Terror and Evil in Iraq
A Study of Political Discourse

Georgia Dekavalla
Abstract

This paper aims to determine the validity of the hypothesis that the effective and eloquent use of language can result in shaping beliefs and altering people’s perception of certain phenomena. In order to explore this hypothesis, a speech given by George W. Bush concerning the Iraq war is examined, followed by a brief study of two corpora, the Time Magazine Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English, where the collocation-patterns of the words *Iraq*, *evil* and *terror* are examined. The paper starts by presenting the main concepts upon which this study is based, i.e. mental frames, the co-operative principle and conversational maxims and finally, various rhetoric devices. An analysis section follows, where George Bush’s speech is examined with the help of the concepts mentioned above and the analysis continues with the corpora-study. One of the conclusions drawn in this study is that, indeed, it is possible that language can be successfully used in order to achieve political means, and that there seems to be a shift in the American public’s perception of concepts such as *Iraq* and *terror*, visible in the use of language. However, it cannot be said with certainty whether the Bush Administration has managed to dominate public discourse, through a study as minor as this one.

Keywords: mental frames (purport) – the co-operative principle – maxims of conversation – rhetoric devices – implicature – Iraq – terror – evil
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1. Introduction

Politics can be defined, among other things, as:

- The theory or practice of government or administration
- Activities or policies associated with government, especially those concerning the organization and administration of a state, or part of a state, and with the regulation of relationships between states.
- Public life and affairs involving matters of authority and government
- The political ideas, beliefs, or commitments of a particular individual, organization, etc.
- Actions concerned with the acquisition or exercise of power, status, or authority

(Oxford English Dictionary, 2008)

It appears that politics can mean many different things, but most definitions are connected to power. So, politics is all about power: to establish it, maintain it, distribute it etc. One of the most effective means at the disposal of those concerned with politics and by extension, with power, is language. Of course, power can be exercised by coercion, but it is usually much more desirable and cost-effective to persuade people to behave in a certain way, i.e., in Fairclough’s words, to exercise power by manufacturing consent (Thomas et.al 1999: 38). Language plays an important part in creating consent and making certain ideologies generally accepted as common sense. Cameron (1999: 154), for example, goes as far as to state that “Whoever controls words controls the world”.

How is language connected to exercising power? Many linguists maintain that our language represents the way we interpret reality, and, consequently, language can influence our thoughts on that reality (see, for example, Edwards 1997 and Cameron 1999). Thus, potentially, language can influence thought, since it is language that provides speakers with a range of concepts in order to express their perception of the world. At the beginning of the 20th century, the American linguists Whorf and Sapir conducted research on how our language can influence the way we perceive reality. They argued that the structures of language influence the way people think and this notion came to be called linguistic relativity. When people apply language categories to real life
situations, i.e. when “people act about situations in ways which are like the ways they talk about them” (Whorf 1939), the way they think and act can be affected. Whorf and Sapir supported this argument by various real-life observations (Edwards 1997: 204-208). A part of the research by Whorf was conducted in storage facilities: the people working there considered containers labelled ‘empty gasoline drums’ safer than those labelled ‘gasoline drums’, even though the empty ones still contained dangerous fumes. The workers were, as a result, less careful around the ‘empty’ containers, thus causing accidents (Whorf 1939). If we accept the linguistic relativity perspective i.e. that we perceive the world through categories provided by language, it is clear that language and thought are, to a certain extent, indistinguishable (Edwards 1997: 204-208). In a political context, this notion is of great importance. Wilson (2001: 401) maintains that in order for politicians to persuade people to share their values and view the world in a way that favours their political agendas, they have to be able to master language as a means of representation (Schiffrin et.al 2001: 401). Chilton (2004) exemplifies the close connection between language and politics by quoting Aristotle:

Speech, on the other hand, serves to indicate …what is just and what is unjust. For the real difference between man and other animals is that humans alone have perception of good and evil… It is a sharing of a common view in these matters that makes…a state. (Chilton 2004: 198)

Chilton’s interpretation of Aristotle’s words is that humans’ ability for language is closely linked to their ability to live in communities. Also, language is used to communicate the value systems shared by the members of a community (Chilton 2004: 198-199).

2. Aim, Scope and Research Questions

The area of study of this paper is political discourse in terms of linguistic devices used in political speeches. The objective is to look into how politicians can use language in an attempt to shape people’s beliefs and establish ideologies. In particular, I examine a speech by George Bush concerning the Iraq war given on 26 February 2003, less than a month before the war began. The aim of this paper is to apply the theories discussed in

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the following section on President Bush’s speech. The theories will be tested through (i) pointing out the rhetoric devices used in the speech and (ii) interpreting the intentions of the speaker behind the use of these devices. Further, the validity of the claim that the elaborate use of language can affect the way people perceive situations and phenomena is tested. This is tested by studying the collocations related to specific words such as *Iraq*, *evil* and *terror* using the Time Magazine corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English. By doing this, the following questions are addressed:

- In what way can rhetoric devices be used as means of persuasion?
- Is it possible to detect President Bush’s intentions and ideologies by analysing his speech?
- Has there been an effect on the American public’s conceptual mental frames of concepts such as ‘Iraq’, ‘evil’ and ‘terror’ from 2000 onwards, detectable in the use of language?
- If there has been an effect, is it a result, among other extra-linguistic factors, of the use of effective and persuasive language on behalf of the administration?

The hypothesis in this paper is that it is possible to manipulate people’s perception of some phenomena with the effective use of language. Further, by ‘reading between the lines’ in President Bush’s speech on Iraq, it is possible to detect his intentions, which are to render public opinion in favour of a war that he claims might be necessary, but what he means is that it has already been decided. Lastly, this paper assumes that a shift of people’s perception of the terms mentioned above can be observed in their use of language. However, the validity of this hypothesis remains to be tested by the study of the two corpora.

