

This study is located in the tradition of research focussing on idiosyncratic phraseological patterns in different types of discourse such as conversation (Biber et al 2002), US congressional speeches (Miller 2007) and newspaper editorials (Partington and Morley 2004).

Previous research (Spinzi 2009) has demonstrated that the search for security involves any layers of political, social and personal life. In other words, security is undergoing a process of re-definition in that the state has lost its monopoly and consequently the concept of security has become less state-centric and more human.

Subscribing to Van Dijk's theory of ideology (2001), this work aims to attend to those features of discourse that signal opinions, perspectives, interests, and evaluation. Accepting the theory that ideologies are socially shaped, Van Dijk emphasizes their cognitive aspect, considering them as system of beliefs performing identifying tasks and representing the basic social characteristics of a group such as their objectives, values and norms.

Against this backdrop, this study gives insights into how 'particularist ideologies' and choices mapped to broader ideologies are worded in the language of diplomacy, which, more than any other fields of specialized communication, rests on the traditional claim to be objectively constructed.

3. *The corpus and the methodology*

From a methodological perspective, this study is set in the recent tradition that combines corpus linguistics and discourse analysis (Koller and Mautner 2004; Miller 2007; Bayley 2008), in particular the Appraisal Theory (Martin and White 2005) pointing out how corpus studies can assist discourse analysis.

The data for the analysis come from a specialized corpus of about 553,462 running words (see Table 1) of the speeches delivered by the three British foreign ministers (i.e. John Cook, Jack Straw and Margaret Beckett) from 1997 to 2007 and downloaded from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website. The corpus was interrogated using Wordsmith Tools (Scott 2007) for quantitative observations.

In their interactions with people and reporters and Members of Parliament, foreign ministers make prolific use of a range of words and phrases that denote their approval or disapproval of certain decisions made with reference to international issues.

Table 1 - The Diplomatic Corpus (henceforth DiCo)

Foreign Ministers	Text-typology	Tokens	Years
Robin Cook	58 speeches	140,583	May 1997- June 2001
Jack Straw	144 speeches	308,570	June 2001- May 2006
Margaret Beckett	46 speeches	104,309	May 2006 - June 2007

This analysis moves from an automatic computer-based to a mainly manual but in

THE VOICES OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS: A CORPUS-ASSISTED STUDY OF IDEOLOGICAL POSITIONING IN THE LANGUAGE OF DIPLOMACY

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1. Introduction

One of the major aims of a politician is to gain the people's allegiance, to have them believe that the decisions that are being made are the right ones" (Wilson 1990: 76). The basic idea is that the way we see the world, think about it and act on it, is largely determined by how we 'frame' it, and this in turn may be influenced by our choice of rhetorical device.

In the context of foreign policy, language choices, which carry significant communicative intent, are regularly made "to galvanize the audience to achieve a common 'purpose'" (Burhanudeen 2005: 37) through the enactment of specific linguistic mechanisms. This work is part of a wider research project aiming at investigating register-specific features of ideology and stance in the sub-domain of political discourse: the language of diplomacy seen as the expression of the foreign policy of a country.

In this paper I investigate how the 'voices' of the foreign ministers are expressed in current foreign policy by looking at those mechanisms which express the point of view of the speakers (Stubbs 1996: 20), namely their way of projecting the world, their way of positioning their audience to accept what they say. The approach is informed by Bakhtin's notion of 'dialogism' and 'heteroglossia' ([1935] 1981; 1986), meaning that verbal communication reveals the influence of what has been said before, setting up a dialogical relationship with other voices in the text. However, utterances may regard the background against which they are set and in this case they are labelled 'monoglosses'.

2. Theoretical Background

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summary (Halliday 1994) and more particularly on the framework of the Appraisal theory (Martin 2000; Martin and White 2005), whose main aim is to better understand the interplay of interpersonal meaning and social relations in the model of language and the social we were developing, especially in the area of solidarity (i.e. resource of empathy and affiliation)" (Martin 2000: 148). The Appraisal system (see Figure 1) an overview) proposes three dimensions of evaluative meaning which, adopting Martin and White's terminology (2005), are 'Attitude', 'Engagement' and 'Graduation'. The sub-system which pertains this work is that of 'Engagement' (see Figure 1), which involves those resources that position the textual voice intersubjectively. Martin (2000) points out that the expression of attitude is a truly interpersonal issue in that it does not simply relate to the speaker's opinion about the world but to the aim of eliciting a reaction of solidarity. A point worth highlighting is that appraisal works as an ongoing regulative process so that the interpersonal structure of language reveals its 'prosodic' nature (Halliday 1979: 66-67).

