

“How Obama can use pressure to bring peace”¹: a favorable stance and positive attitudinal assessment

Jane Aparecida Florêncio
Sara Regina Scotta-Cabral
Universidade Federal de Santa Maria

Abstract: *Whereas language is used to fulfill some task, it is equally used to constitute and express the subjectivity of the writer. In an attempt to identify the value positions and the assessments adopted by the writers, in an opinion article, in relation to the interference of the U.S.A. in the Gaza war, a particular analysis was conducted by means of the Appraisal Theory (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005) and the Lexical Cohesion perspective (HALLIDAY; HASAN, 1976; 1985; HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004). The results demonstrated that the writers take a favorable stance towards the U.S. interference, and at the same time, they accept alternative positions. Besides that, the writers create a group of the same general field which cohesively tie the text, and to them are given positive attitudinal assessments, mostly in terms of behave.*

Key-words: *Lexical items. Opinion page. Appraisal. Language.*

Introduction

For most people, reading a text is unconsciously treating meaning as simply *a matter of fact*. Regarding that, Fairclough (1996) explains that for words one is familiar with, it's taken for granted as mere common sense that they mean what they mean. However, language may be highly articulated to fulfill some task. And it is interesting to note that “the meaning of a single word depends very much on the relationship of that word to others” (FAIRCLOUGH, 1996, p. 94).

On the other hand, although the meaning of words is dependent on the relationship of words to words, their choice as well as their arrangement in the text is ascribed to the writer/speaker. “Every utterance – be it oral or written, primary

¹ This is the article original heading.

and secondary, belonging to any field of the discursive communication – is individual since it can reflect the individuality of the speaker/writer”² (BAKHTIN, 2011, p. 256). So, any text has the subjective presence of the writer/speaker.

In what matters the presence of the subjectivity of the writer/speaker in texts, Martin and White (2005) have contributed by developing a theory that can identify what is interpersonal in language. In other words, their concern is “with the subjective presence of writers/speakers in texts as they adopt stances towards both the material they present and those with whom they communicate” (Ibid. p. 1).

This paper contributes significantly to this point, by analyzing an opinion page article from the online version of *The New York Times* Newspaper. More specifically, the central focus of the present work is to verify to what extent the producers of the text use linguistic resources to assess attitudes and state value positions in relation to the U.S. interference in the Gaza war. In other words, it explores how semantic-discursive and lexical-grammatical items are used by the writers to judge behavior and aesthetics, to graduate both the judgments and the appreciations, to dialog with more or less aligned communities. Besides that, with the help of the lexical cohesion studied by Halliday and Hasan (1976, 1985), and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), it is possible to verify how semantic coherently and lexical cohesively elements are organized within a range of specific words.

This paper is structured in four sections. The following section addresses the theory in which this work is grounded – Appraisal Theory – and the perspective of Lexical Cohesion. Next, there is a precise description on how this research was conducted. The two remaining sections show data obtained by the analyses and a brief conclusion.

² The translations and adaptations of extracts taken from languages other than English are of the authors of this paper.

Language to the systemic-functional approach

Some recent approaches emergent in Linguistics have given rise to different ways of considering language (HALLIDAY; HASAN, 1985; HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004). These approaches offer principles which can be applied to a great range of texts and contexts, broadening many theoretical aspects in different areas (VIAN JR.; SOUZA; ALMEIDA, 2010). As Vian Jr, Souza and Almeida say, one of these aspects is Appraisal Theory (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005), which provides mechanisms that identify stances of interpersonal evaluation in texts.

This section starts with a brief recount of how language is conceived by the systemic-functional approach, followed by Appraisal Theory. We consider also Lexical Cohesion, a perspective within the systemic-functional approach, which refers to a group of lexical elements that semantically helps tying and giving text its texture.

Language to the systemic-functional approach

Language, from the standpoint of the systemic-functional perspective, “[...] is a specific kind of semiotic system based on grammar, characterized by organization in strata and by functional diversity” (FUZER; CABRAL, 2010, p. 10, *cf.* HALLIDAY; MATHIESSEN, 2004). Each stratum of language (figure 1) is a semiotic system which involves different levels of abstraction (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005).

