

บทคัดย่อ

คำพูดทำลายล้างมวลชนของแบลร์: การวิเคราะห์วัจนลีลา

ในช่วงหลายทศวรรษที่ผ่านมา นักภาษาศาสตร์และนักสังคมวิทยา ได้พยายามสร้างกรอบแนวคิดเพื่อใช้วิเคราะห์และอธิบายการใช้ภาษากว่าได้ว่าวาทะทางการเมืองนับเป็นภาษาที่มีความพิเศษมากเนื่องจากมีความเกี่ยวข้องกับสังคมโดยรวม มักมีบทบาทในการเปลี่ยนแปลงนโยบายของประเทศ สามารถขับเคลื่อนนโยบายทางเศรษฐกิจให้ก้าวหน้า หรือแม้กระทั่งนำประเทศเข้าสู่สงคราม หนังสือของเลสลีย์ เจฟฟรีย์ส์ เล่มล่าสุดเรื่อง *Critical Stylistic Analysis (การวิเคราะห์วัจนลีลา)* ได้เสนอกรอบแนวคิดที่ใช้ศึกษาการครอบงำทางอุดมการณ์ของภาษาการเมือง บทความนี้อ้างอิงกรอบแนวคิดดังกล่าวเพื่อวิเคราะห์วาทะของโทนี แบลร์ ซึ่งมีผลต่อการโน้มน้าวและชี้นำประชาชนอังกฤษให้เห็นพ้องกับนโยบายเข้าร่วมสงครามและรุกรานอิรัก โดยนักวิพากษ์สังคมหลายรายได้วิจารณ์ว่าวาทะของแบลร์สะท้อนการครอบงำและทำให้สังคมไขว้เขว จากการศึกษาพบว่ากรอบแนวคิดวัจนลีลาช่วยให้เกิดความเข้าใจในการศึกษาและถอดรหัสความหมายของภาษาโน้มน้าวอุดมการณ์มวลชน

Abstract
Blair's Words of Mass Destruction (WMDs):
A Critical Stylistic Analysis

For many decades linguists and social scientists have been developing frameworks that enables deep analysis and explanation of language use. Of special note are political speeches because they involve society as a whole and are often powerful enough to change national policy, force forward new economic policies or take nations to war. Lesley Jeffries recent book *Critical Stylistic Analysis* claims to offer a framework that is able to uncover the intricacies of ideological manipulations within political language. This paper uses Jeffries' framework to analyze Tony Blair's 'going to war' speech which took Britain into an invasion of Iraq, and has been cited by numerous social commentators as a manipulative and misleading dialog. Using *Critical Stylistic Analysis* this paper uncovers and explains how Blair was able to mislead the British public, and take Britain into an unjust and unfounded (by his examples) war. The paper concludes that *Critical Stylistic Analysis* affords valuable new insights into the study and deciphering of ideologically manipulative language.

Blair's Words of Mass Destruction (WMDs): A Critical Stylistic Analysis

เจสัน รีฟ *

Jason Reeve

มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล
Mahidol University

Introduction

Former Prime Minister Tony Blair's infamous 'weapons of mass destruction' speech to the House of Commons, 18th March 2003, has received considerable coverage, both from society at large (including a public inquiry) and academics. Estimates ranging from 100,000 to over 1 million conflict deaths lie in testament to the importance of Tony Blair's words – words which initiated war, against the aspirations of the UK public, European Union and United Nations.

Discourse Analysis (DA) is defined by Bhatia et al. (2009: 1) as 'the analysis of linguistic behavior, written and spoken, beyond the limits of individual sentences, focusing primarily on the meaning constructed and interpreted as language used in particular social contexts', and provides one of the premier linguistic methods for analyzing political speeches. From atomistic bottom-up approaches that focus on rank structures (the Birmingham School) and ethnomethodological markers (Conversation Analysis [CA]), to top-down functional approaches which spotlight interdiscursivity

* อาจารย์ เจสัน รีฟ อาจารย์ประจำคณะศิลปศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยมหิดล

(Genre Analysis) and ideologies (Critical Discourse Analysis [CDA]), DA has a wide breadth of tools and methods at its disposal. A recent addition to the field is Lesley Jeffries' *Critical Stylistics* (CS). Born out of literary linguistics and developed under the CDA umbrella, *Critical Stylistics* promises to supplement the micro-level insights afforded by atomistic approaches to a widely contextual macro-level viewpoint – as Jeffries (2010: 16) puts it, CS is “in a tradition of bringing the best of stylistics and critical linguistics together”. This paper aims to test the effectiveness of *Critical Stylistics* by initially outlining the key apparatus, then analyzing: 1) Blair's WMD speech, adding CA tools to enhance the CS toolset in a conversational context.

