# "In the beginning was the Word": Discourses of Apology in International Politics as a form of Memory Diplomacy

"No princípio era o Verbo": Discursos de contrição na Política Internacional como uma forma de Diplomacia da Memória

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**RESUMO**

Este artigo estabelece uma articulação entre a discursos de contrição, diplomacia pública e diplomacia da memória. O objetivo é questionar se os discursos internacionais de contrição desenvolvidos por líderes nacionais e instituições de soberania podem refletir um género particular de diplomacia pública: a diplomacia da memória. Tendo como base a teoria linguística sistémico-funcionalista de Halliday (2009) e a abordagem pragmático-dialética sobre argumentação de van Eemeren e Grootendorst (2004), o artigo analisa três discursos de contrição empreendidos pelo antigo Primeiro-ministro Japonês Tomiishi Murayama (1995), pelo antigo Primeiro-ministro do Japão Junichiro Koizumi (2005) e pelos Ministros dos Negócios Estrangeiros do Japão (Fumio Kishida) e da República da Coreia (Yun Byung-se) numa Declaração conjunta em 2015. O objetivo é discutir como diversos discursos de contrição empregam construções argumentativas distintas para atingirem objetivos diplomáticos. O artigo também discute como, entre 1995 e 2015, a atitude do Japão relativamente à diplomacia da memória sofreu uma transformação significativa e como tal transformação traduz-se em práticas argumentativas específicas.

**Palavras-chave:** Discursos de contrição; Diplomacia da Memória; Diplomacia Pública; Japão

**ABSTRACT**

This paper establishes an articulation between discourses of apology, public diplomacy and memory diplomacy. It questions whether international discourses of apology developed by state leaders can embody a particular type of public diplomacy: memory diplomacy. Building from Halliday's (2009) Systemic Functional Linguistics Approach and van Eemeren and Grootendorst's (2004) pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation, the paper addresses three acts of contrition uttered by Japan's former Prime-minister Tomiishi Murayama (1995), by Japan's Prime minister Junichiro Koizumi at the Asian-African Summit (2005) and by the Foreign Ministers of Japan (Fumio Kishida) and of the Republic of Korea (Yun Byung-se) in a joint statement in 2015. The goal is to analyze how discourses of apology employ distinct constructions of language and argumentation to attain diplomatic goals. The paper also discusses how between 1995 and 2015, Japan's attitude towards memory diplomacy has changed and how such a change is mirrored in specific argumentative practices.

**Keywords:** Discourses of Apology; Public Diplomacy; Memory Diplomacy; Japan

## 1. Introduction

This paper analyzes the following research question: how Japanese discourses of apology help understanding the evolution of Japan's memory diplomacy? Discourses of apology are situated in the context of memory and public diplomacy (Etheridge, 2008). Building on the coordination among the pragma-dialectical theory on argumentation and systemic functional linguistics (SFL) theory, and focusing on Japan as a case study, the paper analyses discursive acts of contrition developed by foreign policy agents as a way to empower states' memory and public diplomacy (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004; Halliday, 2009; Etheridge, 2008; Taylor, 2009).

Discourses of apology are addressed as diplomatic instruments with different functions and argumentation components (Etheridge, 2008). To identify those functions and components, the paper builds from the pragma-dialectical theory on argumentation and the SFL theory to study examples of discourses of apology in international politics (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004; Halliday, 2009). Selecting Japan as a case study of memory diplomacy, the following speeches and statements were addressed:

1. Japan's Former Prime-minister (FPM) Murayama's 1995 declaration celebrating the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War (Murayama, 1995);

2. Japan's FPM Junichiro Koizumi's 2005 speech at the Asian-African Summit (Koizumi, 2005);

3. Japanese former Foreign Minister Kishida and former South Korean Foreign Minister Yun's statements on the issue of 'comfort women,' uttered in a Joint Press Occasion in 2015 (Kishida, 2015; Yun, 2015).

The selection of the speeches and statements followed the following criteria:

1. Significance: the two speeches and the joint statements are relevant for those interested in understanding Japanese memory diplomacy;

2. Historical evolution: the speeches and statements mirror the perspectives on memory diplomacy of diverse Japanese decision-makers speaking in distinct political contexts. Between Murayama's speech and Kishida's statement, there is a period of twenty years. The argumentative analysis of the selected speeches and statements contributes to assessing the evolution of Japan's memory diplomacy.

From a methodological standpoint, the paper builds from the articulation between Halliday's SFL approach (2009), namely its distinction between the three types of metafunctions performed by human language — ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning, and textual meanings — and van Eemeren and Grootendorst's (2004, p. 52) pragma-dialectical theory on argumentation, particularly their identification of the elements that allocate coherence to an argumentative speech: functionalization, externalization, socialization and dialectification.

