Legitimisation in Political Discourse

Legitimisation in Political Discourse: A Cross- Disciplinary Perspective on the Modern US War Rhetoric

Second Revised Edition

By

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Do you deal with a threat once you see it?

(George W. Bush, on attacking Iraq in March 2003)

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PREFACE TO THE 2ND EDITION

I used to read a lot of Orwell in my graduate years. One of the most fascinating things I would find in his books, and especially in the *1984* classic, was an appraisal of the power of language.[1] Specifically, its power to construct a new reality, new social order, yet without uncomfortably addressing an old one ("who, after all, was Oceania previously at war with?") The lesson the Party taught me was the following: What language creates, language can dislodge and build anew–with little harm to the speaker's credibility. There is not much exaggeration in saying that, ever since, my frequent pondering on this question has effectively turned me into a linguist.

As I was watching the CNN coverage of the American troops entering Iraq on March 19, 2003, there was obviously no need yet to build anything 'anew'. The rationale for war was stable: according to the CIA reports, the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction. More than that–he maintained links to terrorist organizations. To use G.W. Bush's words, he was "a threat to all democratic world," an embodiment of fear of the September the 11th events re-occurring, on a yet bigger scale. This threat had to be dealt with and the pre-emptive strike on Iraq seemed to the public opinion nothing but legitimate.

But the war dragged on, with Saddam himself getting captured on December 14, 2003, and the Bush administration were still unable to substantiate the original argument with any specific finding. Gradually, the presence of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) became "an alleged presence" and later, the Bush public communication team deftly coined the phrase "programs for weapons of mass destruction," which would yield a multitude of interpretations regarding the advancement of the WMD related activities and mainly, public speculations over the true caliber of the envisaged "threat."

All this meant the emergence of a new reality, involving the weakening of the original premise for war, and consequently, the piling up of questions about

[1] While not engaging in a larger terminological debate, I need to say that I use the term *language*, i) in the broadest sense of a human capacity to communicate and pursue social goals via speech or text; ii) in the sense of the actual *language use* situated in a specific time and place. The instances of *language use* involving statements about a given object, place, time, etc., and giving structure to the manner in which a particular topic is talked about are referred to as *discourse* (or, in a written form, *text*).

the legitimacy of the March 19, 2003 intervention in Iraq. The accumulation of doubts about the rational side of the strike, coupled with the rising death toll among the American troops got quickly reflected in the polls. While the February 2003 support for the war was at the level of 80%, it went down to an all-time low of 20% less than a year later. How did the Bush administration react to that, given that they could no longer construe the reality with "facts," however confabulated or unverified, like the fact of possession of WMD by the Iraqi regime? Here is where we find an analogy to the workings of the Party in Orwell's *1984*: the White House used *language* to dislodge and blur the old reality and build one anew.

How the Bush administration used language to invoke and maintain the stance of legitimisation of the Iraq war, especially after the collapse of the WMD argument, is precisely the subject matter of this book. The phrase "subject matter," however, is not synonymous with that of "aim." The White House rhetorical ploys targeted at keeping the legitimacy of the warfare intact despite the intelligence failure are certainly interesting and worth a number of micro descriptions, but a far more enticing challenge is theoretical. It can be defined, in a capsule, by the following questions–some of which in fact pertain to political discourse in general. Is there, within the geopolitical context of the Iraq war, a regular rhetorical pattern that governs a change in argumentation following the loss of the original premise? If so, how does the political speaker compensate for the lost premise in terms of new lexical choices? Do these choices follow any predefined cognitive expectations concerning the addressee? And further questions, extending the scope and the potential impact of the study: Are the observations of the rhetoric of the Iraq war consistent enough in terms of offering possible generalizations for theories of crisis and threat construction? Are they promising for studies on the nature of interventionist discourse, as long as the latter presupposes the US-THEM dichotomy and construes a symbolic distance between the 'good' party and the 'bad' party? Altogether, the above questions, together with responses (not all of which are unequivocally positive), contribute towards my *proposal for a theoretical model of legitimisation* which evolves in the forthcoming chapters.

In fact, most of these issues, descriptive and theoretical, had prompted the first edition (2006) of this book, but now that I was approached to prepare a new version, I find it essential to include several additions and refinements that have accrued since then. I will comment on how they affect the structure of the new edition towards the end of this preface. First, however, it seems more important to follow the above catalogue of questions with their theoretical underpinnings, and thus locate the present book within the vast and, as we shall see, often hardly demarcated domain of Political Discourse Analysis (PDA).

To start with, the naturally occurring questions related to the geopolitical context of the Iraq war, including the addressee expectations and responses, make this study draw from a wealth of the post-9/11 publications focusing on the history and consequences of the attacks. Having their eye turned on *politics* and *culture*, rather than *language* as such, they nonetheless provide invaluable insights in social complexities of the war-on-terror that its discourse has had to take into account to represent the existing reality, and to become constitutive of a new reality, according to the aspirations of the speaker. Thus, one cannot ignore the research on the ends of Al-Qaeda (cf. e.g. Doran 2001), the American foreign policy before and after 9/11 (cf. e.g. Jhally and Earp 2004; Harvey 2005) and the media-created cultural patterns that have determined a variety of social responses to the attacks (cf. e.g. Sherman and Nardin 2006).

Furthermore, there are discourse-related studies where the critical lens is on the interaction between linguistically framed and transmitted concepts and their power to explain and (re)construe the pre- and post-9/11 worlds, including the social, political and military world at the outset of the Iraq war–cf. Collins and Glover 2002, Dedaic and Nelson 2003, Chouliaraki 2007, etc. For instance, Jackson (2005) works with the language used to raise public anxiety over the 9/11 events as part of a broader research in the ethical values of the modern US governments. The significance of these works for the current study is even greater, since they invite–however indirectly–a fruitful methodological dialogue between cognitive, pragmatic and lexical dimensions of discourse, a tripartite hierarchical sequence captured in a theoretical model of legitimisation evolving in chapters I-VI.

