



# ***Hot and Cold War: The Linguistic Representation of a Rational Decision Filter***

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## **Abstract**

*This paper focuses on the linguistic representations of war and their implications; it examines how war is linguistically and rhetorically justified or rejected (Butt, Lukin and Matthiessens 2004). I propose the theoretical notion of a 'Rational Decision Filter' that allows us to understand the tone and intentions of the U.S. administration (Bhatia 2006), expressed through lexical choices (Caldas-Coulthard 2003). I analyze several U.S. presidents' speeches to observe the characteristics of their discourses when dealing with 'enemies' and show how a rational filter applies to legitimate or avoid confrontation. I describe strategies of legitimatization or de-legitimatization and their emotive effects (Chilton 2004). The arguments employed to justify war against Afghanistan and Iraq (lack of freedom, lack of democracy, totalitarian regimes, possession of mass destruction weapons ...etc) were also applicable to other well-known nations in the world like the Soviet Union, China and North Korea. However, the U.S. administrations' declarations barely refer to those regimes. Furthermore, this paper accounts for the U.S. administrations' intentional elusion (Galasinski 2000) of these regimes when addressing a 'foreign enemy' in speech. I intend to describe when and why these elusions are latent. When the outcome of the 'Rational Decision Filter' is the physical war, politicians often use a device to create emotions of fear and rejection: 'Explicit Emotional Enumeration'. I present this theoretical notion as a tool to analyze political discourse.*

**Keywords:** *Rhetorically, legitimatization, emotions, elusions, lexical choices.*

## **1. Introduction**

The September 11th attacks on the United States became the rationale for a series of overseas military actions on the part of the Bush Administration, with the stated purpose of fighting a global war on terrorism. Soon the Bush Administration specifically defined and demonized the enemy as 'the axis of evil', a phrase that allows a simplistic but effective dichotomy (Billig and MacMillan 2005) between 'our good' and 'their evil' (Said 2004) and places the U.S. on the 'good side'. George W. Bush illustrates this simplification with the following words: 'Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists' (Bush, Address to Congress, Sept. 20, 2001). The question that arises is: Has the U.S. administration always been so clear cut, categorical, and unequivocal addressing enemies?

Through a comparative analysis of some speeches and declarations by John F. Kennedy and George W. Bush, different discursive patterns to address different political enemies can be defined. Politics is essentially a linguistic activity, an activity in which language is employed to inform others about political issues and persuade them to adopt courses of action in regards to these issues (Geis 1987). Prior to the conflict with Afghanistan and Iraq, the world witnessed a clear attempt on behalf of the U.S. to justify war. This justification was possible in part due to a demonization process that the George W. Bush Administration undertook to appeal to, reproduce and create emotions (Elster 1986, 1994), particularly fear and rejection, to obtain full public support (Bourdieu 2001). However, the U.S. administrations do not address their enemies equally, and this paper intends to show that different treatment linguistically. This paper analyzes the linguistic characteristics of discourse that U.S. administrations have produced, according to the specific nature of each enemy.

Authors such as Butt, Lukin, and Matthiessen (2004) have compared speeches by different politicians (Bush and Tim Collins). The authors dissect a list of semantic phases, i.e. 'Engagement: personal survival', 'justice and retribution', 'liberate not conquer', 'choice and enemy deaths', etc. (2004: 278) in Collins' speech and their grammatical realization. This work presents new semantic topics developed in specific war-rhetoric contexts of the genre of political discourse. In these specific contexts the lexical choices presented are intentionally loaded to construe negative or positive interpretations (Chibnall 1977; Caldas-Coulthard 2003; Foucault 1971; Lazar and Lazar 2004; Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Richardson 2004; Rindler Schjerve 1989; van Dijk 2005; Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl and Liebhart 1999; Wodak 2002). Lazar and Lazar (2004) present 'four micro-strategies: 'enemy construction', 'criminalization', 'orientalism' and '(e)vilification', all of which rest upon a logic of binarism' (2004: 223) to explain the process of construction of the 'other'.

The construction of enemies requires overt accusations, definitions and attributions. Politicians can also avoid 'agency and responsibility' in the display of 'self-and other-presentation' (Galasinski 2000: 106). This paper provides a methodological tool (Rational Decision Filter) to show the U.S. administrations' intentional elusion of certain aspects to reduce the gap between the positions of different social actors (van Leeuwen 2002) involved in the discourse.

## **2. Theoretical Frame**

Critical Discourse Analysis dictates the approach in this study. The purpose of CDA (i.e. Billig, Chilton, Fairclough, Kress, van Dijk, van Leeuwen, Wetherel, Wodak) is to decode the ideology embedded in the linguistic sign, to observe the relationship between these linguistic forms and discourse, and to study how ideologies are naturalized through the discourse employed. CDA conceptualizes languages as a form of social practice, and attempts to make humans aware of the reciprocal influences of language and social structure of which they are normally unaware (see Fairclough 1989, 2002b; van Dijk 1993). The aim of CDA, according to Wodak, de Cillia, Reisigl and Liebhart (1999) is 'to unmask ideologically permeated and often obscure structures of

power, political control and dominance...' (1999: 8). Power relations are of great importance in discourse, and our reference in this field will be Bourdieu (2001) and his ideas on power in and over discourse. Very few linguistic forms have not at some stage been pressed into the service of the expression of power by a process of syntactic or textual metaphor.