The paper presents three arguments:

1. The discursive study of the 1995 speech by FPM Tomiishi Murayama illustrates an articulation between ideational meaning and functionalization (Halliday, 2009; van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004, p. 52). FPM Tomiishi Murayama's speech had the purposive function of developing Japan's trauma and memory diplomacy, particularly concerning Japan's relations with other Asian countries;

2. Japan's FPM Junichiro Koizumi's 2005 speech at the Asian-African Summit exemplifies the importance of textual meanings associated with the "meta-theoretical principle" of externalization (Halliday, 2009; van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 52). The

constitution of meaningful sentences that can be comprehended by specific audiences is a rhetorical goal present throughout the text. What is at stake are the attitudes, motivations, and discursive pledges of a particular speech-utterer — a Japanese Prime minister — whose empowerment regarding memory diplomacy depends on his capacity to communicate with international audiences.

3. That the analysis of Japanese Foreign Minister Kishida and South Korean Foreign Minister Yun's 2015 statements on the issue of 'comfort women' delivered in a Joint Press Occasion embody interpersonal meaning as well as the "meta-theoretical principles" of socialization and dialectification (Halliday, 2009; van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004, p. 52). In this particular speech event, the performative role of language was based on interactive communication between a speaker and its audience. The Joint Press Occasion also illustrates Japan's need to settle its differences of opinion with the Republic of Korea (ROK) to avoid further problems in international fora. The Joint Press Occasion is, as well, an opportunity to critically evaluate how both statements have or have not contributed to settle divergent standpoints (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004, p. 52) between the Japanese and the ROK governments, as well as between the former and the south Korean society, regarding the issue of 'comfort women'.

It is relevant to highlight that the diverse categories of meanings and "meta-theoretical principles" that, following the SFL theory (Halliday, 2009) and van Eemeren and Grootendorst's (2004, p. 52) pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation, give meaning to human language, constitute significant elements of diplomacy as a human relational activity and of memory diplomacy as a sub-type of public diplomacy.

The paper is composed of four parts. In the first section, the paper's theoretical background, as well as literature review, are explored. The second section develops the paper's methodological framework. In the third section, the findings of the paper are presented. In the concluding section, the paper's research question is answered, building on the findings presented in the paper.

## 2. Theoretical Background and Literature Review

The analysis of how argumentation structures affect global diplomacy, and memory diplomacy in particular, is still an underdeveloped study arena. Con-

sequently, the theoretical framework will be based on the establishment of a relationship between memory diplomacy and argumentative structures of communication.

Memory diplomacy can be defined as a sub-type of public diplomacy, as well as an interdisciplinary research field, which studies how memory, trauma, mnemonical elements, and discourses of apology influence states' foreign policy (Etheridge, 2008, pp. 207-238). The articulation between memory and foreign policy is at the core of the emergence of memory diplomacy characterized by the importance of mnemonic practices for contemporary foreign policy (Etheridge, 2008, pp. 207-238). Historical accountability for past acts committed in contexts of military conflict or that can be qualified as particularly serious crimes involves political costs that few states are willing to assume (Innes & Steele, 2014, pp. 57-74). Those political costs are frequently managed through rhetorical acts of forgiveness which invoke collective memory and aim at developing international discursive practices of reconciliation considered as fundamental in the context of memory diplomacy (Wilson & Bleiker, 2014, p. 55).

A "political apology" may be depicted as "an official apology given by a representative of a state corporation or other organized group to victims, or descendants of victims, for injustices committed by the group's officials or members" (Thompson, 2005, p. 31) Edwards (2005, p. 321), argues that "community focused apologies" comprise four elements, namely, remembrance, reconciliation, mortification, and atonement.

The element of remembrance is crucial, for it is how an act of forgiveness defines a relationship between the past and the present (Edwards, 2005, p. 321). Remembrance signals the "authentication" and validation of victims' subjectivities and trauma descriptions (Edwards, 2005, p. 322). Reconciliation is a rhetorical element that signals the need to "repair" shattered political and social links (Edwards, 2005, p. 322). As it happens with the element of remembrance, reconciliation comprises "validating" victims' ordeals, their mnemonic memories, and how they convert those mnemonic recollections into trauma narratives (Edwards, 2005, p. 322). Mortification may be considered as a symbolical dynamic whereby a speech-utterer admits he is accountable for a particular offense, demonstrates regret for the misdeed, and requests clemency (Edwards, 2005, p. 322). Consequently, accountability for a transgression is discursively recognized, and guilt is not erased and projected towards a third party which allocates authority to an act of contrition and permits blame to be appeased (Edwards 2005: 322). Lastly, atonement embodies a "gesture on the way to acknowledging liability for past transgressions to build

a novel collective or individual 'persona' with a rehabilitated and redeemed subjectivity free of guilt" (Edwards, 2005, p. 322). Regarding acts of apology, atonement is defined by Edwards (2005, p. 323) as a first move in the direction of an inter-community healing dynamics since it signifies the discursive compromise, assumed by the culprit or someone who speaks on the culprit's behalf, that those past ordeals will not occur again.

