

INFLUENCE OF THE ECONOMY ON POLITICAL DECISIONS: THE CASE OF LULA DA SILVA'S INAUGURAL SPEECH IN 2023

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Annotation. The main objective of this paper is to analyze how political discourse, with a strong economics and transformational approach, reaches different audiences. Specifically, we study Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's speech at the National Congress on January 1, 2023, marking his inauguration as president of Brazil. The audiovisual content of the speech is used to investigate, through a codebook, the reality of the market environment in Brazil. The purpose is not only to analyze the competitiveness of political and economic discourse in an international context saturated with diverse messages but also to assess its contributions to the development of Brazilian society. The conclusions of this work confirm the research questions. On the one hand, Lula's discourse resonates more strongly with ideologically aligned audiences. On the other hand, he employs both verbal and nonverbal variables that help him reach the audience more efficiently.

Keywords: neuropolitics, economics, Lula da Silva, Brazil, voter effects.

JEL classification: M14, M19, P2.

Introduction

Neurocommunication is a field in which many researchers are working because the phenomenon has numerous applications in society (Rua *et al.*, 2021). In recent years, it has been developed in different countries, especially in the contexts of politics and economics. Fields such as advertising, marketing, business, economics, or audiovisual communication illustrate some of the main applications of neurocommunication, but, more recently, its impact is especially evident in the study of political speech and how it affects the cognitive processing of the actors involved.

Understanding how this message (political, economic, etc.) reaches the brain means that „we need to be cautious because the brain is a complex machine, and no single area is responsible for how we think” (Qvortrup, 2024). This author argues that neuropolitics is used in the field of political advertising and states that „whatever you think, we already know that we can predict ideology with up to 85% accuracy”.

The prefix 'neuro' has been attached to all these disciplines and, in a way, they have become new fields of work for professionals and scholars, though sometimes they are at the risk of not being as effective. In any case, in the context of this study, which examines political discourse with a particular emphasis on the country's economy and inequality to challenge the status quo, we note some author's

considerations about neuroscience techniques that „by measuring how the brain reacts to certain stimuli, try to explain the behavior of people in complex scenarios, such as, for example, politics” (Tapia *et al.*, 2020, p.26).

However, some scholars consider this prefix, ‘neuro’, to be overused. Calderón (2017, p.3) points out that simply searching the Internet reveals an abundance of „‘neuro-terms’ that are currently used to highlight an alleged scientific legitimacy of the study in question, ranging from neuroeconomics, neuromarketing, neuropolitics, through neurotheology, neuroastronomy to neuromagic”.

Neuropolitics has become a valuable tool for political leaders and their advisors because its techniques effectively reach the minds of voters. Now and in the future, it will not be possible to run an election campaign, prepare speeches and debates, or develop strategies and arguments without taking neuropolitics into account.

Political leaders will go beyond serving as figureheads. They will be able to amplify or diminish the brand perception of their parties according to how well their traits resonate with voters' perceptions. „Recent technological advancements, such as neuroimaging techniques, have made it possible to quantify these phenomena, offering the potential for more precisely targeted political marketing strategies that are both effective and ethically defensible” (Çakar *et al.*, 2023, p.2).

The article posed two main research questions: on the one hand, it seeks to determine whether a leader's discourse is more effective among audiences with similar ideological views or whether factors beyond ideology influence its effectiveness. On the other hand, it explores whether using certain expressions or a leader's speaking style helps them succeed, that is, to achieve better electoral results. In this case, Lula da Silva stands out as a figure of interest in Brazil and globally, not only because he has been president before but also due to the circumstances he has faced in recent years.

As for the structure of this work, it starts with theoretical explanations of the relationship between neurocommunication and politics, analyzing how the brain of the voter is reached through the messages, and pointing out the phenomenon of populism in Brazil. Subsequently, a codebook is used to develop the analysis and the results of Lula's speech, which leads to some conclusions.

In the conclusions section, in addition to explaining the reasons for answering the research questions, we include the implications of this work, both academic and professional. And, finally, we refer to the necessity of this work in the political and economic environment in which we find ourselves, concerning neurocommunication.

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1 Neurocommunication and Politics

Neuroscience provides a theoretical foundation for analyzing how each person not only conceives themselves but also how they conceive society. As some authors point out, neuroscience's application to communication studies has very recent origins. „It arises from the evolution produced within neurology, especially the branch applied to the neurobiology of behavior, which tries to explain the relationship that exists between neurological processes and their behavioral manifestations” (Cuesta *et al.*, 2017, p.42).