Furthermore, I also explore the dimension of the conscious consideration of the audience's feelings being embedded in utterances and the possible manipulation of these feelings to provoke a reaction; thus, I also look closely at Elster's ideas (1986, 1994).

Fairclough's 'ideological discursive formations' (IDFs) (Fairclough 2002a) define the phenomenon that regulates discourse in society: these are presented in any given discourse. IDFs pretend to become dominant in a speech community. The purpose of institutions, then, is to 'naturalize' ideologies to win acceptance for them as non-ideological 'common sense'. This paper also pays attention to the ideas of Chilton and Lakoff (1995). Metaphors are not mere words or fanciful notions, but rather embody modes of thought and structure the 'discourse' of foreign policy. We conceptualize the world through metaphors and understand our experiences through metaphorical concepts that appear real to us as they help to conceptualize and re-conceptualize foreign policy. They serve to update ideologies. Some important metaphors considered concern 'States as persons' with personalities (trustworthy or deceitful, aggressive or peace-loving, strong or weak, cooperative or intransigent...), whereby personal characteristics become correlates of a political system. Our goal is then to underline that metaphors need to be openly discussed.

My study shows how the 'Rational Decision Filter' operates in discourse; I show how the specific selection of lexical choices marks the outcome of the rational filter. This Rational Decision Filter (RDF) is based on Clausewitz's perception of war in terms of political, cost-benefit analysis (Strachan and Herberg-Rothe 2007). In this analysis, war is seen as a way to serve or respond to the political objectives of a nation. The possible political benefit is weighed against possible costs. If the costs of war exceed the possible gains, the war should be avoided or stopped.

If a nation decides, after the previous analysis, to declare war, the government in that nation often starts a demonization phase. I introduce the notion of 'Explicit Emotional Enumeration' to show how part of this process is carried out linguistically. This discursive strategy I propose is related to the fear appeals embedded in the political discourse. If there is threatening information in a fear appeal, there are more chances that the produced message will be accepted (Witte 1992). For these fear appeals to be effective, they must incorporate a useful action for reducing or eliminating the threat they announce (Jowett and O'Donnell 2006: 171). This is precisely the package politicians provide the audience with; politicians state the threat enumerating the negative actions of the enemy (EEE), and they provide the solution (war) to eliminate that threat.

### ***3. Justifications of War through Demonization and Fear.***

In the last years, the U.S. has initiated two wars, specifically justified by instilling fear in the general public through a process of demonization. Here some examples of justification proposed by Bush's Administration for the war in Afghanistan and later in Iraq:

#### **3.1. Afghanistan**

(1) **The terrorists'** directive commands them to kill Christians and Jews, to **kill all Americans**, and make no distinctions among military and civilians, including **women and children**. (Bush, Address to Congress, Sept. 20, 2001)

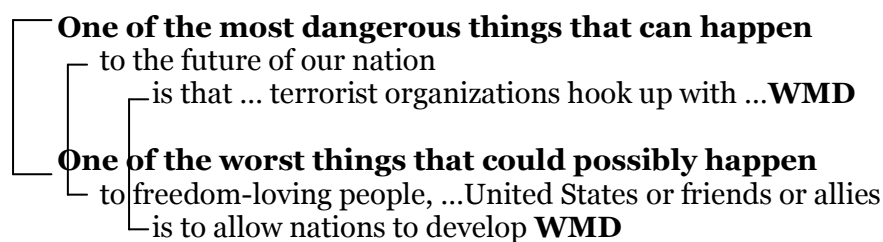
Here there is a statement with a very simple message. Bush is essentially saying that the terrorists make no distinctions in their goals, 'they kill everybody'. Yet, this 'everybody' was broken down in his specifically naming two religious particular groups missing Muslims [Religion], Americans [nationality], and military and civilians [combatants vs. non-combatants]. The message is that terrorists are so evil, they do not make distinctions. The linguistic choice here, however, is imprecise and inconsistent as his groupings overlap, for example, women and children are also civilians. The point of the discourse, however, is not analytical precision, but rather the conscious goal of persuading the audience emotionally (Chilton 2004) by emphasizing the death of innocent and maybe unprotected human beings. Within this demonization process,

I would like to propose the theoretical notion 'Explicit Emotional Enumeration' as a linguistic power tactic that moves the audience emotionally by emphasizing fear or rejection to obtain general public support in future decisions. This term is presented as a new tool for future discourse analysis studies. In contraposition with other examples of enumerations where the enumerated elements provide relevant information and analytical precision, the elements of the 'Explicit Emotional Enumeration' are redundant since they do not provide new information. The goal of these specific discourses is to present fear appeals demonizing the enemy to then propose action to eliminate the threat (Jowett and O'Donnell 2006: 171). This formula stands as an emotional appeal to the audience to position them on the speaker's side. One of the most common strategies of the Bush Administration to justify the war was to instill fear in the audience to get the public support needed to go to war. The following excerpt clearly represents this strategy.