The significance of the articulation between argumentation studies, public and memory diplomacy, and the study of discourses of apology derives from two main elements:

1. Argumentation theory is fundamental for diplomacy and foreign-policy analysis, specifically, in what concerns the study of negotiation and mediation contexts, as well as the performing of memory diplomacy (Etheridge, 2008; Taylor, 2009);

2. International acts of contrition are deeply related to the judgment of contested speech acts and trauma narratives amidst differences of opinion and divergent interpretations of historical facts (Bell, 1999). They are also an argumentative arena where the distinctions and "balance" between a speech's "rhetorical aims" and dialectical obligations" can be analyzed (Eemeren & Houtlosser, 1999, p. 481)

The importance of argumentation in the field of diplomacy is at the core of the emergence of evolving literature that develops the relevance of discourse and argumentative communication in foreign policy and diplomacy. However, how argumentation structures affect global diplomacy is still an underdeveloped research field. As Swain claims, "diplomatic argumentation has not attracted a great deal of scholarly attention" (Swain, 2017, p. 128). In the area of diplomacy, argumentation, and discourse, the research developed by Claudio Ciofi-Revilla (1979), Philip Taylor (2009), Patricia Riley and Thomas Hollihan (2012), Ilan Manor (2019), and Nicholas Cull (2019) is focused on the importance of argumentation for the development of diplomatic activities, namely, public and memory diplomacy. The works by Edwards (2005:321, 2010) on "community focused apologies" is essential to understand the relevance of rhetoric for memory diplomacy and to consider apology speech acts as a particular rhetorical category (Edwards, 2010). The article by Ciofi-Revilla (1979) was, in the 1970s, particularly significant since it characterized diplomacy as a significant form of communication among international actors and because it signaled the existence of literature gaps in the fields of the articulation between the study of diplomacy and communication studies. However,

Ciofi-Revilla's work (1979) did not treat diplomatic communication from the perspective of discursive and argumentative structures of communication. In what concerns the application of argumentation studies to diplomatic and foreign policy analysis, the work by Daniela Muraru (2012), which applies the pragma-dialectical approach to the analysis of diplomatic mediation, is noteworthy. Frans van Eemeren's book on *Strategic Maneuvering on Argumentative Discourse* (2010) also provides clues on how argumentation theory can be employed in the realm of foreign-policy analysis. A good example is an article by Peng Wu (2019) on strategic maneuvering and confrontational maneuvering at Chinese diplomatic press conferences.

Despite the importance of the aforementioned works, there is still a literature gap concerning the study of the concept of memory diplomacy, the analysis of the articulation between discourse and memory diplomacy, and the argumentative dimension of international diplomatic acts of contrition. That explains the selection of Halliday's SFL (2009) theory and van Eemeren and Grootendorst's (2004, p. 52) pragma-dialectical approach to argumentation to address Japanese discourses of forgiveness.

## 3. Methodological Framework

Halliday's approach is considered as "structuralist-functionalist" for it establishes an articulation between language and its performative role within a discursive context (Aijmer 2015, p. 2). However, it is not only language that is considered as an "object of inquiry," but also what Halliday (2009, p. 59) designates as the "sociological foundations of human relationship and interaction." In Halliday's (2009, p. 60) words, "language includes both the potential to mean and the act of meaning which brings that potential to life." Such potential is accomplished through what Halliday designates as metafunctions (Halliday, 2007). Those metafunctions are, fundamentally, three: ideational, interpersonal, and textual (Bilal, 2012).

The ideational metafunction highlights the performative role of the "content" within a specific discourse (Bilal, 2012, p. 726). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p. 30) consider that the ideational metafunction embodies "language as reflection." Grammatically, the ideational metafunction frequently employs transitivity, which means that speech acts are used to "represent" social "events" and the agents they involve (Bilal, 2012, p. 726). Halliday (2007, p. 318) believed that the ideational metafunction of language permits the use of language to "construe our experience, to make operational sense of what goes on around us." Language is constituted through the selection of formal terms to ensure efficient "communication" (Beji, 2016, p. 328). It is in language that

speakers materialize their perspectives of reality and convey ideas about the social environment in which they are situated (Beji, 2016, p. 328).

The interpersonal metafunction underpins the "participatory" dimension of language (Beji, 2016, p. 328) since language is employed to "enact our interpersonal relationships, to take part in social processes and to identify ourselves at the intersection of those processes" (Halliday, 2007, p. 318). Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p. 30) consider the interpersonal metafunction as "language in action." Mood and modality constitute the main grammatical instruments employed in the realm of the interpersonal metafunction (Almurashi, 2016, p. 73). While modalization is related to the role of information exchange, modulation is concerned with "proposals" that should guide human agency (Aijmer, 2015, p. 6). Also, modality is employed to establish "degrees of certainty" (Aijmer, 2015, p. 6). Modality can also define subjective judgments or objective judgments about particular convictions uttered by a speaker (Aijmer, 2015, p. 6).

A third "mode of meaning" concerned with the "construction of a text" regards the textual metafunction (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 30). The textual metafunction is closely interrelated with the ideational and the interpersonal metafunctions since it enables the construction of "experience and the enacting of interpersonal relations" (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p. 31). The textual metafunction is focused on "building up sequences of discourse, organizing the discursive flow and creating cohesion and continuity" within a discursive context (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 31). Such a metafunction is, therefore, concerned with "text creation" and with how "meanings" are embedded in a discourse to be comprehended by audiences (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p. 74).

