aggressiveness and violence are intentional Face Threatening Acts.

However, according to Rodríguez and Lara (2008), it is important to establish the difference between aggressive or inhibiting acts (such as threat) and violent acts (such as insult, ridicule, usurpation of words, that is, all acts that threaten the person's dignity) (RODRÍGUEZ; LARA, 2008, p. 18), and it is crucial to mark the distinction between aggression and hostile violence (which aim to harm others), and instrumental aggression and violence (which aim at another end) (RODRÍGUEZ; LARA, 2008, p. 17).

Some authors, such as Cabral and Lima (2017), warn of the fact that the effectiveness of aggression/violence depends on an evident linguistic mark, perceived by the opponent. However, Terkourafi (2008) reinforces that this marking can also occur by using an unconventional expression in a given context, and then it is not necessary to use pejorative linguistic markers. In this sense, and in order to establish what can be considered aggressive or violent, Culpeper (2011, p. 20) proposes two necessary conditions for the occurrence of verbal offense: 1) the language used must conflict with expectations; 2) the language used must produce a perlocutory effect of offense.

Also Bousfield (2008), based on Culpeper (1996, 2005), systematizes some marks of rudeness that allow for a clearer analysis. Thus, for Bousfield (2008, p. 99), some of the explicit impoliteness strategies are 1) disdain or contempt; 2) dissociation from the other; 3) demonstration of lack of interest; 4) use of inappropriate identity markers; 5) perpetuation of the disagreement; 6) use of taboo language; 7) threats; 8) condescension or ridicule; 9) association of the interlocutor with a negative aspect. He also lists two of the main implicit manifestations of lack of politeness: 1) sarcasm or false politeness; 2) silence or inaction.

Analyzing the list presented by Bousfield (2008), strategies that can present an aggressive or violent nature are easily identified. Even so, among the innumerable manifestations of verbal violence possible, the insults top the list of the most explicit, assuming a situation of interlocution – even if *in absentia* –, characterized by dissensus, with a critical and derogatory intention. Despite being considered a purely verbal act, according to Cabral and Albert (2017, p. 278), the insult “touches the social domain,” since it questions its interlocutor’s image and positions him/her as an ideologically distant other. In fact, and as mentioned by Amossy (2014a), verbal aggression traditionally starts from an *argumentum ad hominem*, seeking disqualification of the other, removing legitimacy and credit.

According to van Dijk (2008), the strategy of discrediting the other, whether through insult or not, allows reinforcing the antagonistic relationship between ONESELF and the OTHER, that is, between the ingroup and the outgroup of the “ideological square” proposed by the same author (VAN DIJK, 2008, p. 195).

The manifestation of aggressiveness and/or violence in the verbal field seems, however, clearer in oral texts, as evidenced by

Bravo (2003). According to the author, courtesy (or its absence) has a communicative and conversational nature, with physically present participants (BRAVO, 2003, p. 6). Nevertheless, as it is demonstrated in this work and corroborated by Rodríguez ([n.d.]), written texts also allow the manipulation of courtesy or rudeness strategies, including, in some cases, traits of aggressiveness and violence. The provocative nature of some written texts – such as opinion essays – enables proving this belief, even though, due to temporal issues or difficulty in identifying the receiver, the response to these stimuli may be delayed.

Let us therefore look at the exploratory study presented below to better understand the above.

8 Analysis of the corpus of the polemical essays (“troca de galhardetes”)

The exploratory study proposed aims at the analysis of two opinion essays on the AO90 (refer to Annexes), published on the *Expresso*, weekly Portuguese newspaper, in February 2012.

First, it is important to know, even briefly, the actors (direct or indirect) of the corpus under analysis.

One of the essays is written by Daniel Oliveira, Portuguese writer Herberto Hélder’s son. At the time of the publication under analysis, Daniel Oliveira was still a political activist, journalist and TV announcer. He started his political life in the Portuguese Communist Youth and was one of the founders of the Left Bloc. From the beginning, he is a staunch supporter of the 1990 Orthographic Agreement.

The second essay is signed by Miguel Sousa Tavares, Portuguese writer Sophia de Mello Breyner Andresen’s son, journalist, editor, writer and Portuguese political announcer. Unlike his parents, Miguel Sousa Tavares was never affiliated with any political party, although he participated in some civic movements on sporadic occasions. From the beginning, he is a staunch detractor of the 1990 Orthographic Agreement.