(2) One of the most dangerous things that can happen to the future of our nation is that these kinds of terrorist organizations hook up with nations that develop weapons of mass destruction. One of the worst things that could possibly happen to freedom-loving people, whether it be the United States or our friends or allies, is to allow nations that have got a dark history and an ugly past to develop weapons of mass destruction like nuclear weapons or chemical weapons, or biological weapons which could, for example, be delivered by long-range missile, to become a part of the terrorist network. And there are such nations in the world. (Bush, Speech to the Troops in Alaska, Feb. 16, 2002)

There is a clear structure based on parallelisms of syntactic structures in the previous fragment.

**Fig. 1. Repetitive structures on hypothetical future problems.**



Bush has presented hypothetically the worst possible scenario, not only by presenting the worst things that could happen (with the use of modals: can and could, speculating about a disastrous future instead of mentioning actual facts). In the structure above, the cause of this possible horrible situation is related to the possession of WMD. Even though the situation is hypothetical the audience hears the repetition of WMD. This kind of repetitive structure is a useful strategy to ‘naturalize’ (Fairclough 2002a) discourse, so the audience assimilates the exposed situations as ‘norms’ (Elster 1994). By the time war is declared, this association has been exploited in the discourse and the fact that “terrorists have WMDs” becomes a given for the majority of the audience.

Bush also breaks down ‘the weapons of mass destruction’ into a descriptive list: ‘nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, biological weapons’ that could be delivered by a ‘long-range missile’. The appeal to emotions is again latent in an attempt to terrify the public opinion. The previous fragment provides us with another clear example of ‘Explicit Emotional Enumeration’. A whole (WMD) is broken down into its different parts (nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, biological weapons) with the intention of provoking fear or rejection in the audience, that is, to appeal to emotions and make of the hypothetical situation something rational and therefore a norm. (Elster 1994). The previous fragment reveals clear evidence of the fact that a sentence performs certain functions by particular choices of ‘wording’ (Thompson 2004: 29). The use of modal verbs allows the speaker to present a future hypothetical situation (Dunmire 2005). Even though, this situation is not real, it is scary enough to allow him to justify his current actions and decisions. Semantically, ‘the future of our nation’ and ‘freedom-loving people’ are in the position of receivers-sufferers, and therefore immediate action is required to save them (Jowett and O'Donnell 2006).

The following fragment represents Bush’s threatening tone towards the ‘Taliban leaders’. The linguistic choice ‘demands’ leaves the other side with little choices. By using ‘demands’ (that Bush himself gave) the option of dialogue, negotiations or alternatives is automatically cancelled.

(3) More than two weeks ago, I gave Taliban leaders a series of **clear and specific demands**: **Close** terrorist training camps. **Hand over** leaders of the al-Qaida network, and **return** all foreign nationals, including American citizens unjustly detained in your country. **None of these demands were met**. And now, **the Taliban will pay a price**. By destroying camps and disrupting communications, we will make it more difficult for the terror network to train new recruits and coordinate their evil plans. Initially, the

terrorists may burrow deeper into caves and other entrenched hiding places. (Bush, *Freedom will Prevail*, Oct. 7, 2001)

The use of imperatives (close, hand over, return) reflects the nature of a speech that does not give options to the other side—imperatives do not leave room for dialogue or negotiations, and furthermore manifest a position of superiority and another of subordination.

### 3.2. Iraq

The justifications for the war have also been developed in the case of Iraq through a process of demonization where our new rhetoric device (E.E.E) was employed to instill fear and rejection, as clearly seen in the following fragment:

(4) Last year the U.N. Commission on Human Rights found that Iraq continues to commit **extremely grave violations of human rights** and that the **regime's repression is all-pervasive**. Tens of thousands of political opponents and ordinary citizens have been subjected to arbitrary arrest and imprisonment; **summary execution; and torture by beating and burning, electric shock, starvation, mutilation and rape. Wives are tortured in front of their husbands, children in the presence of their parents**, and all of these horrors concealed from the world by the apparatus of a totalitarian state. (Bush, Speech to the UN, Sept. 12, 2002)

Again it can be observed how this simple but powerful discursive strategy described before is used over and over again in the president's public interventions. By using 'Explicit Emotional Enumeration' of a whole (violations of human rights) into its different parts, G.W. Bush mentioned the worst possible crimes in order to provoke a clear emotion in the audience and to achieve the climax of the demonization process: fear and rejection (Martín Rojo 1995) Who would not hate a regime that brings about those crimes? In the same way, the next fragment presents an intentional descriptive list of Hussein's atrocities.

