

THE ROLE OF CONNECTORS IN THE CO-CONSTRUCTION OF IDENTITY IMAGES: THE USE OF THE *MAS* IN ELECTORAL DEBATES

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- **ABSTRACT:** This study is part of a broader research whose purpose is to investigate whether the establishment of discourse relations and its marking through connectors have implications for the co-construction of identity images. Looking for additional evidence for this research and adopting contributions from the Modular Approach to Discourse Analysis, this paper studies the connector *mas* employed by candidates for public office in two electoral debates, one municipal and the other presidential. The objective is to verify to what extent *mas*, in signaling the discursive maneuvers performed by the candidates, is an important piece in the game through which they (de)construct identity images. Analysis revealed that the 55 occurrences of the connector signaled two groups of discursive maneuvers. By using the *mas* through which the candidate signals maneuvers of attack to the opponent (*mas* for hetero-attack), he tries to construct an unfavorable image of the other and a favorable one of himself. But by using the *mas* through which the candidate signals maneuvers in which he attacks himself (*mas* for self-attack), he tries to attribute to himself values such as humility and modesty, as well as anticipate future criticism from the adversary.
- **KEYWORDS:** Connector *mas*. Figuration process. Negotiation process.

Introduction

In the last four decades, studies on the linguistic resources used in face work (GOFFMAN, 2011) have obtained relevant results in understanding the role of speech acts in the co-construction of identity images. Under the impact of the pioneering approaches of Lakoff (1977), Leech (1983), and especially Brown and Levinson (1987), politeness studies have shown that there are lexical, grammatical, and prosodic phenomena that can only be explained by the consideration of Sociological factors (face, territory, power, social distance) and pragmatic factors (principle of cooperation and its maxims, principle of politeness and its maxims, acts of speech and their conditions

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of happiness). But, in spite of the results they have achieved, these approaches remain, in general, restricted to the notion of speech act, neglecting the role of other aspects of discourse in the joint construction of identity images (see TERKOURAFI, 2005; CULPEPER, 2011).

Contrary to studies conducted in the framework of politeness theories, researchers who adopt the approach proposed by Roulet and his team, the Modular Approach to Discourse Analysis (ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001), have highlighted the role of different discourse aspects in face work (or figuration process)¹ (see PIRES, 1997; ROULET, 1999; ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001; SIMUNIC, 2004; LANNA, 2005; RUFINO, 2011; CUNHA, 2013; TOMAZI; MARINHO, 2014). However, even with this advance, not always there is, in this theoretical perspective, the interest in proceeding to the deep and systematic study of how plans of discourse act in the figuration process.

Following the methodology proposed by the modular model, the study of this process usually takes place in some stages. Once the selection of a given discursive production has been made, the plans of this production (lexical, syntactic, relational, polyphonic, topical, compositional, periodical, operational etc) are studied separately. Then the study of the figure process is carried out. This study consists of a combination of information previously obtained in the study of discourse plans with information about faces and territories at stake in this discourse (ROULET, 1999; ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001, cap. 12). In this perspective of analysis, the purpose is to understand, in a holistic way, how the participants take part of the figuration process, managing together the relations of faces, territories and places, and not as each of the planes of discourse acts in this process.

Adopting contributions from the Modular Approach to Discourse Analysis, but following a distinct methodological perspective in the treatment of the figuration process, this study is inserted in a broader piece of research. In this research, I have been investigating the role of textual articulation in this process, which encompasses discourse relations (argument, counter-argument, reformulation, topicalization, time, comment, etc.) and their markers (connectors, syntactic structures, etc.). The purpose of this research is to verify if the establishment of these relations has implications for the co-construction of identity images in different contexts².

Looking for additional evidence for this research, this paper studies the connector *mas* employed by candidates for public office in two electoral debates, one municipal (Fernando Haddad (PT) and José Serra (PSDB), 10/26/2012) and the other presidential

¹ The Modular Approach to Discourse Analysis uses the notion of figuration process. The notion of face work is not used. The difference between the notions will be further discussed. For now, it is sufficient to know that the notion of figuration process explains how the interlocutors make the co-construction of identity images.

² In recent years, using the Modular Approach to Discourse Analysis, but also the Rhetorical Structure Theory (MANN; THOMPSON, 1986) in articulation with Goffman's work (1973, 2009, 2011), I have been developing studies on the role of different discourse relations in the co-construction of identity images in electoral debates (CUNHA, 2015, 2016a; CUNHA; BRAGA, 2016; CUNHA; MARINHO, 2017), reports (CUNHA, 2013, 2014) and official documents (CUNHA, 2010, 2016b).

(Dilma Rousseff (PT) and Aécio Neves (PSDB), 10/24/2014). The objective is to verify to what extent the occurrences of the connector *mas*, in signaling the discursive maneuvers performed by the candidates, are important pieces in the game through which they (de)construct identity images. To achieve this objective, I initially study the connectors, revealing their role in signaling discursive maneuvers. Then, I reveal to what extent the connectors can act as discursive strategies, that is, as linguistic items relevant to the negotiation of identity images. Finally, from the theoretical framework outlined, I proceed to analyze the occurrences of *mas* found in the two electoral debates.

The connectors and their role in the signaling of discursive maneuvers

In the Modular Approach to Discourse Analysis, the study of connectors is based on the contributions of Ducrot et al. (1980) on the role of connectors as the French terms *mais* (but), *donc* (therefore) and *d'ailleurs* (besides), and also on the contributions from authors who studied the connectors in the perspective of Relevance Theory (SPERBER; WILSON, 1995). On the basis of these study traditions, the connectors would be linguistic items that, when marking a relation of discourse, would limit the possibilities of interpretation of the relations between textual constituents, indicating, at the same time, the hierarchical (main or subordinate) status of these constituents (ROULET, 2006; ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001). Therefore, the connectors are understood as procedural or instructional items (REBOUL; MOESCHLER, 1998; MOESCHLER, 2005), since they would give instructions on how to treat mental representations and on how to understand the structure of discourse.

I illustrate this approach with the analysis of the fragment below, extracted from Fernando Haddad's speech, protagonist of one of the debates constituent of the corpus of this research.

- (1) Serra, nesse particular dos medicamentos, as ideias estão bem estruturadas, **mas** os programas não estão funcionando.
(Serra, about the medications, the ideas are well structured, **but** the programs are not working.)