Daniel Oliveira and Miguel Sousa Tavares are experts in argumentation techniques and, perhaps for that reason, the latter, regarding a polemical discourse that involved him, stated “(...) I never said, never wrote and it never occurred to me to think of so stupid phrase. It is absolutely false, from one end to the other. Whoever invented it knew well that the best way to hit an opponent is not to discuss his reasons, but to attack his character.” (SOUSA TAVARES, 2008)

Finally, we present Vasco Graça Moura, the figure that is repeatedly mentioned by the two authors in the essays under analysis.

Vasco Graça Moura (January 3, 1942– April 27, 2014) was a Portuguese writer, translator and politician. After April 25, 1974, he joined the Social Democratic Party, having held positions of State Secretary of State for Social Security and, later, Secretary of State for Returnees (Portuguese citizens formerly resident in the African colonies). For ten years (from 1999 to 2009), he had been a member of the European Parliament. In 2012, he was appointed, by the Secretary of State for Culture – Francisco José Viegas – president of the *Centro Cultural de Belém* Foundation.⁹

The essays under analysis were produced following an action by Vasco Graça Moura, who, in February 2012, as President of the *Centro Cultural de Belém*, ordered the use of the previous orthography in all texts produced by the institution.

Below, there are some strategies developed by the authors.

8.1. Title

Both authors seek, through the title, to inform the reader as to the direction that the text will take.

Miguel Sousa Tavares titled his article “*A coerência, a coragem e a dignidade*” (“Coherence, courage and dignity”), while Daniel Oliveira chooses the title “*O cantinho de Vasco Graça Moura*” (Vasco Graça Moura’s little spot).

The axiological assessment appears in both cases. However, only through reading the body text and prior knowledge of Daniel Oliveira’s position in this matter, it is possible to confirm that the choice of the diminutive “*-inho*” is in no way innocent. Rather, it has a negative connotation, thus attributing to Vasco Graça Moura’s actions a certain

⁹ According to the official website, “The Centro Cultural de Belém is managed by a Foundation whose aim is to promote culture, developing and disseminating new creations in all of their different forms, from classical music to jazz, from theatre to dance, from opera to literature, architecture and cinema. The CCB is also a center for holding conferences and professional meetings. The CCB is also available as a centre for the holding of conferences and professional meetings. The Foundation’s special aim is to guarantee the conservation, administration and development of the patrimony of the Centro Cultural de Belém” (DL. 391/99, 30 September).

inadequacy. It is worth remembering that, according to Villalva (2003), the modifying diminutive suffixes, by changing the semantic information of the nucleus, provide a positive affective charge to the term, as being something small, something loving. Daniel Oliveira, by resorting to this strategy, seems to want, ironically, to devalue Vasco Graça Moura's position, attributing him certain childishness, this time with a derogatory connotation. This assessment is based on the fact that the *Centro Cultural de Belém* should not, contrary to what is mentioned in the title, be Vasco Graça Moura's "little spot," but a cultural institution, with a wide audience, which seeks, as described in official website, to promote culture and the arts – not Vasco Graça Moura's beliefs. This position is reinforced by the question posed by the author at the end of his essay: "Could it be like that or did the CCB become an instrument of Mister Graça Moura's whims?"

Then, this seems to be the first example of verbal violence (RODRÍGUEZ; LARA, 2008) of the analysis.

In the case of the essay by Miguel Sousa Tavares, which lists some loose noun phrases that express positive ethical values, it is understood, by reading the first words of the body text, that it is his sincere (and apologetic) opinion on the same action that Daniel Oliveira refers to.

8.2. Body Text

Both essays begin mentioning the receiver or the agent of the action: "Vasco Graça Moura."

The above mention seems sufficient to, as predicted by Amossy (2010), identify the provocative nature of the essays, that is, evidence the relation established between a first text/previous information and the reaction to it. In fact, in both cases, it seems clear that the argument revolves around a third element, identified, but absent, as proposed by Plantin (1995), giving it a nature of response – perhaps not to a single element, but to the different opinions expressed on the subject.