(5) '**Saddam Hussein** attacked Iran in **1980** and Kuwait in **1990**. He's **fired ballistic missiles** at Iran and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Israel. His regime once **ordered the killing of every person between the ages of 15 and 70 in certain Kurdish villages in northern Iraq. He has gassed many Iranians and 40 Iraqi villages**'. (Bush, Speech to the UN, Sept. 12, 2002)

Following, instead of mentioning fatal gas, Bush named different types of these gasses not only to produce fear but also to give the impression of an authentic threat since he used the scientific terminology to define them. Together with the specific terminology, numbers portray the speaker as someone knowledgeable of the topic; used with negative actions numbers serve to demonize the enemy. This is defined as 'the Number Game' (van Dijk 2005).

(6) 'We know that the regime has **produced thousands of tons of chemical agents, including mustard gas, sarin nerve gas, and VX nerve gas**. Saddam Hussein also has experience in using chemical weapons.

He has ordered chemical attacks on Iran, and on more than forty villages in his own country. **These actions killed or injured at least 20,000 people, more than six times the number of people who died in the attacks of September 11**. (Bush, Speech to America, Oct. 7, 2002)

After the Bush Administration severely accuses these regimes, the public takes for granted that the U.S. cannot remain passive and will do something. The previous justifications lead the U.S. toward a future active role to change the situation, bringing 'justice and fairness'. As seen before, the phase of justification of war contains a continuous feedback to emotions (Elster 1986, 1994) at the same time that an 'Explicit Emotional Enumeration' phenomenon is largely used by Bush to produce new emotions: fear and rejection particularly to get the power of full public support (Bourdieu 2001).

(7) 'In 1991, Security Council Resolution 688 **demanded** that the Iraqi regime cease at once **the repression of its own people, including the systematic repression of minorities**, which the council said threatened international peace and security in the region. This **demand** goes ignored'. (Bush, Speech to the UN, Sept. 12, 2002)

In relation to Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. administration has intended to 'naturalize' its ideology through a process of division, demonization and fear to win acceptance for them presenting the issues as non-ideological, as 'common sense'. These 'ideological discursive formations' (IDFs) (2002a) pretend to become dominant in a speech and regulate the discourse. However the government sees the need of creating new ones when dealing with other enemies, as shown in the following section.

#### ***4. An Alternative to Physical Warfare: The Case of Kennedy and the Cold War***

Demonization, division, and fear have been conveyed through powerful tactics like 'Explicit Emotional Enumeration' in Bush's speeches in order to justify a threat to war in the build-up process for the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. However, U.S. administrations have faced regimes that possess WMDs before, and have they used the same rhetoric? Not all the enemies have been threatened by the U.S. in the case that they do not 'change' or fulfill certain demands. In other instances, a diplomatic version of dealing with enemies is found. This was the case in the Cold War between the U.S. and Soviet Union. The two were clear enemies and the process of demonization was intense and continuous, however, both powerful countries avoided war throughout the period.

A clear example of this is found in then U.S. President John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 1961. The following excerpt displays his attempt to negotiate a peaceful dialogue with 'the enemy' in an open and cooperative atmosphere and tone of cordiality and good will, which can be starkly contrasted with the words and tone employed in the speeches of G.W. Bush:

(8) Finally, to those nations who would make themselves **our adversary, we offer not a pledge but a request: that both sides begin anew the quest**

**for peace**, before the dark powers of destruction unleashed by science engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self–destruction. We dare not tempt them with weakness. For only when our arms are sufficient beyond doubt can we be certain beyond doubt that they will never be employed...

So **let us** begin anew – remembering on both sides that **civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate. Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us.** (J.F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, Jan. 20, 1961)

After analyzing in section 3 G. W. Bush’s speeches, the previous intervention of J.F. Kennedy leaves us with many questions. While both U.S. presidents are dealing with a U.S. enemy, the tone is different. At first sight, it is obvious that Kennedy’s speech does not share many of the characteristics of G.W. Bush’s speeches. Kennedy’s tone is friendly and no aggression is presented. In ‘a request...peace, before the dark powers of destruction unleashed by science engulf all humanity in planned or accidental self–destruction’, Kennedy does not attribute the enemy to be in possession of these ‘dark powers of destruction’ Rather, those powers are placed in a third space and his request is to fight ‘together with the enemy to avoid’ that from happening and to maintain peace. The linguistic question then must be for us: what are linguistic choices used in the speech that makes it friendly, soft and open to dialogue? A simple linguistic analysis of the words used by the U.S. administration will provide us with the answer.