While the present book utilizes many observations informed by the non-linguistic approaches, its emphasis is on discourse, in the sense that it is discourse that defines the theoretical procedures used to describe and, above all, systematize, the legitimisation strategies. Thus, for the most part, I rely on the conceptual apparatuses of linguistic pragmatics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), but there are also significant contributions from cognitive linguistics, sociology, social psychology, political sciences and the art of persuasion and rhetoric. The observations on the particular language forms which make up the discourse of the Iraq war have a co-ordinating function. On the one hand, they prompt the ensuing quantitative-qualitative verifications, in line with the doctrine of careful data-mining advocated by the broadly conceived 'critical scholarship' (cf. e.g. Fowler 1979; Fairclough 1995, 2003; Wodak 1996; Wodak and Chilton 2005; Chilton and Schaeffner 2002, etc.). On the other, they pose questions about the socio-cognitive grounding of the discourse, in which case the analytic attention turns to the macro level of mental representations and processes underlying the particular language choices or, in Van Dijk's (1995, 2002) words, 'social cognitions'–including, for instance, the aforementioned

symbolic distancing and threat construction. Altogether, by standing in the very center of analysis, they invite, as if, a dialogue for analytic objectivization, between the macro-cognitive level of hypothesis and the micro-lexical level of description. This latter aim–objectivization–is by no means alien to critical studies and in this sense the present book is a contribution to the CDA literature.

To elucidate what else can be expected from this book and especially from its second edition, I need to embark on a necessarily brief excursion into the past ten years of my work on political discourse.

My research in political discourse has been, more often than not, a (tacit) reconciliation of two approaches: theoretical and descriptive. The latter was extensively applied in *Explorations in Political Discourse* (2002), in which I gave a critical account of the rhetoric used by the 20th century US presidents in their inaugural addresses, as well as the modern rhetoric of the leading NATO politicians. That book left me quite uncomfortable in methodological terms. Apparently, two different ways of analysing texts were applied relative to my expertise of the background: I used a deductive, "top-down" (i.e. hypothesis-data-thesis) approach for those with a clearly defined and familiar context (geopolitical, social, etc.) and an inductive, "bottom-up" (i.e. data-thesis) approach for those texts which I found less "analytic-friendly." Since the preference for either was rather automatic and subconscious I thought that it could be the discourse itself that is indeed capable of inviting a specific mode of analysis. This question was raised in *Analytic Determinism of the Study of Persuasive Discourse* (2003), a more theoretically oriented monograph. I postulated that analysts who are, to put it somewhat simplistically, "part of the discourse," usually follow a deductive track of analysis, while those who construe themselves as "strangers" are prone to take a more demanding, inductive track.

Then came the first edition (2006) of the present book. I wrote in its preface:

> I am […] mindful of the fact that a study of a discourse such as the language of the US administration in the Iraq war […] has some inherent limitations. They are the consequence of the ever-increasing institutionalization of the discourse, which causes that the analyst's interpretation of events occurring in the geopolitical backround, often fragmentary or culturally overdetermined in its own right, might not yield a fully objective account of the speaker's language choices used to communicate these events to the addressee. Thus, as will be seen, the majority of conclusions in the book are necessarily tentative and even the model proposed as a viable handle on the US administration rhetoric, and potentially as a model of linguistic legitimisation in political discourse as a whole, is not free from problems with its extension on a broader spectrum of thematic domains.

Now that another two years have passed I believe there is enough empirical evidence that allows a more conclusive stance, at least as regards the language of the Iraq war. Such a time span might seem short for making generalizations, but in fact the years 2006-2008 have seen an extremely intense publishing activity regarding the discourse of the war on terror. More than that–the abundance of studies conducted within different disciplines, each with its own research tools and methodological rigor, has produced a cross-fertilization of ideas, resulting in an increasingly broader consensus on a number of critical issues. The ones that have influenced the present edition are mainly:

Enemy conflation (cf. e.g. Hodges 2007; Hodges and Nilep 2007). It is widely agreed upon that political speakers benefit from the strategy of imposing, mixing or otherwise playing with sociopolitical enemy identities on the world stage. Hodges and Nilep (2007) observe that "in a series of speeches prior to and after the invasion of Iraq, George W. Bush constructs an enemy such that Saddam Hussein's Iraq and Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda network are sufficiently similar so that a strike against one is justified by its equivalence to a strike against the other" (: 8). The conflation narrative has legitimised the Bush administration's policy of the regime change in Iraq in relation to the conflict with Al-Qaeda, to the extent that in March 2003 many Americans believed that the two entities collaborated together prior to 9/11, an allegation refuted in the 9/11 Commission Report.

The Arab identity in the Western media (cf. e.g. Stoltz 2007; Hodges and Nilep 2007). On the eve of the war, the Bush administration went to great lengths to erase the complex and multi-faceted picture of the Arab identity, making it instead a plain matter of victimization. While the label "Arab" was extensively used in relation to the people oppressed by the Iraqi regime, it was scarcely used in relation to social and political groups siding with Hussein's government, and almost never to describe the direct opponents or enemies of the US, such as Al-Qaeda or even the Palestinian radicals. The same strategy was followed by a number of the pro-government media outlets, whose journalistic practices involved a consistent, clear-cut distinction between 'good Arabs' (as a whole) and 'evil rulers/groups/extremists'. Such a distinction corroborated the Bush administration's pledge that the war is not against, but for, Arabs.