### 3. Method and Material

The material used in this paper is a speech given by George W. Bush on 26 February 2003 and two corpora of American English: The Time Magazine Corpus, comprising ten million words, and the Corpus of Contemporary American English, comprising
approximately three hundred and eighty five million words. A qualitative analysis was conducted on the speech while a quantitative method was used to examine the collocation patterns of *Iraq*, *terror* and *evil* in the two corpora.

4. Theoretical Background

The theoretical background is divided into three sub-sections, where the three main concepts used in the analysis, namely mental frames, the co-operative principle and rhetoric devices, are presented, defined and exemplified.

4.1 Mental Frames

Sapir and Whorf’s claim that language determines the way its speakers perceive reality has never been proven with certainty. However, given that language contains our interpretation of reality, it should, to a certain extent, also influence our way of thinking about reality (Edwards, 1997: 204-208), which is the theory adopted in this paper. Taking this idea further, many linguists talk of frames, though they define and exemplify them in different ways. Lakoff (2000) defines mental frames as a body of previously accumulated knowledge that people draw upon in order to better understand an utterance, and argues that frames are very important parts of people’s cognitive inventory. They are “the glue that holds cultures together and allows individuals within those cultures to feel like competent members of a cohesive community” (Lakoff 2000: 49). Once a frame has been established it is very difficult to think outside of it, so an idea becomes common sense when it is a part of a frame accepted by the vast majority of a community. An effective way of persuading is thus to evoke particular frames in listeners and assume that the speaker’s position is unquestionable because it is normal or common sense (Lakoff 2000: 47-50). Cruse (2004) calls mental frames ‘purport’, i.e. a mental body of concepts. He suggests that every word is connected to our purport, which constitutes a collection of previous experiences of the use of each word in context (Cruse 2004: 262). An example of a mental frame would be EDUCATION. The conceptual frame of EDUCATION involves other concepts such as SCHOOL, TEACHERS, STUDENTS, COURSES, LEARNING, etc, and the use of any of the concepts related to EDUCATION can evoke this particular frame.
In Fairclough’s (2001) view, an ideology can be successfully spread by inserting it into discourse along with notions that are considered to be common sense. An ideology is effective when it appears to be a part of people’s mental conceptual frames. A spoken or written text becomes coherent by combing the information included in the text and the reader’s/listener’s assumptions and expectations. Apparently, we interpret all messages we are confronted with, by combining information given by the text to our implicit frames. Fairclough calls this inference. By using this process, a speaker/writer can force their theses upon readers/listeners: through elements of the texts interpreters are placed in a position where they have to accept the speaker’s presuppositions as valid in order for the text to make sense. Chilton (2004: 38) calls the same process deontic implicature, and suggests that it is extensively used by political speakers to, firstly, convey more than they say, and, secondly, to ‘force’ a particular ideology upon the hearers. Political forces use discourse to legitimise their policies, and each one of them seeks to render its own discourse type the most commonly used to talk about all aspects of society. Fairclough describes this process as naturalisation of a discourse type, where the dominant discourse is no longer associated with particular ideologies or interests and becomes the common sense (Fairclough 2001: 64-89).

Bolinger (1980) also explores the idea of framing. He argues that every time we are faced with something new, we try to fit it to our previous experiences. We do not just learn new names for new things, we simultaneously try to place them into our mental frames as subcategories of something we already know. A baobab, for example, is a tree. This is the process by which we organise reality and construct language. Bolinger (1980: 140) says that “the world is a vast elaborated metaphor”. This process of organising reality starts during early childhood and it is the means by which humans categorise and store their knowledge of the world. We are born with the capacity to see similarities. There are, for example, colours that we notice first, the so called primary colours. Other colours that are less distinguished are named by comparison to the primary colours, e.g. light green, green-blue. Children, therefore, learn language at the same time as they learn to compare, i.e. they widen their language and frames by classifying new experiences under previously learned categories. Thus, Bolinger concludes, everything we know and express through language is in terms of something else, in terms of metaphors, a
continuous process originating in early childhood. In simple words we learn about the world through metaphors that help us comprehend new experiences and knowledge, by comparing it to what we already know (Bolinger 1980: 140-146). Bolinger’s suggestion strengthens the claim that it is extremely difficult to think outside our mental frames by which we categorise the world further, and reframing can be viewed as “social change” (Lakoff 2004: xv).

4.2 The ‘Co-operative Principle’

Chilton (2004) bases his analysis of political discourse on the so-called ‘co-operative principle’. According to this principle, when humans communicate they share the will to co-operate, in order to exchange information. Chilton suggests that no kind of linguistic communication would be possible, if the co-operation principle was not assumed. He demonstrates this by saying: “it is impossible to lie or be devious unless the group makes a collective assumption about communicative cooperation” (Chilton 2004: 20). The co-operative principle is accompanied by four ‘conversational maxims’, which propose some guidelines for effective linguistic communication:

i) Maxim of Quantity: be as informative as required, no more and no less 
ii) Maxim of Quality: do not say what you believe to be false or lack evidence for 
iii) Maxim of Relation: be relevant 
iv) Maxim of Manner: avoid obscurity and ambiguity, be brief and orderly  

(Chilton 2004: 33, based on Grice 1975)

Even in a political context, where the purpose of communication could very well be deception, the co-operative principle has to be followed, at least on a basic level, for communication to be possible. This fact leads to numerous choices of linguistic interaction, making human language so prolific. In other words, a speaker may flout the maxims, i.e. the speaker might openly contravene the conversational maxims, intending for the hearer to notice and by that convey additional information. This phenomenon is called implicature. Chilton (2004: 35) claims that implicatures are crucial to political speech, since they are the means by which a message is implicitly conveyed, without the

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1 first developed by Grice (1975)
speaker assuming responsibility. What is more, the use of implicatures enables a speaker to communicate a message that only members of a particular group will be able to figure out (Chilton 2004: 34-35). There is a distinction between generalised, or conventional, and particularised, or conversational, implicatures, the latter being relevant to political speech. An example of a generalised implicature (Chilton 2004: 35) would be:

(1) Some MPs are in favour of the policy.
   (The listener is to assume that not all Members of Parliament are in favour of the policy.)

