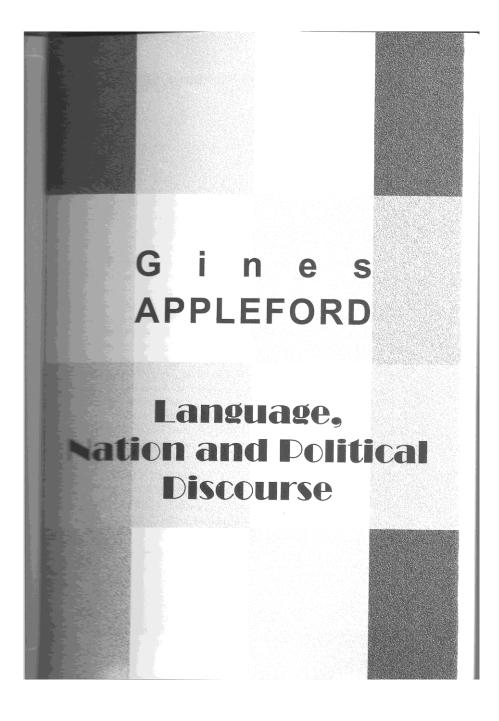


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Language, Nation and Political Discourse Gines Appleford¹

Abstract

This paper focuses on identification and analysis of implicit assumption in political discourse in English and the ways in which discourse can be constructed to maintain and reinforce existing cultural biases. Specifically, the paper describes the relationship between language and ideology in relation to speeches and interviews given by politicians during two decisive phases of the Howard government in Australia (illegal immigration, Iraq war). The analysis also takes into consideration aspects of the language used by the media at the time.

1 Introduction

1.1 'Common sense', ideology, presupposition, consensus

In this paper the term 'ideology' refers to the beliefs that people hold as being natural and logical (Jones et al 2004). One way those in positions of power holding certain beliefs can influence people is through language. The political speech is one means used to promulgate the ideology in the messages of politicians. Another powerful means of communicating the beliefs and 'common sense' of those in power, and of creating a sense of consensus of the majority is through the rhetoric of the mass media.

According to the critical linguistics school of thought (Kress, Fowler, Trew, Hodge 1979) discourse can be constructed to maintain and reinforce the existing cultural values and beliefs of a given society, or group. It is possible to observe cultural biases in the linguistic devices used in the discourse of a particular group or culture to regenerate and reconfirm the existing 'common sense' values of the society, or group. For example an Australian newspaper text may be likely to present discourse that implicitly reflects the ideological stances or attitudes of the economic and social system characteristic of the Australian western capitalistic reader model: the discourse is directed towards 'the ideal Australian reader'².

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² 'Ideal reader' as described by Kress (1988:36): "The text constructs its ideal reader by providing a

In other words, as Fairclough (1989) maintains, the sense of text is the result of a combination of the content of the text and what is 'in' the reader. This constitutes the 'common-sense' assumption of the reader or 'interpreter', or what Fairclough calls 'members resources'. For Halliday (1995) reality is not only represented and communicated through language but, in a sense, reality can also be constructed through language choices. If reality can be constructed through language choices, it may be within the power of those who are able to use language through the mass media (for example, politicians, journalists) to create specific cultural realities, or 'common sense' values.

One example of this view of 'common sense', or appeal to the emotions and values of the audience can be found in some of Prime Minister John Howard's language in regard to the measures taken by the Australian government to prevent a group of illegal immigrants from entering Australia in August 2001. The focus in this study is on the discourse used by government officials to handle the crisis they were facing when entry into Australia was refused to a group of 'boat people' that the Norwegian cargo ship, the Tampa' had rescued at sea. The Australian media was to label the incident as 'The Tampa Affair' ³

Text 1

Prime Minister:

We assert the absolute right as a country to control our borders and to decide who comes here. Now, no country can ever give that up, but against that of course we balance our long record as a very humanitarian country stretching back 60-70 years of taking refugees from war torn Europe. I mean we are a very generous people and you've got to balance that against, not having that generosity played apon.

(A Current Affair: Television Interview - 28 August 2001)

In this discourse Mr. Howard uses a series of strategies to create consensus with his audience and to appeal to the 'pathos' of his fellow Australians. First of all there is the frequent use of the pronoun 'we' (and 'our' repeated in each sentence). 'We' is used to

certain 'reading position' from where the text seems unproblematic and 'natural''.

³ 'The Tampa Affair': In August 2001 a Norwegian cargo ship rescued a group of 460 refugees ('boat people') in Indonesian territorial seas and then, defying the Australian government's refusal to permit entry, entered into Australian seas. The cargo was boarded by Australian SAS troops and was refused entry into an Australian port.

establish a more personal connection with the audience. 'We' is used inclusively: it refers at the same time to both the government and the people (the concept of nationality and the Australian people is implied). The ideal reader (or audience) is, in this case, the Australian people as a whole.