In summary, this paper utilizes *Critical Stylistics* to probe the Blair WMD scandal, rigorously assessing the toolset in the process and combining additional CA tools in an effort to move towards a unified micro-to-macro discourse analysis framework.

Critical Stylistics

Lesley Jeffries introduces *Critical Stylistics* with a firm statement of intent:

The book introduces a set of tools, which, whilst not complete, are nevertheless more comprehensive than any provided on the literature on CDA and other similarly politically motivated linguistic studies. (Jeffries 2010: 1)

She goes on to explain CS as a broad range of tools used ‘to explain how texts are in a position to persuade the reader...’ and add linguistic “rigor” to the field – albeit at the ‘micro-analysis end of the spectrum’. As such, CS could reasonably be considered a discourse grammar.

At no point does Jeffries use the complete toolset to analyze a text, preferring to move one tool at a time through her (predominantly) constructed examples and 'adapted' texts. This paper, however, will analyze two real political texts using the complete toolset – on the presumption that linguistic methods must be rigorously tested and proven in the field.

Critical Stylistics Toolset

- A *Naming and Describing*: noun phrase analysis.
- B *Equating and Contrasting*: semantic equivalence and opposition.
- C *Exemplifying and Enumerating*: phrasal markers.
- D *Prioritizing*: TG clause transformation.
- E *Assuming and Implying*: Pragmatic presupposition and implication.
- F *Negating*: syntactic and semantic negation.
- G *Hypothesizing*: grammatical modality.
- H *Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of other Participants*: stylistic speech presentation.
- I *Representing Time, Space and Society*: deixis.

The list of CS tools appears extensive, especially at the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels, so it's hoped that a thorough understanding of textual meaning creation and ideological manipulation can be teased out. The biggest worry is just how to go about using the tools; Jeffries doesn't provide any kind of framework or advice upon their systematic implementation – my initial approach

will be text driven, but the eclectic nature of the tools (Jeffries states [p. 13] 'I am in flavor of eclecticism...') seems to exhibit internal frictions with its combination of Chomskyan, Hallidayan, Gricean and Cognitive Linguistic methodologies. Lastly, Jeffries consideration of Assuming and Implying covers such a massive area that I've separated it and then considered it at depth: Pragmatics.

Analysis

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2003/mar/18/foreignpolicy.iraq1>.

Tony Blair's WMD Speech (2003)

I beg to move the motion standing on the order paper in my name and those of my right honourable friends.

This highly ritualized inauguration firmly establishes genre type, framing the forthcoming political monolog. In Bakhtin's (2009: 103) words: '...genres, particularly the high and official ones, are compulsory and extremely stable', Biber and Conrad (2009: 7) go further: 'Genre features are not persuasive; they might occur only one time in a complete text, often at the beginning or ending boundary' (a position harder to maintain for genres such as rap songs where vocabulary dynamically reinforces genre; and impossible to maintain if we go beyond linguistic analysis into multimodal analysis and consider clothing, hairstyles, etc.).

At the outset I say: it is right that this house debate this issue and pass judgment. That is the democracy that is our right but that others struggle for in vain.

The two key deictic pronominal structures are 'this issue' and 'that'; the honest choice would be 'the invasion of Iraq', but the text would then read as 'The invasion of Iraq is the democracy that is our right but that others struggle for in vain' – clearly a contradiction, thus, from the outset, Blair has disguised the key issue by using endophora without an antecedent.

The parallel use of verbal processes '*I say*' and '*this house debate*' is a group inclusion device (Blair doesn't want to be isolated) and is in contrast to the material action verb '*struggle*' which emotes somebody who needs help.

