



Critical Discourse Analysis and Lexical Semantics: An Interdisciplinary Interpreting of the US and China Defense White Papers

Análise Crítica do Discurso e Semântica Lexical: Uma Interpretação Interdisciplinar dos Livros Brancos de Defesa dos EUA e da China

Análisis Crítico del Discurso y Semántica Lexical: Una Interpretación Interdisciplinaria de los Libros Blancos de Defensa de EEUU y China

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ABSTRACT

There have been new facets of multilateralism, which have motivated the realignment of traditional power relations established globally, especially regarding the United States and China. This new strategic environment can be observed in changes made to the Brazilian National Defense White Paper (LBDN) of 2020, as well as in the dialectic between white papers of the United States (2017), and China (2019). To investigate these realignments and their possible impacts on the Brazilian defense sector, the analysis was carried out in two phases: (1) analysis of the general characteristics of the Defense White Papers by the USA and China; and (2) comparison of discourses conveyed in chapters on international cooperation in each Defense White Paper. Speech patterns were analyzed according to rationales of Lexical Semantics and Critical Discourse Analysis. As a result, elements of semantic fields, intertextuality and modality in discourse were pointed out as parameters that could contribute to the evaluation of cooperation and deterrence/dissuasion actions to be adopted by the USA and China in the 21st century.

Keywords: Identity; Defense Studies; Critical Discourse Analysis.

RESUMO

Novas facetas de multilateralismo emergiram e motivaram o realinhamento de tradicionais relações de poder estabelecidas globalmente, principalmente entre os Estados Unidos e a China. Esse novo ambiente estratégico pode ser observado nas mudanças feitas no Livro Branco de Defesa Nacional do Brasil (LBDN)

de 2020, como também na dialética entre os Livros Brancos dos Estados Unidos (2017) e da China (2019). Para investigar esses realinhamentos e seus possíveis impactos no setor de defesa brasileiro, a análise foi realizada em duas fases: (1) análise das características gerais dos Livros Brancos de Defesa dos EUA e da China; e (2) comparação dos discursos apresentados em capítulos sobre cooperação internacional em cada Livro Branco de Defesa. Os padrões de discurso foram analisados conforme os arcabouços teórico-metodológicos da Semântica Lexical e da Análise de Discurso Crítica. Como resultado, elementos de campos semânticos, intertextualidade e modalidade no discurso foram apontados como parâmetros que poderiam contribuir para a avaliação das ações de cooperação e deterrence/dissuasão a serem adotadas pelos EUA e pela China no século XXI.

Palavras-chave: Identidade; Estudos de Defesa; Análise de Discurso Crítica.

RESUMEN

Nuevas facetas de multilateralismo han surgido y han motivado el realineamiento de las tradicionales relaciones de poder establecidas globalmente, principalmente entre Estados Unidos y China. Este nuevo entorno estratégico se puede observar en los cambios realizados en el Libro Blanco de Defensa Nacional de Brasil (LBDN) de 2020, así como en la dialéctica entre los Libros Blancos de Estados Unidos (2017) y de China (2019). Para investigar estos realineamientos y sus posibles impactos en el sector de defensa brasileño, el análisis se realizó en dos fases: (1) análisis de las características generales de los Libros Blancos de Defensa de Estados Unidos y de China; y (2) comparación de los discursos presentados en capítulos sobre cooperación internacional en cada Libro Blanco de Defensa. Los patrones de discurso fueron analizados conforme los marcos teórico-metodológicos de la Semántica Lexical y del Análisis de Discurso Crítico. Como resultado, elementos de campos semánticos, intertextualidad y modalidad en el discurso fueron apuntados como parámetros que podrían contribuir para la evaluación de las acciones de cooperación y deterrence/dissuasión a ser adoptadas por EEUU y por China en el siglo XXI.

Palavras clave: Identidad; Estudios de Defensa; Análisis de Discurso Crítico.

INTRODUCTION

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In recent decades, the world has witnessed the unfolding of new facets of multilateralism, which have motivated the realignment of traditional power relations established globally. In this context, the Asian continent stands out as the main motivator of this realignment, particularly regarding the relationship between countries in this geographical place, and the United States (US) and China.

Whereas the US and China have great economic and political influence nowadays, it is essential to understand their context of global action in the field of defense and international cooperation, with the purpose of allowing Brazil to anticipate strategies to deal with new multilateral contexts.

In this sense, it is necessary to go through a more complex and detailed analysis about stances shown in the White Papers published by the US and China, with interdisciplinary contributions, in order to expand perceptions that may be relevant for the performance of the Brazilian Defense sector.

According to these assumptions and based on methodological rationales of critical discourse analysis and lexical semantics, this paper

aimed at identifying defense approaches adopted by the US and China, according to the publicized in their White Papers, dated 2017 and 2019, respectively. To this end, the analysis unfolded in two phases: (1) analysis of general characteristics of Defense White Papers by the US and China; and (2) comparison of discourse conveyed in chapters on international cooperation in each Defense White Paper, in addition to Closing remarks on both White Papers.

1 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND DETERRENCE/DISSUASION: A GEOPOLITICAL PANORAMA.....

One of the purposes of the International Relations field is to analyze the world scenario regarding the hierarchical classification of great and medium powers. Among the various thinkers who dedicate themselves to the interpretation of phenomena on the international stage, some defend Eurocentric perspectives and, more recently, the possible emergence of a Chinese School of International Relations is argued (Cf. CUNHA et al, 2018).

In this sense, this article seeks to contribute to an understanding of the quest for the position of power of the US and China within the international system in the 21st century, taking into account the Chinese rise and the decline of the US in this century. We understand that the US, aiming to maintain its world hegemony, intends to control the Chinese economic strengthening. China, for its part, opposes hegemonism and power politics, by declaring its military power and development as a ballast for peaceful development.