In the passage, which constitutes an intervention (I) of the candidate, the connector *mas* signals the relation of counter-argument (c-a), linking the main act (Ma) (*the programs are not working*) to a piece of information whose origin is the subordinate act (Sa) (*Serra, about the remedies, the ideas are well structured*). In the modular approach, the result of textual articulation analysis or relational organization of a discursive production is represented in hierarchical structures, such as:

I [Sa Serra, about the medications, the ideas are well structured,
 c-a
 Ma **but** the programs are not working.

With this analysis, the role of the connector is to indicate that the information brought by the first act constitutes a counter-argument to be refuted by the information brought by the second act. The analysis is centered on the instructional and structural properties of the connectors and the intervention in which they occur. Therefore, this analysis does not show that the connector is a linguistic item articulated to the context (or situation of action³) in which it is employed. In other words, considering the structuralist (Ducrot) and cognitive (Sperber and Wilson) theoretical influences, the modular approach minimizes the role of the connectors in the dynamics of a given action situation, although the study of the discourse developed by the modular approach belongs to the interactionist tradition of language studies (ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001, Chap.2; KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI 1992; VION, 1992).

To study the connectors in an interactionist perspective, which is the perspective of the modular approach, I work with the hypothesis, developed in previous studies (MARINHO; CUNHA, 2015; CUNHA, 2017), that connectors are not only instructional items, because they are also markers of the discursive maneuvers performed by the agents:

[...] the connectors are understood as signals of the discursive maneuvers that each speaker, in function of the situation of action, performs to elaborate interventions that can be considered adequate and complete by the interlocutor, who can thus develop the interaction (oral or written). (CUNHA, 2017, p.1704, our translation.)⁴

In this definition of connector, the notion of negotiation process is central, fundamental since the initial versions of the modular approach (ROULET, 1988; ROULET et al., 1985). According to Roulet (2003, 2006; ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001), the interaction is characterized by a process in which the interlocutors negotiate their reciprocal contributions to come to an agreement about the end of the interaction. Thus, all interaction is defined by a negotiation process in which the interlocutors begin propositions and respond to them, evaluating if the interventions

³ In general, to conceive context as a situation of action is to understand that interaction involves both local coordination mechanisms of actions and socio-historical representations prior to the production of discourse. In this sense, the context is shaped by internal aspects (decisions and choices of agents responsible for actions) and by external aspects (knowledge and values historically constituted). An in-depth definition of the notion of situation of action is found in Fillietaz (2006) and in Cunha (2013, 2017).

⁴ Original: “[...] os conectores são concebidos como sinalizadores das manobras discursivas que cada locutor, em função da situação de ação em que se encontra, é levado a realizar para elaborar intervenções que possam ser consideradas adequadas e completas pelo interlocutor e que permitam a este dar sequência à interação (oral ou escrita).” (CUNHA, 2017, p.1704).

are sufficiently complete and adequate for the interaction. In this way, all interaction is developed under a restriction (dialogical completeness) that foresees the reach of an agreement between the interlocutors:

[...] every negotiation has its origin in a problem that gives rise to an initiative of the speaker; this initiative asks for a reaction from the other speaker, which may be favorable or unfavorable. If it is favorable, the speaker may end the negotiation, expressing, in turn, its agreement. (ROULET et al., 1985, p.15, our translation.)⁵

But if the intervention produced by one speaker is interpreted by the other as inadequate, malformed or obscure, they interrupt the ongoing process and try to make the intervention more appropriate. For Roulet, when the interlocutors try to make a sufficiently complete intervention for the negotiation process, they are obeying another restriction, the restriction of monological completeness.

As Roulet notes (ROULET et al., 1985, p.9, our translation), “[...] the structure of discourse is largely determined by the constraints of verbal interaction.” From this perspective, the development of the negotiation process is not independent of the situation of action in which it occurs (cf. note 3). In other words,

The action situation restricts how speakers develop the negotiation process and hence how they can initiate propositions, react to them, detect and evaluate problems of completeness, contribute to the repair of such problems, and so on. In this perspective, the action situation restricts what discursive maneuvers the interlocutors can or cannot perform. (CUNHA, 2017, p.1704, our translation.)⁶

In the political debate, genre studied in this paper, the participants systematically present favorable facts about themselves and unfavorable facts about the other, to convince the audience formed by voters. Therefore, in a political debate, the interlocutors attack themselves with irony, accusations and criticisms. In this genre, there is the implicit permission for candidates, in a relatively polite way, to demean the opponent’s political past and not only to expose government proposals (AQUINO, 2008; SILVA, 2013; KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI, 2013; CUNHA, 2015).

⁵ Original: “[...] toda negociação tem sua origem em um problema que dá lugar a uma *iniciativa* do locutor; essa iniciativa pede uma *reação*, que pode ser favorável ou desfavorável, do interlocutor. Se ela é favorável, o locutor pode encerrar a negociação, exprimindo, por sua vez, seu *acordo*.” (ROULET et al., 1985, p.15, grifo do autor, tradução nossa).

⁶ Original: “A situação de ação restringe a forma como os interlocutores desenvolvem o processo de negociação e, consequentemente, como eles podem iniciar proposições, reagir a elas, detectar e avaliar problemas de completude, contribuir no reparo desses problemas, etc. Nessa perspectiva, a situação de ação restringe quais manobras discursivas são possíveis e quais não são possíveis de ser realizadas pelos interlocutores.” (CUNHA, 2017, p.1704).

For this reason, in this context, an important characteristic of the negotiation process is the non-obedience to the restriction of dialogical completeness. As shown in Cunha (2017), because the electoral debate is a dispute between political opponents, each candidate tries to show that the intervention previously produced by the adversary is malformed and obscure or based on false information, that is, it is inadequate for the negotiation process and does not obey the restriction of monologic completeness. Acting this way, each candidate, when producing an intervention, opens a secondary negotiation whose purpose is to reveal the inadequacy of the intervention produced by the opponent. Considering that every intervention produced by one candidate is usually evaluated by the other as inadequate, each block of a debate is characterized, from the point of view of the negotiation process, as the opening of exchanges or secondary negotiations with clearing function (CUNHA, 2017). In the debate, the interaction ends not because the adversaries agree on the end of the interaction, obeying the restriction of dialogical completeness, but because the TV channel ends the interaction.

As discussed in Cunha (2017), connectors work in two ways in this conflictive negotiation process. On the one hand, a candidate, when using connectors, signals the maneuvers to show that his intervention, by bringing arguments, refuting counter-arguments, reformulating parts of his speech, is complete for the negotiation process, that is, his intervention is clear and adequate. In this use, each candidate employs the connectors to signal the maneuvers that allow him to achieve monologic completeness.