These sciences have had a practical application in politics and economics as leaders are keenly aware of how potential voters perceive them. Non-verbal cues such as gestures, facial expressions, and body language are tools that influence the voter's brain's decision-making process. In this sense, we must

bear in mind that „politics is a form of manifestation of the power that a person (the politician) exercises over another person or a group of people, society, or community” (Ilikova *et al.*, 2020, p.265). Understanding actors’ actions and intentions is crucial for political and economic analysis, particularly regarding leaders’ speeches. Voters often base decisions on emotional appeals, much like how persuasive advertising „strongly influences consumer choices” (Khan *et al.*, 2023, p.5).

In 2015, The New York Times warned in an article that political campaigns were turning to „voter data and insights that will propel them to victory. Now, in an increasing number of places, that includes the contentious field known as neuromarketing — or in this case, neuropolitics” (Randall, 2015, p.A1). This marked the beginning of a phenomenon in which political actors began considering technologies such as facial coding, biofeedback, and brain imaging.

Neuropolitics is a discipline that studies citizens’ political behavior through the lens of neuroscience. It addresses aspects such as understanding the political decision-making process or political behaviors; it not only starts from a theoretical approach but also has numerous practical applications. Although it has already made notable advances, neuropolitics is still in its infancy (Schreiber, 2007). As Schreiber noted years later „in the long run, the field has the potential to fundamentally change the way we understand human nature” (Schreiber, 2017, p.126). Looking ahead, the role of technology will have to be taken into account because it has changed all facets of communication (Green, 2023).

1.2 How to Reach the Voter's Brain

The voter's brain is an element of growing interest for political advisors, as depending on how it reacts to the leader's stimuli, some voting guidelines or others will be sent. Voters make their voting decisions based on rational processes, but emotional factors also play an important role. Ramsøy (2020) points out that „it is safe to say that humans are not making political choices purely based on rational, cognitive processes. Emotional and social -- even tribal -- processes are at stake”.

Mirror neurons underlie the phenomenon of neurocommunication, which is relevant in the field of politics. When a listener encounters a word deemed relevant, novel, or surprising, their brain initiates a mechanism that facilitates the processing and comprehension of the preceding speech. According to Heyes *et al.*, (2022, p.156) „there appears to be reasonably strong evidence for the involvement of the motor system (including premotor brain areas of mirror neurons as well as motor cortex) in speech discrimination under noisy perceptual conditions.” This data, however, has yet to be verified by patient data.

These elements are strengthened in countries with notable political polarization, like Brazil. In this case, polarization goes beyond ideas and focuses on the dominance that supporters of one party may have over those of the other. In Brazil’s 2022 elections, this dynamic occurred because the supporters of Jair Bolsonaro were pitted against those of Lula da Silva with the same intensity as the candidates themselves.

In this climate of political polarization, where speeches and messages evoke such a wide range of perceptions and emotions, neuroscience provides valuable insights. In any case, it is essential to remember, as Ellger (2024) stated, that increasing voter turnout comes at a substantial cost. If negative emotions drive turnout, polarization can further undermine the legitimacy of democratic decision-making.

According to Knowles (2023), the brain’s primary functions are: „to provide sensory information about what is happening in the world, to generate a perceptual awareness and feeling of what is being experienced, and to decide what to do about it.”

In 2007, Professor Drew Westen (2007) indicated that the political brain is emotional. In recent years, it has been shown that through the use of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) we can determine which parts of the brain are activated during various activities, including politics. We will use one area of the brain or another depending on whether we identify as moderates or radicals (Qvortrup, 2023).

In conclusion, Feenstra and Pallarés-Domínguez point out that

Political neuromarketing is characterized by studying the human brain but with the aim of improving political communication and thus attracting more votes. In other words, communication is adapted to the way the brain manages political thinking in order to send messages that are more in line with it. The aim is to understand the brain in relation to politics with the ultimate goal of attracting votes (Feenstra et al., 2017, p.13).

In summary, we must consider how each brain receives political messages because this will provide essential insights into managing rational and emotional processes, especially in highly polarized environments.

1.3 Political Discourse in Brazil. Populism

According to Van Dijk (2003), political discourse is nothing more than the „discourse of politicians”, adding that „discourse is political when it performs a political act in a political institution, such as governing, legislating, campaigning, etc.”. And Callegaro (2015, p.26) builds on this concept, asserting that „when the political discourse is used by a socially recognized political agent, and his text, both oral and written, is constructed from political conjunctures, the discourse becomes, in our view, the politician's discourse”.

In recent years, many political and economic leaders' speeches worldwide have been described as populist by the media, analysts, experts, and citizens in general. Regardless of the socioeconomic and sociopolitical context in which populism emerges, „it is always already constructed as an idea or a discourse. It is through this construction that ‘the people’ and, their counterpart, ‘the elite’ emerge” (Munck, 2024, p.231).