Blair could have said 'Iraq doesn't have democracy', but this would be open to debate as well as questions of legitimacy in forcing Western ideologies upon non-Western nations, so instead he uses a relative clause (relative clauses are subordinated and difficult to challenge) to negate the idea of democracy with 'that *others struggle for in vain*' which brings to mind images of poor Iraqis in need of our help, which is pragmatically induced by negation rather than 'known'.

And again I say: I do not disrespect the views of those in opposition to mine.

The object of this SVO sentence has been chosen as an unnamed group; naming them: the majority of British people, the European Union, the United Nations and the majority of people on planet Earth, would completely undermine his cause, thus he has used linguistic manipulation through non-referenced endophora to avoid naming a group and thus taking away their power.

This is a tough choice. But it is also a stark one: to stand British troops down and turn back; or to hold firm to the course we have set. I believe we must hold firm.

The intensive relationship verb *'is'*, used twice, sets up a close connection with *'stand down'* and *'turn back'* which have negative (cowardly) connotations, especially when *'British'* is emotively inserted inside the first phrasal verb, finally setting up the option to *'hold firm'* which is hard to disagree with and not be seen as a traitor to the British troops.

The first two sentences set up a powerful hypothetical world where British troops/people are weak, they *'stand down'* and *'turn back'*, which can then be pragmatically negated by supporting Blair's invasion plans by *'hold [ing] firm'* – setting up hypothetical world's just so they can be negated is extremely ideologically manipulative.

The question most often posed is not why does it matter? But why does it matter so much?

As above, *'it'* is an unreferenced endophora which avoids saying *'The invasion of Iraq'*; an invasion needs justification, which Blair avoids.

Negation in the first sentence is used as an intensifier leading into the parallel structure of the second, thus powerfully spotlighting the next section (below).

Here we are, the government with its most serious test, its majority at risk, the first cabinet resignation over an issue of policy. The main parties divided. People who agree on everything else, disagree on this and likewise, those who never agree on anything, finding common cause.

Blair, this time, uses cataphoric 'we' followed by its reference '*the government*' in apposition. In fact, the apposition continues over clause and sentence boundaries, mixing ideas and phrase/clause structure as it goes, finally ending with '*finding common cause*' which connectively connotes as everyone is in agreement – opposite from the truth, but Blair's speechwriter has skillfully masked the truthful meaning by confusing the audience.

The verb usage echoes the noun manipulations above: '*we are*' defines an intensive group relationship; '*divided*', '*agree*', '*disagree*' and '*finding common cause*' alternate between equating and contrasting before finally ending in a mental process highlighting group agreement – falsely. The verbs are used as converse antonyms, which are very easy to collocate and thus rest our minds upon the final phrase.

The negation here of '*disagree*' and '*never agree on anything*' are used to juxtapose and thus foreground their antonyms – ultimately empowering the phrase '*finding common cause*', with, it is implied, the speaker himself.

The country and parliament reflect each other, a debate that, as time has gone on has become less bitter but not less grave.

The noun phrase choice '*country and parliament*' shows parallel form, an equality which suggests agreement; he could have said 'the country does not agree with me, but...' which would have been accurate, but damaging to his ideological focus.

The verb choice '*reflect*' has strong connotations of sameness/identicalness and demonstrates yet another in-group strategy. The use of passives ('*has gone*', '*has become*') eliminates the subject (perhaps because they are people who disagree with war; they are bitter) and seems to imply (falsely) that the country, parliament and speaker are in agreement about the invasion of Iraq.

The negative modifier 'less bitter' works in parallel with 'not less grave', but it is unclear exactly whether this multiple negated (six times if we include: 'less', 'bitter', 'but', 'not', 'less' and 'grave') section of wording ends with a positive or negative connotation. Blair piles ambiguity upon ambiguity because the reality is so clear: the majority of Britons, Europeans and World citizens are against the invasion – linguistic elusiveness is a consistent ploy which he uses to counteract the facts.