On the other hand, a candidate signals the discourse relations with argumentative, counter-argumentative, reformulative, temporal connectors to reveal that the opponent, when elaborating his intervention, was not correct, true or honest, that the proposals of government presented by the other are inconsistent, that the intervention produced by the opponent is not understandable, that there are contradictions between pieces of information presented by the opponent, among others. In this other use, each candidate uses the connectors to try to evidence that the opponent's interventions do not obey the constraint of monologic completeness and are unsuitable for the negotiation process.

In summary, in a typical situation of action of the debate, the connectors signal the discursive maneuvers that a candidate performs to show that his speech is adequate for the interaction (it obeys the restriction of monologic completeness) and that the speech of the opponent is inappropriate for the same interaction (does not obey the restriction of monologic completeness). Since connectors are words that play a major role in the negotiation process, they can be very useful resources in the co-construction of identity images.

The use of connectors as a discursive strategy

Before discussing the role that the connectors play in the figuration process, it is important to define the notion of figuration process itself, used by Roulet (1981, 1999;

ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001), and at the same time to justify why, in this paper, I use this idea and not the most recent concept of face work.

As discussed in the introduction, studies on face work and, more specifically, politeness, have traditionally investigated how elements of a micro-linguistic nature (hedges, forms of subject indetermination, pronouns etc) diminish the threat that speech acts (promise, criticism, offering, warning, order) represent to the faces of interlocutors. In Brown and Levinson's Theory of Politeness (1987, p.61), Goffman's notions of face and territory⁷ are reinterpreted as positive and negative faces respectively:

- (a) negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction – i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition.
- (b) positive face: the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants.

In this theory, interlocutors, to avoid conflicts, neutralize the threats to the faces by doing face work. Goffman (1967, p.12) defines the notion of face work in this way:

[...] the actions taken by a person to make whatever he is doing consistent with face. Face-work serves to counteract "incidents" – that is, events whose effective symbolic implications threaten face.

From the perspective of the author, face work corresponds to the linguistic and non-linguistic actions performed by the speakers to claim positive social values or to preserve an image of the self (face) considered satisfactory for the encounter.

By systematizing Goffman's approach to language studies, Brown and Levinson (1987) revise the concept, giving it a sense that is a little distant from the original one. For the authors, face work corresponds to the set of linguistic strategies that the speaker performs to avoid or diminish the threats that speech acts (*Face-Threatening Acts* – FTA) represent to the positive (face) and negative (territory) faces of the listener. Thus, in Brown and Levinson (1987), the notion goes through an important conceptual modification: on the one hand, the notion is limited because it corresponds only to the use of linguistic procedures (and not any procedures) that diminish the threat of speech acts; on the other hand, it is broadened, since it corresponds to the strategies used to reduce attacks to the negative face (and not only to attacks on the positive face).

In the Modular Approach to Discourse Analysis, Roulet uses the notion of figuration process and not the notion of face work. In his studies (ROULET, 1999; ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001), the process of figuration corresponds to the set of discursive strategies, belonging to any level of discourse, that are used by interlocutors

⁷ In Goffman's approach (2011), face refers to the positive social value that a person claims for himself through the line assumed during a particular contact. Complementing the notion of face, the territory refers to the rights that each person claims and to the defense of these same rights (GOFFMAN, 1973).

to perform the management of faces, territories and places. Thus, although Roulet considers the notions of Goffman and Brown and Levinson, he goes beyond them because, with the notion of figuration process, the author defines a broader process of joint construction of identity images.

For the author, the study of this process does not specifically correspond only to the description of microlinguistic strategies employed to make speech acts less threatening, as in Brown and Levinson (1987) and in much of the literature on politeness. This study encompasses (syntactic, relational, operational, topical, polyphonic, periodic, compositional, etc.) strategies that allow each speaker, through interaction, to preserve, enhance or attack their own face, defend or expose their territory, preserve, enhance or attack the face of the other, invade the territory of the other, placing himself in a high place, or allow the other to stand out in the interaction. Furthermore, Roulet works with extensive discourses (not with isolated speech acts), authentic texts (not produced by the analyst), monological and dialogical interactions, literary and non-literary discourses such as fragments of novels, telephone conversations, bookstore interactions, letters, fragments of plays and films etc. (ROULET, 1999; ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; ROULET, 2001).

The notion of face work, as elaborated by Brown and Levinson, is reductive, because it is essentially centered on the notion of speech act and on the analysis of isolated acts generally produced by the analyst, as well as on the strategies used by the speaker to decrease the level of threat of speech acts (cf. CULPEPER, 2011; KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI, 1992, 2005, 2006, 2013; LEECH, 2014). I therefore adopt the broader notion of the figurative process.

As for the discourse relations and their markers, such as connectors, the indications available in the literature about their role in the figuration process are punctual and non-systematic and do not offer a broad view of the phenomenon. In Brown and Levinson (1987), some strategies to make speech acts less threatening use the articulation of clauses and their markers. An example is the strategy of indicating difficulty in performing an act. With this strategy, the speaker reveals to the listener that he does not want to bother him: “I don’t want to interrupt you, but [...]” (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987, p.188). In the final part of the book, there is also a section in which the authors, starting from the Analysis of the Conversation, recognize that the acts do not exist isolated, but they act articulated in the structure of the discourse. However, in this section, the authors basically provide an indication for future studies, suggesting a field of study for Theory of Politeness, and do not perform systematic work. Thus, in Brown and Levinson (1987), the role of discourse relations in face work is only suggested and is not the object of detailed study, such as the study of indirect speech acts or hedges.

Based on the Theory of Politeness (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987) and on early versions of the Modular Approach to Discourse Analysis (ROULET et al., 1985), Kerbrat-Orecchioni (2005, 2006) reveals that speech acts are articulated in hierarchical structures, and a main speech act may be linked to others, whose function is to prepare, justify, reformulate the main act. However, the author does not propose a systematic

study of the textual articulation in the figuration process, but merely draws attention to the role of “softener” that some acts, such as preliminary or concessive acts, can perform in relation to a principal act. In *Semantics of Enunciation*, Ducrot (1987, 2005) also reveals that acts are not isolated and notes that concessive constructs and connectors such as the French terms *mais* (but) or *donc* (therefore) play a relevant role in the construction of the speaker’s *ethos* (image). Studying the concession, the author points out: “It allows to improve the image that the speaker provides of her/himself in her/his speech. The speaker assumes the appearance of a serious, therefore trustworthy man, because, before choosing his Z position, he also pays attention to the possible objections against Z.” (DUCROT, 2005, p.29, our translation).