In Miguel Sousa Tavares' essay, however, and even though he establishes a "dialogue" with a previous subject, it is not to Vasco Graça Moura that he speaks. The speaker directly addresses António José Seguro,¹⁰ who opposes Vasco Graça Moura's action, structuring his

¹⁰ António José Seguro is a Portuguese politician, member and former Secretary-General of the Socialist Party. In August 2011, he was elected member of the Council of State by the Portuguese Parliament.

essay around him. Below, in detail, some mechanisms developed by the two speakers.

a) Ethos

In both cases, the ethos adopted does not seem conciliatory, but rather arrogance or superiority in relation to the object of criticism, making violent considerations about the subject in question. In both essays, their authors make categorical statements that place them in the upper position of being able to make them, distancing themselves, often subtly, from the image of the one who is criticized. Statements are below

Antônio José Seguro – who has never fought for a cause – decided to make this act of civic resistance a challenge to the authority of the Government and the State. (Miguel Sousa Tavares)

In the example above, the author implies, without shame, a logical relation in which Antônio José Seguro, because he never fought for a cause – a condition that would allow him to criticize –, should not question Graça Moura's action. On the other hand, and since the author himself is involved in the defense of this cause, it is possible to understand that he distances himself from the target of criticism, implying that he would have already fought for other causes and, thus, would have legitimacy to condemn Antônio José Seguro's position.

I am not going to dedicate myself here to the passionate National Orthographic Resistance combat. (Daniel Oliveira)

Daniel Oliveira, in the example mentioned, assumes a higher position than those who, inferiorly, struggle with the issue of the AO90 implementation. He reinforces this position of arrogance, through irony,¹¹ a literary device, by using “passionate.”

¹¹ Irony is a conversational device that reveals the discourse polyphony; the pluralization of the subject in the discourse (DUCROT, 1980) allows us to distinguish that there is a divergence between what the speaker says (literal sense) and what the speaker implies (derived meaning) by irony. The interpretation of these acts is found in the illocutionary value (derived and/or implied) that the speaker calculates as “being of the world” (DUCROT, 1980) and from his encyclopedic knowledge (KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI, 1986).

On the other hand, in Miguel Sousa Tavares' case, in particular, there is a need to balance his role as a judge with the democratization of his role, integrating himself into what he believes (or knows) to be his reading audience. For this purpose, he uses an expressive praising act, in which, resuming the noun phrases of the title (which thus clarify it), underlines Vasco Graça Moura's qualities and an inclusive and recurring "we," as in:

Vasco Graça Moura [...] had coherence, courage and dignity to retake the use of the Portuguese we speak and write at the CCB and not of the one that the Orthographic Agreement forcibly wants to convert us. (Miguel Sousa Tavares)

b) Explicit defense and attack

The explicit strategies of attack and defense are very frequent, throughout the two essays; however, they can be subdivided into some subcategories. Thus:

– Defense of man (and his action) by attacking detractors/weakening positions through *ad hominem* attack

Vasco Graça Moura (whom the unofficial intellectuality saw with suspicion being appointed CCB president) [...] (Miguel Sousa Tavares)

In the example above, Miguel Sousa Tavares reinforces the legitimacy of Graça Moura's legitimacy to occupy the position of CCB president, by weakening those who criticized him. In this way, he equally legitimizes his action, devaluing all subsequent criticisms.

The Secretary for Culture Appointments, Francisco José Viegas – the same who said that Mega Ferreira would continue but was obliged, by Mister Graça Moura's party, to leave – has already explained that the CCB "is not under direct or indirect administration" of the State. (Daniel Oliveira)

Daniel Oliveira, in this example, attributes to Francisco José Viegas the characteristic of not being reliable, or even of being a liar, recovering a historical fact that allows him to disqualify his opponent and, consequently, any position he takes.

The use of the term “Mister,” in “Mister Graça Moura” is also highlighted here. Daniel Oliveira employs this form of treatment in a deprecatory manner. In European Portuguese, using the term “mister,” especially in the case of a man with his curriculum and the position he holds, is offensive, as he is usually referred to as Dr. Vasco Graça Moura.

– Blurriness/recreation of the enemy

Miguel Sousa Tavares, in his essay, develops a very interesting strategy that exposes his opponent to a massive enemy, insofar as he resorts to historical passages related to the colonization of African countries and the consequent linguistic heritage that the Portuguese left them, contrasting them with the fact that some countries did not accept the AO90. He thus creates the idea that the detractors of Graça Moura are also the detractors of Angolans, who refused to implement the agreement. In this way, he not only puts António José Seguro as an enemy of Angolans, but also calls for their sympathy and defense. Thus, he clarifies who belongs to the ingroup and the outgroup (VAN DIJK, 1998, p. 43). Statements are below

You see, António José Seguro: it is our former colonies that refuse to abandon the language received from us and which now we betray. Will you also want to teach Angolans a lesson in this matter? (Miguel Sousa Tavares)

The rhetorical question directed at António José Seguro is also a face threatening act, thus simulating a dialogue with a third party.