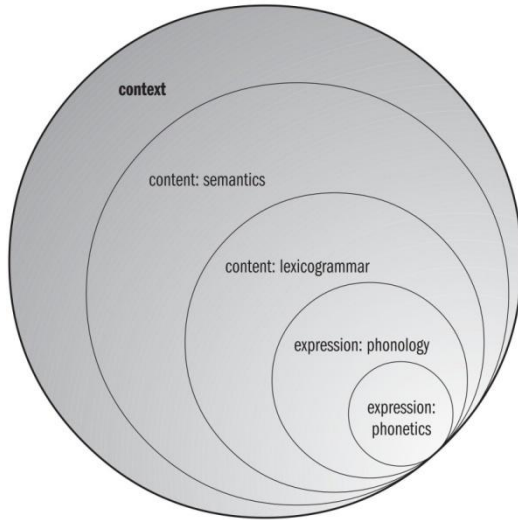


Figure 1 – Stratification (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004, p. 25).

By using language, one makes sense of his/her experience and carries out his/her interactions with others (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004), the *context* stratum (figure 1). Taking it from another perspective, language might be thought as being formed by two planes: the content and the expression plane (Ibid.).

In the ‘content’ plane, language is allowed to more or less indefinitely expand its meaning potential, since grammar interfaces with what goes on the outside world. That means “the content [plane] expands into two, a *lexicogrammar* and a *semantics*” (Halliday; Matthiessen, 2004, p. 24, author’s emphasis) (figure 1). The lexicogrammar is concerned with the organization of experiences which are outside language. Semantics carries out outside experiences and interpersonal relationships. As a result of their interface, *meaning* is conceived in the semantics stratum as well as *wording* in the lexicogrammar.

A similar stratification might take place within the ‘expression’ plane. The *phonetics* stratum (figure 1) is related to

the resources the body provides to speaking and hearing activities, while the *phonology* stratum (figure 1) deals with the organization of such resources, of speaking and hearing, transforming them into formal structures and systems.

As described previously, one of the layers of the stratification is semantics, which constructs interpersonal meanings. The following section describes ways on how to systematically analyze interpersonal meaning.

Appraisal System

Appraisal is an approach which evolved from the theoretical framework of Systemic-Functional Language (SFL) and acquired its place in discourse semantics. Martin and White (2005) justify it with three reasons: that the realization of an attitude reaches the discourse phase; that it is necessary to get out of the lexicogrammar stratum to generalize an evaluative meaning that can be realized across a range of grammatical categories; that something is originated grammatically, due to a reorganization of the ‘grammatical metaphor’ issue (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004) by which a complex relationship between semantics and lexicogrammar is created, that is, the nominalization of an attitude (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005). This approach is used to analyze assessment and stance in texts (WHITE, 2004).

So, to analyze assessment and stance, Martin and White (2005) systematically sketched appraisal within three interacting domains – *Attitude*, *Engagement* and *Graduation*. *Attitude* deals with ways of feeling. By means of *Engagement*, “textual producers assume stances in relation to their interlocutors and to the texts they produce” (VIAN JR., 2010, p. 33). *Graduation* refers to the way linguistic resources are employed to express intensity in both attitudinal assessments and value positions in the text. That is the general scope of the domains.

Attitude

Attitude is a subsystem within the whole Appraisal System which provides a framework for mapping feelings (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005). According to the Appraisal Theory, when feelings are expressed, they may cover three semantic regions that refer to emotion, ethics and aesthetics.

When it is related to emotions, it is called *Affect*. That is a way of registering the positive and negative feelings in language. As realization in the language system has a great range of possibilities, the category of Affect comprises all these possibilities in terms of *participants*, *processes*, *circumstances* and *modal adjuncts*. When participants are modified by a quality, Affect is being realized (e.g. the captain was *sad*). When there is a surge of emotion involving some kind of embodied manifestation or a kind of emotive state or mental predisposition, Affect is realized by behavioral, mental or relational processes (e.g. the child *wept* – behavioral process; the man *liked* the idea – mental process). Circumstances affecting processes is also a way of realizing Affect (e.g. they left the room *in a sad way*). By using modal adjuncts, Affect is also realized (e.g. *Fortunately*, the mailman arrived) (ALMEIDA, 2010).

For *Judgement*, the category of ethics, feelings are expressed in relation to the behavior of people. And they can vary into 'social esteem' and 'social sanction'. When values of social esteem are expressed, they refer to how unusual (normality), capable (capacity) and resolute (tenacity) a person is. Social esteem lies more in the oral culture, through chats, gossips and stories of various kinds (e.g. those girls who won the lottery are very *lucky* – normality; He is perfectly *competent* to manage the bank branch – capacity; Good friends are *loyal* and stick by you no matter what happens – tenacity). When feelings are oriented to social sanction, they refer to how truthful (veracity) or ethical (propriety) someone is. Social sanction lies more in written culture, through regulations, laws, and decrees (e.g. Women know how to play guys because they are

manipulative – veracity; According to the constitution, that man is *right* – propriety) (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005).