From a different theoretical perspective (Functionalism), but with results similar to those mentioned, Oliveira (2005), working with NURC data, reveals the role of conditional sentences in reducing the aggressiveness of threatening acts to the positive and negative faces, such as critiques and offerings. Also investigating data from NURC, but based on Discursive Semiotics, Barros (2008) points out the role that adversarial sentences introduced by *mas*, negations and hedges play in constructing a negative image of the recipient. According to the author (BARROS, 2008, p.99, our translation), “With these procedures, the speaker shows that he distances himself from the listener, that he is not interested in what the listener said or even that he does not agree.”

The sample of works presented reveals that the available indications about the role of discourse relations in the construction of identity images follow different theoretical orientations and focus on the punctual study of one or few discourse relations. Therefore, there is no theory that, like politeness theories centered on speech acts (BROWN; LEVINSON, 1987; BROWN, 2015; LAKOFF, 1977; LEECH, 1983, 2014; KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI, 1992, 2006; FRASER, 1990; KASPER, 1990; TERKOURAFI, 2005), offers a global explanation for the role of discourse relations in the process of figuration.

Nevertheless, the understanding of connectors as signals of the process of negotiation between the interlocutors, as proposed in the previous item, allows to comprehend in a broad way how connectors act as an important discursive strategy in the process of figuration. In any situation of action, signaling with a connector the realization of a discursive maneuver, such as refuting another’s argument or reformulating parts of the discourse, may have an impact on the negotiation of identity images.

In an electoral debate, the speaker who refutes the argument of the interlocutor can attribute to him negative social values (liar, unable, inhuman, etc.), as well as attribute to himself positive social values (sincere, competent, human, etc). In pointing out this maneuver with *mas*, for example, the candidate emphasizes the maneuver, in the expectation that the spectator (target of his interventions) understands his effort to reveal that the intervention of the adversary does not obey the monologic completeness and that, therefore, the adversary does not have the necessary social values to be a public manager.

From this perspective, the notions of negotiation process and figuration process are complementary. The co-construction of identity images (figuration process) has

an impact on the way the interlocutors develop the negotiation process and mark the development of this process with connectors and syntactic structures. In order to demonstrate the important role that a connector can play in the figuration process, I return to the fragment of the debate between Haddad and Serra previously analyzed:

- (2) Serra, nesse particular dos medicamentos, as ideias estão bem estruturadas, **mas** os programas não estão funcionando.

(Serra, about the medications, the ideas are well structured, **but** the programs are not working.)

Prior to this fragment, Serra had listed the public policies he carried out for health, when he was the mayor of São Paulo (*Quando eu cheguei a Prefeitura a distribuição [de medicamentos] estava praticamente paralisada. [...] Criamos o remédio em casa, que foi uma coisa muito importante e vamos fazer agora a cesta de medicamentos para o idoso, além de ampliar o remédio em casa [When I arrived at the City Hall the distribution [of medication] was practically paralyzed. [...] We created the “home medication” program, which was a very important thing and we will now make the basket of medicines for the elderly, in addition to expanding the “home medication” program*]). From the point of view of the negotiation process, the fragment produced by Haddad tries to show that the intervention produced by the adversary was not adequate for the development of this process, because it did not bring information compatible with reality. Thus, after Serra states that he implemented programs that improved the health of the population, Haddad retakes the opponent’s argument to refute this argument (act introduced by the connector), claiming that the programs are not working. With the use of *mas*, the candidate signals the maneuver to criticize the negligence or incompetence of the adversary as public manager.

From the point of view of the figuration process, the implications for the faces are evident. By signaling with *mas* the maneuver to criticize the incompetence of the adversary, Haddad attacks the face of the other and damages the image of efficient public manager that he tried to construct in his intervention. Haddad also attacks the opponent’s territory by revealing information - the inadequacy of government programs - that the other might want to hide from voters. At the same time, Haddad values his own face because he shows that he knows the reality of São Paulo and the programs in operation and because he attacks the face of the other politely, recognizing their merits (*the ideas are well structured*), to later refute them (*but the programs are not working*).

In this section and in the previous one, I have presented the theoretical framework that guided the study of a corpus formed by two electoral debates. In the next section, I present and discuss the results of the analyzes, which investigated the role of *mas* and the discursive maneuvers signaled by it in the figuration process developed by the candidates participating in the debates.

The use of *mas* in electoral debates

As I mentioned in the introduction, Fernando Haddad (PT) and José Serra (PSDB) were the participants of the first debate which took place on 10/26/2012, in the second round of the electoral campaign by the city of São Paulo. This debate was transcribed and published by Folha de S. Paulo newspaper the day after the debate. On the second debate analyzed, its participants were Dilma Rousseff (PT) and Aécio Neves (PSDB). This debate occurred on 10/24/2014, in the second round of the campaign by the Presidency of the Republic, and was transcribed and published by Portal G1. The two debates were promoted by the same TV network, Rede Globo⁸. In both debates, a total of 55 occurrences of the connector *mas* were found, as shown in table 1.

Table 1 – occurrences of *mas*

Candidatos	N	%
Aécio Neves	22	40.0
Dilma Rousseff	16	29.0
Fernando Haddad	09	16.4
José Serra	08	14.6
Total	55	100

Source: Author's elaboration

All the occurrences of *mas* mark the relation of counter-argument between the textual constituent they introduce and the information activated in the course of the debate, therefore stored in the discursive memory of the interlocutors. However, with these occurrences, the candidates perform more specific discursive maneuvers, such as denying or correcting information given by the interlocutor about the speaker or returning the same accusation made by the interlocutor. Because of their role in the figuration process, these maneuvers were separated into two groups. The first corresponds to the occurrences of *mas* in which the connector signals maneuvers with which the speaker clearly attacks the opponent. Therefore, this group signals hetero-attack maneuvers. Generally, in these occurrences, the point of view preceding *mas* can be assigned to the interlocutor (adversary), whereas the point of view introduced by *mas* is always the speaker's point of view.