It is worth mentioning the absence of a form of deference treatment, as might be expected in the case of a Portuguese parliamentarian.

c) Power of argumentation

– The other’s point of view is retaken and arguments are made explicit

In both texts, retaking others’ words is often used to reinforce a point of view – either through agreement or through the “ridicule” of the statement. Statements are below

And I could also reflect on the content of the unofficial “Jornal de Angola” editorial of this Wednesday, when the refusal to accept the AO is justified by saying that “we do not want to destroy that

preciousness (the Portuguese language) that we inherited in full and without stain” and that “if we want Portuguese to be a working language at the UN, we must, first of all, respect its matrix and not make it dependent on the difficult word trade. There are things in life that cannot be submitted to business.” You see, António José Seguro: it is our former colonies that refuse to abandon the language received from us and which now we betray. Will you also want to teach Angolans a lesson in this matter? (Miguel Sousa Tavares)

Miguel Sousa Tavares, in the excerpt presented above, uses the word “unofficial” for the second time. In the first instance, the author uses the term to disqualify the validity of the intellectuals who opposed Vasco Graça Moura as president. In this excerpt, the term is used with the same meaning – in contrast to the notion of “official” –, but seeking to distance the source from any political influences, which implies that it is the people’s voice, of Angolans in general, of the reality without interest of any other order than the language preservation.

Thus, Miguel Sousa Tavares retrieves some passages from the article published on the *Jornal de Angola* and, clearly in line with them, directly challenges António José Seguro, questioning him about his willingness to “teach Angolans a lesson.”

The Secretary for Culture Appointments, Francisco José Viegas – the same who said that Mega Ferreira would continue but was obliged, by Mister Graça Moura’s party, to leave – has already explained that the CCB “is not under direct or indirect administration” of the State. That is, that the former Secretary of State for Social Security, former Secretary of State for Returnees, former director of RTP2, former administrator of the Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, former president of the Executive Committee of the Centenary Commemorations of Fernando Pessoa, former president of the National Commission for the Commemoration of the Portuguese Discoveries, former commissioner general of Portugal for the Universal Exposition of Seville, former MEP and intrepid opponent of subsidy-dependent intellectuals who built their career at the expense of public money can do whatever he wants. (Daniel Oliveira)

In the excerpt above, Daniel Oliveira retakes the other’s quote, in order to, contrary to Miguel Sousa Tavares, contest this position.

Following the quote, Daniel Oliveira explains the meaning that such intervention, in his view, has, using “that is.” In this sequence of explicitness, Daniel Oliveira, using facts, seeks to demonstrate the lack of connection between the position adopted and the reality of Vasco Graça Moura’s role – a public office, following many others that, despite everything, he no longer has (position that the author intentionally reinforces using “former”). He reiterates his displeasure at the assumed impunity through the expression “[...] former MEP and intrepid opponent of subsidy-dependent intellectuals who built their career at the expense of public money can do whatever he wants.”

The accusation without euphemisms of any kind allows us to clearly identify one of the most evident examples of verbal violence: Daniel Oliveira accuses Vasco Graça Moura of being dependent on subsidies and of having spent his life with what the Portuguese call political “tachos,” that is, assuming posts to which he was appointed without any merit.

– Axiology of terms

In both essays, it is possible to verify a careful choice of verbs associated with “good” and “bad,” in this polemical dichotomy. Statements are below:

Vasco Graça Moura [. . .] had coherence, courage and dignity to retake the use of the Portuguese we speak and write at the CCB and not of the one that the Orthographic Agreement forcibly wants to convert us. (Miguel Sousa Tavares)

Vasco Graça Moura imposed on the CCB services the suspension of using the Orthographic Agreement. (Daniel Oliveira)

In the first example, Miguel Sousa Tavares turns, with the construction presented, the Orthographic Agreement into an agent. Evil agent, which has the intention of forcibly “converting” the Portuguese people, in which Miguel Sousa Tavares is included.

In the second example, it is Vasco Graça Moura who vilely “imposes” the fight against the Orthographic Agreement.

In both cases, the choice of agentive verbs and negative connotation is evident when associating with the object of criticism.