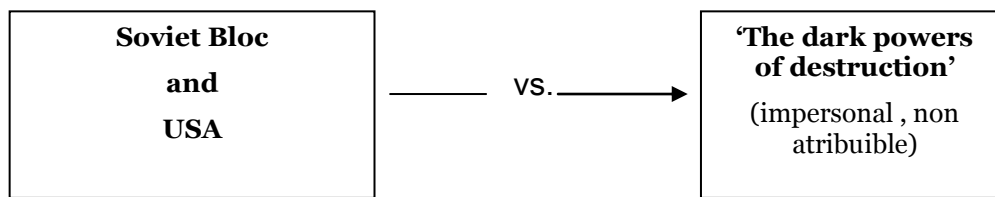
The very first line ‘would make themselves our adversary’ presents first a euphemistic diplomatic indirectness of reference, by not mentioning the real name of the adversary. Secondly, it also presents the agency of themselves choosing to be the adversaries (the U.S. does not seem to play any role in that choice). And thirdly, the linguistic choice of ‘adversary’ is a softer, less loaded term than ‘enemy’. The first and second paragraphs of the fragment show the use of exclusive ‘we’ and ‘our’. The last paragraph contains an inclusive ‘us’, the adversary and the U.S. (repeated five times). The cohesion of linguistic choices in the text goes hand in hand with the coherence of the pragmatic message that Kennedy intends to transmit: to narrow the distance between the U.S. and their adversary. First presented as separated groups and later on as the only group that can ‘explore what problems unite’ them ‘instead of belaboring those problems which divide’ them.

**Fig. 2. Lexical choices addressing different political enemies.**

A) Soviet Bloc	B) Afghanistan–Iraq
–‘request’	–‘demands’
–‘adversaries’	–‘enemies’
–‘us’	–‘they’

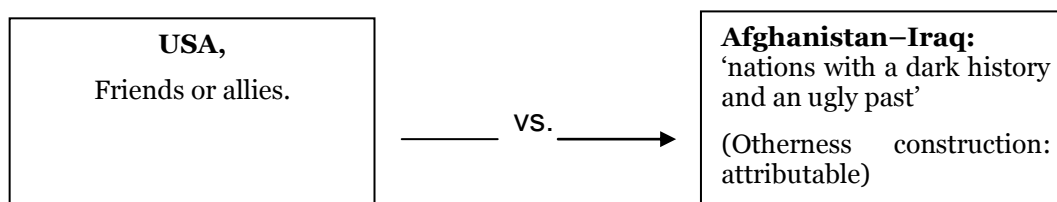
(A) ‘...**both sides begin anew the quest for peace**, before the dark powers of destruction unleashed...’(J.F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address, Jan. 20, 1961)



**Fig. 3. Social actors in Kennedy's speech.**

Goal: Peace to avoid war through negotiations and exploring problems.

(A) 'whether it be the **United States or our friends or allies**, is to allow **nations that have got a dark history and an ugly past** to develop weapons of mass destruction'. (Bush, Speech to the Troops in Alaska, Feb. 16, 2002)

**Fig. 4. Groupings of social actors in Bush's speech.**

Goal: War to get peace

The attempt on behalf of the U.S. administration in Kennedy's time to reconcile positions as seen in his sentence is interesting: 'Let both sides explore what problems unite us instead of belaboring those problems which divide us'. In contrast, the U.S. administration in George W. Bush time developed a phase of 'division and rejection', (Foucault 1971): 'Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists' (Bush, Address to Congress, Sept. 20, 2001) in relation to Afghanistan and later to Iraq.

However a question remains unanswered: which 'Ideological discursive formations' (Fairclough 2002a) used by the U.S. administration formalize a threat in the speech rhetoric? When and following which criteria does the U.S. administration apply this demonization of the enemy, and when do they attempt to justify war? Using Critical Discourse Analysis (Meyer 2001), I am proposing an ideological concept that will answer whether a war is justified linguistically and why: the RDF.

## **5. RDF and its Alternative Outcome to Avoid War**

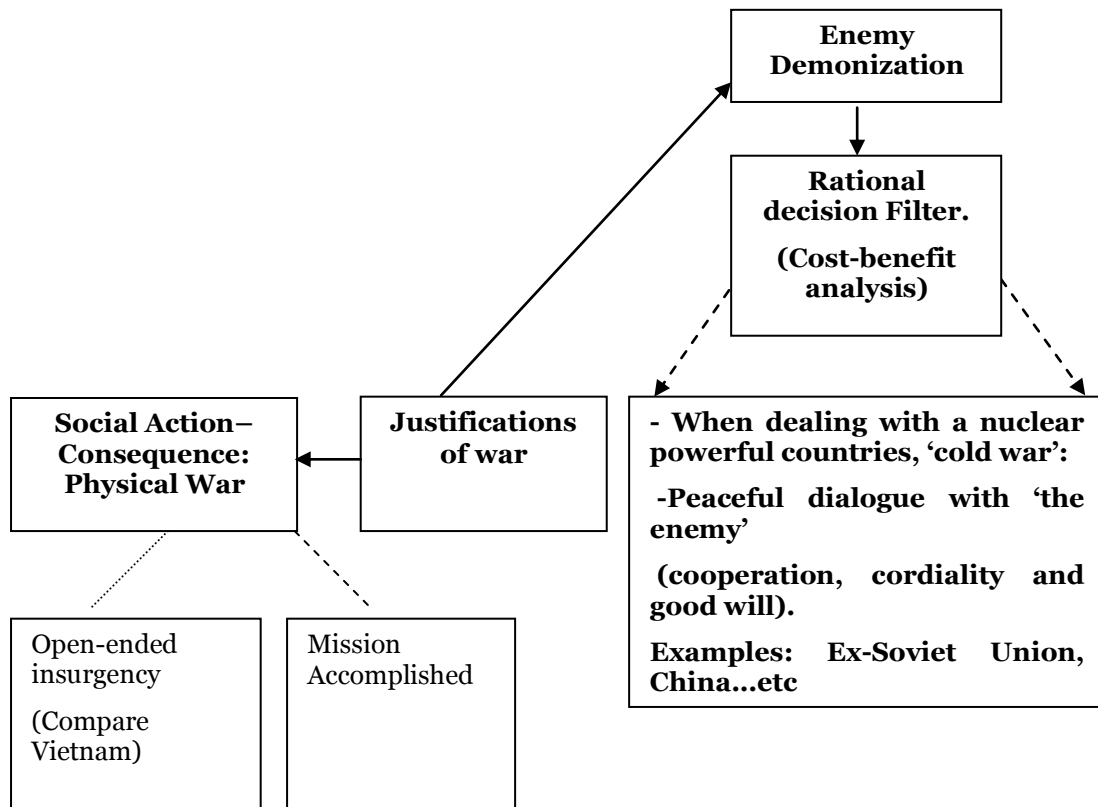
Not all U.S. enemies are addressed in the same way and not all the conflicts are followed necessarily by a rhetorical justification of war and later on by the physical war. War may not necessarily be the goal in itself. The question then is how can we account for explanations when a conflict does not end in war? How is this intentional elusion presented in the speeches and declaration of the U.S. administration? A perspective to account for this relies in Lakoff's