The second group corresponds to the occurrences of *mas* with an unexpected functioning in electoral debates. These occurrences indicate maneuvers with which the speaker attacks his own face, recognizing a failure of his management, the insufficiency of actions taken or the non-accomplishment of actions in favor of the population. Therefore, the second group signals auto-attack maneuvers. As we will see, with this

⁸ The debate between Fernando Haddad and José Serra can be accessed on: <<http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/1176189-leia-a-transcricao-do-debate-da-tv-globo-entre-candidatos-a-prefeito-de-sp.shtml>>. The debate between Dilma Rousseff and Aécio Neves can be accessed on: <<http://g1.globo.com/politica/eleicoes/2014/transcricao-debate-presidencial-2-turno.html>>.

kind of *mas*, the speaker attacks his own face to claim positive social value (humility) and to make the listener believe that if the candidate has not completed all actions during the mandate, he must be (re)elected to complete the actions he failed to take.

Table 2 shows the two groups mentioned, the discursive maneuvers that correspond to each of them, as well as the number of occurrences of *mas* that signals each one of the maneuvers.

Table 2 – discursive maneuvers signaled by *mas*

Discursive maneuvers of hetero-attack	N	%
To oppose the management of the speaker to the management of the interlocutor or of members of the interlocutor’s coalition.	15	27.2
To evidence contradictions between the actions taken by the opponent in his public life, criticizing his negligence or his incompetence.	10	18.1
To indicate topic change (conversation structuring marker).	6	11.0
To deny or to correct information given by the opponent about the speaker.	3	5.5
To introduce criticism to the interlocutor, criticism preceded by politeness formula.	2	3.6
To return the same accusation made by the interlocutor.	2	3.6
Partial total	38	69.0
Discursive maneuvers of auto-attack	N	%
To specify information given before the connector about the government program or the speaker’s previous management.	14	25.5
To reveal the awareness that the speaker has of the problems he will encounter, if elected.	3	5.5
Partial total	17	31.0
Total	55	100

Source: Author’s elaboration

Next, I will analyze each of these maneuvers, placing emphasis on the role that these maneuvers and the connector that signals them play in the figuration process.

Maneuvers of hetero-attack

In the debates studied, the number of occurrences of *mas* for hetero-attack was higher (38/69%) than self-attack (17/31%). This can be explained by the fact that the central feature of a political debate is that it is an aggressive contest between candidates for gathering votes and not for the recognition of disabilities.

With the *mas* for hetero-attack, the candidate connects the textual constituent introduced by the connector and a piece of information from the opponent’s speech. As emphasized by Roulet (1999; ROULET et al., 1985), the *mas* that connects a textual constituent and the information given by the interlocutor has a polemical and aggressive nature. The speaker recollects the other’s speech to deny or refute it and to show that

the argument introduced by *mas* must prevail. Thus, this type of *mas* is quite aggressive for the faces, since, with the information brought by the connector, the speaker denies the other's arguments and attacks his face. Therefore, this type of *mas* is a strategy of impoliteness (CULPEPER, 2011; KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI, 2013).

However, this general analysis is based on Ducrot's classic studies of *mais* (French) (1987; DUCROT et al., 1980) and omits relevant information about the discursive maneuvers signaled by the occurrences of *mas* in the *corpus*, because these occurrences neither present the same behavior nor produce the same effects. Thus, to verify the role of *mas* in the figuration process, this general description can be enriched by the study of the discursive maneuvers of hetero-attack that the political opponents signal with *mas*.

The maneuver most frequently signaled by *mas* is this: *to oppose the management of the speaker to the management of the interlocutor or the one of members of the interlocutor's coalition*. In our data, 15 occurrences (27.2%) signal this maneuver. In this example, candidate Aécio Neves, with *mas*, makes a criticism against the adversary (all the segment that precedes *mas*) and a promise (the segment introduced by *mas*).

- (3) **Aécio Neves:** A transposição do rio São Francisco, que levaria água para as regiões mais carentes do país. Era para ter ficado pronto em 2010, nós estamos em 2014 e aqueles que estão lá próximos das obras não acreditam mais que verão uma gota d'água. **Mas** eu, ao assumir a presidência da República, estejam certos que esta obra será concluída.

(**Aécio Neves:** The transfer of the São Francisco River, which would take water to the neediest regions of the country. It was to be completed in 2010; this is 2014 and the people who are there do not believe they will see a drop of water. **But** when I take over the presidency of the Republic, I am sure that this work will be completed.)

It is common for one candidate to accuse the other of incompetence, because of the typical aggressiveness of the debate. As this fragment shows, it is common for a candidate to use *mas* to oppose two forms of management, the adversary's management, which would be marked by delays in the delivery of work, and his own, which would be marked by efficiency. In the fragment, the candidate mentions a work that was not completed by the adversary (the transposition of the São Francisco River), a promise that, if elected, he would keep. This maneuver is important for the figuration process, because, with it, the candidate attacks both the face of the adversary, compromising his image as an efficient public manager, and its territory, because it shows supposed evidence of his incompetence.

That maneuver is similar to this: *to evidence contradictions among the actions taken by the opponent in his public life, criticizing his negligence or his incompetence*. This maneuver, in our data, was signaled by 10 (18.1%) occurrences of *mas*. The two excerpts below, taken from Fernando Haddad's speech at different moments of the debate, illustrate it.

- (4) **Fernando Haddad:** Olha, há oito anos nós estamos aguardando providências que estão sendo anunciadas agora **mas** que não foram tomadas.
(Fernando Haddad: You see, for eight years we've expected for measures that only now are being announced, **but** which have not been taken.)
- (5) **Fernando Haddad:** São medidas simples que o Serra está anunciando, **mas** tiveram oito anos para fazer e não fizeram.
(Fernando Haddad: Serra is announcing simple measures, **but** they had eight years to take them and they have not done anything.)

With this maneuver, the candidate, in the segment that precedes *mas*, recollects promises made by the opponent, only to inform, in the segment introduced by the connector, that these promises are actions that could have already been taken by the opponent, when he was mayor of São Paulo. The repetition of this maneuver, during a debate, aims at denying the felicity conditions (AUSTIN, 1962) of Jose Serra's promises, questioning his sincerity and suitability. With *mas*, Fernando Haddad signals the contradiction between the adversary's speech (his promises) and the way he acts in public positions.

This same maneuver (*to evidence contradictions among the actions taken by the opponent in his public life, criticizing his negligence or his incompetence*) occurs in the debate between Dilma Rousseff and Aécio Neves. In the fragment below, which is quite aggressive towards the face of the opponent, the candidate reveals the incoherence of Aécio Neves, who would be hiding corrupt acts of coreligionists.