With *appreciation*, things are assessed – the aesthetics. The realizations for appreciation are divided into *reaction*, *composition* and *valuation*. Reaction deals with affection; the way things catch our attention or please us (e.g. that story was not so *captivating*). Composition refers to perception and may be thought as our view of things, in terms of balance and complexity (e.g. the room was so *disorganized* I could barely find the keys). Valuation consists of cognition, regarding our opinion of things (e.g. it is a *unique* masterpiece).

Engagement

Engagement is the appraisal domain in which value positions are taken. To put it another way, influenced by the dialogism, a bakhtinian theory that considers all verbal communication dialogic, this domain deals with attitudinal origins, not only where attitudes are grounded, but also how they are placed, whether they are open or closed to an agreement.

Due to the fact that attitudes can be opened or closed to alternative voices, the Engagement presents two initial value positions: the *monoglossic* and the *heteroglossic*. The monoglossic perspective references no other voices, not even recognize alternative positions. By contrast, the heteroglossic perspective includes, as Martin and White (2005, p. 97) say, “those meanings which in various ways construe for the text a heteroglossic backdrop of prior utterances, alternative viewpoints and anticipated responses”. Heteroglossic value positions may vary, then. Although, there is variation in positioning, some may contract their dialogic opening to other voices. For this reason, they are classified into dialogic *contraction* and dialogic *expansion*.

One dialogically contracted positioning is that in which the textual voice rejects some contrary position, or stands at odds with others – *Disclaim*. It can vary as *denying* (e.g. the country should *not* fight their enemies) or *counter opposing/giving a*

concession (e.g. *although* he tried to change their minds, they kept with their decision). Another occur when the textual voice represents the proposition as being warrantable, that of *Proclaim*. This latter is divided into three types: *concur* (e.g. *Actually* this is unacceptable), *pronounce* (e.g. *there can be no doubt* that our knowledge begins with experience) and *endorse* (e.g. *researches have shown* the preference for the older candidate).

The dialogic expansion is separated into *Entertain* and *Attribute*. In the *Entertain* positioning, the textual voice takes a subjective stance opening dialogical space to other voices (e.g. *Both can* vote for bringing peace). Alternatively, *Attribute* is construed when the textual voice recognizes an external voice as a consequence accepting a range of other possibilities (e.g. *According to* the writer, this book is not the new version).

Graduation

In the appraisal perspective, Graduation occurs along with the attitudinal assessments and value positions by means of increasing or decreasing the degree of what has been assessed or the degree of how it has been invested. The intensity which is tended to vary remains between two poles, a more intense and a less intense. So, as a basis, assessments and investments can have a low, medium and high intensity (SOUZA, 2010).

The Graduation domain forms a system in the sense that it is subdivided into *force* and *focus*. Force, then, is divided into *intensification* and *quantification*.

For *intensification*, the resources available in the lexicogrammar are *processes* (e.g. *I loved* her), *qualifiers* (e.g. this is *extremely* dangerous) and *indicators of modality* (e.g. it's *just* possible that it rains). Strategies of intensification put into work the available resources. That is, "when the degree of the intensity is included in the meaning of an only lexical item" (SOUZA, 2010, p. 193), the strategy is called *infusion* (e.g. prices *rose* these last years); when the degree of intensity is expressed in a lexical item apart, be it a grammatical intensifier or a lexicalization, it is called *isolation* (e.g. it was *too* dark); or

when the same lexical item is repeated, it is the *repetition* strategy (e.g. she was so *calm*, *quiet* and *patient*) (SOUZA, 2010, 193).

As for *quantification*, the lexical resources characterize the *number* (e.g. there are *a few* people in the room), *mass* (e.g. this is an *enormous* problem to be solved by us) and *extent* (e.g. it is a *recent* relationship). The use of strategies is employed in the subsystem of quantification, although only two of those mentioned are possible, infusion (e.g. he is a *mountain* of a man) and isolation (e.g. *many* people have been accused). According to Souza (2010), most realizations happen under the isolation strategy.

Returning to the other category of Graduation, the *focus*, it offers lexical items to *sharpen* (e.g. he is a *great* friend) or *soften* (e.g. this is *some kind* of Rock) the specification (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005). The lexical items may be typically construed or experiential based-construed.