Relativity of the 'us and them' divide. It is often argued (cf. e.g. Becker 2007) that, despite the early efforts to the contrary (viz. above), the status of allies and enemies within the whole of the Iraq war–and in fact during the entire post-9/11 period–should be considered as shifting and unstable. This of course affects any kind of critical description based, as in the present book, on the symbolic construal of distance between the speaker's party and the antagonistic entity or entities. For instance, following Saddam Hussein's downfall, the new government of Iraq joins the 'us' camp and thus any further mention of it

evokes positive values salient in lexical choices often identical to those used originally to evoke negative values and negative emotions–viz. nominal phrases like *Iraqi government*; *Baghdad*; *Iraq*, etc. Furthermore, many agree (cf. e.g. Lassen, Strunck and Vestergaard 2006; Verdoolaege 2008; Hodges and Nilep 2007) on the existence of a relativity which stems directly from the 'them' status, i.e. whether the 'them' party is localized within a foreign country (or countries) or is part of a dichotomy between rival factions within the home country. It is then imperative that any account of legitimisation strategies clearly distinguishes in analysis between the lexical choices used by the speaker with reference to his own people (even political opponents) and to the people and governments of countries construed as enemies.

Internationalization of the discourse of legitimisation. Studies such as Volcic and Erjavec 2007, van Dijk 2007, etc., point to the appropriation of many legitimisation strategies originally found in the war-on-terror discourse, by sociopolitical actors in countries other than the US. The most prominent strategy is, again, that of enemy conflation. Volcic and Erjavec (2007) give an example of young Serbs construing an analogy in which Serbia is to Muslims in the Balkans as the United States is to terrorists like Al-Qaeda.

Finally, the past two years have brought much systematic research into *fear appeals* (cf. e.g. Stenvall 2007; Stocchetti 2007), most of it focusing on the enactment of strong leadership based upon a consistent perpetuation of negative emotions such as fear, worry and concern. The perpetuation of fear often extends onto an abstract ideological territory and thus political actors–including the Bush administration in the later stages of the Iraq war–tend to speak of a "clash of civilizations," "conflict of values," etc., to justify their ends over a long time period.

The above findings have been affecting my research ever since the first edition of this book was published in 2006. As a result, the present second edition features a number of reformulations, updates and additions. The most important is of course the inclusion of a new chapter (Chapter Six), which closes the book by offering a state-of-the-art version of the legitimisation model originally (2006) culminating in Chapter Four. The current version is informed not only by the novel theoretical insights as described above, but also by the attempts to fulfil the 2006 promise of doing more corpus work for the objectivization and universality of the model, especially regarding its axiological domain. Chapter Six can thus be approached as a continuation of earlier research (and then it is perhaps interesting to compare it with Chapter Four), but it can also be treated, especially by those familiar with the 2006 publication, as a self-contained, article-like proposal, and hence its lengthy introduction reiterating the crucial points from the entire first edition.

In comparison with the new chapter, the other changes can be described as minor in terms of space, but certainly important for the validity of argument as of 2008. For clarity, the majority of additions come in footnotes, which draw a hopefully visible line between the original material and the later comments or afterthoughts. Naturally, all the applicable modifications have been introduced as regards the relation between the events and narration time. One should finally note the different status of Chapter Five: while originally promising a universalization of the legitimisation model through its application beyond the field of the war-on-terror rhetoric, it now assumes a much more toned-down and digressive stance. This change follows the recognition of a priority to further refine the model from a quantitative standpoint, before it can be tested across different discourse communities, nationalities and cultures.

Like most studies of war rhetoric, especially those stressing the prominent role of language in understanding as well as shaping the power relations in the world, the present book is naturally raising questions about its possible social impact. These questions arise from more general doubts concerning the efficacy of discourse studies which aspire to function as instruments of social justice (cf. e.g. Chilton 2005). Do academic analyses of war and language really provide any tangible benefits outside of their own scholarly settings? Do they play any role in restoring sanity and humanistic values which fall victim to the war discourse? While not even attempting to take a definitive position on these delicate issues, I shall nonetheless point to the following. If language partakes in a process of legitimising war and violence, in spreading fear and dehumanizing enemies, it should also possess the capacity of description which exposes the complexities of these practices to the public and thus pinpoints or prevents any potential *abuses of power*. Although there have been many reasons to write this book, the opportunity to voice my opinion on whether such an abuse did take place in the Iraq war was certainly one of them.

Piotr Cap
September 2008

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The present second edition has been influenced by friendly and constructive feedback I received after the original publication, especially with regard to the legitimisation model proposed. Much of it should be credited to my colleagues in the CDA community, but comments from other scholars have also been very helpful. I want to thank Paul Chilton for the cognitively oriented discussions we had during and after the pragmatics symposium in Lodz in May 2006. I owe thanks to Ruth Wodak and Jef Verschueren for exchanging, either via e-mail or at conferences, our views on political discourse and pragmatics. Finally, I have received a lot of interesting suggestions for revising the legitimisation model, from anonymous reviewers of my 2006-2008 papers submitted to *Journal of Pragmatics*. While the second edition echoes all these voices and thus attempts improvements, I can foresee a need for yet more debating and developing ideas, before the STA model becomes fully crystallized.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STA MODEL OF LEGITIMISATION

As I am beginning to write this book, on the 4th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks,[1] the memory of these petrifying events again prompts questions about how America, the American public and the American government have been changing ever since, how and what new social attitudes have been evolving and what policies, both home and abroad, have been put in place to handle the post-9/11 reality. One obvious issue that emerges involves the US government's response to the attacks. What form(s) did it take? Was it legitimate? What steps, political and non-political, military including, were taken to make it appear legitimate? Finally, what strategies were pursued to *communicate* this legitimacy to the American and the world audience?