The implicature here arises without the need for the listener to be aware of any background information, and is achieved by flouting the maxim of quantity (be as informative as required). When it comes to particularised implicatures, the hearer needs to be aware of the particular context and some background information, in order to be able to extract the meaning intended by the speaker. Cruse (2004: 374) gives an example of a particularised implicature:

(2) A: What time is it?
    B: Some of the guests are already leaving. (A is to infer that it is late)

The implicature in (2) arises by flouting the maxim of relation (be relevant) and even that of manner (avoid obscurity). By doing this the speaker wishes to convey an additional message, under the condition that the speaker is aware of the particular context (there is a party with guests that has been going on for some time).

The importance of particularised implicatures in political language lies in the fact that they enable politicians to convey additional implicit messages with their utterances. Most significantly, in order for the co-operative principle to be followed and for the interaction to make sense, the hearer is ‘forced’ to assume the speaker’s values and ideology. According to Chilton (2004), the exact way in which implicatures work is not clear, but they involve exploiting listeners’ implicit mental frames and in this way direct
them to infer information that was not explicitly stated, and adopt a certain set of values suggested by the speaker (Chilton 2004: 35).

4.3 Rhetoric Devices

Implicatures might be the most important means available to political speakers but there are also additional ‘tools’ that are used in speeches to aid and strengthen the work of implicatures. Linguists call these rhetoric (or rhetorical) devices. Rhetoric is defined as “the art of using language so as to persuade or influence others; the body of rules to be observed by a speaker or writer in order that he may express himself with eloquence” (OED 1989). Some of public speakers’ favourite rhetoric devices are metaphors, metonymy, analogy, presuppositions, personifications, parallelisms, deixis and anaphora, the sophisticated use of personal pronouns and the ‘rule of the three’ (Thomas et al. 2004). These notions are discussed below.

Presuppositions are used to persuade listeners, through textual cues, to accept something as self-evident even if it is controversial. More precisely, presuppositions are defined as “background assumptions embedded in a sentence or phrase, which are taken for granted to be true regardless of whether the whole sentence is true” (Thomas et al. 2004: 42). Thomas et al. provide an example of a presupposition in the following statement, taken from the British Conservative Party Manifesto: We want to set people free so that they have greater power over their own lives (Thomas et al. 2004: 42). It is presupposed that people are not currently free since the speaker wishes to free them. The presupposition would still be valid in the case of negation: We do not want to set people free so that they have greater power over their own lives (ibid: 42). Presuppositions can be embedded in sentences by using adjectives in the comparative, possessives, subordinate clauses and questions instead of statements. The difference between presuppositions and implicatures is that presuppositions are not depended on a specific shared conceptual background between speaker and listener and are not suggested but taken for granted (Thomas et al. 2004: 36-53).

Metaphors are in essence comparisons between entities or ideas, and as mentioned earlier, are crucial components for categorising reality (Bolinger 1980). A metaphor is a
declaration that something is something else, as in *time is money*, time is rendered valuable by comparison to money. According to Beard (2000), the most commonly used metaphors in politics relate to sports or war, and are so deeply rooted in people’s minds that politics is equalised with confrontation and conflict, while other aspects of politics, such as consensus, are mostly disregarded (Beard 2000: 22). A personification is also a kind of metaphor, which concerns giving inanimate entities and abstract ideas human characteristics. Countries are often referred to as persons, for example, for purposes of rendering speeches more dramatic or to even evoke ideological frames (Thomas et al. 2004: 36-53).

Beard (2000) defines metonymy as substituting the name of something with something else with a close connection to it. We can, for example, refer to a king as the *crown*. In political discourse the administration of a country is referred to by the name of building as in the *White House* for the American government or *No 10 Downing Street* for the British one. Metonymy serves to make actions or statements appear less personal, where the actor’s identity is obscured (Beard 2000: 19).

According to Beard (2000), analogy is also a means of comparison. The term refers to the comparison between things that are different but share certain characteristics. So, the listener is urged to deduce that if the two things compared have certain common characteristics they must logically have other common elements as well. The degree of validity of an analogy depends on how similar the things compared are and whether they are relevant to the argument in question. Beard gives an example of a comparison between human and monkey behaviour. Since monkeys and humans share similar properties, by analogy, the way monkeys behave under stress may be similar to the way humans behave under stress (Beard 2000: 28).

Public speakers also use parallelisms in order to emphasise particular parts of their message. Parallelism thus refers to a series of similar structures where equally important ideas are expressed. It furnishes a text with rhythm and symmetry, making it stay on the minds of people (Thomas et al. 2004). Thomas et al (2004: 51) use a quote from a very famous speech by Sir Winston Churchill in 1940 as an example:
We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender

Here the speaker, by the use of repetition, makes his text more vibrant while simultaneously the important message is underlined.