Up to now, the whole framing of the Appraisal System was briefly sketched, except for one last characteristic which is highly significant, that of implicit and explicit assessments. In fact, Martin and White (2005) claim that not all evaluations are directly *inscribed* by the use of attitudinal lexis in discourse. There is a set of possibilities. While inscribed means explicitly seen in the discourse, *invoked* realizes assessments in which there is lack of attitudinal lexis that tells one how to feel. Within the category of invoked realizations, ideational meaning can be used to *invite* and *provoke*. Provoked is construed with the use of metaphors (e.g. they *attacked* them *like lions*) and invited is subdivided into *afford*, non-core vocabulary infused with manner (e.g. we smashed their way of life), and *flag*, counter-expectancy construed (e.g. we brought the diseases) (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005).

Next, at a lower level of realization or, more specifically, in the lexicogrammar, resources that language has for creating texture are described.

Lexical Cohesion

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), a set of lexicogrammar systems has evolved as a resource to make it possible to transcend the domain of the clause. This set is called by Halliday and Matthiessen system of *Cohesion*. But it is important to emphasize that "lexicogrammar stands in a natural relation to semantics" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p. 531), that means that the patterning which emerges at the level of lexicogrammar is also semantically significant.

As far as cohesion is concerned, it essentially requires a tie. A tie is not possible to happen without having two members which must be semantic related (HASAN, 1985). In this sense, semantics is the basis of cohesion. So, in one hand, cohesion is semantically understood since "it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text" (HALLIDAY; HASAN; 1976, p. 4). On the other hand, it is lexicogrammatically understood, that is, it is expressed as grammar and as vocabulary, which, in turn, can be referred as *grammatical cohesion* and *lexical cohesion*.

So, cohesion ties are established by the following ways: *conjunction* (mainly grammatical, but having a lexical component in it), *reference*, *ellipsis* and *substitution* (grammatical cohesive ties), and *lexical organization* (lexical cohesive ties). Below, there is some brief information about them, except the lexical cohesion ties which, being the focus of this work, are more specifically depicted.

Cohesion originated by the resource of *conjunction* can be formed by conjunction proper in which markers only signalize some cohesive tie later in the text, and by continuity in which markers indicate a connection between the clause in turn with the previous one (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004).

As for *reference*, the semantic relation is that of referential identity, that is, a situational referent creates cohesion by referring to another situational referent. *Ellipsis* occurs when parts left out of the structure can be inferred by what has gone

before (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004). And *substitution* is the “replacement of an item by another” (HALLIDAY; HASAN, 1976, p. 89).

Hasan (1985) hypothesizes that the interpretations of some items which have no linguistic or situational referent, no apparently semantic relation, can be achieved because they have a co-extensional tie. In other words, they come from the same general field of meaning which is delimited by creating a sense relation. They are the *lexical cohesive ties*. And, their functioning is by “leap[ing] over a number of sentences to pick up an element that has not figured in the intervening text” (HALLIDAY; HASAN, 1976, p. 16).

In accordance with Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), five are the kinds of lexical relations: *repetition*, *synonymy*, *hyponymy*, *meronymy* and *collocation*.

Repetition is concerned to repeating an element in the unfolding of a text in order to create cohesion. Synonymy may vary between two: similarity, in which the element is semantically similar but lexically different and, opposition, in which the element has a reversed meaning in contrast with another, called antonymy. These cohesive ties may elaborate a referent of identity (HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004)

In comparison, the hyponymy creates an elaborating relation of attribution. Speaking of hyponymy, its relation is held between a general class and its subclasses (HASAN, 1985). The item which refers to the general class is labeled as *superordinate*, the subclasses as *hyponyms*. However, upon creating with each other a semantic relation, these subclasses are labeled as *co-hyponyms* (HASAN, 1985).

As for meronymy, there happens to be a *meronymy* relation, when the elements constitute parts of a whole. The parts of the whole, when holding a semantic relation to each other, are called *co-meronyms* (Ibid.).

By *collocation*, Halliday and Matthiessen mean as “a particular association between the items in question”, or else, a co-occurrence – that is, from two collocational items which form a strong bond it makes a cohesive occurrence (2004, p. 577).

Metodology

This section is concerned with the following steps: the corpus selection criteria ; the corpus selection procedures ; and, the analysis procedures .

Corpus selection criteria

Under some specific criteria, the collection of one text was made:

- a) Genre: a newspaper opinion article;
- b) Newspaper: an international famous U.S. newspaper;
- c) Medium: available online since it were of easy and free access;
- d) Subject: current world news.

For more information on the collection of the text, a more detailed table is provided (table 1):

Newspaper	The New York Times (online version)
Site	http://www.nytimes.com ³
Topic	The U.S. relationship towards the Palestinians war in Gaza.
News	How Obama can use pressure to bring peace
Section	The opinion pages
Date	Nov 19, 2012.
Author(s)	RAVIV, D.; MELMAN, Y.

table 1

Corpus selection procedures

Among different genres, the opinion article from a newspaper was preferred since it serves as a resource in benefit of the discursive functioning of the very newspaper, provoking the illusion of subjective opinion if contrasted to the facts presented in other sections (BALOCCO, 2010).