Now, confront the use that Miguel Sousa Tavares makes of the term “courage” and the option of Daniel Oliveira for the same term, in the example below.

His “courage” deserved excited applause from more impressionable journalists (Daniel Oliveira).

The use of “courage” without quotation marks is supposedly a reference to Daniel Oliveira’s essay, whose publication preceded that of Miguel Sousa Tavares. If so, it is new evidence of the provocative character of opinion essays and, in particular, of the certainty that the texts communicate and respond directly, as if they were face to face.

In the case of Miguel Sousa Tavares, the use of the term “courage” is not ironic. However, in the case of Daniel Oliveira, there is a clear need to show that its use is ironic. If the quotation marks were not enough to show his intention, the author also discredits the journalists who applauded Graça Moura’s action, calling them “impressionable.” The contrast between the meanings attributed to the same word is very evident and allows reinforcing the position occupied by each of the authors.

8.3 Ending the Text

It is clear the intention of continuity when the authors end the essays. The use of somewhat insulting terms reveals that the speakers do not seek consensus, which, in addition, is characteristic of the polemical discourse. The incentive to dissensus becomes more evident when, in both cases, the essay ends with an initiative illocutionary act of question, although rhetorical, thus allowing the discussion to continue.

You see, António José Seguro: it is our former colonies that refuse to abandon the language received from us and which now we betray. Will you also want to teach Angolans a lesson in this matter? (Miguel Sousa Tavares)

“Could it be like that or did the CCB become an instrument of Mister Graça Moura’s whims?” (Daniel Oliveira)

In the case of Miguel Sousa Tavares, the author uses an act of provocation that places, as seen above, António José Seguro in confrontation with an enemy heavier than himself. It is also worth

mentioning the use of “Mister” in “Mister Graça Moura,” which, as explored above, takes on a deprecating connotation.

In the case of Daniel Oliveira, the use of the expression “whims” causes some irritation in the target of criticism, in this case, the State, which did nothing to stop Vasco Graça Moura’s action. It is also an insulting way to classify the action under analysis.

In both cases, the option for the question shows that the authors intend to provoke a reaction, which, accompanied by the lexical choice, reveals the intention to perpetuate polemics without desire to convince the other.

9 Final Considerations

This study allowed showing, through the analysis of two opinion essays on the AO90, some linguistic strategies developed in the construction of the polemical discourse. It was concluded that the authors of the essays assumed, since its beginning, an ethos (AMOSSY, 1999) of superiority, even though Miguel Sousa Tavares, based on the need to clarify his position and, concomitantly, attract supporters, has often resorted to the use of an inclusive “we.”

The two authors, using a strategy to discredit their opponent, reinforced the antagonistic relationship established between ONESELF and the OTHER, as predicted by authors like van Dijk (2005).

In both cases, the intention is to attack the opponent – more than his ideas –, trying to feed the polemics that already exists (and from which the two essays start – provocative nature). The provocative nature (KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI, 1980a, 1992, 2001, 2005, among others) and, perhaps dialogical, of the two essays is thus clearly expressed also by Miguel Sousa Tavares reusing specific terms employed by Daniel Oliveira, with opposite connotations, such as the use of the word “courage” (with and without quotation marks).

Within polemics, there are several FTA (GOFFMAN, 1959) activated by the two authors, with special emphasis on the *ad hominem* attacks (AMOSSY, 2014) initiated by Daniel Oliveira, when he insults Vasco Graça Moura and accuses him of being subsidy-dependent, or Miguel Sousa Tavares’ brilliant strategy in creating a new enemy for António José Seguro – the Angolans. The constant attacks on the other’s face, charged with violence and aggression, reveal, precisely, the null

intention of convincing the other, and reinforce the intention to win and annul the opponent.

It was also possible to present some examples of what was said, in the form of quotes, motivating the verbal dispute.

The two essays end with an initiative illocutionary act of question, with insulting assumptions, revealing the intention to continue the discussion and feed the dissensus.

It seems to be confirmed, therefore, that, in opinion essays on the AO90 published in the Portuguese press, “*troca de galhardetes*,” verbal offenses, imbued with aggression and violence, are common and, instead of debating the linguistic arguments that underlie the AO90 adoption or refusal, focus on the quarrel and insult to people or political actions.