Within this panorama, Nogueira (2019) argues that there is a Chinese economic leadership and a US military supremacy, so there is not only one hegemonic state, but two states that would concentrate much of the international power.

Therefore, it is necessary to describe how some forms of cooperation are made evident in the discourse. For this reason, as a way to bring a broader context to the debate, we present some visions of cooperation and deterrence in the international relations of the US and China, starting with the South China Sea, a current hotspot of dispute.

The South China Sea is a semi-enclosed marginal sea, which is part of the Pacific Ocean and comprises China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia, having access through the Malacca Strait and the Taiwan Strait. Due to its geological formation, it has oil and natural gas deposits in its bed, although still difficult to explore; in addition to being one of the most important trade routes in the world. These factors have led, in recent decades, to increased claims for portions of the South China Sea.

Aguilar and Fakhoury (2019) state that the disputes surrounding the South China Sea not only involve countries claiming territory in this field, but also the two major world powers and international and regional organizations, as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). In this sense, countries involved in the conflict have signed agreements in order to increase their military power in relation to China and/or dissuade more aggressive Chinese posture.

The authors highlight the position of some countries such as: India, which has a medium- and long-term strategy of making its defense industrial base self-sufficient; Japan, which outlined in its Defense Plan (2013) the acquisition of new war materials (destroyers, submarines, unmanned aerial vehicles, fighter planes and new helicopters) until 2019; and Australia, which publicized in its 2009 defense document their intent of modernizing and strengthening its naval forces (air defense, strategic attacks, special forces, intelligence, Ultramarine and Antarctic warfare force).

Regarding India, which has rivalry with China and Pakistan, relations with Japan have been established and there has been integration with the Indian Ocean Rim Countries Association (IOR-ARC). As for Japan, it is opposed to Chinese growth and has maintained relations with the US since the end of WWII with the guarantee of stability provided by them. Australia, also supported by the US since the end of WWII, is a member of a security alliance that encompasses Australia, New Zealand and the US, although China is a major trading partner to Australia.

When considering the South China Sea as a strategic point for these three countries, Aguilar and Fakhoury (2019) say that any threat to this point, however distant, is seen as a threat close to the security and interests of the three countries. Thus, freedom of navigation has been defended and the Chinese stance of aggression has been condemned.

Vietnam, after problems with China due to the 2014 Oil Platform Crisis, has increased its defense cooperation policies since the late 1990s, when it became a member of ASEAN, strengthening relations with India on security issues, establishing a Strategic and Extensive Partnership for Peace and Prosperity in Asia with Japan, and building strong ties with the US on bilateral defense relations. Therefore, Vietnam primarily has defensive purposes, but its policy of alliances is related to the increasing Chinese assertiveness in the region.

Malaysia also maintains defense agreements with strategic partners, eg with the US, but it also conducts military exercises with China and India. The protection of Malaysian interests is ensured through an agreement involving Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom, as well as an agreement with Brunei to resolve border disputes. The Philippines have cooperation agreements with China, but guarantees the US rotational access to military bases in the country. And Taiwan has a treaty with the US to defend the country in the event of an external attack, although it is engendering efforts to integrate with the Chinese economy. Besides the relationship with these countries, China also fosters interaction with African countries for both economic and defense matters.

As can be seen, the South China Sea has strategic dynamics involving several actors with particular interests in the region, and there have been moves by the US and China, with policies of deterrence in the region, as opposed to efforts of other countries to establish strategic partnerships in defense, to protect their claims against Chinese growth.

On the other hand, in the Korean Peninsula, defined by its strategic condition of “outpost between great powers” (SARAIVA; AMARAL, 2019, p. 18), cooperation is bringing together the Democratic Peo-

ple's Republic of Korea and the US. This is a US foreign policy strategy for East Asia and the Middle East, to increase control over global oil, and the long-term growth conditions of China and other rising Asian powers.

Regarding cyberspace, an analysis by Maier (2018) on the US policy for this sector during the Obama and Trump administration highlighted international cooperation. The US sought leadership in the cyber field through multilateral environments, but also, at the same time, launched cyber espionage operations against its partners, which countered multilateral rhetoric and unilateral and aggressive action.

In this field, China has established a policy of space cooperation (CEPIK, 2011), aimed at increasing Beijing's international influence without other major powers overreacting, as a way to postpone possible militarization of space, and also seek to build partnerships with regional countries still beginning space projects, as in the case of Latin America (CUNHA et al, 2018).

In view of this, we emphasize it is essential to note that a rigid categorization of actors favorable or contrary to country X or Y is insufficient to understand the reality of cooperation and deterrence/dissuasion issues. Some institutions called think tanks, particularly in the US, work to encourage Sino-American relations on some topics, although they maintain different positions regarding other points (PONTES, 2020). In Brazil, the think tank called Brazilian Center for International Relations (CEBRI) also acts to encourage discussion about global interdependence and demystify biased positions. In the US, China is recognized as important for the maintenance of the great American strategy. To understand this interrelation, it is necessary to address concepts of identity and hegemony.

2 IDENTITY AND HEGEMONY: PERSPECTIVES ON WESTERN AND EASTERN WORLDS

One of the concerns of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is investigating how the discursive clash between identities occurs. The hegemonic struggle over identification modes consists of a struggle between stabilization and destabilization of identity constructions. Fairclough (2003) states that identification should be understood as a dialectical process in which discourses are inculcated into identities, since identification presupposes representation, in terms of presumptions, about what one actually is.

The concept of Hegemony adopted by the CDA is the one conceptualized by Gramsci and used by Fairclough (2016): "hegemony" is characterized as leadership and as domination in the economic, political, cultural and ideological domains of a society, that is, the dominance exercised by the power of a group over others.