- (6) **Dilma Rousseff:** Candidato, se o senhor me responder por que é que o chamado mensalão tucano mineiro até hoje não foi julgado, por que é que o senhor Renato Azeredo, aliás, Eduardo Azeredo, pediu, pediu renúncia do seu cargo para o processo voltar para a primeira instância, o senhor estaria sendo de fato uma pessoa correta. **Mas** não, o senhor faz uma política e adota uma estratégia nesse debate que é uma estratégia estranhíssima.
(Dilma Rousseff: Mr. Neves, if you told me the reason why the “mensalão tucano mineiro” [vote-buying corruption scandal] has not been tried yet, and the reason why Mr. Eduardo Azeredo resigned from his position for the case to return to the lower court, you would indeed be a correct person. **But** no, you make politics and adopt a rather strange strategy in this debate.)

With the ‘não’ introduced by *mas*, the candidate denies the information given by her before the connector (that the opponent would be a correct person, if he provided explanation about a certain episode of corruption ‘*mensalão mineiro*’ involving his party). This way, the candidate actually denies not the discourse produced by the opponent, but a potential discourse (ROULET, 1999) or a response she wished the candidate had given.

The occurrences of *but* that signal the maneuver to indicate topic change (*conversation structuring marker*) are apparently not very aggressive for the faces involved in the debate. In these occurrences, the role of *mas* would only be to act in the topical organization of the text, indicating the end of a topic and the opening of another, as well as the hierarchically superior status of the second topic (ROULET et al., 1985; ROULET; FILLIETTAZ; GROBET, 2001). However, because the (de)construction of images affects all the elements of the discourse, with this *mas*, the candidates try to attribute positive social values to themselves and negative values to the other, as these words of Aécio Neves show.

- (7) **Dilma Rousseff:** Vocês [políticos do partido do adversário, PSDB] bateram recordes de desemprego, recordes de baixos salários, e quando o senhor se refere à inflação, estou falando do governo Itamar, e não do Fernando Henrique. **Aécio Neves:** Mais um engano da senhora, **mas** volto a Cuba que é a minha pergunta.
(**Dilma Rousseff:** You [PSDB politicians] beat unemployment records, low wage records, And when you refer to inflation, I'm talking about Itamar's government, not Fernando Henrique's. **Aécio Neves:** You are making another mistake, **but** I'm going back to Cuba, which is the topic of my question.)
- (8) **Aécio Neves:** Candidata, muito confusa essa sua explicação. **Mas** eu vou voltar à questão central. A senhora então quer dizer que o PT controlou a inflação?
(**Aécio Neves:** Mrs. Rousseff, this explanation is very confusing. **But** I'm going back to the central question. So you mean PT controlled inflation?)

In the constituent that precedes *mas*, the speaker criticizes the adversary, portraying the candidate as someone who gives confusing or inadequate answers to the negotiation process (*You are making another mistake and this explanation is very confusing*). In the textual constituent that succeeds *mas*, the candidate introduces a new topic (*financing of works in Cuba and control of inflation*, respectively), denying the expectation that he will continue the criticism and suggesting that he has no interest in the mistakes supposedly made by the adversary. Thus, the candidate affirms the weaknesses he attributes to the other, but suggests not having the goal of developing the attack on his face.

In this sense, the intervention formed by textual constituents articulated by *mas* as conversational marker is an important strategy of (de)construction of the faces. With the use of the connector, the candidate signals that the criticism made to the adversary is not the central topic of his intervention, because he subordinates the criticism to the new topic introduced by the connector. So, when the adversary, the target of the criticism, speaks again, she does not recollect the criticism so as to defend herself. The action of reactivating a subordinate topic from the other's speech (the criticism) would be to show that criticism is important and that denying it is more relevant than talking about the central topics of the opponent's speech, those that subordinated the

criticism: *investment in works and inflation control*. Thus, in the debate, *mas*, as a conversational marker, places the criticized person in a difficult situation. Rebutting criticism means giving importance to a secondary topic, not rebutting it, on the other hand, means remaining with the face attacked.

In an action situation in which the one that best attacks the face of the opponent wins points, the maneuver *to deny or to correct information given by the opponent about the speaker* can be very useful to the interlocutors, as in this excerpt of Aécio Neves.

- (9) **Aécio Neves:** Eu não devia lhe corrigir em público, **mas** eu era líder do PSDB.
(**Aécio Neves:** I should not correct you in public, **but** I was PSDB leader.)

The correction announced in the act to the left of the connector is performed in the act initiated by *mas*. The act on the left can be interpreted as an indirect apology: *I apologize for correcting you in public, but...* In societies like ours, correction is seen as a very aggressive act for the positive face of the person criticized (KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI, 1992, 2006; LEECH, 2014). Therefore, even in the electoral debate, criticism can be preceded by attenuating procedures, which apparently would have the power to reduce their degree of aggressiveness (KERBRAT-ORECCHIONI, 2013).

In the fragment under analysis, the attenuation act that precedes the connector (*I should not correct you in public*) reveals the candidate's awareness of the aggressiveness of the criticism, especially if it is done in public. The presence of an audience at an occasion of attack on the face usually increases the feelings of shame, embarrassment or humiliation on the part of the person criticized (GOFFMAN, 2011). At the same time, the same attenuation act reveals the candidate's intention to make viewers understand that the act introduced by *mas* is a criticism. In the absence of an illocutionary verb, the act *I was PSDB leader* could be understood as a simple statement and not as a criticism. Thus, we perceive the illocutionary force of criticism when we read the whole intervention and not only the act introduced by *mas*.

That maneuver is similar to the one in which the candidate *introduces criticism to the interlocutor; criticism preceded by politeness formula*. The speaker opens his speech with an apology that announces that the act introduced by *but (mas)* is a criticism. This act only seems to attenuate the aggressiveness of the criticism. As in the fragment studied previously, in the next one Dilma Rousseff, who was the only candidate to perform this maneuver, recognizes the taboo that, in our society, involves criticism, even in a situation of debate, in which the attack on the faces is expected.

(10) **Dilma Rousseff:** Então, candidato, me desculpa, **mas** o senhor falou, falou e não apresentou nada de concreto. Nem no presente, agora, tampouco para o futuro.

(**Dilma Rousseff:** So, Mr. Neves, I'm sorry, **but** you've been jabbering on and have not presented anything concrete. Neither for the present, nor for the future.)