Deixis refers to ‘pointing with language’ and it is central in maintaining text cohesion. Chilton (2004: 56) defines deixis as the means by which a speaker urges his or her listeners to relate a deictic expression used to a particular context. Personal pronouns can perform a deictic function e.g. *us* as opposed to *them*, to signify group insiders and outsiders. Deixis can also be spatial (*here* – *there*) or temporal (*now*) (Chilton 2004). Deictic expressions can also be used to perform an anaphoric function. That is to say, deictic expressions such as *this* or *these* are used to refer to something previously mentioned in the speech and thus strengthen text cohesion further by repetition (Beard 2000: 25). Finally, personal pronouns can also be used to emphasise or conceal agency and consequently responsibility. ‘Three-part statements’ are used for aesthetic results as it appears that all humans share a liking for triads (Thomas et al. 2004: 36-53).

5. Analysis

The analysis section comprises of two parts, a qualitative analysis of a speech given by President George W. Bush, and a small scale corpus investigation on the collocation-patterns of *Iraq*, *terror* and *evil*.

5.1 President Bush’s Speech

On 26 February 2003, President George W. Bush gave a speech at the Washington Hilton Hotel for the members of the American Enterprise Institute. The subject of his speech was the future of Iraq, as stated by the Office of the Press Secretary. The President opens his speech with an all-time classic, a group of three:

(l) I’m proud to be with the scholars, and the friends, and the supporters of the American Enterprise Institute.
In this way he opens the speech dynamically and at the same time signals his proximity with, and appreciation for, his listeners. After a few introductory words of praise for the Institute and its members, the main elements of the speech are presented, namely the impending danger originating from Iraq and a warning that inaction will lead to results similar to 9/11. Bush’s intention is clear: to justify a possible military action against Iraq. In order to achieve this he needs to evoke fear and a sense of duty in his audience.

(2) On a September morning, threats that had gathered for years, in secret and far away, led to murder in our country on a massive scale.

Here, the mental frame of the terrorist strikes in New York on September 11, 2001 is evoked in the minds of the hearers, so they will infer that they are facing a similar threat, thus fear for the upcoming threat is induced.

(3) As a result, we must look at security in a new way, because our country is a battlefield in the first war of the 21st century.

The metaphor our country is a battlefield is a powerful one. The evoked frame of a battlefield includes concepts such as death and suffering on a large scale, which in turn evoke the 9/11 frame, thus rendering the danger present and immediate. The implicature we must look at security in a new way arises by flouting the maxim of manner. It could be said that Bush is being obscure about the new way to look at security. However, in this particular context, this new way Mr Bush is referring to, could probably be interpreted as so-called pre-emptive strikes, a term referring to military operations attempting to prevent an enemy threat or offensive, otherwise considered inevitable.

(4) We learned a lesson: The dangers of our time must be confronted actively and forcefully, before we see them again in our skies and in our cities. And we set a goal: we will not allow the triumph of hatred and violence in the affairs of men.
The implicature here is that inaction, i.e. not going to war, will lead to disaster. Further the use of *we* performs the deictic function of placing the speaker and hearers in the exact same position, spatially as well as ideologically. There is also the presupposition that our times are dangerous, which is taken for granted, as well as the idea that speaker and hearers have a common goal. Finally, the personification of hatred and violence adds a dramatic effect to the utterance. The result is that the speaker manages to inconspicuously ‘compel’ his hearers to share his position.

(5) We have arrested, or otherwise dealt with, many key commanders of Al Qaeda. Across the world, we are hunting down the killers one by one. We are winning. We are showing them the definition of American justice. And we are opposing the greatest danger in the war on terror: outlaw regimes arming with weapons of mass destruction.

The president with the use of parallelism emphasises the work already done against the individuals considered responsible for the terrorist attacks in New York, and concludes with yet another implicature: the greatest danger consists of regimes arming with weapons of mass destruction and that includes Iraq, which is explicitly mentioned first in the coming sentence, but has been hinted at, right from the start. In this way, a parallel is drawn between Iraq and Al Qaeda leading the audience to infer that Iraq is similar to the terrorist organisation of Al Qaeda, arming in order to carry out terrorist strikes.

(6) In Iraq, a dictator is building and hiding weapons that could enable him to dominate the Middle East and intimidate the civilised world…

Another example of presupposition: it is presented as an indisputable fact that there are weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, even though that was highly disputed by many at the time and later on proven not to be valid. The use of *dictator* as a means of anaphora to Saddam Hussein helps support the presupposition by evoking the frame of *dictator*, demonstrating how dangerous and ruthless he is, just like all dictators.

(7) The danger posed by Saddam Hussein and his weapons cannot be ignored or wished away. The danger must be confronted.
It is presented as an indisputable fact that Hussein does possess dangerous weapons and that this danger is not being confronted, even though the United Nations Security Council’s inspectors in Iraq, were unable to find any such weapons.

(8) The safety of the American people depends on ending this direct and growing threat.

The implicature in this example is that American people are not safe and the only means by which to protect their safety is to go to war. The danger is near and immediate. The deictic this is used anaphorically and helps maintain cohesion by repeating the vital message of the speech, which is that Iraq poses a threat to the safety of Americans and must be dealt with immediately.

(9) Rebuilding Iraq will require a sustained commitment from many nations including our own: we will remain in Iraq as long as necessary and not a day more. America has made and kept this kind of commitment before – in the peace that followed a world war.

Here the implicature is attained by means of analogy and by evoking the conceptual frame of WWII, where the Americans with their “Marshal Plan” were indisputably the good guys. This kind of commitment is a deictic expression referring to the context of the end of the Second World War, commonly shared by speaker and audience. American funds and troops helped rebuild the war-devastated Europe and re-establish democracy in Germany. By analogy the listeners are to infer that a post-war Iraq will develop in the same way that countries in Europe did in the post-war era.