In this research, identity, as aligned with Cultural Studies, is considered as "the source of meaning and experience of a people" (CASTELLS, 2018, p. 54). Thus, we discuss the formation of identity in the contemporary political, economic and social scenario, and the affirmation of an

identity as part of a chain of denials, differences, and affirmations, or a chain of denials about other identities (SILVA, 2014).

In this sense, concepts of identity and difference are mutually determined, as acts of linguistic creation: they are constructions of the social world, actively produced in speech, in texts and interactions. As they are symbolic constructions, Silva (2014) states that they are subject to power relations and struggles for their redefinition. In other words, identity is constructed from difference, the perception of oneself and the other, and the exclusion of the other, by valuing the self to the detriment of the other (WOODWARD, 2014).

Along with this perspective, it is important to highlight that dominant cultures tend to project their own interpretation of other cultures. As Said (1990) explains, the Western identity became stronger precisely through its contrast with the Eastern identity, which used to be considered a sort of second-class society. Even nowadays sometimes interactions with citizens from the “Eastern world” are highly impacted by cultural simulacra (Cf. PEIXOTO, 2019).

From this perspective, we will look at the dialogue between the US and China Defense White Papers as a dialectical construction of identity and difference.

3 METHODOLOGY

In this paper, the methodology was carried out in two phases: (1) analysis of general characteristics of Defense White Papers by the US and China; and (2) comparison of discourse conveyed in chapters on international cooperation in each Defense White Paper, namely Chapter VI “Actively Contributing to Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind” (pages 42 to 51) in the Chinese document, and Pillar IV “Advance American Influence” (pages 37 to 54) in the US document, in addition to “Closing remarks” in both White Papers.

As mentioned before, the discourse patterns were analyzed according to methodological rationales of lexical semantics (L’HOMME, 2020; PEIXOTO; PIMENTEL, 2020) and critical discourse analysis (FAIRCLOUGH, 2003), aligned with perspectives of international cooperation and deterrence/dissuasion (CUNHA et al, 2018; AGUILAR & FAKHOURY, 2019), and identity and hegemony (CASTELLS, 2018; SILVA, 2014; WOODWARD, 2014; SAID, 1990).

Concerning the lexical semantic approach, semantic labels were created to express how lexical and semantic contents are related in the specialized discourse in the field of International Relations. As a full extensive lexical semantic analysis would be too long for this paper, the use of this rationale intended to offer an overview of discursive approaches, so the selected terms and their corresponding semantic labels are presented in Section 5 and briefly discussed in subsections 6.1 and 7.1. As for the critical discourse analysis, the theoretical and methodological assumptions are introduced in the following section and more broadly discussed in analyses of subsections 6.2 and 7.2 later in this paper.

4 CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS (CDA)

The studies of discourse and identity serve as a basis for the investigation of the constructions of identities in the discourses in general and, in this article, specifically in the discourses presented in the White Defense Documents of China and the US. By highlighting our interest in language and its complex relationship with society, we characterize our research as discursive analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is at the center of the search for understanding the construction of meanings, the relations between language and society. For this reason, this theoretical aspect is the means by which we conduct the processes of reflection and analysis on the identity presented by China and the US in their defense books in relation to performance and global cooperation. The CDA contributes to debate issues related to control, power and institutional manipulation, providing, as stated by Magalhães (2005), theoretical and methodological contributions to interpret and explain language in socio-historical contexts.

Thus, through the notions of ideology, identity, power and hegemony, it is possible to understand the discourse as a reproducing and/or producing social inequalities and struggles for power. In this sense, CDA assumptions are related to assumptions of the Social Sciences, in order to study language as a social practice.

When we understand that the discourse reflects social standards, we see that the discourse will reflect and reproduce the transformations that occur in society (Cf. NOGUEIRA, 2019). Therefore, the analysis of texts produced in the field of defense, particularly the Defense White Papers by China and the US, are relevant contributions to understand the global scenario of defense policies.

This production of meaning interwoven in the social process is characterized as an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary theoretical-methodological approach. In this sense, Fairclough (2003) points out that speeches are part of social events, such as part of a White Paper on National Defense. For the author, the discourses have causal effects, among which the most prominent are the ideological effects: sustain or even change ideologies and identities.

In his 2003 work, Fairclough proposes to analyze the three ways in which discourse figures in social practices: gender, discourse and styles. The actional meaning is associated with the concept of gender, as ways of acting and interacting in social events; the representational meaning, to the concept of discourse, as ways of representing different aspects of the world in a particular way; the identificational meaning, the concept of style, as ways of being, of identity construction, that is, the way in which people identify with each other.

Based on a textually-oriented analysis, Fairclough (2003) proposes to investigate the constitution of meanings in discourses from the perspective of Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL). Then we chose to analyze the ways in which discourse figures in social practices, especially the way of being, intertwined with the identificational meaning, since we are interested in the way in which China and the US identify with each

other. The identificational meaning of discourse relates to the process of constructing identities, referring to the way of being or to the identities in their linguistic and semiotic aspects. For Fairclough (2003), the way the individual writes reveals who he is, and how people identify and are identified by others.

Styles are manifested through different linguistic characteristics such as pronunciation, intonation, accent, rhythm, vocabulary and metaphor. For Fairclough (2003), the categories of analysis that can be associated with the identificational meaning are modality and evaluation, which we use in this research and we will further discuss.

The modality (if what is said is true/necessary/possible) is seen as the way in which people engage when making statements, questions, offers or demands, as there are different ways of making a statement, a question, a demand and a supply, which materialize different commitments. Modality is important in the structuring of identities, since the way a person engages in social interaction is a significant part of what (s)he is.

To analyze evaluation in discourse, we used the appraisal category, through the system proposed by the Sidney School of SFL. This category analyzes what concerns the speaker's impressions regarding different aspects of the world, what pleases or dislikes him/her, what (s)he considers relevant or not and is materialized in textual traits as statements of appraisal, statements with deontic modality (obligation) or statements with verbs of affective mental process and presumptions of affective value.