In developing countries, populism is heavily influenced by economic factors. The state assumes the role of vigilant avenger against those who promote inequalities and a defender of the helpless. Brazil is one of these areas where populism has taken root, and many of its leaders, including some presidents, have conceptualized it in this manner.

According to González (2021) the term populist is stigmatized by both the right and the left from an ideological point of view, leading to reciprocal reproaches. „The former accuses the latter of manipulating the working and popular classes; the latter accuses the former of manipulating the popular classes and the middle classes, which are not very politicized, by appealing to fear” (Charaudeau, 2019, p.101).

Mudde and Kalwasser (2017) define populism as a „thinly focused ideology that views society as ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic camps, ‘the pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and advocates that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people”.

It is pertinent to note that certain conditions and scenarios must exist for populism to emerge. Among the former, there is a coexistence of a plurality of demands that the institutional system is incapable of

addressing. Among the latter, some of the scenarios that enable the rise of populism are those of a breakdown in the social order, loss of confidence in the political system's ability to restore stability, the exhaustion of political traditions, and the discrediting of political parties, or changes at the economic, cultural and social levels.

In Latin America, the most prominent form of populism is characterized by economic programs based on subsidies, protection of local industry, mobilization against the oligarchy, incorporation of the lower classes, the creation of mass political parties, the cult of personality that exalts the importance of the leader, etc. (Arditi, 2009; Troilo, 2023). Other authors' definitions also align with what is happening in this geographical area:

Populism is a logic of political action, which uses a dichotomous communicative strategy that, in order to achieve and maintain power, appeals to the people or the average citizen through a discourse in which emotions and a simplification of messages, particularly of solutions to problems, predominate (Valenzuela *et al.*, 2023, p.458).

In the specific case of Brazil, the political changes that occurred in 2016, with the impeachment of President Rousseff, and in 2018, followed by the election of Jair Bolsonaro,

opened the door to the dismantling of a wide range of public policies, including social, rural development, environmental, health, educational and cultural ones. A common characteristic of most of the policies subject to this process was their creation during the period of democratization and their consolidation during the governments of the Workers' Party, particularly during the terms of Lula da Silva (2003-200; 2007-2010) (Milhorange, 2022, p.756).

Regarding the subject of this paper, Lula's discourse, it is evident that he employs elements characteristic of populists throughout his political speeches. He uses keywords that repeatedly form the foundation of his public speeches. As some authors highlight, dialogue, nationalism, or democracy, for example, are central to Lula's way of speaking (Lucca, 2020).

André Singer (2009) developed the concept of 'lulismo' or lulism to describe the support the Workers' Party received from the popular classes, especially in the Northeast region. Mandache (2024, p.1880) considers that this 'lulismo' consisted in the maintenance of stability and state-led distributive actions, „implying that the poor are risk averse and preferred a candidate who would make minor changes to the structure of power over one who promised large reforms”.

In his speeches, Lula states that his presidency in Brazil meant the advent of a context of dialogue between society and government that was unprecedented in Brazilian history. Particularly regarding his connection with workers, portraying a sense of greater closeness and even empathy with the labor community (Lucca, 2017). The Brazilian president is a leader who challenges the masses and fosters a process of popular identification that crystallizes 'the people' as an element calling for change. As some authors note, „Lula became the symbol for the resolution of varied and distinct demands, including housing, health, education, and food. These demands were condensed and became equivalent, with Lula as the icon of the unraveling of all of these long-lasting problems” (Coutinho *et al.*, 2017, p.702).

2. Chapter title

This paper employs a methodological approach based on the analysis of the political speech delivered by Luis Inácio Lula da Silva on January 1st, 2023, in Congress, at his inauguration as the new president of Brazil. The objectives of this study are twofold: to analyze the effectiveness of a political leader's speech

at the beginning of a presidential term when addressing an audience that has a favorable ideological disposition and to assess the success of the messages conveyed by a leader in a political speech through the use of some ordered and categorized variables derived from verbal and nonverbal language.

Based on these objectives, the following research questions are posed:

RQ1. To determine whether a leader's discourse is more effective among those who share a similar ideology or whether its effectiveness does not lie so much in ideological issues.

RQ2. To determine whether the use of certain expressions or the manner in which a leader speaks contributes to their success, that is, to achieve better electoral results.

This work will commence with a review of some representative works on neurocommunication applied to the field of politics, that is, neuropolitics, the relevance of the brain in political decision-making, and the relationship between political and economic discourse in Brazil and populism. An analysis of Lula da Silva's discourse (Quartucci, 2023) will then be conducted using content analysis, explored by numerous authors from both theoretical and applied perspectives.