The pragma-dialectical theory on argumentation (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004) builds from the assumption that the theorization of speech acts should be "preceded" by particular "meta-theoretical principles" (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 52). Those principles are functionalization, socialization, externalization, and dialectification (Eemeren et al., 2013, p. 5).

The principle of functionalization assumes that the study of a speech-act should identify the "specific functions that the speech-act puts forward" as well as how those functions are related with the "disagreement space" that a particular argument intends to manage and "resolve" (Eemeren et al., 2013, p. 6).

The principle of socialization embodies the "dialogical" dimension of argumentation which, as a rule, involves the interaction between agents with different perspectives regarding a particular question and whose goal is to

"resolve" those "differences" (Eemeren et al., 2013, p. 6). Those agents, which frequently, assume the role of "protagonists" and "antagonists," develop a "discourse in which a party responds methodically to the questions, doubts, objections, and counterclaims of another party" (Eemeren et al., 2013, p. 7).

Externalization is a "meta-theoretical principle" (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 52) with a particular role: it allows identifying the "commitments" taken by discursive agents and concerning which they may be accountable for (Eemeren et al., 2013, p. 7).

Finally, dialectification regards the normative dimension of dialectical argumentation, which allows researchers to judge and evaluate how specific discursive utterances subsidize the resolution of conflicting standpoints (Eemeren et al., 2013, p. 8).

Assuming that argumentation theory and discourse studies can profit from a joint dialogue, Christian Plantin (2002, p. 364) claims that to accomplish the fundamental goal of discourse theory– "the study of speech in context"– speech-utterers should be considered as conscious and responsible for their claims (Plantin 2002, p. 364). Furthermore, the discursive dimension of power relations be should not be overlooked (Cabrio et al., 2013, p. 9).

## 4. Findings

In the context of Asian diplomatic relations, how Japan is often held accountable for war crimes committed between 1937 and 1945 is particularly significant (Lebow, 2008, pp. 25-41). Between 1984 and 2019, Japan uttered 23 international speech acts of apology (Dodds, 2020). The authenticity of those acts was often contested (Dodds, 2020). As Desmond (1995, p. 3) claimed, "[i]n a society where several rounds of apologies will be made in the most trivial circumstances, the question of how to admit responsibility for the enormities Japan committed during the war has been a vexing one." The diplomatic relations between Japan and other countries, particularly Asian countries, continue to be constrained by distinct historical interpretations of events that arose mainly throughout World War II (Johnston, 2012, p. 69). Japan's memory diplomacy is particularly complex since the country, during a considerable period, assumed an attitude of non-trauma acknowledgment concerning relations with several East-Asian countries (Becker, 2014, p. 72). As Jennifer Lind (2009, para. 2) argues,

> Tokyo's official apologies for its past aggression and atrocities are dismissed as too little, too late. [w]orse, they often trigger denials and calls of revisionism in Japan, which anger and alarm the country's former victims. [i]n East Asia, the last day of World War II has yet to come.

Regarding Japan's responsibility for atrocities committed in World War II, the issue of 'comfort women' remains a particularly contentious question. Authors like Lind (2009) argue that Japan should not formally apologize for the wrongs of World War II since that could lead to a nationalist reaction. However, authors like Ayako Doi (2009, para. 2) claim that Japan needs to "confront" its "ugly history and reach a widely shared understanding of it that is acceptable" to its "former foes." The analysis of Japanese speech acts of contrition uttered by distinct political actors and in disparate historical contexts is significant to understand the evolution of Japanese memory diplomacy.

### Japan's Former Prime-minister (FPM) Murayama's 1995 declaration celebrating the 50th anniversary of the end of Second World War

Tomiishi Murayama was the fourth Japanese Prime minister to issue a statement of apology for Japan's acts during World War II. Former Prime-minister (FPM) Murayama's 1995 speech is a significant example of how a decision-maker may employ memory diplomacy to develop a "reflection" about a past event (World War II) and to establish a "representation" of such occurrence as a "social event" (Bilal, 2012, p. 726). According to the ideational meta-function, the speech-utterer "embodies in language his/her experience of the phenomena of the real world" (Bilal, 2012, p. 726).

Murayama demonstrated an ability to perform efficient communication, namely through the selection of appropriate words. It should be noted that FPM Murayama, in his 1995 speech-act of apology employed, not the term "*hansei*" (regret) but the term "*owabi*," which "unequivocally means to apologize" (Desmond, 1995, p. 4). In a passage of his speech, FPM Murayama (1995, para. 3) stated his belief "that, as we join hands, especially with the peoples of neighboring countries, to ensure true peace in the Asia-Pacific region - indeed, in the entire world- it is necessary, more than anything else, that we foster relations with all countries based on deep understanding and trust." In the context of the post-war Japanese relations with other Asian countries, expressions like "join hands," "true peace," "understanding," and "trust," have a symbolical and historical significance.