It is primarily the last question that lies at the core of this book and defines its goals. Before we turn to a specific description of these goals, let us note that when President George W. Bush declared the worldwide War on Terrorism on the evening of 9/11, the American people were hardly filled with a spirit of vengeance, rather, they would expect the government to seek a balanced solution to the terrorism problem as a whole. This was echoed in one of the first eyewitness accounts of the day which was broadcast on Aaron Brown's CNN night edition:

> [...] Americans will persevere. And you know what? I don't think we'll stoop to the level of these zealot, terrorist pigs. And we won't kill children and mothers. But you know what? I just hope Bush will do whatever is necessary to get rid of this terrorist vermin [...]

These words do not seem to give license to wage a war, at least not of the kind that broke out almost immediately in Afghanistan and eighteen months later in Iraq. In fact, the social picture of the late 2001 America shows multiple attitudes of reluctance to engage in a retaliatory combat operation, even if the 9/11 perpetrators were to constitute the primary target. But, as we know now, two

[1] The text for the first edition was written in 2005-06.

foreign wars did follow. And while the prompt bombing of Afghanistan was an operation that, given the logic of an attempt to destroy the Al-Qaeda network, could be (and indeed was) perceived as justifiable by both the American people and the majority of the world community, the invasion on Iraq in March 2003 needed a much stronger rationale. The lack of a clear enemy of the Osama-like kind, the wobbly evidence of the possession of WMD by the Iraqi regime, the apparently unsubstantiated claims of the relationship between Saddam Hussein and the Al-Qaeda group,[2] the conceivable human and financial costs of going to war, the anti-war attitudes in the academic elites–all these were serious adverse factors to be surmounted by the Bush administration in the service of making the military involvement in Iraq legitimate. Therefore, though not detracting from the importance of studying the Afghan conflict (which will be addressed a number of times in the following chapters) my primary challenge throughout the book will be the analysis of legitimisation of the Iraqi intervention.

Assumptions, goals and methods

My chief assumption behind the argument in this book is that the Bush administration did everything that they possibly could in order to communicate to the American and the world audience that the military operation in Iraq was justified and that it was pursued in the vital interest of all the peoples abhorring the vision of the 9/11 ever repeating again. A consistent pattern of rhetoric was developed in the aftermath of the WTC attacks, aiming to justify military retaliation on account of the apparent imminence of danger facing the American citizens. The most salient premise of the White House rhetoric was the construal of the terrorist threat as existing within the US borders. Unlike in the past, when America was going to *foreign* wars in Korea, Vietnam or, recently, Kosovo, the current war came "home."

One cannot possibly underestimate the role of the evidence brought by the 9/11 attacks in such an argument. Although following the WWII the legitimisation of each consecutive military involvement has drawn on the simplistic dichotomy of "us and them," the latter party usually symbolizing some kind of adversarial or plainly evil ideology that could potentially jeopardize the American system of beliefs and values or, in the long run, threaten the lives of the American people, it was not until after 2001 that the ideologies of evil and terror could be claimed, by analogy, to have already been

[2] Much current research (see Preface to the 2nd Edition–henceforth referred to as Preface) indicates that, while such an 'enemy conflation' strategy might have been ineffective in the long run, it did indeed help to legitimise the initial strike.

operating within the American territory. Consider the following excerpt from President Bush's 9/11 prime-time speech:

> [...] Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts, right here, on the American soil. [...] Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. [...] Immediately following the first attack, I implemented our government's response plans. I've directed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and to bring them to justice. America has stood down enemies before, and will do so this time and in the future [...]

And now let us turn to a necessarily longer quotation which comes from the president's address at the American Enterprise Institute, delivered on February 26, 2003, the mere three weeks before the first US troops entered Iraq on March 19:

> [...] We are facing a crucial period in the history of our nation, and of the civilized world. 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 our cities. And we will not allow the flames of hatred and violence in the affairs of men. The world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder. [...] Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction are a direct threat to our people and to all free people. [...] My job is to protect the American people. When it comes to our security and freedom, we really don't need anybody's permission. [...] We've tried diplomacy for 12 years. It hasn't worked. Saddam Hussein hasn't disarmed, he's armed. Today the goal is to remove the Iraqi regime and to rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. [...] The liberation of millions is the fulfillment of America's founding promise. The objectives we've set in this war are worthy of America, worthy of all the acts of heroism and generosity that have come before [...]

At a glance, one can see a functional, goal-oriented continuum underlying the two performances. It is almost as if the AEI speech fulfils the promise made at the end of the 9/11 address, to trace down the perpetrators and thus prevent any future threats. Importantly, by referring to "our skies and our cities", as well as to the country being "a battlefield," Bush invokes an analogy between the 9/11 tragic events and the possibility of such events (or even more tragic, given the nuclear element at stake) occurring again should there be no action from the government on the current Iraqi issue. The justification for going to war in Iraq

is thus built on the recurring closeness and imminence of danger facing the American people, which this time stems from the alleged possession of WMD by the Iraqi regime and, consequently, by easy access to these weapons for terrorist groups such as Al-Qaeda.