A U.S. newspaper was sought due to the fact that, at the time of the selection, national and international newspaper

³ Text link: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/20/opinion/how-obama-can-use-pressure-to-bring-peace.html?hp&_r=0

companies had released some opinion page articles which suggested a sort of interference in the Palestinian and Israeli war by the United States. Regarding the war event, it was thought relevant to see what stance is taken by the U.S. media. In doing so, The New York Times newspaper was the choice.

The New York Times is a newspaper whose owner is The New York Times Company which acclaims itself as the ‘leading global, multimedia news and information company’. The core purpose of the company is ‘to enhance society by creating, collecting and distributing high-quality news, information and entertainment’. To fulfill that promise they are underscored by their No. 1 statement which belongs to their core values: ‘content of the highest quality and integrity’. As doing so, their goal is said to be achieved which is ‘to cover the news impartially and to treat readers, news sources, advertisers and all parts of the society fairly and openly’⁴. The newspaper circulation is 1,586,757 on weekdays, 1,550,696 on Saturdays and 2,003,247 on Sunday (the year 2012)⁵.

Corpus analysis procedures

Since texts are often constraining in terms of the meanings which are to be accepted, it is only *through the interpretation of the reader*, in view of a certain context, that meaning is actually conceived (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005, our emphasis). For this reason, reading along with interpreting was the first step so that the attitudinal values, their gradability and the position value were observed and classified, taking into consideration the analytical tools offered by Martin and White (2005).

Since attitudinal values of affect were detected in an insignificant number, they were left out. Aside from that, attitudinal behavioral values and the value of things were found.

⁴ All the highlighted passages of this paragraph are information adapted from the sites: www.nytimes.com/company/index.html and www.nytimes.com/press/ethics.html#intro.

⁵ Data collected from the site: http://en.wikipedia.org/The_New_York_Times.

As Martin and White (2005) postulate, in texts, resources of assessment and stance constitute the writer/speaker's evaluation. Although these markers are in texts, they present realizations of various kinds: explicit, implicit, inscribed, invoked, provoked, invited, flagged and afforded. So, in this study, data showed that there was oscillation in realizations, ranging from explicit to afforded, that is, markers were identified in a simple lexical item explicitly as well as in clause complexes implicitly. The observing of these various kinds of realization was a constitutive step in the study. But that was not the last step.

On the following, lexical items which performed as giving cohesion to the text were gathered and analyzed since they paradoxically seemed to fulfill a specific complementary function, that of identifying the referent being assessed. A contextual-related interpretation of their use was alongside necessary, in the sense that, according to Hasan (1985), these devices form a cohesive chain within the context of a specific text. Thus, the confluence of these two aspects, the lexical items and the cohesive chain in a natural relation to the context of a specific text, made possible an interpretation of the lexical cohesive ties.

At last, both, the attitudinal and stance as well as the lexical cohesion interpretations, were brought in together and a final interpretation conjunction was made.

Results and discussion

Before going into more data-specific accounts, it is important to point out some situational features about the context where the text was produced, since it is assumed that the situational features are of great relevance for the analysis.

The text entitled "*How Obama can use pressure to bring peace*" dates back to November 19th, 2012, some days after the war in Gaza had started. At that time, Media had already issued the possibility of interference by the U.S.A. in the war. It was then that the decision of reading an opinion page article from *The New York Times* emerged. The New York Times is a newspaper

whose flow of information reaches an international level, which includes online as well as in-print information.

The configuration of the particular social setting involves two text producers, an American and an Israeli who are journalists. The American journalist has worked for the CBS News⁶ and he is originally from New York. The Israeli journalist has worked for the news portal Walla⁷ and is a member of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), which is sponsored and managed by the Washington-based Center for Public Integrity⁸. Together, the journalists released a book in 1990 entitled “*Every spy a prince: the complete history of Israel’s intelligence community*”, which was a New York Times’ best seller.