Presupposition is closely interconnected with the concept of common sense. For example, in many of Prime Minister Howard's interviews with journalists with regard to the US/Iraq war in which also Australian troops participated there is presupposition. In the following exchange, Mr. Howard's use of language presupposes the existence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq and uses the argument of common sense in his argument in favour of Australian military support to America in Iraq.

Text 2

Journalist:

Will it be necessary for the coalition to find weapons of mass destruction to legitimise this military campaign.?

Prime Minister:

Well I have no doubt that at a certain point of time the evidence of noncompliance by Iraq in relation to weapons of mass destruction will be found but I wouldn't ... I mean, commonsense tells you that you wouldn't find them along the roadway to Baghdad. I mean commonsense tells you that they've been very carefully hidden, dispersed and any suggestion that you're sort of going to find them in the next little while is a bit unrealistic.

(Press Conference Parliament House Canberra: The Hon John Howard MP: 23 March 2003: http://www.pm.gov.au/interviews/2003/interview 301.html)

The strategy of appeal to common sense is used here not only in the Gramscian⁴ sense of ideas and attitudes that are held in common, but the Prime Minister, in fact, appeals directly to the people's common sense in the sense of logical thinking. The presupposition is that everyone knows this is true. Even if there is no evidence of the existence of weapons of mass destruction we are all presumed to know they are there (it is a 'common sense' assumption): there is the presupposition that there are weapons of mass destruction. There is also presupposition in the journalist's question with the use of the word 'legitimise'. Putting the question in this way implies, or presupposes that the campaign is not

^{4.} Gramsci, A. (1971) - Common sense: '...a conception of the world that is implicitly manifest in art, in law, in economic activity and in all manifestations of individual and collective life ...'

legitimate: if the campaign needs to be 'legitimised' it is therefore not legitimate. Also the use of the term 'military campaign' is of interest in that it is a more acceptable term than using the term 'war'.

For Fairclough (1989) presupposition can express ideology if the function of the presupposition is to reinforce a position of power. Fairclough gives the example of a general threatening term used during the cold war years: 'the soviet threat'

Such presuppositions do not evoke specific texts or textual series, but are rather attributed to readers' textual experience in a vague way: while some presuppositions are sometimes drawn from particular texts, in other cases they make general appeal to background knowledge. (Fairclough, 1989: 154)

For example, Mr. Howard in his discourse often uses the term *'non-compliance'* in relation to Iraq: Iraq's *'non-compliance'* expressed as a nominalized form has become a technical term. This use of *'non-compliance'* as a technical term presupposes that 'non-compliance' is a given fact, it presupposes that Howard's audience has background knowledge of 'non-compliance' and that it is a part of our common sense that this term is to be associated with Iraq. A similar kind of presupposition is found in Prime Minister Howard's comments on *'rogue states'* in texts 3 and 6.

Text 3

Iraq has a long history of acting in defiance of the United Nations resolutions. Iraq has chemical and biological weapons and an aspiration to acquire nuclear weapons. If Iraq does not have taken from it those chemical and biological weapons, other rogue states will think they can imitate Iraq and as more rogue states acquire chemical and biological weapons, so the danger of those weapons falling into the hands of terrorists will multiply.

(Transcript of the Prime Minister, The Hon John Howard MP press Conference, Parliament House, Canberra, March 2003 : http://www.pm.gov. au/news/interviews /Interview 286. html)

In the case of Howard and '*rogue states*' the presupposition is attributed to the readers' common sense, background knowledge of '*rogue states*'. The term '*rogue states*' has been naturalized. In other words it has become part of the normal everyday vocabulary of a specific group of the society holding the same common sense views (Fowler, 1991). Based on background knowledge and common sense ideology the

assumptions in this sentence are also that terrorists are not from western nations, and that rogue states are not western states.

The concept of consensus is closely connected to the naturalization of discourse. Implied consensus can be seen in many areas of social discourse. One case is in political speech or discourse: the point of departure of the speech is taken for granted. For example, when a journalists asks the Prime Minister of Australia why Australia is supporting the US attack on Iraq the Prime Minister's reply is based on presupposition and consensus.

Text 4

Journalist:

But why are we and the Americans and the Brits preparing to invade Iraq when 170, 180, 190, other United Nations countries disagree? What do we know that they don't know? *Prime Minister* Well we certainly, we all know that Iraq and chemical and biological weapons, we all know that if Iraq is allowed to keep them other countries will

do likewise.

Journalist:

But they are not

(Transcript of The Prime Minister The Hon John Howard M P, - Interview with Ray Martin 'A Current Affair', channel 9: http://www.pm.gov.au/news /interviews/2003/ Interview 285. html)

With his reply Howard states what he maintains is common knowledge about Iraq and he uses the all inclusive 'we' form. In other words consensus is implied: we all agree. Who 'we' refers to is left vague . 'We' could be referring to the Prime Minister and the Australian people? It could refer to the Australian, U.S. and British governments. It could refer to all of these? The strong presupposition in Howard's reply makes it unnecessary for him to formulate a complete sentence. It seems to be sufficient to simply place the words '*Iraq*' and '*chemical and biological weapons*' in juxtaposition without completing the phrase to create the presupposition that Iraq has the weapons. The presupposition then continues with the conditional phrase formed with 'if' and 'will'.