In this book I will attempt to develop an analytic model to serve as a viable handle on the post-9/11 war-on-terror rhetoric. Taking the concept of legitimisation in a broad theoretical sense of a combined enactment of the political speaker's right to be obeyed and of the linguistic justification of actions following this obedience, I will be particularly interested in *the model's capacity to explain*,

i. how the described '9/11 analogy' and the concept of 'direct threat' have been used to legitimise the intervention in Iraq, and,
ii. what steps have been taken to maintain the stance of legitimisation after it became clear that the intelligence reports on the Iraqi possession of WMD failed.[3]

Since, as can be seen from the two excerpts above, the White House pro-war rhetoric has been relying heavily on conceptualization of the terrorist (nuclear) threat in terms of a physically close phenomenon, I propose to employ Chilton's (2004) notion of *proximization* to serve as a controlling concept for defining the internal structure of the model, encapsulating all the legitimisation related techniques. In short, thus, the advocated model recognizes legitimisation (of the post-9/11 foreign military involvement) as a macro function of all the war-on-terror rhetoric. The function of legitimisation is enacted by utilizing the peruasive power of proximization, a notion which assumes "putting the discourse addressee in the center of events narrated to him/her" (cf. Chilton 2004) and which will be described as such in detail below. Finally, there are language constructs whose strategic combination triggers proximization. All the three levels, involving the constancy of the legitimising function, the ongoing presence of proximization pattern serving legitimisation, and the consistent use of language making up a given proximization aspect or strategy, must be seen to interrelate in their collective contribution to the aura of justification, in order for the proposed analytic model to prove theoretically sound.

[3] The accomplishment of these critical goals is naturally conducive to theoretical findings (see Preface, p. ix).

Proximization

The concept of proximization has originally (cf. Chilton 2004) been developed to account for situations in which the speaker (political actor) seeks legitimisation of his actions by alerting the addressee to the proximity or imminence of phenomena which can be a "threat" to the addressee (and the speaker, too) and thus require immediate reaction. In other words, the speaker solicits approval of his actions by placing the addressee close to the source of the threat or, alternatively, by picturing the threat as close to the addressee. In Chilton's view, proximization has an intrinsically spatial character; the addressee is located in the "deictic center" of the event stage, from which setting he conceptualizes external phenomena in terms of physical distance holding between their source and his own location. If we apply the spatial aspect of proximization to account for the geopolitical context of the early stages of the Iraqi conflict, we observe that the Bush administration have been utilizing the notion of "direct threat," in order, first, to alert the addressee to the proximity of nuclear danger stemming from the alleged possession of WMD by the Iraqi regime, and second, to enhance the perception of this threat by building the analogy between the current situation and the events of 9/11 when the previously underestimated danger indeed materialized and physically affected the addressee.

The excerpt from the AEI speech features a large number of lexical realizations, or "triggers," of spatial proximization. They include such items and phrases as "secret and far away," "all free people," "stable and free nations," "Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction," "direct threat" and "flames". Some of them define the elements/members of the deictic center as such ("all free people"), while some others define entities which can potentially enter the deictic center and threaten or destroy its members ("Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction," "flames"). As the gap between the former and the latter is seemingly closing due to the presence of the 9/11 analogy, the spatial proximization appears successful in its role of soliciting legitimisation for the government's reaction to the evolving threat. This process will be analyzed in more detail in Chapter Four of the book,[4] where I will give the AEI speech a very close, almost sentence-by-sentence look.

Meanwhile, I shall continue with the description of other aspects of the proximization model (contributing to the overall analytic model) I wish to utilize in this book. In addition to Chilton's (2004) findings on the spatial character of proximization, I argue that a fully-fledged proximization theory,

[4] Before it is discussed in relation to the whole legitimisation model, whose state-of-the-art version is presented in Chapter Six.

equipped with enough explanatory power to account for a variety of legitimisation related phenomena, must necessarily involve two other dimesions, i.e. temporal and axiological. Temporal proximization involves construing the events which take place in the spatial dimension as momentous and historic and hence of central significance to the discourse addressee, as well as to the speaker. It needs to be made clear that, under the proposed triadic approach, the speaker belongs to the deictic center (the anchor point for all conceptualizations) no less than the addressee does; otherwise, it would be reasonably difficult to have both parties unanimously subscribe to the course of action which the speaker attempts to legitimise. This observation holds true for all the three aspects of proximization, spatial, temporal and axiological. Returning to the temporal aspect, I shall claim that its contribution to the integrated proximization model lies in its capacity to provide the analysis of actions or events bringing about physical consequences (in other words, space-dynamic events like the projected use of WMD by Saddam Hussein or the US intervention in Iraq seen as a preventative measure) with a retrospective insight which allows generation of inferences or analogies such as the 9/11 analogy mentioned before. Additionally, a combined spatial-temporal analysis possesses a heuristic value; for instance, the study of the speaker's description and the addressee's construal of current events (viz. the American military involvement in Iraq) which are happening as a result of previous events (viz. the 9/11 "lesson") may lead to anticipation of recurrence of a similar cause-and-effect pattern in the future, with the same or a different adversary involved. Finally, in my approach there is the axiological aspect of proximization, too. It consists in the addressee's interpretation of alien ideological beliefs and values relative to the axiological background of the self, or the dominant ideology of the State, in our case the US. Here, the proximization of "threat" is neither a physical phenomenon (viz. the conceivably destructive consequences of the use of nuclear weapons by the Iraqi government) nor a temporal one (viz. the unfolding of the state of affairs which makes the above scenario possible); it rather involves the narrowing of the distance between two different and opposing ideologies whose clash could lead to the events defined within the other dimensions.[5]

All in all, the proposed model of proximization, a much-revised version of Chilton's (2004) theory, consists in the speaker's continual endeavor to impose upon the addressee the conceptualization of the suggested adversary in terms of

[5] As of today (i.e. 2008; see Chapter Six, written exclusively for this second edition), axiological proximization seems to me not only *a* proximization strategy, but in fact *the* 'compensatory proximization strategy'. It will be shown to possess a unique capacity of restoring legitimisation in spite of diminishing contributions from the other, spatial and temporal, domains.

an entity which gradually enters, along the spatial, temporal and axiological lines, the addressee's "territory" in the deictic center. For a brief overview of the functioning of this integrated proximization strategy, let us consider the concept of the "ideologies of murder" invoked in the AEI address:

> The world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder. [...]