The FPM Murayama (1995, para. 3) also developed a reflection about the value of peace, represented as "priceless" and as a "blessing," and about the consequences of war, described as a "horror," that Japanese should "never repeat." Following Murayama (1995, para. 3), his goal was to warn younger Japanese about the horrific consequences of military conflicts, preventing future generations from reiterating the mistakes of the recent Japanese past. The FPM (Murayama, 1995, para. 4) employed language to construct an image of

war and peace as well as to incentive the Japanese to learn with the "lessons of history." The goal was ensuring Japan's global acceptance as a full-blown member of the global community of nations and, thus, guaranteeing that the country could contribute towards internationally advancing "the principles of peace and democracy" (Murayama, 1995, para. 6). Murayama's apology speech-act was employed not only to "represent" Japanese participation in World War II as a social "event," but also to honor the agents involved in overcoming the trauma unleashed by such participation, namely Japanese citizens and the countries which assisted Japan after the war (Murayama, 1995, para 2). The representation of Japanese participation in World War II as a social "event" is achieved through two argumentative strategies. Firstly, by voicing mortification and atonement, through the expression of "deep remorse and heartfelt apology" (Murayama. 1995, para. 5). Secondly by creating an image of Japan as a country which, due to its past traumas – Japan is the only state that experienced "the devastation of atomic bombing"— is now an agent of peace supporting the elimination and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons (Murayama, 1995, para 6).

Murayama's personal experience as a political leader led him to recognize the significance of deepening Japanese relations with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region (Murayama, 1995, para. 3). It is also Murayama's perception and cognition regarding such significance that explains the launching by Japan of the "Peace, Friendship and Exchange Initiative" whose goal was to advance historical research regarding Japanese modern foreign policy as well as to foster the "rapid expansion of exchanges" with Asia-Pacific countries" (Murayama, 1995, p. 3).

In terms of argumentation theory, it is noteworthy how FPM Murayama's speech was constructed to comply with identity and correctness conditions associated with valid argumentation (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2009).

Identity conditions are fulfilled when Murayama argued to be in good faith when uttering his speech-act of apology. In his words: "[i]t is said that one can rely on good faith. [a]nd so, at this time of remembrance, I declare to the people of Japan and abroad my intention to make good faith the foundation of our government policy, and this is my vow" (Murayama, 1995, para. 7). The goal was to associate Japan's image with international recognized values, such as good faith, constructing a new "collective" and "rehabilitated" Japanese "persona" (Edwards, 2005, p. 322).

Regarding correctness conditions, the speech of FPM Murayama contains all the four core elements of "community focused apologies," particularly remembrance, reconciliation, and especially mortification, and atonement (Ed-

wards, 2005, p. 321). The FPM claimed that the remembrance of World War II fatalities made his heart become "overwhelmed by a flood of emotions" (Murayama, 19995, para. 1). Launching of the "Peace, Friendship and Exchange Initiative" symbolizes one of the many steps towards reconciliation. The element of mortification is explicit when FPM Murayama recognized that in the past, Japan followed a "mistaken national policy" constituted by acts of "aggression" and which triggered great harm and misery to the population of several nations, predominantly Asian countries (Murayama, 1995, para. 5). Murayama was the first Japanese Prime minister to have explicitly recognized that Japan had, during World War II, committed acts of aggression (Desmond, 1995, p. 4). Murayama also stated that he humbly acknowledged the indisputable realities of the recent Japanese past, declared his profound sorrow and voiced his deepest regret (Murayama, 1995, para. 5). Finally, in a spirit of atonement, Japan's FPM (Murayama, 1995, para. 6) argued that

> "[b]uilding from our deep remorse on this occasion of the 50th anniversary of the end of the war, Japan must eliminate self-righteous nationalism, promote international coordination as a responsible member of the international community and, thereby, advance the principles of peace and democracy.

The FPM Murayama's speech highlights the "meta-theoretical principle" of functionalization (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004, p. 52) and demonstrates how language can be employed to accomplish particular communication purposes, namely, the definition of a new stage in Japan's memory politics and memory diplomacy where the recognition of Japan's acts of aggression and the validation of its victims' narratives is associated with the fostering of a more proactive foreign policy, namely towards Asian countries (Murayama, 1995, p. 3). Murayama (1995, para. 6) demonstrated to be aware of a deep disagreement regarding how Japan should manage and reconstruct its past. The FPM attributed such disagreement to "self-righteous nationalism" that could prevent Japan from being considered "as a responsible member of the international community" (Murayama, 1995, para 6). What was at stake in Murayama's speech was the need to normalize the belief that Japan should acknowledge past teachings, ensuring that the Japanese do not deviate from a path of harmony and development (Murayama, 1995, para. 4).

Japan's Prime-minister Junichiro Koizumi 2005 speech
at the Asian-African Summit
Junichiro Koizumi was the seventh Japanese Prime-minister to utter an international speech-act of apology (Dodds, 2020). His 2005 speech at the Asian-Af-

rican Summit builds from FPM Murayama's 1995 speech. However, it takes Japan's memory diplomacy to a different level. This paper argues that Japan's Prime-minister Junichiro Koizumi's 2005 speech at the Asian-African Summit exemplifies the importance of textual meanings associated with the "meta-theoretical principle" of externalization.