This analysis allows the researcher to delve into the purposes of speech as an element of perception, construction of ideological messages, and power relations between individuals, leaders, and political actors. It is an interdisciplinary construct that serves as an approach to interpreting facts of social and cultural relevance crossed by language (Mila *et al.*, 2022). Even the use of objects and symbols is part of this discursive construction, as is the context in which the subject operates (Charaudeau, 2009).

According to Tinto (2013, p.141), content analysis is a type of scientific measurement applied to a message, within the framework of objectives in the field of social sciences. It is positivist, objective, and quantitative (Saraisky, 2016, p.27), so it usually involves the development of a codebook. According to Ortega *et al.* (2013, p.225), it is a tool that establishes guidelines through the reading of a list of codes along with explanations detailing how each variable of the object under analysis should be evaluated.

In this study, a codebook system is applied to classify the discourse, and variables such as the way of speaking, tone, word choice, and the use of singular or plural pronouns are considered to address RQ2. Furthermore, an overall interpretation of the political speech delivered by Lula Da Silva at the inauguration as the new president of Brazil will respond to RQ1.

3. Results

This section develops the codebook, addressing the research questions posed, as shown in *Table 1*.

Table 1. Codebook according to Research Questions

RQ1: Effectiveness based on ideology	RQ2: Variables to achieve better electoral results
4. Interpretation of the speech	3.1. Way of speaking
	3.2. Tone
	3.3. The use of words
	3.4. The use of singular and plural

Source: own elaboration.

3.1 Way of Speaking

Like most leaders, Lula has a particular way of expressing himself. In his case, „he intends with one of the most launched means to persuade, with protagonism of metaphorical uses, to convince the Brazilian people and, especially, his faithful electorate” (Schadeck et al., 2013, p.1.614).

Lula employs metaphors in his speeches, and this instance is no exception (‘I saw hope shine in the eyes of a suffering people’, ‘the eyes of the world were on Brazil in these elections’, ‘under the winds of re-democratization, we said: dictatorship never again!’, ‘May all the flowers sprout and all the fruits of our creativity be harvested, may all enjoy them, without censorship or discrimination’).

This use of metaphors serves as a mechanism that conceals and highlights certain realities. „The implications of this for political reasoning are enormous: metaphors used in public discourse can determine what people think and what they ignore” (Lakoff et al., 2016).

Regarding the way he speaks, Lula uses a fairly uniform manner throughout his speech. He rarely looks up from the pages he is reading during his speech to look at those in the audience. Some experts point out that the effectiveness of a leader's image when addressing an audience may be determined by emotional expressiveness and facial cues. Diego Redolar, researcher at the Cognitive NeuroLab of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, in Spain, states that the shape of the mouth and eyebrows, for example, can influence audience perception. Faces characterized by a happy facial expression, typically featuring U-shaped mouths and A-shaped eyebrows, denote confidence. In contrast, faces showing angry facial expressions, with n-shaped mouths and V-shaped eyebrows, are faces we tend to be wary of (Sánchez Juárez, 2019).

President Lula combines the two types of facial expressions in his January 1st speech at the National Congress in Brasilia. On the one hand, he maintains a serious demeanor appropriate for the occasion in which he addresses the nation, yet he shows no signs of anger, as his eyebrows are in the shape of an A, as in Figure 1. Given the supporters and followers around him, he could have conveyed an image of greater confidence and joy, but his expression is usual in speeches as relevant as this one.



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xnh2lAe1RRw>.

Figure 1. Lula's Facial Expression during his Speech

Another relevant aspect to assess his way of speaking is his hand movements. Some authors point out that hand gestures „help us express our thoughts, emotions and intentions” (Bosker et al., 2021, p.1). During his speech, Lula uses his hands to turn the pages he is reading, and occasionally, he uses them to adjust his tie or rest them on the lectern. Therefore, the viewer has minimal cues from which to draw

clear conclusions from this section. The president does not convey signs of authority, often displayed by leaders when they move their hands vertically while speaking.

Elements such as the use of hands, facial expressions or specific linguistic resources are relevant in each speech. As Rahmani *et al.* (2024, p.2065) point out, „the words that come out of the mouths of political leaders, their narrative construction and their rhetorical devices are determinant for policy orientation and even for public perception”.

3.2 Tone

Concerning tone, Lula, maintains a uniform intonation and slow pace throughout his speech, aiming to ensure that what he wants to communicate in his first speech as president is understood. This intonation is enhanced when he points out the state of the country, often as a means to criticize his adversaries. Similarly, it is also emphasized at the beginning of each of his proposals for his new mandate.

Some of the statements expressed in a louder tone are: ‘It was demonstrated that it was indeed possible to govern this country with the broadest social participation, including workers and the poorest in the budget and in government decisions’, ‘As of today, the Law of Access to Information will again be complied with, the Transparency Portal will again fulfill its function, republican controls will again be exercised to defend the public interest’, ‘We must say: democracy forever!’, ‘We will repeal all injustices committed against indigenous peoples’. Sometimes these expressions end with applause from those attending his speech (in total, he was applauded 26 times).