So: why does it matter so much? Because the outcome of this issue will now determine more than the fate of the Iraqi regime and more than the future of the Iraqi people, for so long brutalised by Saddam. It will determine the way Britain and the world confront the central security threat of the 21st century; the development of the UN; the relationship between Europe and the US; the relations within the EU and the way the US engages with the rest of the world. It will determine the pattern of international politics for the next generation.

The '*Iraq regime*' is obviously a negative word choice (regimes are thought of as bad, he could have said 'the Iraqi government' which is an appropriate synonym, but it doesn't carry the negative connotation that '*regime*' does); '*Britain and the World*' shows group alignment which simply is not true on this issue; '*the central security threat of the 21st century*' is massive hyperbole; from '*the development of the UN...*' to '*...rest of the world*' is another massive group inclusion which is fundamentally untrue because Britain and America were largely alone in their sentiment.

This paragraph has a remarkable lack of verbs: one dummy question verb and three instances of 'determine'. What will 'it'/the outcome of this issue' determine? Seemingly, '*the fate of the Iraqi people*', the entire world, the 21st century and '*international politics for the next generation*'! Extreme hyperbole resting upon one dummy verb and a powerfully emotive verb (heavily associated to its adjective form) which is surprisingly ambiguous as a potential mental cognition process, material action verb and/or mental perception process.

English doesn't have a future tense; we use modality which is open to refutation, thus Blair's strong wording in this section is underpinned by his option to deny these words at a later date should he choose – which, history showed, he did... But first, Iraq and its WMD.

This is a classic nominalization; the normal SVO sentence order would be 'Iraq has WMDs (which I will now discuss)', and is easily challenged because it's a direct statement. Blair's linguistic manipulation removes any potential challenge to the truth of the statement as well as turning his belief into a named entity – a verity.

Pragmatic Analysis

Jeffries considers pragmatic ‘presupposition and implication’ as a major linguistic tools. A deep analysis can be found in Reeve 2012a (upcoming); the findings are listed below:

Firstly, let’s address three notable absentees: felicity conditions, flouting CP maxims and perlocutionary force. Because this is not a two way communication, and thus can be considered one long chain of utterances, the last point could be seen primarily as ‘what does BS accomplish with the speech?’ War was a pre-determined event, so the speech wasn’t any type of discussion. The desired perlocutionary force was to limit the potential political damage to self and party; this notion is further supported by the intensity of positive politeness strategies. A formal speech which is to be broadcast worldwide will completely avoid floating CP maxims because such floating is very group specific and easily misunderstood by hearers not party to the specific shared knowledge of the speech. Felicity conditions could be considered one of the weaknesses of Austin’s original work. Searle developed the idea, and Grice bettered the concept with his co-operative principle, but we still need to go further – power. Henry the VIII, when his felicity conditions for remarrying were blocked, simply rewrote the felicity conditions; an act made possible through power, Blair’s speech violates CP maxims in way that a less powerful speaker couldn’t – if I’d made similar comments in a local tavern during 2003 I’d have been shouted down as a liar by angry pub philosophers.

With a nod to Sperber and Wilson, the speech could be said to maintain coherence primarily via contextual relevance because the referent (the proposed war in Iraq) is so overwhelming.

Thus, *Relevance Theory* might be understood to complement, rather than contradict, *Speech Act Theory* within this speech.

The complete speech has three notably repetitive aspects: positive politeness strategies, presuppositions and CP maxim violations. The politeness strategies are obviously seeking solidarity; on the eve of war there are precious few, if any, other options for a Prime Minister – using negative politeness (limiting imposition upon others) would be an impossible task when you're pronouncing war! Presuppositions are cancellable, and thus deniable, which is why politicians the world over, throughout history, adhere to this *modus operandi*. Violating CP maxims is usually thought of as an attempt at deception. In Grice's words: 'VIOLATE a maxim; if so, in some cases he will be liable to mislead.' (1975: 49) Pertinent questions thus take centre stage: Was BS lying in order to lead us to war, why? – questions beyond this paper's scope.