ideas (1995). He introduces the notion of ‘rational decision-makers’ who intend to maximize the economic and military self-interest of the state as a whole, through whatever means. ‘Social Darwinism’ (which could further be argued to be the overriding social ideology within the U.S.) dictates that states are considered to have basic instincts of survival and desire to dominate. Clausewitz’s ideas of a cost-benefit analysis in relation to war (Strachan and Herberg-Rothe 2007) also explain the theoretical foundations of the RDF I propose in this paper. Under Bush’s presidency, the United States’ desire to extend its political and economic power throughout the international system may be seen as the underlying goal, with ‘war’ as a tool or instrument to achieve this end. While with JFK ‘war’ seemed a crisis to be avoided at all costs. Thus, previous leaders may have sought this goal through non-war means, even through a discourse of war-avoidance.

In this sense, one important type of rational decision for any given country would be to not attack an equally strong country, with or without provocation, with the strength criterion here measured in terms of troops and nuclear capacity. Within this rational decision, a combination of game plus economic theories is taken into account, including a commercial cost-benefit analysis of maximization of ‘gains’ and minimization of ‘losses’, the same as in a decision to go to war. When the decision to go to war does not pass a cost-benefit analysis of gain-maximization/loss-minimization, then war is neither worthwhile nor profitable. Thus, war is not in itself the rational outcome of considerations of power and self-preservation or -extension. This was the case, as seen above, in the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union in John F. Kennedy’s Inaugural Address on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 1961. Kennedy’s speech is a clear case where military conflict was avoided through words.

For the different cases in which war is or not carried out, I would like to present the theoretical notion of RDF, which is considered by politicians before making the decision of going to war. This cost-benefit analysis is a necessary state that governments consider every time enemies are identified or new enemies arise. This process is inherent in human nature and, as Lakoff (1995) suggests, is embedded in ‘Social Darwinism’: If our enemy is beatable, we will show our supremacy by subjugating it. On the other hand, if our enemy could cost great harm or our victory is not clear, we will look to negotiate. In the linguistic and rhetoric construction of war, this filter, thus, could provide a potent tool for uncovering, through comparison of such contrasting cases for instance, the power of language. The following schema explains the alternative path towards a non-bellicose ending.

Fig. 5. The RDF and the Rational War.



Once the guilty party has been Identified and Demonized (Said, 1995), (Martín Rojo 1995), the facts are measured in the RDF and a Cost–benefit analysis takes place. Basically the questions are: Is it worthy to go to war? Is our enemy beatable? Will we receive benefit or will the cost be bigger? Therefore there is a need to look for the optimal choice (Coleman and Fararo 1992). This Filter will determine if a country goes to war and therefore it passes to the next phase of Justification of the war. On the other hand, if a country does not go to war, there will be an attempt to soften positions by having peaceful dialogue (the U.S. with Ex–Soviet Union, North Korea, China).

### 5.1. The Mass Destruction Weapons Paradox

Dealing with the process of justification of war and the RDF , a clear paradox that refers to rational decisions appears not to attack a country equally strong, but weaker, with or without provocation. An obvious contradiction of this logical principal is that the U.S. would not have attacked if Iraq had really been believed to have weapons of mass destruction, for such an attack would have been too risky. This reasoning goes against rational decision-making not to attack countries equally strong.