According to this theoretical perspective, in any text, the author must indicate his/her level of commitment to what is being stated, as a modality feature. For Halliday (1985), modality must be considered from intermediary levels ranging from absolute assertion to absolute negation. In a different direction, Fairclough (2016) considers both assertion and negation to be part of a categorical modality; and he also adds another distinction: objective and subjective modalities. In the objective modality, it is not clear-cut if the statement would be (a) a point of view of the author; (b) a universal perspective of the author's point of view; (c) another individual's point of view just presented by the author; or (d) the point of view of a group. In the subjective modality, it is made clear by the author that the point of view expressed is his own.

By using the appraisal analysis in CDA, we can systematically show how readers and listeners are dynamically positioned before seemingly neutral statements, in a negative or positive way. In the analysis, we prioritize the attitude subsystem, because we understand attitudes occupy a central place in the appraisal process, being able to reveal the types and levels in which appraisal is developed and expressed in discourse (ALMEIDA, 2010).

5 GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF U.S. AND CHINA WHITE PAPERS

To best understand the context in which ideas of international cooperation were expressed in the two White Papers, a previous analysis of the whole text is carried out, then the selected chapters are analyzed

04	Association	It refers to the interrelation between two elements, in an associative or cooperative way. Eg: ‘~terrorism’
05	Characteristic	It refers to an intrinsic characterization, generally attributed by an adjective or adjective phrase. Eg: ‘aspiring ~’
06	Characteristic / Association	It is a label that combines the labels CHARACTERISTIC and ASSOCIATION. Eg: ‘~ channels’
07	Characteristic / Type	It is a label that combines the labels CHARACTERISTIC and TYPE. Eg: ‘~ strategy’
08	Circumstance	It refers to a physical or contextual circumstance for or during a given situation. Eg: ‘~ stagnation’
09	Location	It refers to the location of a facility or activity. Eg: ‘across the ~’
10	Location / Reference	It is a label that combines the labels LOCATION and REFERENCE. Eg: ‘~ offices’
11	Management	It refers to the management or planning of some action or activity, or to an entity that is in charge of managing it. Eg: ‘institutional ~’
12	Principle	It refers to a principle of general nature, which is common sense. Eg: N/A
13	Purpose	It refers to a direct or indirect purpose for the accomplishment of something. Eg: ‘~ ministers’
14	Reference	It refers to an entity, namely referred to or in comparison to something. Eg: N/A
15	Related Term (RT)	It refers to two terms that are directly related in discourse. This label is commonly associated with other labels. Eg: N/A
16	RT / Activity	It is a label that combines the labels RELATED TERM and ACTIVITY. Eg: ‘~ and political challenges’
17	RT / Asset	It is a label that combines the labels RELATED TERM and ASSET. Eg: ‘~ and open seaways’
18	RT / Association	It is a label that combines the labels RELATED TERM and ASSOCIATION. Eg: ‘allies and ~’
19	RT / Circumstance	It is a label that combines the labels RELATED TERM and CIRCUMSTANCE. Eg: ‘~ turbulence and instability’
20	RT / Principle	It is a label that combines the labels RELATED TERM and PRINCIPLE. Eg: ‘[shared] ~ and way of life’
21	Scope	It refers to the scope of some activity or its influence. Eg: ‘~ trade organization’
22	Scope / Normative	It is a label that combines the labels SCOPE and NORMATIVE. Eg: ‘~ law’
23	Type	It refers to the type or category of a given item. This label is commonly associated with other labels. Eg: ‘trading ~’
24	Type / Purpose	It is a label that combines the labels TYPE and PURPOSE. Eg: ‘border ~’
25	Variation Factor	It refers to a variation factor of spatial or quantitative nature. Eg: ‘dozens of ~’

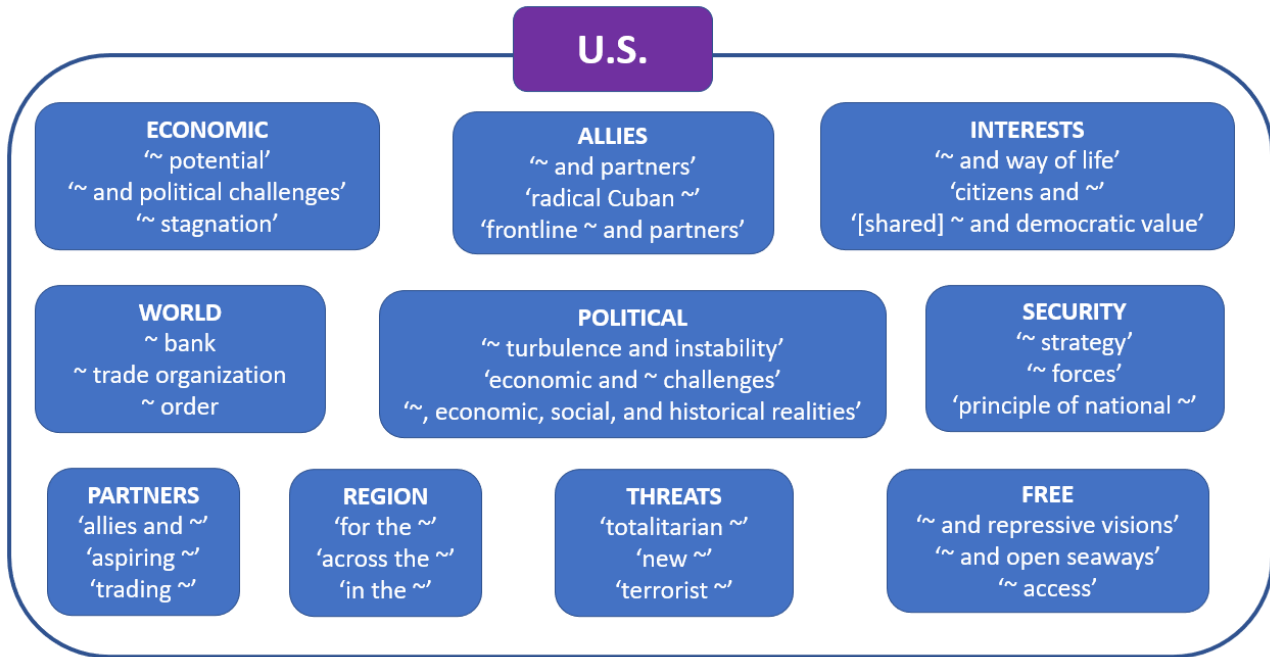
SOURCE: Authors’ own elaboration (based on PEIXOTO; PIMENTEL, 2020)