Because of the controversial nature of a political debate, candidates can develop the negotiation process by exchanging the same accusation. Thus, a maneuver found only in the debate between Dilma Rousseff and Aécio Neves is this: *to return the same accusation made by the interlocutor*. The two excerpts below show the occurrences of *but (mas)* which signal this “boomerang” maneuver.

(11) **Dilma Rousseff:** O senhor é o primeiro a falar em corrupção, **mas** eu posso enumerar todos os processos de vocês que nunca foram julgados e as pessoas estão soltas.

(**Dilma Rousseff:** You are the first to speak of corruption, **but** I can name all lawsuits filed against you that have never been settled and people remain free.)

(12) **Aécio Neves:** Se a senhora quer falar com o mensalão mineiro o chamado mensalão mineiro, vamos aguardar que ele seja julgado, **mas** a senhora agora comete um grave, talvez até uma... A senhora antecipou algo que possa, que pode amanhã lhe criar constrangimentos, porque o principal acusado do mensalão mineiro é o coordenador da sua campanha em Minas Gerais.

(**Aécio Neves:** If you want to talk about the so-called “mensalão mineiro” lawsuit, let's wait until it is settled, **but** you now make a serious mistake, maybe even a... You are bringing forward something that tomorrow may cause embarrassment to you, because the main accused of “mensalão mineiro” is the coordinator of your campaign in Minas Gerais.)

In both fragments, to show that the opponent does not deserve the confidence of the voter, the candidate initiates the intervention with the accusation of corruption made by the opponent in the previous intervention. After the candidate recollects the accusation, he uses it but to deny any inference resulting from the accusation, such as *the opponent made a fair accusation or the opponent, for making accusations against corruption, is honest*. With *mas*, the candidate introduces the criticism to complete the attack to the face of the opponent, arguing that he is the one who should give explanations for corruption.

Maneuvers of self-attack

The occurrences of self-attack are less frequent because they are a risky strategy for a candidate in electoral debate. As shown in table 2, 17/31% occurrences of *mas* in the two debates are of this type. With these occurrences, the candidate attacks his own face, introducing, with the connector, failures or inadequacies of his own acting as a public manager. In both debates, this type of *but (mas)* occurred only in the speeches of the speakers who, at the time of the debate, were the candidates of ruling parties, Dilma Rousseff and José Serra⁹. Some hypotheses explain why only the candidates of ruling parties used *mas* for self-attack.

When the candidate of the ruling party attacks himself/herself, he/she provides justification for either staying in power (Dilma Rousseff) or returning to power (José Serra). If the candidate, for reasons that are independent of his/her will, has not been able to take the actions he/she had promised, the voter must vote for him/her. Only so, he/she will be able to take actions as the voter allows the candidate to be re-elected.

In addition, the candidate of the ruling party is in an unfavorable position compared to the opposition candidate. As the candidate of the ruling party has already finished his/her mandate, his/her management is widely known, his/her actions have been publicized (attacked and defended) in the media, his/her decisions have been attacked by the opposition and his fragilities have been exposed and attacked by opponents as well as justified and defended by supporters. As for the opposition candidate, although he/she might have held other public positions, the qualities and weaknesses of his/her management are less evident at the time of the debate. That is what has occurred in the debates analyzed here. The achievements and limitations of Dilma Rousseff and José Serra, candidates of the ruling parties, were more evident at the time and were therefore constantly mentioned throughout the debates¹⁰.

Thus, performing the self-attack maneuver in this situation is an effective strategy, with which candidates of the ruling party anticipate the criticisms that may be made by opponents. By anticipating criticism, the candidate assumes failures, but mostly justifies such failures and explains why and where the management has failed.

In addition, although the self-attack strategy is risky, an important effect can be achieved with this strategy. When he attacks himself, the speaker can be seen as a humble candidate who does not emphasize his past actions and who knows that no public manager can solve all the problems of the city or country. In many societies, humility is a positive social value, which makes Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1992, 2006) say that our social interactions would be governed by a law of modesty, a law that prevents self-praise. It is also the value attributed to humility that made Leech (1983, 2014) include the maxim of modesty among his maxims of politeness. According to Leech,

⁹ In 2014, Dilma Rousseff attempted the second presidential term. In 2012, José Serra tried to return to the city hall of São Paulo, whose mayor was Gilberto Kassab, a political co-religionist of Serra at the time.

¹⁰ This difference between the candidates explains why, in a political debate, the candidate of the ruling party tends to be more defensive, while the opposition candidate tends to be more aggressive (FIGUEIREDO et al., 1997; CUNHA, 2015).

the tendency of members of societies (Western and Eastern) to avoid disagreement or offense, obeying the Principle of Politeness, makes the subject minimize self-pleasure and maximize displeasure for the self, producing acts of self-devaluation.

On the basis of these hypotheses, it should be noted that self-attack should not be interpreted as a genuine act of self-denial. The production of this maneuver may be a strategy of the speaker to construct a favorable image of himself. In my view, this is what happens in the electoral debate analyzed.

The occurrences of *mas* from this second group basically signal two discursive maneuvers of self-attack. The first one, which is signaled by most of the occurrences of *mas* for self-attack (14/25.5%), is *to specify information given before the connector about the government program or the past speaker's management*. In the occurrences below, drawn from the two debates, the candidates use *mas* to signal that they need to do more than they did.

(13) **José Serra:** Além disso, para as mães que estiverem na fila esperando vaga em creche, foram feitas 150 mil vagas **mas** não deram conta, nós vamos dar uma bolsa, uma bolsa creche de 200 reais até que abra uma vaga para o bebê. (**José Serra:** In addition, for mothers who haven't been able to find their children a daycare center, 150 thousand openings have been created **but** they are not enough, we will give mothers a daycare grant of 200 *reais* until they can put their babies into a daycare center.)

(14) **Dilma Rousseff:** Nós conseguimos um avanço nos últimos quatro anos [no investimento em esgoto tratado], **mas** esse avanço ainda não é suficiente porque durante muitos anos nesse país não se investiu em esgoto tratado. (**Dilma Rousseff:** We have made a breakthrough in the last four years [by investing in treated sewage effluents], **but** it is still not enough because in many years there has been no investment in sewage treatment.)

In José Serra's speech, the segment that precedes *mas* brings the information that 150 openings were created in São Paulo's daycare centers. With the act introduced by *but (mas) (they are not enough)*, the candidate acknowledges that the number is unsatisfactory, countering the idea that the 150 openings would suffice. To convince the voter that his return as a mayor is necessary, the candidate uses the acts articulated by *mas* as argument for the conclusive segment: *we will give mothers a daycare grant of 200 reais until they can put their babies into a daycare center*. But this can only happen if the candidate is elected. It is as if the candidate told the voter: *I recognize that there are still problems to be solved. That's why you should elect me*.