Attacking weaker countries with or without provocation would seem to be the real rational decision. Indications of this longer-standing reasoning can be seen in statements of George H.W. Bush leading up to the Gulf War in 1991, such as: 'He (Saddam) would not listen to reason'. Taken on its own, this

statement would seem a very weak reason to go to war. In 2003, however, we see the force of this reasoning in the continuation of this logic, as in the statement of George W. Bush that: ‘Saddam did not fulfill the ultimatum to hand over the mass destruction weapons’. Although this second justification is forceful in terms of its reiteration of the discourse being constructed over more than a decade, it is a factual misconception, since weapons of mass destruction have not been found. The justification for the war in Iraq is thus unfounded.

One could argue that I have been comparing two different presidents, in two different periods with two different international settings. In the next section I show how the notion of RDF is also applicable to Bush’s speeches.

## **6. The Active Role of the RDF in G.W. Bush’s Speeches**

In the following excerpts I show how, once the situation has been analyzed throughout the RDF, if the decision to go to war is made, no choice is offered to the enemy. There are no negotiations and options are not given. On the other hand, if it has been decided not to go to war, a position willing to negotiate and discuss will be displayed. In the case of Iraq, the balance favored ‘benefit’ more than ‘cost’.

(9) **‘There’s no negotiations**, by the way, for Mr. Saddam Hussein. **There’s nothing to discuss**. He either gets rid of his weapons and the United Nations gets rid of his weapons -- he can either get rid of his weapons and the United States can act, or the United States will lead a coalition to disarm this man’. (Bush, Speech in Colorado, Sept. 27, 2002)

‘No negotiations’ and ‘nothing to discuss’ are expressions that define, in very clear terms, the position of the U.S. administration in relation to Saddam’s regime. In the following fragment, Bush states his position in the same line. The constant repetitions and threats play an important role in the audience’s mind, that is, being prepared for the worse, since it seems that there is no way out. Repetitions make this idea become a social norm (Elster 1994).

(10) ‘Saddam Hussein has got a choice, and that is, he can disarm. **There’s no negotiations**, by the way. **There’s nothing to negotiate with him**. He told the world he would disarm 11 years ago, and he’s lied to the world. It’s their choice to make. He must disarm, just like he said he would do. And the United Nations, in order to be effective, must disarm him. But for the sake of our freedom, for the sake of our future, if nothing happens, the United States will lead a coalition to hold him to account and to disarm Saddam Hussein. **We owe it to the world to do so**’. (Bush, Speech in Arizona, Sept. 28 2002)

Through ‘ideological discursive formations’ (IDFs) (Fairclough 2002a) the idea of ‘the United States leading a coalition to disarm Saddam Hussein becomes dominant in the speech community. The purpose of the U.S. administration is to ‘naturalize’ this ideology to win acceptance for them as non-ideological ‘common sense’. On a different note, ‘We owe it to the world to do so’, constitutes a big but unreal claim (Galasinski 2000: 42). That hyperbolic manifestation distorts reality and displays a ‘big claim’ that collaborates with this language of deception and manipulation (Galasinski

2000).

However, the linguistic choice used when addressing North Korea is soft and diplomatic, as seen in the following fragments:

(11) 'We want **to resolve all issues peacefully**, whether it be Iraq, Iran or **North Korea**, for that matter. And as you know, I'm going to the Korean Peninsula to talk about that very subject. On the one side of a parallel we've got people starving to death, because a nation chooses to build weapons of mass destruction. And on the other side there's freedom. And it's important for those of us who love freedom to work with nations **to convince them to choose freedom**'. (Bush, Press Conference with Prime Minister Koizumi, Feb. 18, 2002)

Bush points out his peaceful intentions when addressing North Korea. He is not using verbs denoting material processes (physical action) like 'disarm' but verbs denoting mental processes like 'convinces' which semantically does not present a threat.

(12) 'As to how any **dialogue** were to begin, it obviously takes two willing parties. And as people in our government know, last June, I made the decision that we would extend **the offer for dialogue**. We just haven't heard a response back yet. And how we end up doing that is a matter of the **diplomats**. The great Secretary of State will be able to handle the details. But **the offer** stands, and if anybody's listening **involved with the North Korean government**, they know that the offer is real, and I reiterate it today' (Bush, Press Conference with President Kim Dae-Jung, Feb. 20, 2002).

An offer for a diplomatic 'dialogue' is presented and an honest 'desire to meet' is implied. The word 'folks' shows some informality in an attempt to present solidarity:

(13) 'That was constructive leadership. I then told him that the offer I made yesterday in Seoul was a real offer, and **that we would be willing to meet with a North Korean regime**. And I asked his help in conveying that message to Kim Jong-il if he so chooses. If he speaks to the leader of North Korea, **he can assure him that I am sincere in my desire to have our folks meet**. **My point is that not every threat in the war against terror need be resolved with force. Some threats can be resolved through diplomacy and dialogue**'. (Bush, Press Conference with President Jiang Zemin (China), Feb. 21, 2002)

In this last paragraph Bush distinguishes among threats and therefore among enemies. The questions that arise: When is force needed to resolve a threat? Why are diplomacy and dialogue needed in some cases? The answer is obtained from the RDF after a meticulous Clausewitz's cost-benefit analysis (Strachan and Herberg-Rothe 2007).