(10) There was a time when many said that the cultures of Japan and Germany were incapable of sustaining democratic values. Well, they were wrong. Some say the same of Iraq today. They are mistaken.

Again by means of analogy, the listeners are to infer that just like Japan and Germany were built up after the war and are today respected members of the world community, so
will Iraq. The American people have a moral duty of helping Iraq to accomplish that by ridding it of a dictator, by going to war.

Furthermore, President Bush goes as far as to suggest that a successful military operation in Iraq would eventually lead to the solution of the Palestinian conflict. This implicature is stretched over three paragraphs embedding further presuppositions and a metaphor.

(1) Success in Iraq could also begin a new stage for Middle Eastern peace and set in motion progress towards a truly democratic Palestinian state. The passing of Saddam Hussein’s regime will deprive terrorist networks of a wealthy patron that pays for terrorist training, and offers rewards to families of suicide bombers.

Much can be deduced from this utterance. Firstly, there is the presupposition that the Palestinian state is not democratic and also that the Palestinian state is a network of terrorists. This network is being financed by a wealthy patron, Saddam Hussein. Saddam is the head of a network of terrorist activity. The Palestinian state is linked to Saddam somewhat metonymically, since Saddam is the one financing a terrorist network, of which Palestine is a part. The expression wealthy patron makes the proposition more dynamic by means of contrast. A patron is someone who supports arts or athletic events, educational institutions and similar, not a person financing terrorist networks. So patron usually has positive connotations, being synonymous to sponsor and benefactor, but here it is used in a negative context. In this case, it is a ‘clash’ of mental frames that makes a strong impression.

(12) Without this outside support for terrorism, Palestinians… will be in a better position to choose new leaders. True leaders who strive for peace; true leaders who faithfully serve the people. A Palestinian state must be a reformed and peaceful state that abandons for ever the use of terror.

The use of the deictic this…support, to refer to Saddam maintains cohesion and once again presupposes that Saddam actively supports terrorism. Further presuppositions are that Palestinians are not in a position to choose leaders, the current leaders of Palestine...
are not true and faithful to the people and also that the Palestinian state is exercising terrorism. Examples 11 and 12 demonstrate how, in order for the text to make sense, the listeners have to assume Bush’s beliefs with regard to Iraq and the Middle East.

Next, Bush attempts to remove legitimacy from the UN Security Council, since the UN inspectors in Iraq did not find any weapons that would justify military action.

(13) We believe in the Security Council – so much that we want its words to have meaning.
(14) If the council responds to Iraq’s defiance with more excuses and delays, if all its authority proves to be empty, the United Nations will be severely weakened as a source of stability and order.

Firstly, the use of the personal pronoun we places the audience in the same position as the speaker and the presupposition that follows is that the words of the Security Council are empty of meaning. In the next example, what the president wishes to convey with not so many words is that the Security Council does not have the resolution to respond to the threat coming from Iraq. This is achieved by two presuppositions: that the council is delaying and using excuses and that some of its authority is indeed empty.

After rendering the council’s position illegitimate, Bush strengthens his own position further:

(15) They know America’s cause is right and just: liberty for an oppressed people and security for the American people.

His conviction becomes America’s cause, by metonymy. Earlier he has used the pronoun we to place the audience and by extension the American people in the same position as him, and now America is used in the same way: his cause is America’s cause. The choice of the word cause is also interesting: who can argue with a cause that is about liberating the oppressed and protecting their own? Again, the listeners have to adopt the speaker’s position for the message to make sense.

President Bush used the expression ‘Axis of evil’ to describe Iran, Iraq and North Korea as early as January 2002. Nonetheless, it was not until a year later that military operations in the Persian Gulf were initiated. It appears that Bush had decided about the
war a long time before it happened. There was no need for time-consuming preparations, since the USA has the biggest arsenal in the world. The reason for the delay was that public support was needed, and the means to ensure public support was the successful use of language. People cannot easily perceive issues of territory and threat that are so distant, but almost all of us have a mental frame of the risks involved in a war, provided by our language. Therefore, the public needed to be convinced of the necessity of a war. The speech analysed above is an example of the persuasive power of linguistic expressions. Through the elaborate use of different rhetoric devices, the president manages to present the danger as near, thus evoking fear, while at the same time he induces a sense of duty to help a suffering people, by presenting despicable crimes committed by Saddam Hussein.

5.2 Iraq, Terror and Evil

This section examines the possibility to detect traces of a shift in the use of the word *Iraq*, pointing to a successful spread of President Bush’s ideology as common sense. The study of the two corpora of American English, the Time Magazine Corpus and the Corpus of Contemporary American English, points in that direction.

Since the beginning of this century, there seems to be a shift in the collocations of the word *Iraq*, in American English. Between the 1920s and the 1990s *Iraq* was mostly used in neutral context in articles from Time Magazine, like:

(16) At Bagdad, capital of *Iraq*, officials decided to postpone a general election for the first national parliament (1925)
(17) In January, Dr. Monroe will sail for *Iraq*, site of ancient Babylon (1931)
(18) Feisal will replace Abdul Illah as constitutional ruler of *Iraq* (1951)
(19) The Mandaeans, markedly taller and fairer than the swarthy Arabs of *Iraq*, sometimes identify themselves… (1960)
(20) Largely because of that petrol power, *Iraq* is emerging as a political force in the Middle East (1979)
(21) The Turks recently offered to make electric power available to Syria and *Iraq* from the huge dam Anatolia project (1990)
However, in the period between 2000 and 2006, Iraq is used in negative context in 47% of the examples from the Time Magazine corpus, and in the rest of the examples Iraq collocates mostly with words such as rebuild and liberate, which are also related to the war. The most common collocates of Iraq in negative context are war, threat, weapons, Al-Qaeda, terror and rogue country, as demonstrated in the following diagram.