He opens his speech by thanking the political awareness demonstrated by Brazilian society, stating that democracy was the winner in the elections (‘If we are here today, it is thanks to the political awareness of Brazilian. Democracy was the great victor in this election’). He adopts a hopeful tone at the beginning of his speech (‘our message to Brazil is one of hope and reconstruction’) to let the audience know what he envisions for his country.

Knox *et al.* (2021, p.649) highlight that „when politicians express themselves skeptically, compassionately, or fervently, their speech conveys more than the mere words that are spoken”. From Lula's speech, it can be inferred that the president intends for his words to carry a meaning that transcends their literal meaning. He wants the audience to perceive him as a serious leader with proposals and clear objectives for the years to come.

Lula also adopts a more emotional tone when he refers to the fact that ‘the freedom they preach is to oppress the vulnerable, massacre the opponent and impose the law of the strongest over the laws of civilization. This is called barbarism’. Finally, at the end, he says ‘with the strength of the people and the blessing of God, we will have to rebuild this country. Long live democracy! Long live the Brazilian people’.

Some authors indicate, „an important distinction here is that politicians who express emotional tone are not necessarily feeling emotional themselves” (Pipal *et al.*, 2024). This observation can be applied to many fragments of the discourse analyzed in this work.

An element that the president-elect includes in his speech is patriotism. He knows he will reach a significant portion of his audience by referring to this sentiment. Hence, he refers to Brazil on several occasions to convey what the country's significance should be at a global level (‘Brazil can and should be at the forefront of the world economy’, ‘our goal is to achieve zero deforestation in the Amazon and zero greenhouse gas emissions in the electricity grid, in addition to encouraging the reuse of degraded pastures. Brazil does not need to deforest to maintain and expand its strategic agricultural frontier’).

3.3 Use of Words

Like any political leader in his speech every word „is carefully selected, and the message he will give to the voter and its effect on him/her are well thought out. This is because how a politician says what he/she says is as important as what he/she says” (Çanakpınar *et al.*, 2024, p.256).

Throughout his speech, Lula uses words with a negative connotation to discredit or call into question the actions of his predecessor, Jair Bolsonaro (‘never before have the resources of the State been so misused for the benefit of an authoritarian project of power. Never before has the public machine been so far removed from republican controls’). On the negative side, he also refers to actions or their consequences that he considers negative for the country (‘ruins’, ‘poverty’, ‘authoritarianism’, ‘fascism’, ‘violence against small children, deforestation and environmental degradation’, ‘obscurantism’, ‘hunger’). According to Callegaro (2015), a speaker’s use of negation serves „to devalue, take in as untrue or invalidate propositions produced previously to his/her text” is a strategy that occurs in the analyzed speech.

Lula goes even further by explicitly warning to the previous government when discussing the Covid 19 pandemic (‘in no other country has the number of fatalities been as high in proportion to the population as in Brazil, one of the countries best prepared to face health emergencies... This paradox can only be explained by the criminal attitude of a government that is denialist, obscurantist and insensitive to life’).

On the other hand, he employs terms and expressions with positive connotations when talking about his personal experiences in his previous term as president (‘Twenty years ago, when I was elected president for the first time). Lula is also very graphic and emotional when he refers to the fight against economic inequality (‘I said, on that occasion, that my life’s mission would be fulfilled when all Brazilians could eat three times a day’).

He also speaks positively about the initiatives he proposed for his years in office (‘The wheel of the economy will turn again and popular consumption will play a central role in this process’, ‘We will initiate the energy and ecological transition towards sustainable agriculture and mining’, ‘We will promote prosperity on the land’, ‘We defend full freedom of expression’, ‘My most important mission... will be to honor the trust received and respond to the hopes of a suffering people’).

During his speech, he uses words to evoke powerful images to stir a profound emotional response among citizens, for example, when he says ‘If we are here today, it is thanks to the political awareness of Brazilian society and the democratic front that we formed throughout this historic election campaign’. In this sense, he repeats the word ‘freedom’ on several occasions to make it clear that under his leadership, freedom will prevail as opposed to what, in his opinion, has not been the case in previous years.

His constant mentions of ‘Brazil’, ‘Brazilian society’, and ‘Brazilian people’ seek to reinforce his sense of belonging to the nation, a point that his opponents had used against him during the election campaign.

Another aspect for which Lula had been criticized was that of religiosity, especially in a country where 64% of the population is Catholic. Lula mentions the word ‘God’ twice, although he does so to reaffirm religious freedom (‘I inaugurate this mandate reaffirming that in Brazil, faith can be present in all dwellings, in different temples, churches and cults. In this country everyone will be able to freely exercise their religiosity’).