The mention of the "ideologies of murder" serves to establish an axiological frame defining the essence of the dictatorship-based functioning of the states opposing the US ideology of "freedom," "democracy," etc. The components of this frame are the implicitly communicated antithetical concepts of "regime," "dictatorship" and "oppression" which, presumably, give rise to violence and terror as the natural outlets for the anger and frustration of the oppressed. The assumption behind the composition of the frame is that the ideologies of anger and hatred have a tendency to grow and expand (cf. the use of the word "breed") if nothing is done to prevent them from being enacted by authoritarian figures such as Saddam Hussein in Iraq. This is how the proximity of threat to free states like the US is communicated within the axiological dimension. In addition, it is implied, by the use of "the" [ideologies of murder] that places like world terrorism harbors where the anger and hatred turn into concrete plans to destroy the "enemy" (most of the countries of the "civilized" West and the US in particular) have indeed evolved worldwide and that it is their existence that constitutes the very physical threat (cf. the spatial aspect of proximization). Let us remember that immediately following the 9/11 attacks, Bush's explanation of the terrorists' "rationale" to strike has been the envy of the American way of life, the freedoms guaranteed to citizens living in a state ruled by law:

> [...] Today, our fellow citizens, our way of life, our very freedom came under attack in a series of deliberate and deadly terrorist acts, right here, on the American soil. [...] America was targeted for attack because we're the brightest beacon for freedom and opportunity in the world. [...] The world now knows the full evil and capability of international terrorism which menaces the whole of the democratic world. Blind in their hate and envy of our freedoms, the terrorists responsible have no sense of humanity, of mercy, of justice. [...]

Finally, the axiological and spatial proximization strategies salient in the application of the "ideologies of murder" catch-phrase get complemented within the temporal domain. One of the implicit messages in "the world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder" is that the growth of the ideology of destruction in terrorist groups can be traced back to the period of inaction

following the initial recognition of the evolving threat. From the 9/11 viewpoint, the roots of international terrorism spreading from the Middle East region can be attributed to the US being previously too soft on the Taliban regime in Afghanistan or the UN being unable to properly execute its 1991 resolution on the disarmament of Iraq. As usual in the time of national catastrophe, the leader of the state involved is expected to admit at least *some* degree of blame on the part of his own governement (or on behalf of the preceding governments) and this is exactly what can be found in Bush's tacit assumption of temporal perspective on the evolution of antagonistic beliefs and values.

Conditions for operation of the STA model of legitimisation

Let us recap the findings so far. Under the proposed model, legitimisation is seen as the principal goal of the political speaker seeking justification and support of actions which the speaker manifestly intends to perform in the vital interest of the addressee (cf. pursuit of the "war-on-terror"). While not detracting from the importance of factors related directly to the persona of the speaker such as charismatic leadership projection or positive self-presentation, the major factor affecting the success or failure of legitimisation is the speaker's ability to follow a consistent, tripartite proximization strategy, involving space-, time- and axiology-based (hence the STA acronym used throughout this book) conceptual shift of alien and normally antagonistic entity onto the addressee's own mental and physical territory in the deictic center, from which both the addressee and the speaker view the external events. As has been seen from the brief overviews of the concepts of "9/11 analogy" and "ideologies of murder", the STA proximization *always* involves functional interaction within or between its bottom-level language constructs. In other words, a phrase such as "ideologies of murder," carrying primarily a heavy axiological load, will *never* be conceptualized in isolation from the spatial and/or temporal aspect of the notion it addresses. The latter aspects may be seen to exist within the "anchor" phrase itself,[6] but they can also be found operating in the adjacent phrases, whether overtly or by implication (consider "free nations," explicit reading vs "oppressed nations," implicit or "follow-up" reading; "do not breed," explicit reading vs "do breed," implicit or "follow-up" reading).

The existence of functional interaction between the language realizations of the three aspects of proximization is the first of the two necessary conditions for the operation of the STA-based model of legitimisation, which, given the crucial role of the integrated proximization strategy in producing legitimisation, can

[6] That is, a phrase from which analysis of a given, most salient aspect of proximization (here: axiological) starts.

simply be referred to as *the STA model*, capturing thus both the global legitimisation effect and the very internal structure of proximization triggerring this effect. The second condition is more complex and can be summarized as follows:

> If, over a period of time, a text involving proximization is followed by another proximization-driven text, produced by the same political speaker, in relation to the same issue and with the same overall goal but against so different a contextual background that it has affected the selection of bottom-level lexical items to the extent that the new text displays a considerable lexical divergence from the old or "previous" one, then any ensuing decrease/increase in manifestation of one type of proximization must mean, respectively, an increased/decreased salience of another type.

This means that, if we take the WMD threat, aggravated by the operation of the "9/11 analogy," to constitute a major premise in the US pro-war stance in the early stages of the Iraqi intervention, the loss of this premise in the later phase manifestly produces a need for rhetorical compensation from another type of proximization. Since the spatial aspect of proximization lost its salience after the intelligence failure became evident, the ensuing legitimisation pattern had to draw much more heavily on another aspect, in fact, the axiological one.[7] Consider the following excerpt from President Bush's speech given at the Whitehall Palace in London on November 19, 2003:

> [...] By advancing freedom in the greater Middle East, we help end a cycle of dictatorship and radicalism that brings millions of people to misery and brings danger and, one day, tragedy, to our own people. By struggling for justice in Iraq, Burma, in Sudan, and in Zimbabwe, we give hope to suffering people and improve the chances for stability and progress. [...] Had we failed to act, the dictator's programs for weapons of mass destruction would continue to this day. Had we failed to act, Iraq's torture chambers would still be filled with victims, terrified and innocent. The killing fields of Iraq– where hundreds of thousands of men and women and children vanished into the sands–would still be known only to the killers. For all who love freedom and peace, the world without Saddam Hussein's regime is a better and safer place. [...]