The following paragraph contains one of the few mentionings of China dealing with WMDs. China is a very powerful country that is more likely to develop Weapons of Mass Destruction than other countries addressed in Bush's speeches. The allusion is not even direct:

(14) **‘I made it clear to the President of China that I am interested in seeing to it that the United Nations is effective -- effective in disarming Saddam Hussein.** That's what the United Nations has said for 11 years, that Saddam ought to disarm. And, therefore, any resolution that evolves must be one which does the job of holding Saddam Hussein to account. That includes a rigorous, new and vibrant inspections regime, the purpose of which is disarmament, not inspections for the sake of inspections’ (Bush, Press Conference with President Jiang Zemin, Oct. 25 2002).

Aditi Bhatia (2006) studies political press conferences of the Chinese President Jiang Zemin and the U.S. President George W. Bush. She defines the tone as ‘diplomatic talk to communicate political differences in a positive way to smooth out socio political and ideological discrepancies’ (2006: 173). Through thematic analysis, she finds major themes: ‘Positivity for the reinforcement of mutual trust, respect and progress; influence and power for subtle persuasion; and evasion to hedge or avoid responses to probing and inconvenient questions from the media’ (2006: 173). Fragment (14) shows one of these ‘diplomatic talk’ instances studied by Bhatia (2006).

The next columns display the lexical choices used by the same U.S. president dealing with different enemies. These lexical choices are loaded intentionally to shape reality, positioning the audience in such a way that they will ‘construe negative or positive interpretations’ (Caldas-Coulthard 2003).

**Fig. 6. The RDF in Bush’s treatment of enemies.**

A) North Korea/ China	B) Afghanistan/Iraq
–‘We want to resolve all issues peacefully, whether it be Iraq, Iran or North Korea’ – ‘Those of us who love freedom to work with nations to convince them to choose freedom’ –‘We would extend the offer for dialogue’ –‘That is a matter of the diplomats’ –‘The offer stands, and if anybody's listening involved with the North Korean government’ –‘We would be willing to meet with a North Korean regime’	–‘There's no negotiations...There's nothing to discuss’ –‘demands’ –‘nations with a dark history and an ugly past’ –‘they develop weapons of mass destruction like nuclear weapons or chemical weapons, or biological weapons’ –‘they are the heirs of all the murderous ideologies of the twentieth century’
–‘I am sincere in my desire to have our folks meet’. (mention to) CHINA –‘I made it clear to the President of China that I am interested in seeing to it that the United Nations is effective – effective in disarming Saddam Hussein’	–‘they follow in the path of fascism, and Nazism, and totalitarianism’

The following fragment is one of the clearest evidences of what this paper has shown by linguistic analysis. There is a RDF that evaluates each enemy in terms of cost–benefit analysis prior to starting ‘a war on words’ (division, demonization), which finally would end in the physical war.

(13b) **‘My point is that not every threat in the war against terror need be resolved with force. Some threats can be resolved through diplomacy and dialogue’.** (Bush, Press Conference with President Jiang Zemin, Feb. 21, 2002)

## **7. Conclusion**

This paper has shown linguistically the different levels of demonization of the enemy, and therefore the different treatments U.S. administrations give to its enemies depending on their potential and strength. This paper has shown how the RDF works as a methodological tool to understand how the different attempts to legitimate or avoid war are built linguistically. Politicians attempt to ‘naturalize’ (Fairclough 2002a) those outcomes as social norms (Elster 1994).

I have explained when and why elusions are latent in the rhetorical linguistic construction of war, that is, when there is not justification of military action against specific enemies. Analyzing Bush’s and Kennedy’s speeches, this paper has answered the question: How is the intentional avoidance of directly confrontational rhetoric of powerful non–democratic countries presented in the speeches and war–declarations of the U.S. administrations?

Taking as a departure point Lakoff’s ideas (1995) of ‘rational decision-makers’ that intend to maximize the economic and military self-interest of the state as a whole and Clausewitz’s perception of war as cost-benefit analysis (Strachan and Herberg-Rothe 2007), I propose a ‘filter’ that evaluates a possible declaration of war and determines which outcome is reflected in the rhetorical construction or avoidance of war in U.S. presidents’ speeches: the RDF.

In the case of legitimization of war, a new theoretical notion has been presented to demonize enemies by appealing to emotions or creating new ones, especially fear and rejection: ‘Explicit Emotional Enumeration’. This linguistic power tactic is a discursive strategy that consists of moving the audience emotionally by breaking down a whole into its different parts with the intention of provoking fear or rejection in the audience. The fragments presented in the study consistently reveal the occurrence of this device.

Besides the limitations of this study, the excerpts analyzed suggest two new theoretical notions to understand the nature of political discourse: (i) The RDF to explain the legitimization or avoidance of war (I show how these legitimizations are constructed linguistically) and (ii) ‘Explicit Emotional Enumeration’, a common and efficient discourse strategy used in the discourse to develop fear appeals in the justification-of-war phase.

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