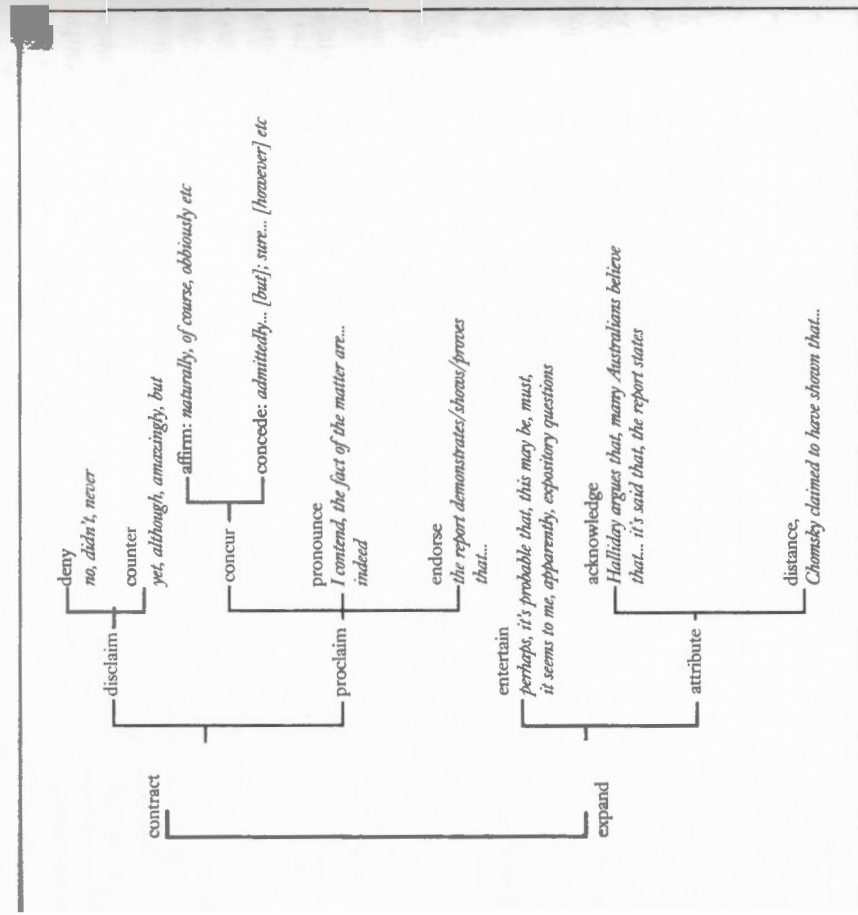


Figure 1 - The taxonomy of options under the category of Engagement (adapted from Martin and White 2005).

Since as corpora studies are mainly comparative (Tognini-Bonelli 2001) as well as register analysis (Matthiessen 1993: 279), the keyword utility was then used to better interpret the incidence or better the saliency (Baker 2006: 125) of features in DiCo by comparing it with the BNC as representing general language. For the same reason DiCo was then referenced against another, but bigger, specialized corpus containing all Tony Blair's speeches from 1997 up to 2007 namely the years of his administration.

As Table 2. shows, noteworthy is the occurrence of the first plural pronoun *we* and the correspondent possessive *our*; which may be relevant at the level of style and it is recommended that such high frequency words are not discarded" (Baker 2006: 128). The first content word is security which constitutes the main focus of this word together with the formulations in which it is embedded. For the lack of space here I will be presenting results of what I named the "ideology of causality".