In Dilma Rousseff's speech, the segment that precedes *mas* praises the investment in sewage treatment (*We have made a breakthrough in the last four years*). In the act introduced by *mas (this progress is still not enough)*, the candidate acknowledges that what she did was not enough. With the act introduced by *mas*, Dilma Rousseff

denies the idea that, in her management, the advance in the universality of sewage was enough. As an argument to justify the insufficiency of its action, the candidate informs that previous rulers did not invest in sewage (*because in many years there has been no investment in sewage treatment*). Thus, in order not to carry the burden of self-attack, the candidate shares responsibility for the problems of basic sanitation with other rulers.

The other self-attack maneuver signaled by *mas* is this: *to reveal the awareness that the speaker has of the problems he will encounter, if elected*. In these occurrences, the constituent introduced by *mas* shows that the candidate is willing to face the challenges of political office, as exemplified by this excerpt.

(15) **José Serra:** São Paulo é uma cidade rica, vibrante, **mas** com muitos problemas, está cheia de problemas. E eu estou pronto para enfrentar esses problemas, com a minha capacidade de fazer acontecer, com o meu sentido de justiça social, com a integridade de mim e da minha equipe, estou pronto para fazer isso.

(**José Serra:** São Paulo is a rich, vibrant city, **but** with many problems, it is full of problems. And I am ready to face these problems, with my ability, with my sense of social justice, with my integrity and the integrity of my team, I am ready to do this.)

In this excerpt, the self-attack signaled by *mas* is less evident. In the context of this debate, the act introduced by *mas* (*with many problems, it is full of problems*), mentioning problems existing in São Paulo, can be understood as a self-attack. In other words, it is possible to attribute the illocutionary force of (self) criticism to this act. The candidate recognizes the existence of problems that, however, he did not solve when he was mayor. Therefore, his opponent, Fernando Haddad, repeatedly accuses José Serra of promising that he, Serra, will solve problems that he did not solve, as in this fragment already analyzed: *Serra is announcing simple measures, but they have had eight years to take them and they have not done anything*. But even if it is possible to interpret the act as (self) criticism, José Serra only mentions the problems that exist in São Paulo to defend the idea that he is prepared to face them (*I am ready to face these problems*). It is therefore for the benefit of his own face that the candidate performs the maneuver of self-attack.

Conclusions

This study has provided evidence that the connectors, because they signal discursive maneuvers, can act as discursive strategies of first importance, playing a fundamental role in the way interlocutors develop the figuration process. To investigate the role of connectors in this process, this research followed an interactionist conception of

connectors, a concept that more strongly amplifies structuralist or cognitivist views. According to the adopted perspective, the analysis of connectors is not limited to the study of how they indicate the hierarchy of the constituents of the text or to the study of the instructions they offer to the reader or listener.

More than that, connectors are signs of the discursive maneuvers performed by the speaker in his attempt to produce an intervention that can be considered by the interlocutor as adequate enough for the negotiation process. In this sense, connectors signal the effort of the speaker to achieve the monologic completeness. At the same time, in the interactional dynamics, connectors can be used by the speaker to signal that the intervention previously produced by the interlocutor is not adequate enough for the development of the negotiation process, by not obeying the restriction of monologic completeness.

Focusing on the use of *but* in electoral debates, I tried to show that the speaker, in performing discursive maneuvers, seeks to attack the face of the other, assigning him negative social values, and to attack or repair his own face, attributing to himself negative or positive social values, respectively. Thus, when producing an intervention, the candidate performs discursive maneuvers, such as *introducing criticism to the interlocutor*, *criticism preceded by a formula of politeness*, and *returning the same accusation made by the interlocutor*. By performing these maneuvers and signaling these maneuvers with *mas*, the candidate shows to the opponent and the voters his intention to construct a sufficiently complete intervention and to reveal that the maneuvers of the opponent, when he produced his intervention, were not adequate.

Because the negotiation process and the figuration process are deeply linked, the candidate's maneuvers, to obey the monologic completeness (negotiation process), allow him to manage the faces and territories (figuration process). By doing so, these maneuvers allow him to claim positive social values for himself – honesty, competence – and attribute negative social values to his adversary – dishonesty, incompetence. Thus, with *mas* for hetero-attack, the candidate can construct an unfavorable image of the other and a favorable one of himself. However, with *mas* for self-attack, the candidate can, by attacking himself, attribute to himself values such as humility and modesty, as well as anticipate future criticism of the opponent, justifying these criticisms.

As discussed in the introduction, this study is part of a larger piece of research that investigates the role of different discourse relations in the figuration process (see note 2). Combining the results achieved in this study with the results already obtained in previous research, I believe it is possible to contribute to the elaboration of a global approach that provides theoretical and methodological tools for the study of the role of textual articulation and its marks in the co-construction of identity images.

CUNHA, G. O papel dos conectores na co-construção de imagens identitárias: o uso do *mas* em debates eleitorais. *Alfa*, São Paulo, v.61, n.3, p.681-706, 2017.

- *RESUMO: Este estudo se insere em uma pesquisa mais ampla cuja finalidade é investigar se o estabelecimento das relações de discurso e sua marcação por meio de conectores têm implicações para a co-construção de imagens identitárias. Buscando evidências suplementares para essa pesquisa e adotando contribuições do Modelo de Análise Modular do Discurso, este trabalho estuda o conector *mas* empregado por candidatos a cargos públicos em dois debates eleitorais, um municipal e o outro presidencial. O objetivo é verificar em que medida as ocorrências do *mas* nesses debates, ao sinalizarem manobras discursivas realizadas pelos candidatos, constituem peças importantes no jogo por meio do qual eles (des)constróem imagens identitárias. A análise dos debates revelou que as 55 ocorrências do conector identificadas sinalizam dois grupos de manobras discursivas. Com o *mas* em que o candidato sinaliza manobras de ataque ao adversário (*mas* de heteroataque), é possível a ele tentar construir uma imagem desfavorável do outro e favorável de si. Já com o *mas* em que o candidato sinaliza manobras em que se ataca (*mas* de autoataque), é possível a ele, atacando-se, atribuir a si valores como humildade e modéstia, bem como se antecipar a futuras críticas do adversário, justificando-as.*
- *PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Conector *mas*. Processo de figuração. Processo de negociação.*

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