Six later excerpts from Blair's WMD speech are emphasized below in order to remind the reader, and clarify beyond doubt, Blair's linguistic choices detailing '*Iraq and its WMD*':

Saddam had used the weapons against Iran, against his own people, causing thousands of deaths. He had had plans to use them against allied forces. It became clear after the Gulf war that **the WMD ambitions of Iraq** were far more extensive than hitherto thought.

This nominalization, complete with definite article (is known...), points to a presupposed 'fact'. But is in fact unknown, and was later proven to be false.

In December the inspectors left. Their final report is a withering indictment of Saddam's lies, deception and obstruction, **with large quantities of WMD** remained unaccounted for.

This embedded phrase spotlights not only WMD's, but '*large quantities*' thereof (presupposing their existence). Of course, by this stage the acronym WMD is a powerful figuring device with the meaning 'Saddam's WMD which will be used against us'. After the invasion and search of Iraq, it was found to be false; a lie.

It says that this time compliance must be full, unconditional and immediate. The first step is a full and final **declaration of all WMD** to be given on 8 December.

What would any tyrannical regime **possessing WMD** think viewing the history of the world's diplomatic dance with Saddam? That our capacity to pass firm resolutions is only matched by our feebleness in implementing them.

The determiner '*all*' is a scalar far away from zero, thus WMD possession is presupposed. It was later proven to be false.

Iraq is **not** the only **regime with WMD**. But back away now from this confrontation and future conflicts will be infinitely worse and more devastating.

The powerful naming of '*regime with WMD*' is further spotlighted by negation that declares '*Iraq*' as that regime. Again, a claim which proved to be false.

The threat is chaos. And there are two begetters of chaos. **Tyrannical regimes with WMD** and extreme terrorist groups who profess a perverted and false view of Islam.

This extraordinary nominalization, with added hyperbole, powerfully figures Saddam (the 'tyrant'), adding '*terrorism*' and '*perverted and false view of Islam*' to his attributes 'with WMD' was proven to be false.

Let me tell the house what **I know. I know** that there are some countries or groups within countries that are proliferating and trading in **WMD**, especially nuclear weapons technology.

If we accept that by this stage Blair has linguistically collocated 'WMD' with '*Saddam*' then, Blair '*knows*' that Saddam has WMDs; adding the hyperbole of '*nuclear weapons*' as a scare tactic. Although in fact Iraq did not have WMDs.

Results

Critical Stylistics does tease out a pattern of how Tony Blair's speech was constructed and delivered with manipulative intent. Under close linguistic inspection the entire speech excerpt: 1) uses excessive positive politeness techniques, 2) is built upon a bed of linguistic deceptions. The evidence of: false presuppositions, numerous CP maxim violations, unreferenced endophora to conceal basic truths, setting up hypothetical worlds purely to negate them, massive hyperbole and use of parallel forms to align notions which seen independently would not be collocated, illustrate extreme manipulation as you'd expect from a political speech, but it goes

further by demonstrating how Blair has concealed truths and inserted falsehoods – what van Dijk (2006a) calls ‘cognitive mind control’, and analyzing the same Blair speech notes: hyperbolic moves, positive self-presentation, ideological polarization, emotionalizing the argument and fallacious ideologically manipulative arguments – although van Dijk’s article lacks the systematic linguistic rigor that Jeffries’ framework offers, and as such Cognitive Stylistics could be well used to support his claims.

Final Thoughts

This paper initially posed the question of whether Cognitive Stylistics could help link the lexico-grammatical elements of discourse, with the ‘social-cultural aspects of linguistic behavior’ (McCarthy 2001: 38). The answer is: yes, to a certain degree, but we still don’t have a complete framework. In a second paper studying Blair’s WMD speech, van Dijk (2006b) concludes that ‘context modes are the missing link between text and talk and their environment’, which tallies with what Schegloff and Sacks (1973: 289) call the ‘details of social actions’. Fairclough’s (1989: 26) three dimensions of discourse: description, interpretation and explanation, could perhaps be fully realized by combining Cognitive Stylistic’s linguistic insights with “Conversation Analysis” descriptive and interpretive power, with additional explanative insights offered by cognitive theories. As yet, no such complete framework is available, but Jeffries’ Cognitive Stylistics may go some way towards realizing an integrated micro-to-macro discourse analysis.

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