In short, in both essays, the intention to perpetuate polemics is evident, attacking the interlocutor instead of his ideas, disqualifying supporters that have positions opposite to the speaker. Furthermore, through the data collected, it was possible to reinforce the idea that verbal aggression and violence can take the written form, contrary to what is advocated by authors like Bravo (2003).

Acknowledgments

*Amizade é regida pelo mesmo mecanismo
que o amor, é instantânea e absoluta.
(Friendship is governed by the same
mechanism as love, it is instant and
absolute)*

(António Lobo Antunes)

I want to thank Professor Isabel Roboredo Seara, to whom I dedicate this work.

Without the challenges you present me and your inexhaustible belief, nothing would remain in me but the conviction of not being able.

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ANNEXES

Annex 1

Newspaper: <i>Expresso</i>	Title: O cantinho de Vasco Graça (Vasco Graça Moura's little spot)	Date: 2/6/12
Author: Daniel Oliveira		

O cantinho de Vasco Graça Moura

Vasco Graça Moura imposed on the CCB services the suspension of using the Orthographic Agreement. His “courage” deserved excited applause from more impressionable journalists. I am not going to dedicate myself here to the passionate National Orthographic Resistance combat. The Orthographic Agreement is a rule without sanction. Only those who want to comply with it do so. No publisher, no newspaper or no individual is obliged to follow it. Neither this agreement nor the successive orthographic reforms of the twentieth century that, in recent decades, we have accepted as if they were a gift from nature. It is only expected that whoever is appointed by the State does not use this appointment to oblige the managed institutions to not comply with the international agreements that the State signs. It is not too much to ask.

The Secretary for Culture Appointments, Francisco José Viegas – the same who said that Mega Ferreira would continue but was obliged, by Mister Graça Moura's party, to leave – has already explained that the CCB “is not under direct or indirect administration” of the State. That is, that the former Secretary of State for Social Security, former Secretary of State for Returnees, former director of RTP2, former administrator of the Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda, former president of the Executive Committee of the Centenary Commemorations of Fernando Pessoa, former president of the National Commission for the Commemoration of the Portuguese Discoveries, former commissioner general of Portugal for the Universal Exposition of Seville, former MEP and intrepid opponent of subsidy-dependent intellectuals who built their career at the expense of public money can do whatever he wants. One question remains: is public nomination just a way of rewarding the most loyal militants or does it have a purpose? If not, it is understood that the alternation in the

government has to be accompanied by party alternation in nominations. If so, the minimum is that the nominee does not dedicate himself to boycott the agreements signed by the State.

Does Vasco Graça Moura refuse to accept working in institutions that apply the orthographic agreement? It has a good solution: to refuse public appointments. This, given his status as a chronic nominee, would be a proof of courage. Thus, only arrogance sounds.

It can, of course, be argued that Graça Moura's imperatives of conscience are above any paper signed by the State which appointed him. Respect. With one condition: his right to indignation is extended to all who work at the institution. Any CCB employee who wants to use the new orthography in official documents should be free to do so. "Could it be like that or did the CCB become an instrument of Mister Graça Moura's whims?"

Annex 2

Neswpaper: <i>Expresso</i>	Title: A coerência, a coragem e a Dignidade (Coherence, courage and dignity)	Date: 2/11/2012
Author: Miguel Sousa Tavares		

A coerência, a coragem e a dignidade

Vasco Graça Moura (whom the unofficial intellectuality saw with suspicion being appointed CCB president), had coherence, courage and dignity to retake the use of the Portuguese we speak and write at the CCB and not of the one that the Orthographic Agreement forcibly wants to convert us. António José Seguro – who has never known a cause – decided to make this act of civic resistance a challenge to the authority of the Government and the State. If, however, he bothered to think beyond political slobber, Seguro could meditate on the legal validity of a treaty that only a few parties have ratified and could question the reasons that led Mozambique and Angola to refuse the treaty that, supposedly, was meant for them, first of all. And I could also reflect on the content of the unofficial “Jornal de Angola” editorial of this Wednesday, when the refusal to accept the AO is justified by saying that “we do not want to destroy that preciousness (the Portuguese language) that we inherited in full and without stain” and that “if we want Portuguese to be a working language at the UN, we must, first of all, respect its matrix and not make it dependent on the difficult word trade. There are things in life that cannot be submitted to business.” You see, António José Seguro: it is our former colonies that refuse to abandon the language received from us and which now we betray. Will you also want to teach Angolans a lesson in this matter?