Diagram 1.

Some examples are:

(22) To construct a Slomin’s Shield to protect us from rogue nations like Iraq, Iran and North Korea
(23) Iraq is back in business as a threat,
(24) The U.S. prepares to shift its war against terror to Iraq,
(25) Secretary Donald Rumsfeld declared, "There are al-Qaeda in a number of locations in Iraq " receiving shelter from Saddam's regime.

A further observation that might strengthen the hypothesis that Bush’s beliefs about Iraq are becoming common sense is that Iraq collocates with the words evil and terror only in the examples from 2000 onwards.

(26) Saddam ends his seclusion, and terror is again in style in Iraq

Evil has mostly been used in religious context, as in:

(27) The rite was performed for the purpose of driving away the evil spirits....
Nevertheless, Iraq is now one of the most frequent collocates of evil, with a frequency of 4%, with the most common example being Axis of Evil, an expression first used by Bush\(^2\):

(28) President Bush first used "Axis of Evil" to describe Iran, Iraq and North Korea in his State of the Union address…

Similar observations can be made in the Corpus of Contemporary American English. Most examples come from spoken language, where Iraq collocates with terror in 230 instances and with evil in 45, with examples such as:

(29) Iraq is part of the worldwide network of terror
(30) The battle of Iraq is one victory in a war on terror that began on September the 11\(^{th}\)
(31) Iraq's evil aggression must be reversed
(32) President Bush's depiction of Iran, Iraq and North Korea as an axis of evil…

Worth noticing is the pattern followed by the word terror through time. Terror is defined in OED as “The state of being terrified or greatly frightened; intense fear, fright, or dread”, and it has been used almost exclusively in that sense, that of denoting great fear in general, until the 2000s, as can be seen in the following examples:

(33) Portugal was in terror of invasion (1940s)
(34) Women cried out in terror, and were beaten back with clubs or gun butts (1950s)
(35) The look of sudden terror and humiliation on the face of a human being (1960s)
(36) Leprosy is still considered too alarming, but the disease is losing some of its terror (1970s)
(37) We shall continue to be threatened by the terror of nuclear holocaust (1980s)
(38) Zulus brandishing traditional weapons is enough to instill terror in the black townships around Johannesburg (1980s)

\(^2\) However, George Bush was not the first American president to use evil to characterize an enemy. The pioneer was Ronald Reagan, when in a speech given at the annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida, on 8 March 1983, he used the expression evil empire to refer to the Soviet Union. For more information see THE RONALD REAGAN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY at http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/publicpapers.html
However, in the large majority of the examples from 2000 and onwards, *terror* is used to denote “violence or threats of violence used for intimidation or coercion; terrorism” (Dictionary.com Unabridged), with the use of the word in its traditional meaning, that of great fear, being the minority of the examples.

(39) CIA chief and a member of the *terror* commission
(40) …new theories of who might be behind the anthrax *terror*
(41) …the specialty of cracking Islamist *terror* networks

Diagram 2.

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Use of terror in the 2000s

- 87% terror as synonym to terrorism
- 13% terror denoting great fear
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As indicated in the above diagram, in the 2000s terror is used as a synonym to terrorism with a frequency of more than 80%. There seems to be an on-going shift of meaning considering the word *terror*. Cruse (2004: 212) claims that semantic change is closely related to synchronic meaning extension, and *terror* is now used as a synonym to *terrorism*. It seems possible that *terror* is undergoing a semantic change, which also means that people’s conceptual frames of *terror* are being altered. According to Cruse (2004: 262), our purports, or mental frames continually develop, as every new instance of the use of a word alters that word’s conceptual frame to a certain extent. It is, of course, impossible to reach an absolute conclusion on evidence from such a short period of time. On the other hand, this possibility cannot be totally dismissed as in the 2000s the use of *terror*
denoting violence used for political purposes comprises the majority of its uses. What is more, many American dictionaries now include this instance of meaning of terror in their definitions, for example terror is defined as “Violence committed or threatened by a group to intimidate or coerce a population, as for military or political purposes” (The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language) or “The use of extreme fear in order to coerce people (especially for political reasons) (WordNet® 3.0, © 2006 by Princeton University). On the other hand the OED does not include this definition of the word, which hints at the meaning extension of terror being confined to an American context, or perhaps that this particular definition of the word is too recent to have appeared in the OED. As mentioned earlier it is not possible to make certain claims in such a minor study. Nonetheless, the results at which this study arrived could be a starting point for future research, and especially the patterns of use of the word terror, which appear to change quite rapidly.

6. Summary and Conclusion

To conclude, the aim of this paper was to - if possible – reach conclusions regarding the use of language for political purposes. In order to achieve this, various issues were examined, such as the role of linguistic expressions and rhetoric devices in language aiming at persuasion, the possibility to interpret speakers’ intentions by analysing their messages and finally the possibility to detect a potential impact on people’s conceptual frames through the use of language. To facilitate this examination, this study focused on firstly, the way that rhetoric devices can be used as means of persuasion in a political context, by examining a speech by George W. Bush. Secondly, there has been an attempt to detect Bush’s intentions by examining his speech and lastly a small scale corpus investigation was conducted on the collocation patterns of Iraq, evil and terror, in an attempt to trace an effect on people’s mental frames of these concepts, detectable in the use of language.