Table 2 - Keywords in DiCo

	DiCo referenced against BNC	DiCo referenced against Blair's speeches	
	KEY WORD	KEYWORD	KEYNESS
1	EU	FOREIGN	2.031,52
2	WE	INTERNATIONAL	1.210,59
3	OUR	EU	1.184,94
4	INTERNATIONAL	RIGHTS	1.155,20
5	SECURITY	WHICH	1.034,32
6	IRAQ	HUMAN	948,72
7	EUROPE	THE	935,96
8	EUROPEAN	OUR	599,50
9	TERRORISM	SECURITY	572,02
10	GLOBAL	GLOBAL	532,31

4. Analysis

The discourse of security is primarily organized around the semantic motif of interdependence, which is expressed either through relational Processes or through a number of lexical items as will be demonstrated:

1. There is no higher national interest for our foreign policy than the promotion of our national security [disclaim: denial]. In the context of international security, no nation can be an island [disclaim: denial]- not even such a distinguished [judgement: +normality] island state as Britain [disclaim: denial/counter].
2. The prosperity and the security of our nation depend on foreign contacts.
3. Promoting our values enhances our prosperity, and reinforces our security.

4. Our national security depends on NATO.

Citation 1 sets up a sharp contrast between isolationism and interconnectedness which is further voiced through the positive 'judgement' of 'social esteem', [+normal] or Britain: *distinguished island*. Even though considered a successful and respectful country Britain, that is an island in its physical nature, cannot achieve security and thus security, if it does not rely on the *security* of other countries. The speaker's assertiveness is here corroborated by the use of the comparative form, which ranks 'security' as first priority of foreign policy and the 'contractive' formulation *There is no higher national interest* objectivises the speaker's position.

The other axiological orientation, namely that of combined effort and collective participation to achieve security, is expressed in an assertive way and the use of monoglosses here a crucial role. The point is that the principle of 'cooperation' (which implies opposition with 'isolation') permeates all the acclaimed values around 'security' (e.g. dependence between economic and political dimension; the supremacy of international law and the European integration) and is encoded through un-negotiated statements of power which reveal its unquestionable aspect as shown from the concordances 4 and many others. These citations set up an "undialogised" environment where authorial voice is constructed as a single voice and is highly invested. As White (2003: 263), the 'bare assertion' construes either 'solidarity' or 'power' and is ally found where:

there is an assumption of ontological, epistemic and axiological commonality between voice and audience, where the addressee is assumed to operate with the same knowledge, beliefs and values as those relied upon by the proposition. The undialogized bare utterance typically operates when this commonality is assumed not to be at risk or in doubt.

The following instances are other examples of the instantiation of the semantic of participation and cooperation through heteroglosses but with different elements contributing to make them assertive:

5. We have learnt that we can achieve more security for our nations by integrating our markets and our economies than we ever achieved by arming frontiers that kept us apart [*concur: Concede*].
6. We have learnt that we can have greater security by bringing down barriers than by building walls between us [*concur: Concede*].
7. Britain's alliance with the United States has of course been the anchor of our security for half a century [*concur: Affirmation*].

I assume the utterances (5) and (6) as being 'concurring' formulations in that, by ending the proposition on past experience, through the inclusive-we cluster *we learnt*, the speaker sets out only one position, once again integration as the only key to the problem of enhancing security. The same aim is instantiated in citation

of history, is the core of *security*. The occurrence of the attitudinal 'inscription' *anchor* triggers positive response of 'security' and 'stability' and, therefore, by giving a capacity-oriented representation of Britain, the speaker presents himself as aligned with the construed audience, as having the same knowledge and belief. This image of *anchor* [+valuation], relationally construed, reinforces the idea of security as a value achievable through integration and 'naturalises' the ideological position of 'atlanticism' via an 'inscribed' metaphor. This of course echoes Blair's governmental decision that UK interests were best served by remaining Washington's closest ally and by promoting 'US leadership'.

As shown, the concept of 'security' as a value achievable only through networking is pervasive in the corpus and it is intensified by recurrent words from the same semantic sphere: *alliances, links, partners, network, partnership* or through material processes (*work together*). What comes into the picture is 'overwording' (Fairclough 1989: 115) which involves nearly synonymous words and has the ideological function of repeating the crucial concept of unity against isolation or put differently it aims to render isolationism anachronistic with reference to globalisation.