Assuming that apology was a fundamental element of Japan's new "language of relationships (Regher & Gutheil, 2002, p. 425), FPM Koizumi (2005, para. 3) expressed Japan's "feelings of deep remorse and heartfelt apology" for World War II events. Koizumi (2005, para. 3) declared Japan's determination in "never turning into a military power but an economic power," as well as "its principle of resolving all matters by peaceful means, without recourse to use of force." Such a declaration is important for two reasons. Firstly, since it establishes a relationship between memory politics, memory diplomacy and foreign policy. Secondly, since it represents a discursive and official pledge, fundamental for speeches of atonement, that past crimes will not occur again.

In his speech, Koizumi (2005, para. 4) tried to establish a relation between the surpassing of the Japanese past and its contribution to international peace. Throughout his speech, FPM Koizumi (2005, para. 3) produced a "coherent discourse" (Kang, 2016, p. 1053) where, the "relationship of trust" established by Japan with "the nations of the world" was highlighted. The discursive coherence of his speech was achieved through two argumentative strategies:

1. The clear statement of what FPM Koizumi (2005, para. 2) intended to achieve with his speech, namely to "look back upon the road we have traveled together," and to contribute to international dialogue with Asian and African nations about the measures needed to promote global development and peace;

2. The establishment of a "sequence of discourse" (Kang, 2016, p. 1053) through which an articulation was instituted between Japan's economic development from the 1950s onwards and how such a development could become an example for other Asian and African nations (Koizumi, 2005, para. 5);

3. The selection of three textual themes which were developed by FPM Koizumi throughout his speech, specifically, "economic development," "peace-building," and the promotion of "international cooperation." Such themes were presented through references familiar to Asian and African audiences, namely the need to reform the United Nations Security Council (Koizumi, 2005, para. 12).

In addition to these three core themes, it is possible to distinguish between other systemic-functional themes, specifically the experiential and the interpersonal themes (Kang, 2016, p. 1053). Through the experiential theme, Koizumi (2005, para. 12) underpinned the importance of civilizational dialogue, as well as of cultural and individual communication. Regarding the interpersonal theme, the question of Japan's responsibility was highlighted. In FPM Koizumi's (2005, para. 3) words, "[i]n the past, Japan, through its colonial rule and aggression, caused tremendous damage and suffering to the people of many countries, particularly to those of Asian nations. Japan squarely faces these facts of history in a spirit of humility."

The FPM Koizumi (2005) combined epistemic modality (modalization) and deontic modality (modulation) with four main goals:

1. To present Japan as a development model for other Asian and African nations (Koizumi, 2005, para. 5);

2. To define his status as a speaker, namely his position as a "representative" of the generation "which rose from devastation after World War II" and now hopes "to walk together with the people of Asia and Africa" (Koizumi, 2005, para. 5);

3. To stress Japan's resolve "to develop itself as a peaceful nation" (Koizumi, 2005, para. 5);

4. To propose measures that will ensure the economic growth of Asian and African nations (Koizumi, 2005, para. 7).

The proposal of measures intended to guarantee the development of Asian and African nations highlights the "meta-theoretical principle" of externalization (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 52). Regarding security and defense policies, Koizumi (2005, para. 3) refused the militarization of Japan and declared Japan's commitment to pursuing an international policy based on the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The FPM Koizumi's 2005 speech also contains pledges regarding global assistance policies directed to developing states, particularly:

1. Delivering public development aid of 0.7% of Japan's gross national income to assist in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals;

2. Proposing tangible measures to ensure market entree to goods coming from least developed countries to back their self-sufficiency;

3. Strengthening development partnerships with Asian and African countries, namely through "the Tokyo International Conference on African Development process" (Koizumi, 2005, para. 7, 9).

Finally, Koizumi (2005, para. 11) also commits Japanese diplomacy to the promotion of international peace-building, to the development of efforts regarding the elimination of nuclear weapons, the fight against terrorism, environmental conservation, and, above all, to the dissemination of global norms, namely democracy and freedom.

These commitments should be understood as elements of a wider mnemonical and diplomatic strategy to rebuild Japan's "persona," bestowing it with a renewed and converted international subjectivity (Edwards, 2005, p. 322).

### Japanese Foreign Minister Kishida and South Korean Foreign Minister Yun's statements on the issue of 'comfort women' delivered in a 2015 Joint Press Occasion

Japanese Foreign Minister Kishida and South Korean Foreign Minister Yun's statements on the issue of 'comfort women,' delivered in a Joint Press Occasion, were particularly significant. This article argues that such statements can be understood as an example of interpersonal meaning since the performative role of language was based on interactive communication between a speaker and its audience (Halliday, 2007, p. 318).