All combinatorics related to the 10 selected terms in each chapter in the U.S. and China White Papers are presented and discussed in subsection 6.1, as follows, and in subsection 7.1.

6 U.S. DEFENSE WHITE PAPER

6.1. Lexical semantic analysis

Figure 2. Lexical semantic patterns of terminology in the US Defense White Paper



SOURCE: Authors' own elaboration.

Words used in the US document are more related to political intent, by mentioning ideal principles which should be followed by Humanity, as in the case of 'citizens and ~' and 'principle of national ~'. In this way, possible negative attitudes, such as threats, are also contrasted with this perspective, as in the case of 'terrorist ~'. The overall approach is assuming a collective perspective to needs of the world, in a way it can be addressed by US policies, including defense policies.

This U.S. discursive approach is more thoroughly debated in subsection 6.2, as follows.

6.2. Critical discourse analysis

The title of chapter IV, "Advance American Influence", highlights the approach the chapter will develop. The term 'influence' refers to the action that someone or something has towards something else, namely power, control or authority. Thus, when we say that one person has an influence on others, it means that (s)he serves as a model or that (s)he interferes with other people's way of acting or thinking. The particular structures of the relations between the senses of a word are forms of hegemony. For Fairclough (2016), hegemonies are produced and reproduced in speech.

Thus, the title presupposes some ‘influence’ exercised by the US, which should be expanded. The choice of the objective modality, in the chapter’s title, allows partial perspectives (particular discourses) to be universalized, to generate an effect of universalization of the perspective (discourse) defended in the text: the ‘influence’ of the US on the world stage. In addition, the commitment to the expansion of such influence is also reflected.

Subsequently, the text positively evaluates the ‘influence’ of the US in the world: “America’s Influence in the world as a Positive force” and corroborates the intention of expanding its influence on the world stage: “This Administration has the Confidence to compete to Protect our values and interests and the fundamental Principles that underpin them.”

Chapter IV starts with the following statement: (1) “Above all, we value the dignity of every human life, protect the rights of every person, and share the hope of every soul to live in freedom. What is who we are.” (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 2017, p. 37). This excerpt (1) presents a presumption of value, which reveals how the document presents the US. In the passage, a categorical modality is, once more, chosen: “What is who we are”, which allows the idea to be universalized and taken as truth. Thus, it is taken as true, considering the statements “value the Dignity”, “Protect the Rights” and “share the Hope”, which point to the idea that the US follows a democratic rule of law, because the values presented are principles of the democratic rule of law.

Later, excerpt (2) is presented: “Around the world, nations and individuals admire what America stands for. We treat people equally and value and uphold the rule of law.” (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 2017, p. 37), and reaffirms the positive assessment of the US position in the world, as well as the characteristic attributed to the US and positively evaluated: “uphold the Rule of law”.

During the Cold War, a totalitarian threat from the Soviet Union motivated the free world to create coalitions in defense of liberty. Today’s challenges to free societies are just as serious, but more diverse. State and non-state actors project influence and advance their objectives by exploiting information, democratic media freedoms, and international institutions. Repressive leaders often collaborate to subvert free societies and corrupt multilateral organizations. (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 2017, p. 37).

In excerpt (3), the document points to a threat during the Cold War, the Soviet Union, and states that coalitions were formed to defend freedom – an evaluative presumption that regards the Soviet Union as a repressive nation. Then the passage points to today’s challenge: they are repressive leaders who want to subvert free societies and corrupt multilateral organizations. In other words, the passage makes a negative assessment of some world leaders (repressive) who try to make other nations repressive and still evaluates some multilateral organizations as corrupt. In this way, two threats are identified: repressive leaders and corrupt multilateral organizations.

In the following paragraph, the text makes a further positive assessment of the US: “We lead by example”. Implicitly, this valorous presumption points to an opposition between leading by force vs. leading by

example: (4) “We are not going to impose our values on others.” (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 2017, p. 37).

Next, when making use of the categorical modality, excerpt (5) makes a positive evaluation of the coalitions that were established with countries that, jointly, hold more than half of the world’s GDP, and that no adversary will be able to establish such successful coalitions: (5) “Together, the United States and our allies and partners represent well over half of the global GDP. None of our adversaries have comparable coalitions”. (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 2017, p. 37).

At the end of the first section of the analyzed chapter ends, American values are defended again:

We will continue to champion American values and offer encouragement to those struggling for human dignity in their societies. There can be no moral equivalency between nations that uphold the rule of law, empower women, and respect individual rights and those that brutalize and suppress their people. Through our words and deeds, America demonstrates a positive alternative to political and religious despotism. (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 2017, p. 38).

The passage also presents a positive assessment of the US stance in defending the rule of law and its principles, and makes a negative assessment of states that do not respect the principles of the democratic rule of law. Finally, it presents the US as a positive alternative against political and religious despotism.