In addition, he also employs inclusive language when referring to 'Brazilians', consistently emphasizing that upon his arrival to the presidency, everyone will be considered, more than what he perceives has occurred in recent years.

George Lakoff discusses the use of words in a discourse as a means of developing mental frames that resonate effectively with audiences and points out that: „once your frame is accepted within the discourse, everything you say is simply common sense. Why? Because that's what common sense is: reasoning within a commonplace, accepted framework” (Lakoff, 2007, p.92). Lula uses these frames in the speech analyzed in such a way that what he expresses becomes common sense to the listener. In this case, he intends to make the idea of Brazil's fortress predominate, declaring ('Brazil is too big to renounce its productive potential', 'Brazil can and must be at the forefront of the global economy', 'Brazil has to be master of itself, master of its destiny').

A common rhetorical device in Lula's speeches is the repetition of words. Besides having a positive and proactive message, the expression 'we are going' conveys the idea that those who voted for him will be involved in carrying out the policies he deems best for the country. The following examples are the most repeated words relevant to this work; they are highlighted, and the number of times they appear in his speech are in parentheses. 'We' (53), 'I' (20), 'country' (19), 'public' (18), 'Brazil' (17), 'people' (14), 'our' (13), 'they' (11), 'Brazilian' (10), 'again' (10), 'rights' (9), 'national' (8), 'today' (8), 'democratic' (8), 'democracy' (8), 'health' (7), 'education' (7), 'government' (7), 'private' (6), 'freedom' (6), 'economy' (5), 'development' (4). And in three-word expressions the most common are 'we are going' (10), 'ladies and gentleman' (9), 'the Brazilian people' (4).

3.4 Use of Singular and Plural

Personal pronouns are frequently used by leaders in their speeches. Liu highlights this point, stating that „given that pronominal forms can be used to implicitly convey alignment with (or distance from) certain roles in institutional settings, it is not surprising that politicians constantly resort to the pronominal system to do identity work” (Liu, 2024, p.423).

Lula's speech highlights the critical use of the first-person singular to underscore his past as head of the Brazilian presidency. He aims to leverage his own experience as an element to be taken into account when governing ('for the third time I appear at this National Congress', 'twenty years ago, when I was elected president for the first time... I began my inaugural speech with the word 'change'').

The use of 'I' describes concrete facts and offers personal reflections. For example, he indicated, 'I said... that my life's mission would be fulfilled when all Brazilians could eat three times a day'. He also uses the first-person plural ('to hatred, we will respond with love... To terror and violence, we will respond with the Law and its harshest consequences', 'we will promote small and medium enterprises', 'we will rebuild the Education budgets') and the possessive 'our' with the idea of welcoming the Brazilian people in decision making ('our protagonism will be materialized through the resumption of South American integration', 'our first actions aim at rescuing 33 million people from hunger'). The leader aligns himself with the audience by using the first-person plural pronouns 'we' and 'us'. „This creates the sense that speaker and audience are in some way united” (Bataineh, 2019, p.42).

The use of 'we' is contrasted throughout the speech with the third person plural ('they emptied the health resources. They dismantled Education, Culture, Science and Technology. They destroyed the protection of the Environment', 'They disorganized the governance of the economy, public financing, support for companies, entrepreneurs and foreign trade. They squandered public companies and public banking') to

discredit or criticize the policies and attitudes of the other, a tactic that, in the populist language, is known as the enemy. „Politicians especially like to use deixis in this way, as it can propose not only that the speaker and the audience have a shared cause, but also that there is a ‘they’ that exists in opposition to the ‘us’” (Jeffries, 2010).

Leaders who employ this technique, Lula is no exception, want the audience to not only identify who is to blame for failures but also to recognize who has a clear conscience because they will be the ones to implement the right policies. The victim/savior binomial is effective in this type of communication.

4. Discussion

4.1 Interpretation of the Speech

Before interpreting Lula da Silva's speech, it is pertinent to briefly contextualize his speech as president-elect.

Lula became president of Brazil in 2022, and although he initially faced skepticism from leaders at first, he was soon able to attract foreign investment and service Brazil's public debt. He allocated resources to combat hunger, poverty, and housing issues. „In May 2010, the UN World Food Programme awarded Lula the title of 'World Champion in the Fight Against Hunger'. Around 20 million Brazilians left poverty and joined the middle class during his presidency” (Sabatini *et al.*, 2023).