The format of the statements delivered by the former Japanese Foreign Minister Kishida and by the former South Korean Foreign Minister Yun — a Joint Press Occasion — disclosed the will to endow two particular speech acts with an interactive communication purpose and to establish a communication relationship with a specific audience. It must be taken into consideration that in the Republic of Korea the issue of 'comfort women' remains particularly controversial (Lind, 2009). As Sang-Hun (2015, p. 2) argues, "[t]he so-called comfort women have been the most painful legacy of Japan's colonial rule of Korea, which lasted from 1910 until Japan's defeat in 1945."

The fact that the statements were produced in a Joint Press Occasion allows us to observe how diplomatic information exchange between top diplomatic representatives can be achieved through the use of grammatical modality. As previously mentioned, modality is employed as a way to describe "the choices underlying the exchange of information in the clause and the establishment of the social roles of the speaker and the hearer (Aijmer, 2015, p. 5). Through epistemic modality, the social roles of the speaker and hearer were

established at the onset of the two statements when both Foreign Ministers stated that they were speaking "on behalf" of their respective national governments (Kishida, 2015, para. 1; Yun, 2015, para. 1). Nevertheless, it should be stressed that the non-attendance of both countries' Prime ministers from the Joint Press Occasion removed epistemic strength to the joint declarations.

Regarding the choices underlying the exchange of information, it is possible to identify three goals of the Joint Press Occasion. The first goal was to permit the government of Japan (GOJ) to apologize for the crimes committed by the Japanese Imperial Army against women and girls from Japanese occupied territories coerced into sex slavery. Fumio Kishida (2015: para. 2) stated that Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expressed his regret and repentance to the women who were victims of the Japanese army and who experienced grave and incalculable mental and physical sore. Secondly, to allow the GOJ to declare that, from its perspective, the issue of "comfort women" was "resolved finally and irreversibly" (Kishida 2015: paragraph 3). The GOJ (Kishida, 2015, para. 2) explicitly declared that to "resolve" the issue, it would, in cooperation with the Government of the ROK, take measures to treat the mental afflictions of all former 'comfort women.' The Japanese government pledged to financially support the institution of an association whose goal would be to assist abused women in an attempt to "recover" their "honor" and "dignity" and to "heal" their "psychological wounds" (Kishida, 2015, para. 2). Finally, the GOJ declared that, in the future, it would "refrain from accusing or criticizing" the Government of the ROK "in the international community, including at the United Nations" concerning the question of "comfort women" (Kishida, 2015, para. 3).

In reply, the then Foreign Minister of the ROK, and accordingly to the requests of the GOJ, stated that the "controversial question" regarding "comfort women" was "resolved finally and irreversibly" and declared that the ROK would abstain from "criticizing" the GOJ in the "international community" about the issue at stake, provided that the Japanese Government fulfills with the policies announced in Kishida's statement (Yun, 2015, para. 1). Such a type of conditionality associated with the permanent closing of the issue of 'comfort women' reveals the use of deontic modality since both Foreign Ministers' statements are embodied with a sense of obligation and duty (Maynard, 1993, p. 34).

The use of deontic modality articulated with a moderate degree of certainty regarding the Japanese acknowledgment of its responsibilities towards 'comfort women' discloses the existence of a will to settle opposing perspectives from which diplomatic negotiations could be established between the

two countries. In Foreign Minister Kishida's (2015, para. 1) statement, it is written that the "Government of Japan is painfully aware of its responsibilities." The existence of a "preference for agreement" (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 98) on the issue of 'comfort women' between the two countries is also demonstrated by the government of the ROK's statement underpinning the significance of the Japanese government's measures and statement (Yun, 2015, para. 1). Also, the existence of such a "preference for agreement" (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 98) finally "exposed" the government of Japan's beliefs about the convenience of settling the issue of 'comfort women'. In Kishida's statement (2015, para. 1), and in what can be considered as an interpersonal expression of normative appraisal, it is explicitly declared that: "[t]he issue of comfort women, with an involvement of the Japanese military authorities at that time, was a grave affront to the honor and dignity of large numbers of women." In exchange for the Japanese government recognition of the Korean narrative concerning 'comfort women,' the government of the ROK acknowledged in its statement that the 'comfort women' remembrance sculpture constructed facing the Embassy of Japan in Seoul threatened the "dignity" of the Japanese diplomatic mission, and therefore, the government of the ROK would "strive to solve" the question "in an appropriate manner" (Yun, 2015, para. 2).