In the topic called “Encourage Aspiring Partners”, there is a positive assessment of the US performance in relation to partners, by classifying it as “unprecedented and Exceptional”, particularly mentioning regions and countries benefiting from the American coalitions: Western, Central and Eastern Europe; and South Korea and Japan. These coalitions are emphasized in the discourse of the US White Paper, which presents contemporary challenges of these partnerships, as highlighted below:

Today, the United States must compete for positive relationships around the world. China and Russia target their investments in the developing world to expand influence and gain competitive advantages against the United States. China is investing billions of dollars in infrastructure across the globe. Russia, too, projects its influence economically, through the control of key energy and other infrastructure throughout parts of Europe and Central Asia. The United States provides an alternative to state-directed investments, which often leave developing countries worse off. The United States pursues economic ties not only for market access but also to create enduring relationships to advance common political and security interests. (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 2017, p. 38).

There is a discourse on the competition for positive coalitions on the world stage, opposing alleged state interests of Russia and China, to declared US free-market interests. Here, the deontic modality, expressed in “must compete for Positive relationships around the world”, reveals the high degree of commitment to the obligation to compete on the world stage in search of spaces, which are being disputed by China and Russia. In opposition, the US is assessed positively by establishing coalitions to establish lasting relationships and ensure political and security interests for all parties.

In the next excerpt, characteristics that the US expects from its allies are highlighted, based on criteria for the country to establish alliances:

The United States will promote a development model that partners with countries that want progress, consistent with their culture, based on free market principles, fair and reciprocal trade, private sector activity, and rule of law. [...] Unlike the state-directed mercantilism of some competitors that can disadvantage recipient nations and promote dependency, the purpose of U.S. foreign assistance should be to end the need for it. The United States seeks strong partners, not weak ones. (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 2017, p. 38-39).

Thus, these criteria are evaluated positively to the detriment of the interests of “some competitors”, who, as stated in the text, practice mercantilism and want to disadvantage their allies by making them dependent.

Concluding the section, a niche including Africa, Latin America and Asia is indicated, to be explored in the endeavor to expand the market for US companies. A positive assessment of the US initiative is made in terms of investments, as opposed to a negative assessment of what it calls “authoritarian states”, classified as corrupt businessmen, and of opaque, exploitative and low-quality nature:

The United States and its partners have opportunities to work with countries to help them realize their potential as prosperous (...) American-led investments represent the most sustainable and responsible approach to development and offer a stark contrast to the corrupt, opaque, exploitive, and low-quality deals offered by authoritarian states. (UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, 2017, p. 39).

Based on the analysis carried out, the following characteristics of the discursive construction conveyed in the U.S. White Papers are highlighted:

Figure 3. Characteristics of the discursive construction conveyed in the U.S. White Papers

01	The US claims to have great influence on the world stage
02	The US aims to expand its influence on the world stage
03	The US is a democratic rule of law
04	Today’s enemies are repressive leaders and corrupt multilateral organizations
05	The US leads by example
06	The main allies of the US are: Western Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, South Korea and Japan
07	The US disputes with China and Russia over positive coalitions on the world stage
08	China and Russia dedicate their efforts to weakening the US
09	The US strengthens its allies, its competitors make its allies dependent
10	The US has a sustainable and responsible approach towards its partners, authoritarian states engage in corrupt, opaque, exploitative and low-quality businesses
11	The regions likely to be explored in the venture to expand the US market are Africa, Latin America and Asia

SOURCE: Authors’ own elaboration.

To deepen the understanding of these outstanding characteristics, particularly regarding the intersections with hegemony and identity, it is possible to cite the debate of Castells (2018) about the loss of influence of the nation-state and the prosperous advance of global capitalism. The author clarifies that the US, due to the issues presented at the beginning of the 1990s, joined the global trend towards a multilateral system of international administration. However, this occurred through asymmetrical multilateralism, where veto power over common policies was maintained.

In addition, the author points out that global security for the US, a factor that assumed greater importance after the attacks of September 11, 2001, depends on the cooperation of governments around the world. During that period, the country offered Russia and China an agreement to help defend the US and, in return, they would have a prominent place in the world that was being reformulated, with expectation of US hegemony. Castells (2018) calls the US the last sovereign nation state.

In relation to identity, it is necessary to remember that the meanings produced by representations project the senses that we give to our experience and to what we are. Thus, representation, understood as a cultural process, establishes individual and collective identities, guaranteeing the influence of hegemonic culture. For example, on the cultural scene, Castells (2018) states that although Hollywood films and rock music continue to be influential, opinion polls show growing discomfort towards the US. At the same time, we are witnessing the increasing advance of Korean culture, with Hallyu, deconstructing North American hegemony on the cultural scene.

As demonstrated in the text of the US White Paper and in the discursive analysis discussion, we observe the US attempts to assert the primacy of an identity, to guarantee its hegemony in the face of the growing context of the globalized world and of shared governance.

In this sense, the US White Paper on Defense not only places Russia and China as devalued opposition, but also claims an extremely positive US identity. In this way, the construction of this identity is linked to social and material conditions, with Russia and China marked as enemies. The expected effects of such an identity process, according to Woodward (2014), are the exclusion and material disadvantages of the enemy.

And Castells (2018) emphasizes that new power relations should be understood as the ability to exercise control over global instrumental networks based on specific identities, or rather from the perspective of global networks, to subjugate identities for the achievement of transnational goals.

In view of these arguments, we agree with Castells (2018) when he stresses that the stability of what he calls the “networked state” depends on the loss of individual sovereignty. The assertion of sovereign rights by some would be contradictory to the proposal of a globalized world, and could lead to a crisis of global governance.

7. CHINA WHITE PAPERS

7.1. Lexical semantic analysis

Figure 4. Lexical semantic patterns of terminology in the China Defense White Paper



SOURCE: Authors' own elaboration.