Dilma Rousseff, also representing the Workers' Party, succeeded him in the presidency until her impeachment in 2016 ousted her from office. That year, the Public Prosecutor's Office of Sao Paulo reported indications of Lula's involvement in a scheme to divert public funds, known as Lava Jato. He was arrested, and his house was searched. The judicial siege intensified until Odebrecht executives confessed to a widespread corruption scheme. Lula was convicted in his first trial in July 2017, receiving a sentence of nine years and six months in prison. He began his prison sentence on April 7th, 2018, and remained for 580 days before being released in November of the following year.

His judicial and political triumph came on March 8th, 2021, when a judge overturned the two convictions against him. Lula was not declared innocent of the corruption charges, although this ruling did restore his political rights, thereby reinstating his eligibility to run for office. At that time, Lula was already ahead of Bolsonaro in the polls for the 2022 elections (CIDOB, 2023).

It is essential to consider this political-judicial background to understand Lula's speech better in the context of the constraints typically associated with presidential speeches.

To interpret Lula's speech (2023), the video has been viewed multiple times to identify certain recurring elements that the president uses. Notably among them, he uses direct and short sentences to reach the audience more clearly. He employs positive terms to emphasize his ideas and proposals while using negative terms to criticize what he believes should be eradicated.

Throughout his speech, Lula repeats a resource of first denouncing the country's problems and then offering a solution (‘faced with the budgetary disaster that we have received, I have presented proposals to the National Congress that allow us to support the immense layer of the population that needs the state to simply survive’). The difficulties he highlights pertain to the strength of democracy, the destruction of the state, or the denial of politics. For each of these, the president has an alternative that he unpacks when he details the structure of his Executive.

Lula shows his conviction in the power of a planned economy that can lead the country toward full economic development and establish it as a regional economic power. ('It will be up to the state to articulate the digital transition and bring Brazilian industry into the 21st century, with an industrial policy that supports innovation, stimulates public-private cooperation, strengthens science and technology, and guarantees access to financing at adequate costs').

The terms 'economy' and 'development' are relevant for Lula, especially considering his ideological stance. In the economic sphere, he criticizes the previous president's actions in his speech ('the country's resources were plundered to satisfy the greed of rentiers and private shareholders of public companies'). He advocates for a new economic vision, stating ('we are going to promote small and medium enterprises, potentially the biggest generators of employment and income, entrepreneurship, cooperativism and creative economy. The wheel of the economy will turn again, and popular consumption will play a central role in this process'). He considers that development will be achieved by restoring the 'role of state institutions, public banks, and state-owned enterprises'. In his opinion, the investment that will lead to the country's development should be in education, health care to guarantee basic assistance, and what he calls the popular pharmacy.

He pays special attention to those issues that he knows resonate with his audience as opposed to what the country has experienced in previous years. These issues include authoritarianism, education, re-democratization, solidarity or the strength that Brazil should have in the global panorama. He dedicates a particular mention to COVID-19, using harsh terms to critique the policies of his predecessor ('denialist', 'obscurantist', 'insensitive', 'genocide').

Lula references the ideas he implemented during his previous presidency ('Twenty years ago... I said... that my life's mission would be fulfilled when all Brazilians could eat three times a day'). He then explains in detail his priority proposals in each ministerial department.

Throughout his speech, he repeatedly uses the 'we-they' dichotomy. For Lula, what 'they' have done is negative, while the solutions will stem from what he and his team do. At no point does he mention Bolsonaro directly, but he does not hesitate to criticize what the previous government has done, which positions him as an enemy, not only of his figure but also as an enemy of democracy and the nation itself.

Lula attaches importance to Brazil's role on the global stage and considers that one of his primary tasks is to ensure that this strength is maintained, particularly after it has, in his view, been severely damaged ('The great edifice of rights, sovereignty and development that this Nation built since 1988 has been systematically demolished in recent years. It is to rebuild this edifice of national rights and values that we will direct all our efforts').

Finally, Lula presents, on this occasion, a presidential image that reflects the context and timing in which his speech takes place. Although he is harsh in some of his remarks regarding the past, he is firm in articulating his proposals and solutions for Brazil's short- and medium-term future.

Conclusions

Concerning the conclusions, the first research question is confirmed because the discourse of a leader, in this case Lula, is more effective among the public that is ideologically favorable to him. Lula's political followers are concerned about inequality and social justice and expect Brazil to become a regional economic superpower. His followers' brains are more predisposed to listen to his messages, especially now, given the realities he has faced in recent years. This reference to the last few years is relevant

because uncertainties surrounded Lula's ability to run in the elections. Hence, his voters turned out at the polls to, in a way, legitimize him.

Moreover, these voters were already familiar with Lula's previous performance at the country's helm, so they already knew that he could fulfill all his economic and national development promises.

The predisposition of the recipients towards what a leader says differs because if they agree ideologically, they will find arguments that favor a positive stance. On the contrary, if they disagree with his ideas, they will also identify arguments that reinforce their negative position. While the brain is a complex machine, the work of neuropolitics helps to predict the final position individuals will adopt.