4.1 Attaining peace to reach security and prosperity: the ideology of 'causality'

This sub-section deals with another semantic category that is extensively used in *DiCo* that is the cause. A closer scan of the following segment uncovers an opposition given by a bifurcation implicitly constructed between 'us' and 'them' also voiced as *industrialised vs. poor countries*:

8. The industrialised nations have enjoyed half a century of peace. That has provided the security and good order in which their prosperity has advanced at a rate without precedent. Yet, in the same half-century, peoples elsewhere on the globe have lived through violence and conflicts, which have broken their human rights and impoverished their standard of living [*disclaim: counter*]. It is largely poor countries that now experience the scourge of war.

Security is the pivotal element that guarantees peace, order and wealth whereas the lack of it is a source of disorder, war and poverty. The opposition is lexically and co-textually construed once again from a historical perspective:

- industrialised nations vs. poor countries*;
- order vs. conflicts* (namely disorder);
- prosperity vs. impoverished* (poverty is the result);
- peace vs. war*.

The argumentative ground given initially, *security* as basis for good order, is then countered in order to show the consequences of the opposed historically annotated case

re discourse of 'security' is thus legitimised through this well-built binary opposition: 'security' excludes automatically war and poverty, or better, wealth and order are the pillars to build up 'security'. The binomial *security/peace*, more frequently used by Cook, construed as the metaphor of the order/peace-as a pathway-to security', worded in terms of 'disclaims'. The segment analysed is a clear example of the ideology of causality which was found to have connection with processes of change (Coffin 2000: 342). This means that the main intent is the assessment of the degree of causal force in historical events and "valuation resources are critical in meeting this purpose" (ibid.). Other two variants of this meaning are formulated according to the pattern 'without X... no Y' and 'more... the more', as displayed by the following enlarged concordances:

- 9 If we value our national security, we must work for international stability.
10. And the greater Europe's military capacity for crisis management the stronger will be the security of Britain.
11. Without close Russian involvement, no security system for Europe is credible.

A relation of conditional causality is clearly evident and its instantiation through relative polarity closes off any alternative, namely there is no sign that these propositions operate within a continuing debate. As concordances show, negatives are pervasive in locomatic discourse. In denials, contesting positions are addressed and set aside; their highlights more semantic content with respect to an affirmative formulation insofar as "semantically, negation belongs to the realm of the nonrealized" (Miestamo 2005: 1). Indeed, the foreign ministers indicate their objectives (*security, peace, prosperity*) as unattainable if some conditions are not achieved. By negating an event the speaker is asserting the absence of 'stability', hence, a status which requires change. These 'denials' present the speaker as having expertise in this area and as intervening to adjust some conceptions of the addressee's part (Martin and White 2005: 119).

Furthermore, studies on denials recognize "many typological similarities between natives and other non-realized contexts, such as questions and conditionals" (Miestamo 2005: 196). Biber's research (1988: 107) considers conditionals as playing a significant role in the textual dimensions as 'overt expression of persuasion' and involved argumentative discourse and, therefore, seen as markers of affect or stance.

5. Conclusion

In attempt to sketch out the stance of the three ministers, we can safely state they make use of the 'contraction' to explain political choices. Many instances of announcements feature in particular Straw's style, whereas Cook sorts to logical connections. More logical and assertive appears Cook if compared to Straw's more

cautious and justifying stance and to Beckett's contrasting attitude. This diversity may find its reason in the social events of their times. The main thrust of discourse is given by the semantic of interdependence. The principle of cooperation is mainly expressed through 'un-dialogized' formulations where no alternative voice is contemplated and through redundant occurrences of items belonging to the same semantic category of 'link'.

Values of 'entertain' occur with a significantly low frequency in the discourse of security whereas 'denials' play a fundamental role in the construal of a 'contractive' stance. The association *security/peace/prosperity* instantiates the ideology of 'causation: given a premise a set of potential effects are carried out in an 'irrealis' environment. Peace is the *conditio sine qua non* for security which is, in turn, a means to achieve stability and prosperity. The patterns of preference include the semantic category of consequence, mainly the 'cause'.

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