The terminological patterns shown in this figure indicate a more governmental perspective, by specifically referencing military semantic frames, i.e. occurrences related to the term 'military', as well as hierarchical conceptual representations, related to the term 'level', as in occurrence 'mid-and-junior ~ officers'.

Similarly to the US White Paper, China also has many references to issues that are common interest to many nations in the world, as fighting terrorism and contributing to peacekeeping operations (as referred to by the term 'troop contributing ~'). However, the Chinese approach emphasizes compliance with procedures that are jointly debated by international institutions and non-governmental organizations. When referring to the term 'cooperation', occurrences such as '~ within the framework of the SCO' and 'win-win ~' presupposes some sort of contestation regarding unilateral practices which would mostly serve hegemonic countries or blocs. This is also corroborated by expressions containing the term 'international' and 'development', which emphasize compliance with principles of global governance.

These findings are more detailed in the critical discourse analysis carried out in the next subsection.

7.2 Critical discourse analysis

Regarding the title of the chapter of the China Defense White Paper analyzed in this research, “Actively Contributing to Building a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind”, the term ‘contributing’ indicates the perspective of cooperation, for the implementation of the proposed defense policy. The use of the adverb ‘actively’, particularly from the perspective of the modality, reveals a high commitment to the act of contributing. Thus, China clearly demonstrates its commitment to cooperation with a ‘Shared Future’, referred to by Castells (2018) as ‘shared governance’.

The first paragraph of that Chapter is as follows:

Building a community with a shared future for mankind conforms to the trends of the times for peaceful development, and reflects the common aspirations of all peoples throughout the world. China’s armed forces have responded faithfully to the call for a community with a shared future for mankind. They are actively fulfilling the international obligations of the armed forces of a major country, comprehensively promoting international military cooperation for the new era, and striving for a better world of lasting peace and common security. (PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, 2019, p. 31).

In this excerpt (10), the text presents two categorical and objective modalities, when it states that the ‘Shared Future’ is a trend of peaceful development times, which reflects the common aspirations of all the peoples of the world. Thus, the use of such modalities tends to universalize the perspective presented in the discourse. Later, in the same excerpt, the high commitment to a ‘Shared Future’ is ratified by modulating the verb ‘reply’ (“responded Faithfully”) and by modulating the verb ‘fulfill’ (“actively fulfilling”).

Then the section title “Resolutely Upholding the Purposes and Principles of the UN Charter” presents modality, once again, by the use of the adverb ‘resolutely’, to positively evaluate the purposes and principles of the UN.

The first paragraph of the section lists a number of positive assessments of China’s conduct towards the UN, and all evaluations are supported by modality through the use of adverbs, which reveals a high commitment to action, as in occurrences ‘unswervingly endorses’, ‘resolutely upholds’, ‘firmly maintains’, ‘participates extensively’, and ‘actively engages’, as shown in excerpt (11):

As a founding member of the United Nations and a permanent member of the UNSC, China unswervingly endorses the central role of the UN in international affairs, and resolutely upholds international law and the basic norms governing international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter. It firmly maintains multilateralism, advances democracy in international relations, participates extensively in global security governance, actively engages in arms control and disarmament, and endeavors to offer Chinese proposals for resolving major issues and formulating important rules. (PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, 2019, p. 31).

This excerpt also emphasizes their efforts to participate in dialogues on issues important to the world, offering Chinese proposals. In the following paragraph, positive evaluations refer to China’s performance in some specific cases:

China has played a constructive role in the political settlement of regional hotspots such as the Korean Peninsula issue, the Iranian nuclear issue and Syrian issue. China opposes hegemony, unilateralism and double standards, promotes dialogues and consultations, and fully and earnestly implements UNSC resolutions. China has actively participated in multilateral dialogues and negotiations on cyberspace and outer space, and pushed for the formulation of widely accepted international rules that are fair and equitable. (PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, 2019, p. 31).

This action is evaluated as having been a constructive action in the question of the Korean Peninsula, in the Iranian question and in the question of Syria; and is opposed to actions carried out according to the convenience of interests of other countries, with unilateralism and double standards. Such actions are evaluated negatively, as they were carried out in disagreement with guidelines and clauses of UN treaties. In addition, there is also a positive assessment of China's performance in cyberspace and outer space, as a way of trying to propose international rules that are favorable to all parties.

In the section entitled "Building a New-Model Security Partnership Featuring Equality, Mutual Trust and Win-Win Cooperation", the text presents a number of existing military agreements and partnerships, and makes a positive assessment of the country's willingness to cooperate militarily with the whole world to ensure world security and peace. The China-Russia relationship is particularly highlighted and evaluated positively, as important for maintaining global stability, as it is intended to be a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership of Coordination for a new era".

Then, the positioning in relation to the US is evaluated positively, based on a non-confrontational attitude; through coordination, cooperation and stability actions with the US. At the same time, it makes a negative assessment of the US stance towards Taiwan by stating its opposition to

The Wrong Practices and provocative activities of the US side regarding Arms Sales to Taiwan, sanctions on the CMC Equipment Development Department and its leadership, illegal entry into China's territorial waters and maritime and air spaces near relevant islands and reefs, and wide-range and frequent close-in reconnaissance. (PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, 2019, p. 32).

In addition, the Chinese White Paper's speech also positively evaluates China's relationship with neighboring countries, specifically those that make up the ASEAN bloc, as well as the Chinese relationship with countries in Europe, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and the South Pacific. Towards this direction, excerpt (14) suggests China's effort to promote more transparent debate on defense actions, by expanding "mechanisms for information release", and convening press conferences, as highlighted below:

China's armed forces work to improve mechanisms for information release to comprehensively and objectively explain China's national defense and military development to domestic and international audiences. In April 2011, China's MND started to convene monthly press conferences to release important information on national defense and the military. Since 2012, multiple thematic press conferences have been held to brief on important events such as national defense and military reform and downsizing the PLA. The MND has organized multiple visits to and interviews with PLA units and academic institutions for nearly 100 domestic and foreign media. Since they were launched in May 2015, the official Weibo and WeChat accounts of the MND Information Office have attracted over 6 million followers. (PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, 2019, p. 34).