The ideological factor is also relevant in contexts where populism is strong, such as Brazil. Reaching the audience's brain through emotions and the simplification of messages to make them see that problems have simple solutions is common in these environments.

Lula da Silva employs tools associated with populist speeches that are highly effective among his voters. He considers that he is a figure who has done a lot for the country, for example, transforming its industrial and business structure and combating hunger, while also asserting that he has been treated unfairly. By repeatedly highlighting this, an approach he adopted during his electoral campaign, he achieves the desired effect of conquering his voter's brain.

Through his messages and public appearances, Lula manages to craft his version of populism: 'lulismo'. This ideology reaches voters, especially in the northeastern region of Brazil, as it counterposes the discourse of the upper classes with accessible measures that his supporters can easily understand.

The second research question is also confirmed. In this case, Lula employs variables that help his messages reach the audience more effectively. Several elements are relevant in this transmission process, including not only verbal components that reach the receiver's brain but also non-verbal elements that are more directly related to emotions.

The codebook designed for this study serves to validate this objective. Notably, it highlights his emphasis on certain words and expressions or the contrast between what „they“ have done and what „we“ will do, always considering that „they“ are the enemy and „we“ are the solution to the prevailing problems.

Other variables that help achieve this objective include his way of speaking and his consistent tone to convey reassurance and security. Lula's way of speaking is characterized by his sobriety when addressing the audience; he avoids excessive gestures and uses the resource of reading his speeches. His tone is also sober, perhaps somewhat monotonous with limited fluctuations in his oratory, traits commonly observed when he delivers formal speeches, as in this case. All these elements enhance his speech's effectiveness from the neuropolitics perspective.

Therefore, the methodology chosen for this paper is deemed appropriate as it begins with a review of the main concepts of neurocommunication, neuropolitics, or populism to establish a theoretical framework for this work. In addition, the content analysis technique is used to highlight the main aspects of Lula's speech, using an appropriate codebook to facilitate the analysis.

Regarding the academic implications of this study for the future, we consider that it analyzes various concepts that, when juxtaposed, yield novel contributions to the examination of a specific case, such as Lula da Silva's discourse. This work can also be useful for professionals by offering a fresh perspective on reaching voters' brains using specific tools.

We also believe that this study is necessary as it focuses on a concrete reality that can be used to analyze others within the current political and economic environment. It analyzes a case of a winning leader that can be applied in similar cases.

The main limitations of this article are threefold. The first is the number of variables chosen for analysis, which could be more significant, as they would also have been useful for the study's objectives. Second, comparative studies could be conducted on the discourse of two or more political leaders, either within the same region, South America or across different regions. This comparison can even extend to speeches in similar contexts, such as inaugural addresses of newly elected presidents. The third limitation pertains to the potential to recognize biases in data collection, which could be done in future research on this topic.

In any case, we believe that this work successfully achieves its objective of providing a neuropolitical perspective on a specific discourse by considering its characteristics and variables.

Looking ahead, we believe this article may be useful for further research in neuropolitics, political discourse, or content analysis. It could also benefit the main actors in the political arena from a practical and scientific perspective.

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EKONOMIKOS ĮTAKA POLITINIAMS SPRENDIMAMS: LULA DA SILVA INAUGURACINĖS KALBOS ATVEJIS 2023 M.

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Santrauka. Straipsnio tikslas – išanalizuoti, kaip politinis diskursas, pasižymintis tvirtu ekonominiu ir transformaciniu požiūriu, pasiekia skirtingas auditorijas. Analizuota Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva kalba, pasakyta 2023 m. sausio 1 dieną, kai jis buvo paskelbtas Brazilijos prezidentu. Analizei aktualios sąvokos: neurokomunikacija, neuropolitika arba ryšys tarp politinio / ekonominio diskurso Brazilijoje ir populizmo. Norint sužinoti, kaip Lula kreipiasi į auditoriją, pasitelkta Kodų knyga. Išskiriami vartojami žodžiai, kaip prezidentas kalba, taip pat kalbos tonas. Šiais elementais Lula bando įtikinti klausytojus savo idėjų Brazilijai naudai. Patvirtinta, kad politinio lyderio, šiuo atveju Lulos, kalba efektyvesnė auditorijoje, kuri yra jam palankesnė ideologiniu požiūriu. Taip pat nustatyta, kad jo dėmesys tam tikriems žodžiams ir posakiams, kontrastas tarp „jūs“ ir „mes“ arba tai, kaip jis kalba, padeda jam sėkmingai pasiekti tikslą.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: neuropolitika; ekonomika; Lula da Silva; Brazilija; rinkėjų efektas.