Synthesis of the results

The results showed that there is plenty of open dialogical space in the text analyzed. Of course that in some moments, a monoglossic position is taken, but it is very little taken. Along the text, in its most part, the writers adopt a favorable position in relation to the U.S. interference in the Gaza war; at the same time they acknowledge that there may be other communities which do not share their values. Some of the most used semantic-discursive resources of dialogical expansion fall in the category of Entertain, ‘*should, must, can, could*’. As for attitudinal assessments, there is no apparent use of affectual assessments. On the other hand, there is a great abundance of behavioral evaluations and a few things are aesthetically evaluated. Most of these behavioral evaluations were implicitly semantic-discursive construed. And, the presence of authorial voice operates within

⁶ Information taken from the link:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dan_Raviv, accessed on Feb 20, 2013.

⁷ Information taken from the link:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yossi_Melman, accessed on Feb 20, 2013.

⁸ ICJI is a global network of 160 reporters from more than 60 countries who on in-depth investigative stories. Information on <http://israelspy.com/about-yossi-melman/>, accessed on Feb 20, 2013.

the judgments of social sanction, between what must be done and must not be done, that is, what is ethical or unethical. As for the 'content words', the lexical items *America, the United States, Washington, Mr. Obama, the president*, they form a semantic-related grouping since they represent the potential for the formation of a similarity chain, that of meronymy in which items refer to a whole-part relation.

Values and evaluations

Some examples of what has been previously said are given as follows.

The flow of discourse starts with a monoglossic position, that is to say, "the speaker/writer presents the current proposition as one which has no dialogistic alternatives which need to be recognized, or engaged with, in the current communicative context [...]" (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005 p. 99). By means of a monoglossic position, the authors assess negatively the Palestinian war once fought, '*the very model of a pointless war*', as well as the U.S. presidents, Bush and Obama, for being *still* when that Palestinian war happened. '*George W. Bush was the lamest of lame ducks*' and Barack Obama was '*too distracted*'. However, Obama had his behavior assessment softened by the proposition, '*although Barack Obama, after he was inaugurated, vowed to push for Middle East peace, he was too distracted by America's domestic problems*', since it was presented as a concession which included reasons why Obama had no good condition to look after the situation. This kind of strategy is employed so that argumentative ground is given up initially to be retaken in the subsequent counter move (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005). In the sentence in turn, its concessive aspect created the idea that '*Obama had just been inaugurated. Then, he vowed for peace in order to start doing something. But there were so many American domestic problems that he got distracted*'. After all, that does not mean he wasn't able to do something; that meant that Obama wasn't given time to, instead. Another thing that greatly influenced on softening Obama's behavior assessment

was the use of the Graduation resource of force – a quality intensifier, ‘*he was too distracted*’. Along with the co-text, ‘*by America’s domestic problems*’, it made the *American domestic problems* extend to a larger dimension, impossible to be controlled unless Obama hadn’t given central attention to. According to Martin and White, “upscaling of attitude frequently acts to construe the speaker/writer as maximally committed to the value position being advanced and hence as strongly aligning the reader into that value position” (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005 p. 99). That is the writes’ intention here.

Unfolding in time, the text is placed in present, and Obama receives other dose of evaluation, oriented towards a positive direction, ‘*Now, strengthened by his re-election, Mr. Obama should work intensively to create a pro-peace, pro-stability coalition in the region*’. Obama is strengthened so he is back to good condition; it transmits the idea that good condition is an inherently natural aspect of living, and for this reason originates a judgment of normality. Referring to the use of authorial directive, *should*, the authorial voice *suggests* what the most ethical thing to do now is – to create peace. In terms of judgement categories, it is included within the social sanction. Apart from this fact, the term ‘suggest’ is employed here due to the fact that the degree, by which the obligation is told, that of medium, decreases the level of the writer’s commitment (NASCIMENTO, 2011).

There are other authorial directive uses constituted in the processing of the text. One thing that makes them different is their gradability: ‘*America must demand more of Mr. Morsi*’; ‘*President Obama can easily let Mr. Erdogan claim the leading role he obviously wants in the region*’; ‘*Iran could be the trump card*’; ‘*Mr. Morsi will have to earn it*’; ‘*Egypt’s army would welcome a diplomatic, rather than bellicose course*’. As mentioned before, the opinion article from a newspaper serves as a resource in benefit of the discursive functioning of the very newspaper, because it provokes the illusion of subjective opinion if contrasted to the facts presented in other sections (BALOCCO, 2010). That is a particular feature of the genre. For the writer to

fulfill the genre's rhetoric purpose, which in case is constitutive of opinions, there is a need of openness for dialog; opinions intrinsically mean one of more views of a fact. So, up-scale and down-scale dialogically expansive tools are much employed in the text. And their gradability is much dependent on the writer's authority of the subject (NASCIMENTO, 2010).