The following sections “Building a Regional Security Cooperation Architecture”, “Properly Coping with Disputes over Territory and Maritime Demarcation” and “Actively Providing International Public Security Goods” positively assess, respectively, China’s relations with neighboring countries towards regional cooperation; the use of diplomacy for the peaceful settlement of disputes over South China Sea territory towards cooperation for regional security; and the contributions of China in partnership with the UN to the guarantee and maintenance of peace, by sending troops and carrying out various investments.

At the conclusion of the chapter, the White Paper of China ratifies the convictions about the shared future for humanity and emphasizes being an alternative to hegemonic attitudes. In this last paragraph, the categorical modality highlights China’s high degree of commitment to the realization of what they call “Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation”, declaring that they have military capabilities to prevail over all the threats and challenges that may arise for the realization of such a dream.

Based on the analysis carried out, the following characteristics of the discursive construction conveyed in the China White Papers are highlighted:

Figure 5. Characteristics of the discursive construction conveyed in the China White Papers

01	Cooperation with shared governance
02	High degree of commitment to the shared future of Humanity
03	High degree of commitment to the UN
04	Negative assessment of hegemony, unilateralism and a posture of convenience
05	Military cooperation with various regions in the world
06	Transparency regarding military power
07	Participation in international organizations
08	Peaceful resolution of disputes in the South China Sea
09	High degree of commitment to the realization of the Chinese Dream

SOURCE: Authors’ own elaboration.

China’s conception of a shared future of Humanity converges with Castells’ argument (2018) about the first years of the 21st century, about the emergence of new organizational forms, new procedures for taking power and new principles of legitimacy. The globalization of economic activities, media, crime, social protest and terrorism has weakened the instrumental capacity of the nation-state.

China affirms its high degree of commitment to the shared future, standing against hegemony, unilateralism and the attitude of conve-

nience. In this context, under the perspective of Castells (2018), the US would be the main challenge for multilateralism, given the unilateralism manifested in its environmental policy, in trade negotiations and in the incentive to wars.

Just as the US points to China and Russia as current threats, China also points to the US as its enemy, and declares willingness to cooperate, manage peace, maintain dialogues with all regions of the world, clearly defending the Chinese perspective of maintaining multilateral interactions as a necessary mechanism to maintain the balance of the world.

Another interesting point is that the US White Paper identifies “corrupt multilateral organisations” as another possible threat to the US. It is important to recall that, after the Iraq War, the US came to question the United Nations-centered international governance system, due to the resistance of the Security Council majority to the US unilateral decision to attack Iraq. China, on the other hand, has made a number of positive assessments of the UN and has declared its high degree of commitment to multilateral organizations, primarily the UN system.

FINAL REMARKS

The analysis of the selected chapters contained in the US Defense White Paper and the China Defense White Paper allowed us to identify a linguistic resource called intertextuality. This resource seeks to be a sort of bridge between two discourses, by using a source text as reference, i.e. the creation of a text based on another previous one. In this sense, the Chinese Defense White Paper makes use of the reference “American Dream” in their own Chinese document.

The American Dream is understood as the proposal that the US would be the “land of opportunity”, a country where anyone who is prepared and willing to work can be successful. Americans take pride in this neoliberal concept that is densely rooted in their culture, and value hard work, determination, and the ability to be successful and become rich.

The Chinese Dream, on the other hand, is defined as aiming at international peace and development, in an international order that would be fairer and more reasonable, by offering guarantees, interdependence and defense of common interests, in order to reduce the conflicts of the world.

Thus, when taking into account the initial statement of the Chinese document, that “the world is moving towards building a community with a shared future for humanity, with times of peaceful development, reflecting the common aspirations of all peoples throughout the world”, the Chinese Dream would be the affirmation of “new times” as opposed to the “old times” of the American Dream. It is important to highlight, though, that it was not aimed at making comparisons or identifying theoretical similarities and distinctions between the American Dream and the Chinese Dream, but just pointing out how, linguistically speaking, the Chinese White Paper makes use of intertextuality to replicate the American discourse, then create a counternarrative.

The dialectic of the ideas proposed by both Defense Books is centered on a perspective of cooperative efforts for the common good. Howe-

ver, it is urgent to highlight that the definition of “common interests” can be influenced by specific interests. In this way, the understanding of this reference can vary greatly and take on possible meanings of preserving the planet from a global warming process; avoiding global epidemics such as COVID-19; preserving financial stability; protecting the world from crime and terrorism; preserving peace, or eradicating hunger. Thus, we agree with Castells (2018), who state that the definition of what exactly constitutes a public good, which becomes the goal of this “shared future”, is, per se, a power relationship.

In both documents, published by the US and by China, categorical and objective modalities are identified. For Fairclough (2003), if a text presents a high density of categorical and objective modalities, the conveyed nuances aimed by this text is the universalization of its perspective, which is tacitly taken as true.

Therefore, as defended by Resende and Ramalho (2016), if a text presents a large quantity of categorical modalities (which entails great commitment by the author), and mostly objective modality (without objective foundation for commitment), there is universalization of the perspective of the discourse uttered by the author. Universalization, as explained by Thompson (2011), is the *modus operandi* of ideology. For this author, it is through this strategy that institutional agreements serving personal interests are presented as if they were serving collective interests. These are therefore strategies to establish or sustain power, as defended by Thompson (2011), because the meaning of the discourse may serve to establish or maintain relations of domination.

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