Apparently, with the cornerstone of the spatial proximization strategy missing, Bush extends the scope of the pro-war rhetoric to cover a broader geopolitical spectrum. There is an extended representation of countries to be construed collectively as harbors of values endangering the axiological backbone of the US audience and the majority of the world audience. The language used draws

[7] See the comment in footnote 5.

on the increasingly drastic imagery ("torture chambers," "killing fields"), seeking a natural common ground for rejection of the alien ideologies. Legitimisation of the ongoing military presence in Iraq is thus claimed in the following way: alien ideological concepts ("dictatorship and radicalism") are shown to inspire actions which come in *increasingly direct* conflict with the basic axiological principles shared by the members of the "deictic center."

As in the case of the AEI speech, I shall attempt a closer analysis of the above excerpt later in the book. For now, it has served to illustrate the dynamic character of the proposed STA model. The "S," "T" and "A" parameters of analysis are designed to complement one another in accounting for the global legitimisation effect; furthermore, their complementary capacity is a factor in keeping up with the macro function of the political performance in case there is underrepresentation of one of the three proximization aspects.

Extensions of operation of the STA model and data for analysis

Evidently enough, I have so far been reluctant to state definitively that the proposed model will or will not operate beyond the field of the war-on-terror rhetoric, which constitutes its primary scope of application. However, since the intrinsic structure of the STA model involves accounting for sociopsychological variables (more on these will be said in the next subsection), which, by their very nature, define larger social and political audiences, the chances are that the model could indeed be utilized in analysis of the phenomenon of (political) legitimisation as a whole. In such a situation, consideration of the currently downplayed factors like charismatic leadership projection or positive self-presentation on the part of the political speaker might turn useful. I shall study some cross-cultural and cross-discursive applications of the STA model as late as Chapter Five, though at places I cannot completely avoid adopting a relatively universal stance when addressing the range of explanatory power of the model earlier in the book.[8] Still, the primary data are texts representing the domain of the US military involvement in Iraq. The entire corpus features the total of 64 presidential speeches and announcements made between February 26, 2003 (the AEI address; the war starts three weeks later on March 19) and June 30, 2004 (select powers are delegated to the Iraqi interim goverment), all

[8] On the other hand, considerations in Chapter Six–especially those concerning the diversity and heterogeneity of the lexical input of proximization–lead to a more toned-down vision of the STA's applicability. It might be that the model, despite its undoubtedly extensive social orientation, is best suited for interventionist discourses, or the discourses of threat construction.

of which have been downloaded from the official White House site www.whitehouse.gov, accessed in December 2004. This collection can be further subdivided into the 34 texts which were produced before November 19, 2003, a date marked by President Bush's first open admission of the WMD-targeted intelligence failure, and the 30 speeches given after this date. I shall refer to the president's performances within these two timeframes as "phase-one rhetoric" and "phase-two rhetoric," respectively, in an attempt to draw a clear distinction between the legitimisation pattern applied relative to the WMD premise and the subsequent legitimisation strategies pursued in the absence of this premise (cf. the shift from the spatial-proximization-based rhetoric to the axiological-proximization-based rhetoric). Naturally, in view of possible extensions of the model's applicability, there is going to be secondary data, too. Part of it comes from the Afghan conflict which immediately followed the 9/11 events. Another part includes performances by modern political leaders from countries other than the US. Finally, in Chapter Three some additional data is used exclusively to clarify the rhetorical function of particular bottom-level language constructs contributing to legitimisation. The reason behind the broadening of the geopolitical spectrum for the operation of the model is the assumption that the model can indeed work to account for any political leader's attempt to activate sociopolitical awareness in the thus-far inert addressee, in order to alert him to the necessity of performing (or merely accepting) the action(s) proposed by the speaker.

Methodological prerequisites and the book contents

What kind of analytic awareness do the construction and implementation of the STA model require?

It has already been said in the previous subsection that the STA model draws on not merely linguistic variables, but also on those involving the domains of related disciplines, such as politology, psychology, and social sciences. Such a cross-disciplinary approach to the study of political language[9] entails questions about the mutual relations between the particular layers of analysis. In particular, it prompts considerations of which of the analytic parameters are methodologically superordinate and which have a merely auxiliary value. The apparent problem with a cross-disciplinary analysis of political language is that there is hardly any visible one-to-one correspondence between the analytic components derived from the different disciplines. For instance, the general

[9] Recall Preface, for its attempts to situate this book within the Political Discourse Analysis (PDA) domain.

strategy of proximization, which the latter can be described as a cognitive and sociopsychological concept, is not to be equated with any particular linguistic form. It is rather a combination of specific language forms that can contribute to proximization, but even in this case, it cannot be guaranteed that the language forms involved will address simultaneously all the three aspects of proximization, i.e. spatial, temporal and axiological.