As for stance-taking lexical items, it can be affirmed that throughout the text, the mainly stance-taking realization is the one construed by the Entertain category. As Martin and White (2005) postulate, that happens once the writer/speaker signals recognition that there may well be those who won't share their point of view on this matter. However, the authors adopt other different value positions which are conditioned to what has been assessed. The second most instantiated category is that of Disclaim. It contains a set of resources that contract the dialogical perspective. Some examples are extracted from the text: 1) '*Mr. Obama should be prepared to threaten a Sharp reduction in foreign aid, unless Mr. Morsi uses his Muslim Brotherhood credentials in a positive way*'; 2) '*The United States should not watch passively if Mr. Morsi positions himself as a great friend of the rocket-launching regime in Gaza*'; 3) '*if Egypt truly wants to retain its role as the leading nation in the Arab world, Mr. Morsi will have to earn it*'. Some are concessions; some are negations; and, others, oppositions. In cases in which concessions are the resources, the authorial voice adopts a distant position which is shortened under some circumstances (example – 1). In negations, the authorial voice acknowledges the existence of an alternative position, but objects being aligned to it (example – 2). In oppositions, the authorial voice does not deny the existence of another alternative voice; it stands at odds though (example – 3).

Graduation emphasized both the stance-takings as well as the attitudinal assessments. There can be said that there was a balanced division in the use of force graduation. Here are some examples: '*If Egypt truly wants*' (intensifier of process – negative); '*the lamest of lame ducks*' (intensifier of quality – negative); '*he did in the first days of the crisis*' (intensifier of

extension-distribution-time – negative). While focus, not so many: ‘*the very model of a pointless war*’ (focus – soften – negative); ‘*if Mr. Morsi positions himself as a great friend*’ (focus – sharpen – negative).

The flow of discourse started with a negative assessment in terms of semantic meaning. Alternatively, the flow of discourse also depends on the textual meaning. In view of that, there can be said that a strong cohesive tie was construed, formed by lexical items such as America, The United States, Washington, Mr. Obama, and the president. They represent a class of meronyms, being America the whole and the United States, Washington, Mr. Obama and the president its parts. By contrast, the other text-constitutive components were loose-intentioned spread in the text, and therefore, received a subordinate position concerning the semantic potential relation. Still, in terms of text-internal cohesive characteristics, the construed class of meronyms responds to specific features which bind the patterns of connection in the text; and, in terms of textual-external cohesive characteristics, it expresses the text producers’ angle, in case, the newspaper’s opinion, that is, *America (meaning the U.S.A.) comprises all American countries within it*. In other words, the United States takes for granted its dominant position over the American countries. In this respect, it is inferred, with the class of meronyms, that all the American countries are sub-classes of the whole-part group; a group which is ruled by the United States. As a consequence, it indirectly consolidates an idea of superiority in relation to the other countries.

To sum up, as the attitudinal assessments and value positions were favorable to the interference of the United States in the Palestinian war, the lexical cohesive ties helped consolidate the positive assessments.

Conclusion

As long as the authorial voice presented its attitudinal assessments and value positions, it was possible to verify the

stance adopted in relation to what has been told and to the voices they communicated. The authorial uses of modality, in the text, formed a prosody oriented to favoring the interference of the U.S.A. in the Palestinian war.

In the beginning of the text, the writers took much care judging Obama's behavior as cause-consequence. His country's problems (cause) avoided his involvement in the war (consequence). But he got strengthened, everything got normal. Once started, the use of directive modals realized the judgment of social sanction: *America must.. The United States should... Mr. Obama should... Washington should...*, the assessment was positive since "now the president is strengthened and he will do what is considered ethical to do".

Taking into consideration the context of culture, against which the text has to be interpreted (HASAN, 1985, p. 46), "this evaluative style [the one in the text analyzed] is typically only found in the context of commentary, opinion and editorials" (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005, p. 170). That comes to say that rhetorical objectives impact directly in the choice of lexicogrammar or semantic-discursive items. The need for persuading the reader makes the writer use authorial directives. So, it might be thought of a dialectical relationship between writer and genre in which the writer accepts the use of modals as a strategy to seek for the reader's solidarity.

But, certainly, the choice of lexical items by the text producers, what must be put as foreground or background, is a particular way of constructing identities, *the United States in the name of America*, and a way of constructing social relations, *a taken-for-granted position which produces and reproduces a relation of domination, the domination of the United States over the American countries and an indirectly-construed status of superiority over all the other ones present in the text.*

References

ALMEIDA, F. S. D. P. Atitude: afeto, julgamento e apreciação. In: VIAN JR, Orlando; SOUZA, Anderson Alves de;

ALMEIDA, Fabíola Aparecida Sartin Dutra Parreira (orgs.). *A linguagem da avaliação em Língua Portuguesa: estudos sistêmico-funcionais com base no sistema da avaliatividade*. São Carlos: Pedro & João Editores, 2010.