Japanese Foreign Minister Kishida and South Korean Foreign Minister Yun's statements on the issue of 'comfort women' illustrate the argumentative principles of socialization and dialectification (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004, p. 52). The 2015 Joint Press Occasion illustrates well how argumentation is a dialectical process that involves speech-utterers with different standpoints. Regarding the issue of 'comfort women,' Japan and the ROK can be defined as assuming, respectively, the roles of "protagonist" and "antagonist" (van Eemeren et al., 2013, p. 7). Furthermore, and through the "meta-theoretical principle" of dialectification (van Eemeren & Grootendorst 2004, p. 52), a critical analysis of the exchange of perspectives that occurred at the 2015 Joint Press Occasion demonstrates two things. Firstly, that the Japanese government tried to retract his former standpoint on 'comfort women' by evoking an argumentation strategy designated by van Eemeren and Houtlosser (1999, p. 485) as "*conciliation*", whereby the "opponent's premises" are adopted by the protagonist in "support" of its "own position." However, the efficiency of such a strategy is dependent on Japan satisfying the ROK conditions for accepting the act of apology. Secondly, the difference of opinions between the two countries was not resolved based on the "merits" of argumentation but based on the exchange of material incentives and agreements founded on the need to

protect Japan's international image. The focus on material incentives and on the need to safeguard Japan's international reputation downgrades the "substance" and the "forces of conviction" (van Eemeren & Grootendorst, 2004, p. 12) of the argumentation employed by both speech-utterers (van Eemeren et al., 2013, p. 7).

## 5. Conclusion

This paper tried to answer the following research question: how Japanese discourses of apology help understanding the evolution of Japan's memory diplomacy? To answer its research question, the paper addressed distinct Japanese acts of contrition in international politics. The paper demonstrated how the analysis of discursive acts of apology allows tracing the evolution of a country's attitude towards memory diplomacy. In the Japanese case, findings reveal that between 1995 and 2005, Japan's memory diplomacy was strengthened and positively developed. However, the analysis of former Japanese Foreign Minister Kishida and former South Korean Foreign Minister Yun's 2015 statements on the issue of 'comfort women' allows concluding that, mainly from 2006 onwards when Prime-minister Shinzo Abe rose to power, there was a throwback in Japan's memory diplomacy. Such a reversion can be explained by the reluctance of right-wing FPM Shinzo Abe in explicitly recognizing Japan's guilt in the events which occurred prior to and during World War II (Dodds, 2020).

In 1995, the speech-act of apology uttered by Japan FPM Murayama was considered the first Japanese "real apology" for Japan's acts committed during the Second World War (Desmond, 1995). Discussing FPM Murayama's 1995 speech, Desmond (1995, p. 1) argued: "the Prime Minister broke ranks with the little minds in his government and spoke out on Japan's wartime actions with an unqualified repentance never heard from his predecessors." In a context where Japanese right-wing parties still normalized the belief that "Japan's 'guilt' was a fiction created by Japan's conquerors," the speech was considered historical since what FPM Murayama said was, at the time, considered as "unsayable" (Desmond, 1995, p. 5).

As mentioned previously, Junichiro Koizumi's 2005 speech at the Asian-African Summit heavily builds from Murayama's 1995 speech. Nevertheless, it takes Japan's memory diplomacy to a different level. Contrary to what the Chinese press wrote about Koizumi's 2005 intervention at the Summit (see China Daily, 2005), FPM Koizumi did not represent Japan as a victim of history but rather as an agent of history (Koizumi, 2005, para. 7,9). Differing from Murayama's speech-act of apology, heavily based on mortification and atone-

ment, Koizumi's speech significantly highlighted the element of reconciliation. By representing himself as a "representative" of the generation "which rose from devastation after World War II," Koizumi (2005, para. 5) validated Japan's victims' ordeals, namely by showing personal proximity to the victims. By presenting Japan as a development model for other Asian and African nations, FPM Koizumi underpinned the need to "repair" and reconstitute broken political and social links (Edwards, 2005, p. 322; Koizumi, 2005, para. 5). These argumentative strategies strengthen Japan's memory diplomacy by implementing a strategy based on renewing Japan's international "persona" and endowing such a new "persona" with a reformed and redeemed subjectivity (Edwards, 2005, p 322).

Finally, the 2015 agreement between Japan and South Korea represented a regression in Japan's memory diplomacy since it was a convenient "compromise" that resulted from Shinzo Abe's complex and pragmatic vision of Japan's politics of the past (Sang-Hun, 2015, p. 4). Surviving South Korean 'comfort women' did not accept the agreement between the ROK and Japan, considering that, instead of giving money, Japan should "admit legal responsibility and offer formal reparations" (Sang-Hun, 2015, p. 23). One of the main controversies of the agreement was that it did not "clarify whether the responsibility that Japan acknowledged was legal or moral" (Sang-Hun, 2015, p. 28). Such non-clarification prevented the speech-act of apology presented at the Japan/ROK Joint Press Occasion by former Japanese Foreign Minister Kishida from being considered as an authentic act of apology. Furthermore, the surviving 'comfort women' and their civic representatives demand formal and legal reparations, which Japan does not accept (Sang-Hun, 2015, p. 28). Following Sang-Hun (2015, p. 29), another issue that the agreement left unresolved was the "lingering debate over whether coercion was a policy of imperial Japan."

Further analysis should explore the possibilities enshrined in the dialogue between discursive studies, argumentative theory, and mnemonical studies to address how contemporary foreign policy is constituted by distinct types of argumentative structures, particularly mnemonical structures of argumentation. Since memory diplomacy is still an unexplored field, additional investigation should be developed to understand the articulation between memory diplomacy and national strategies of reconstitution of the past.

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