Mindful of these limitations, I shall argue that although resolution of most methodological difficulties such as the above can possibly be sought in adopting a hierarchical model of analysis where, like in the STA model, the upper-level, controlling parameters of analysis (viz. legitimisation, proximization in general) break down into a set of mediating variables (viz. the three aspects of proximization) and, finally, into multiple sets of bottom-level variables (language items), there may still occur problems with a possible overdetermination of analysis by the upper-level parameters. In view of this, due attention must be paid to the consistency of balance between utilizing the upper-level parameters (such as, again, the overall strategy of proximization) as entities which signpost the direction of analysis *a priori*, and their controlling potential, i.e. the capacity to verify, in an *a posteriori* manner (and against the global function, i.e. legitimisation), the critical findings from the study of specific language forms at the very bottom level. It is the chief methodological assumption of the present book to elucidate the potential of the analytic ploys to keep the described balance in place for the successful operation of the STA model, and these will be dealt with in the next chapter. Another important assumption is that the essence of the macro functions of legitimisation and proximization identified in particular instances of the investigated discourse can unfold as a result of "updates": for instance, the empirical checking of the data involving spatial proximization will result in a hypothesis about the proximization pattern characterizing the given chunk of text as a whole, but the hypothesis will be open to subsequent redefinition upon the study of these parts of the text's data which possess primarily temporal and axiological load. The emergence of the global function as a result of pragmatic updates will be addressed several times throughout the book, but a special emphasis will be put on it in Chapter Four and Chapter Six, in order to assist the evolution of a fully-fledged legitimisation model.

Chapter contents

Let us now sum up what has been said already, by looking at the contents of the book from the perspective of the consecutive chapters:

Chapter Two starts with discussing the deeply-rooted relationship between language and politics, and the advantages of political-linguistic models of analysis which, as can be seen from the envisaged STA legitimisation model, draw in their structure on the explanatory power of several interrelated disciplines, such as political science, social psychology, anthropology and others. Following this account, there is a counter-discussion of hazards which could arise from a careless, indiscriminate or uncontrolled adoption of the methodologically heterogeneous concepts underlying these disciplines. It is argued that the transparency and fuzzily defined boundaries of linguistic and extralinguistic data and theory may lead to overdetermination of analysis, usually by the controlling, upper-level categories of analysis (i.e. legitimisation and proximization, in our case), but possibly also by the bottom-level category of the actual language constructs. In order for an analytic device such as the STA legitimisation model to prove theoretically sound, this overdetermination can be neutralized in hierarchical analysis, but only if a peculiar system of *checks and balances* (referred to as "updates" above) is implemented in the actual data processing. Above all, the positioning of linguistic and non-linguistic categories must be at different levels of analysis and, second, the language data must be defined in constant interaction with the overarching functional (social or psychological) premise (i.e. legitimisation) which, at the same time, must itself control the development of analysis.

Chapter Three reviews a number of pragmalinguistic constructs which occur at the text level and contribute, in a bottom-up fashion, to the overall function of the discourse of legitimisation. In accordance with what has been said about the dynamic character of the STA model, special attention is paid to those constructs which possess considerable potential to interact with other variables at a given level of analysis. It is claimed that the most promising contribution to the STA model is available from the integrated analysis of such variables as assertive speech acts, implicatures (understood in the traditional, Gricean sense) and "common-ground"-setting acts, as defined by most theories of linguistic politeness. Drawing on the methodological assumptions voiced in Chapter Two, Chapter Three aims, in the long run, to enact efficient communication between the bottom-level, linguistic, and the upper-level, nonlinguistic (social, psychological, political, etc.) parameters of analysis.

Chapter Four is a direct step to the comprehensive model of legitimisation of the US war-on-terror rhetoric adopted after the 9/11 events. Compared to the current, preliminary version of the STA model, the discussion of legitimisation in Chapter Four features methodological and empirical upgrades resulting from the findings described in Chapter Two and Chapter Three. It also contains

detailed qualitative analyses of most of the textual data included in the two corpora representing "phase-one" and "phase-two" rhetoric. Specifically, the characteristics of the phase-one rhetoric are summed up in an in-depth analysis of the AEI speech, while the characteristics of the phase-two rhetoric are illustrated with regard to the Whitehall address. There is, finally, an attempt at a statistical presentation of the key lexical items and major concordances, for now within the spatial domain only, from the perspective of their quantitative impact on the general strategy of proximization, and hence, legitimisation. It is concluded that the main advantage of the STA model lies in its capacity to respond to the temporal variability of the social and political discourse context generating, over time, a number of lexically different manifestations of the speaker's same principal goal. The STA proximization schema assumes the constancy of the macro function of the speaker's performance within a defined timeframe–if, as a result of external factors, one strategy of proximization is downplayed or abandoned, the overall balance is redressed by an increase in the salience of another strategy.

Before the STA model is reconsidered and updated for its 2008 version in Chapter Six, Chapter Five looks at the possible extensions of the operation of the legitimisation strategies, reaching, in spite of the sub-title of this book, *beyond* the field of the war-on-terror rhetoric. Consequently, the STA schema is applied, somewhat digressively, to discourses which not necessarily reinforce the existing ideology of the deictic center (like the ideologies of the "democratic world" underlying the US stance in the Iraqi conflict), but rather provide the addressee with a new axiological frame. In order for the addressee to absorb the elements of this frame, the speaker needs to make sure that the adequate strategies have been implemented to activate the axiological sensitivity of the addressee. The STA's structure and application have appeared, so far, promising enough for such an activation to take place. This is shown on the example of the Polish political discourse addressing the issue of the NATO membership. I analyze a speech by the Polish ex-president Aleksander Kwaśniewski, which followed the invitation of Poland to the NATO membership negotiations in the mid-1997.

As has been indicated in Preface, Chapter Six was written two years after the original publication of the book and thus its role is to provide the necessary additions to and reformulations of some of the material presented in the earlier chapters building up the model–especially Chapter Four. Most of these changes involve the presentation and analysis of further empirical data, notably within the axiological domain of proximization, as well as a strong enactment of the "compensatory" status of the axiological proximization strategy. The idea that