BAKHTIN, Mikhail Mikhailovitch. *Estética da criação verbal*. Tradução de Paulo Bezerra. São Paulo: Editora WMF Martins Fontes, 2011.

BALOCCO, Anna Elizabeth. O sistema de engajamento aplicado a espaços opinativos na mídia escrita. In: VIAN JR, Orlando; SOUZA, Anderson Alves de; ALMEIDA, Fabíola Aparecida Sartin Dutra Parreira (orgs.). *A linguagem da avaliação em Língua Portuguesa: estudos sistêmico-funcionais com base no sistema da avaliatividade*. São Carlos: Pedro & João Editores, 2010.

FAIRCLOUGH, Norman. *Language and power*. London: Logman, 1996.

FUZER, Cristiane; CABRAL, Sara Regina Scotta (Orgs.). *Introdução à Gramática Sistêmico-funcional em língua portuguesa*. Santa Maria: Editora da UFSM, 2010.

HALLIDAY, Michael Alexander Kirkwood; HASAN, Ruqaiya. *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman, 1976.

_____. *Language, context and text: aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

HALLIDAY, Michael Alexander Kirkwood; MATTHIESSEN, Christian M. I. M. *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Arnold, 2004.

HASAN, Ruqaiya. The texture of a text. In: HALLIDAY, Michael Alexander Kirkwood; HASAN, Ruqaiya. *Language*,

context and text: aspects of language in a social-semiotic perspective. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985.

MARTIN, James Robert; WHITE, Peter R. R. *The language of evaluation*: appraisal in English. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

NASCIMENTO, Fábio Santos.

'*GM crops may be harmful to the environment*': graus de autoridade e assertividade em notícias de popularização da ciência. 114 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Letras) – Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Santa Maria, 2011.

SOUZA, Anderson Alves de. Gradação: força e foco. In: VIAN JR, Orlando; SOUZA, Anderson Alves de; ALMEIDA, Fabíola Aparecida Sartin Dutra Parreira (orgs.). *A linguagem da avaliação em Língua Portuguesa*: estudos sistêmico-funcionais com base no sistema da avaliatividade. São Carlos: Pedro & João Editores, 2010.

VIAN JR., Orlando. O sistema de avaliatividade e a linguagem da avaliação. In: VIAN JR, Orlando; SOUZA, Anderson Alves de; ALMEIDA, Fabíola Aparecida Sartin Dutra Parreira (orgs.). *A linguagem da avaliação em Língua Portuguesa*: estudos sistêmico-funcionais com base no sistema da avaliatividade. São Carlos: Pedro & João Editores, 2010.

VIAN JR, Orlando; SOUZA, Anderson Alves de; ALMEIDA, Fabíola Aparecida Sartin Dutra Parreira (orgs.). *A linguagem da avaliação em Língua Portuguesa*: estudos sistêmico-funcionais com base no sistema da avaliatividade. São Carlos: Pedro & João Editores, 2010.

WHITE, Peter R. R. Valoração – A linguagem da avaliação e da perspectiva. Tradução de Débora de Carvalho Figueiredo. *Linguagem em (Dis)curso*, v. 4, n. esp., p. 178-205, 2004.

Recebido em agosto de 2013
e aceito em novembro de 2013.

Título: *“Como Obama Pode Pressionar para Obter Paz”: uma Postura Favorável e Avaliação Atitudinal Positiva*

Resumo: *A linguagem é usada para cumprir alguma tarefa ao mesmo tempo em que é usada para constituir e expressar a subjetividade do escritor. Numa tentativa de identificar as posições valorativas e avaliações adotadas pelos escritores, em um artigo de opinião, com relação à interferência dos E.U.A. na guerra de Gaza, uma análise específica foi conduzida com base na Teoria da Avaliatividade (MARTIN; WHITE, 2005) e na perspectiva de Coesão Textual (HALLIDAY; HASAN, 1976; 1985; HALLIDAY; MATTHIESSEN, 2004). Os resultados mostraram que os escritores tomam uma posição favorável quanto à interferência estadunidense e, simultaneamente, aceitam posições alternativas. Além disso, os escritores criam um grupo de palavras do mesmo campo geral que coesamente conecta o texto, e estas recebem avaliações atitudinais positivas, principalmente em termos de comportamento.*

Palavras-chave: *Itens lexicais. Artigo de opinião. Avaliatividade. Linguagem.*