The analysis of the material used (a speech by G.W. Bush and examples from the Time Corpus and the COCA) leads to the conclusion that the effective use of linguistic
expressions plays a very important role in influencing others through language. Furthermore, the intentions of the former president of the USA are made clear by reading between the lines in his speech: the war was decided a long time before it was actually initiated, though public consent was desirable. Lastly, the study of the two corpora on the use of the words Iraq, evil and terror suggests a possible shift in people’s mental representations of these concepts; however, it is impossible to draw conclusions with certainty by studying changes occurring within a very short time period. The overall impression I received after concluding this study is that president Bush managed by, among other factors, the use of persuasive rhetoric to render his ideology of pre-emptive strikes as common sense.
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President Discusses the Future of Iraq
Washington Hilton Hotel
Washington, D.C.

7:22 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Thanks for the warm welcome. I'm proud to be with the scholars, and the friends, and the supporters of the American Enterprise Institute. I want to thank you for overlooking my dress code violation. (Laughter.) They were about to stop me at the door, but Irving Kristol said, "I know this guy, let him in." (Laughter.)

Chris, thank you for your very kind introduction, and thank you for your leadership. I see many distinguished guests here tonight -- members of my Cabinet, members of Congress, Justice Scalia, Justice Thomas, and so many respected writers and policy experts. I'm always happy to see your Senior Fellow, Dr. Lynne Cheney. (Applause.) Lynne is a wise and thoughtful commentator on history and culture, and a dear friend to Laura and me. I'm also familiar with the good work of her husband -- (laughter.) You may remember him, the former director of my vice presidential search committee. (Laughter.) Thank God Dick Cheney said yes. (Applause.)

Thanks for fitting me into the program tonight. I know I'm not the featured speaker. I'm just a warm-up act for Allan Meltzer. But I want to congratulate Dr. Meltzer for a lifetime of achievement, and for tonight's well-deserved honor. Congratulations. (Applause.)

At the American Enterprise Institute, some of the finest minds in our nation are at work on some of the greatest challenges to our nation. You do such good work that my
administration has borrowed 20 such minds. I want to thank them for their service, but I also want to remind people that for 60 years, AEI scholars have made vital contributions to our country and to our government, and we are grateful for those contributions.

We meet here during a crucial period in the history of our nation, and of the civilized world. Part of that history was written by others; the rest will be written by us. (Applause.) On a September morning, threats that had gathered for years, in secret and far away, led to murder in our country on a massive scale. As a result, we must look at security in a new way, because our country is a battlefield in the first war of the 21st century.

We learned a lesson: The dangers of our time must be confronted actively and forcefully, before we see them again in our skies and in our cities. And we set a goal: we will not allow the triumph of hatred and violence in the affairs of men. (Applause.)

Our coalition of more than 90 countries is pursuing the networks of terror with every tool of law enforcement and with military power. We have arrested, or otherwise dealt with, many key commanders of al Qaeda. (Applause.) Across the world, we are hunting down the killers one by one. We are winning. And we're showing them the definition of American justice. (Applause.) And we are opposing the greatest danger in the war on terror: outlaw regimes arming with weapons of mass destruction.

In Iraq, a dictator is building and hiding weapons that could enable him to dominate the Middle East and intimidate the civilized world -- and we will not allow it. (Applause.) This same tyrant has close ties to terrorist organizations, and could supply them with the terrible means to strike this country -- and America will not permit it. The danger posed by Saddam Hussein and his weapons cannot be ignored or wished away. The danger must be confronted. We hope that the Iraqi regime will meet the demands of the United Nations and disarm, fully and peacefully. If it does not, we are prepared to disarm Iraq by force. Either way, this danger will be removed. (Applause.)

The safety of the American people depends on ending this direct and growing threat. Acting against the danger will also contribute greatly to the long-term safety and stability of our world. The current Iraqi regime has shown the power of tyranny to spread discord and violence in the Middle East. A liberated Iraq can show the power of freedom to transform that vital region, by bringing hope and progress into the lives of millions. America's interests in security, and America's belief in liberty, both lead in the same direction: to a free and peaceful Iraq. (Applause.)

The first to benefit from a free Iraq would be the Iraqi people, themselves. Today they live in scarcity and fear, under a dictator who has brought them nothing but war, and misery, and torture. Their lives and their freedom matter little to Saddam Hussein -- but Iraqi lives and freedom matter greatly to us. (Applause.)

Bringing stability and unity to a free Iraq will not be easy. Yet that is no excuse to leave the Iraqi regime's torture chambers and poison labs in operation. Any future the Iraqi
people choose for themselves will be better than the nightmare world that Saddam Hussein has chosen for them. (Applause.)

If we must use force, the United States and our coalition stand ready to help the citizens of a liberated Iraq. We will deliver medicine to the sick, and we are now moving into place nearly 3 million emergency rations to feed the hungry.

We'll make sure that Iraq's 55,000 food distribution sites, operating under the Oil For Food program, are stocked and open as soon as possible. The United States and Great Britain are providing tens of millions of dollars to the U.N. High Commission on Refugees, and to such groups as the World Food Program and UNICEF, to provide emergency aid to the Iraqi people.

We will also lead in carrying out the urgent and dangerous work of destroying chemical and biological weapons. We will provide security against those who try to spread chaos, or settle scores, or threaten the territorial integrity of Iraq. We will seek to protect Iraq's natural resources from sabotage by a dying regime, and ensure those resources are used for the benefit of the owners -- the Iraqi people. (Applause.)

The United States has no intention of determining the precise form of Iraq's new government. That choice belongs to the Iraqi people. Yet, we will ensure that one brutal dictator is not replaced by another. All Iraqis must have a voice in the new government, and all citizens must have their rights protected. (Applause.)

Rebuilding Iraq will require a sustained commitment from many nations, including our own: we will remain in Iraq as long as necessary, and not a day more. America has made and kept this kind of commitment before -- in the peace that followed a world war. After defeating enemies, we did not leave behind occupying armies, we left constitutions and parliaments. We established an atmosphere of safety, in which responsible, reform-minded local leaders could build lasting institutions of freedom. In societies that once bred fascism and militarism, liberty found a permanent home.

There was a time when many said that the cultures of Japan and Germany were incapable of sustaining democratic values. Well, they were wrong. Some say the same of Iraq today. They are mistaken. (Applause.) The nation of Iraq -- with its proud heritage, abundant resources and skilled and educated people -- is fully capable of moving toward democracy and living in freedom. (Applause.)

The world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder. They encourage the peaceful pursuit of a better life. And there are hopeful signs of a desire for freedom in the Middle East. Arab intellectuals have called on Arab governments to address the "freedom gap" so their peoples can fully share in the progress of our times. Leaders in the region speak of a new Arab charter that champions internal reform, greater politics participation, economic openness, and free trade. And from Morocco to Bahrain and beyond, nations are taking
genuine steps toward politics reform. A new regime in Iraq would serve as a dramatic and inspiring example of freedom for other nations in the region. (Applause.)

It is presumptuous and insulting to suggest that a whole region of the world -- or the one-fifth of humanity that is Muslim -- is somehow untouched by the most basic aspirations of life. Human cultures can be vastly different. Yet the human heart desires the same good things, everywhere on Earth. In our desire to be safe from brutal and bullying oppression, human beings are the same. In our desire to care for our children and give them a better life, we are the same. For these fundamental reasons, freedom and democracy will always and everywhere have greater appeal than the slogans of hatred and the tactics of terror. (Applause.)

Success in Iraq could also begin a new stage for Middle Eastern peace, and set in motion progress towards a truly democratic Palestinian state. (Applause.) The passing of Saddam Hussein's regime will deprive terrorist networks of a wealthy patron that pays for terrorist training, and offers rewards to families of suicide bombers. And other regimes will be given a clear warning that support for terror will not be tolerated. (Applause.)

Without this outside support for terrorism, Palestinians who are working for reform and long for democracy will be in a better position to choose new leaders. (Applause.) True leaders who strive for peace; true leaders who faithfully serve the people. A Palestinian state must be a reformed and peaceful state that abandons forever the use of terror. (Applause.)

For its part, the new government of Israel -- as the terror threat is removed and security improves -- will be expected to support the creation of a viable Palestinian state -- (applause) -- and to work as quickly as possible toward a final status agreement. As progress is made toward peace, settlement activity in the occupied territories must end. (Applause.) And the Arab states will be expected to meet their responsibilities to oppose terrorism, to support the emergence of a peaceful and democratic Palestine, and state clearly they will live in peace with Israel. (Applause.)

The United States and other nations are working on a road map for peace. We are setting out the necessary conditions for progress toward the goal of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. It is the commitment of our government -- and my personal commitment -- to implement the road map and to reach that goal. Old patterns of conflict in the Middle East can be broken, if all concerned will let go of bitterness, hatred, and violence, and get on with the serious work of economic development, and political reform, and reconciliation. America will seize every opportunity in pursuit of peace. And the end of the present regime in Iraq would create such an opportunity. (Applause.)

In confronting Iraq, the United States is also showing our commitment to effective international institutions. We are a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. We helped to create the Security Council. We believe in the Security Council -- so much that we want its words to have meaning. (Applause.)
The global threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction cannot be confronted by one nation alone. The world needs today and will need tomorrow international bodies with the authority and the will to stop the spread of terror and chemical and biological and nuclear weapons. A threat to all must be answered by all. High-minded pronouncements against proliferation mean little unless the strongest nations are willing to stand behind them -- and use force if necessary. After all, the United Nations was created, as Winston Churchill said, to "make sure that the force of right will, in the ultimate issue, be protected by the right of force."

Another resolution is now before the Security Council. If the council responds to Iraq's defiance with more excuses and delays, if all its authority proves to be empty, the United Nations will be severely weakened as a source of stability and order. If the members rise to this moment, then the Council will fulfill its founding purpose.

I've listened carefully, as people and leaders around the world have made known their desire for peace. All of us want peace. The threat to peace does not come from those who seek to enforce the just demands of the civilized world; the threat to peace comes from those who flout those demands. If we have to act, we will act to restrain the violent, and defend the cause of peace. And by acting, we will signal to outlaw regimes that in this new century, the boundaries of civilized behavior will be respected. (Applause.)

Protecting those boundaries carries a cost. If war is forced upon us by Iraq's refusal to disarm, we will meet an enemy who hides his military forces behind civilians, who has terrible weapons, who is capable of any crime. The dangers are real, as our soldiers, and sailors, airmen, and Marines fully understand. Yet, no military has ever been better prepared to meet these challenges.

Members of our Armed Forces also understand why they may be called to fight. They know that retreat before a dictator guarantees even greater sacrifices in the future. They know that America's cause is right and just: liberty for an oppressed people, and security for the American people. And I know something about these men and women who wear our uniform: they will complete every mission they are given with skill, and honor, and courage. (Applause.)

Much is asked of America in this year 2003. The work ahead is demanding. It will be difficult to help freedom take hold in a country that has known three decades of dictatorship, secret police, internal divisions, and war. It will be difficult to cultivate liberty and peace in the Middle East, after so many generations of strife. Yet, the security of our nation and the hope of millions depend on us, and Americans do not turn away from duties because they are hard. We have met great tests in other times, and we will meet the tests of our time. (Applause.)

We go forward with confidence, because we trust in the power of human freedom to change lives and nations. By the resolve and purpose of America, and of our friends and allies, we will make this an age of progress and liberty. Free people will set the course of history, and free people will keep the peace of the world.
Thank you all, very much. (Applause.)

END 7:50 P.M. EST