For Jones et al (2004, 43), 'Presuppositions are backgrounded assumptions embedded within a sentence or phrase. These sentences are taken for granted regardless of whether the whole sentence is true'. This kind of presupposition can be constructed in discourse with various language forms: for example, with comparative adjectives, possessives forms, by using questions rather than statements (Ibid).

1.1.2 Presupposition in question form

For Jones et al (2004, 43) presupposition is a strategy "used by journalists to 'position' politicians in an interview or a press conference." The following are some examples taken from questions by the press to Prime Minister Howard regarding issues such as illegal immigrants and the war in Iraq.

Text 5

Iraq Journalist:

Minister? you've emphasised on a number of occasions the importance of joint intelligence gathering, how much independent information do we have that may not have been tainted by anything that has been subsequently found in the US and in the UK?'

Prime Minister:

Well I don't accept that anything's been tainted.

(The Hon. John Howard, Prime Minister MP - Press Conference, Parliament House, Canberra 11 June 2003:: http://www.pm.gov.au/news/interviews/2001/ Interview 219. html)

With the use of the word '*tainted*' in this exchange of dialogue the presupposition in the question is that information has been tainted: the question is not whether information has been '*tainted*', it is 'how much' information has been tainted. The presuppositions of a text are part of it's intertextuality: ''presupposing something is tantamount to assuming that there are other texts (which may or may not actually exist) that are common ground for oneself and one's readers, in which what is now presupposed is explicitly present, part of the 'said'. '' (Fairclough: 1995, 107)

2 Rhetoric and political speech genre

Today rhetoric in its most well know form as language aimed to persuade, or to influence carries negative connotations. Rhetorical language is one of the tools of language used by orators and writers to convince, and sometimes to manipulate audiences or readers. The successful orator, the person who has successful language communication skills can

have the power to influence and persuade other people. According to Beard (2000, 36), 'throughout history peoples' understanding of the concept of rhetoric has had two principle meanings: For Aristotle it was used to persuade, it was not seen as a negative concept; for Plato rhetoric had negative implications, for Plato rhetoric was connected with manipulation of the audience.'

Language can generate power. Ability to exploit language skills or to have use of the more elite forms of language can be also a means gaining to power: '... having access to prestigious sorts of discourse and powerful subject positions enhances publicly acknowledged status and authority' (Fairclough, 1989, 64).

For Kress (1989, 46): 'The possibility of being a certain kind of speaking and writing subject and therefore a certain kind of social and cultural agent depends on a person's position in and relation to the forms and potentials of speech and of writing'. The successful politician is generally a successful communicator. The successful politician can gain power through the power of language. The successful politician tells his audience, in a convincing way what that audience wants to hear. He uses rhetoric to persuade his audience. Indeed, Beard (2000, 36), for example, poses the question whether the politician's aim in use of rhetoric in political speeches is (a) 'to put forward policies that they genuinely believe in; or (b) to manipulate the audience into agreeing with policies, which really serve only the desire of the politicians to gain, or to keep power'. According to Connor (1996, 65), persuasive language uses, even today, 'Aristotle's triangle' of communication: ethos (the power of the personality of the speaker); pathos (the speaker's appeals to emotion), and logos (appeals to reasoning).

2.1 Press conferences and interviews

The discourse samples chosen for this analysis are taken from some of the speeches and interviews made by the Prime Minister of Australia: firstly in relation to the 2001 incident regarding a group of Afghan refugees who were refused entry into Australia which became known as The Tampa Affair', and secondly in relation to Australia's participation in the 2003 war in Iraq.

According to the views of Critical Linguistics 'any aspect of linguistic structure, whether phonological, syntactic, lexical, semantic, pragmatic or textual, can carry ideological significance ...' (Fowler, 1991: 67). The linguistic devices that can be used in text to express implicit ideology can be divided into three broad areas: (a) choice of grammar (e.g use of transitivity, passive transformations, nominal transformations,

modality, negative language, noun phrases, impersonalization); (b) choice of lexis (e.g. use of negative vocabulary, use of positive vocabulary, use of metaphor, overlexicalization); (c) how the text is structured (e.g. what is included or what is excluded in the text, the combination and sequencing of clauses, what is foregrounded, what is backgrounded) (Fowler, 1991; Fairclough, 1989).

2.1.1 The legal argument (The Tampa Affair, The war in Iraq)

In the many of the press conferences and interviews given by John Howard with regard to the war in Iraq, the Prime Minister uses the 'legal backing argument'. His justifications are based on the authority of the legal case for attacking Iraq: (e.g. 'sound legal basis'; 'legal case'.

Text 6

Iraq

Journalist:

Prime Minister is it the case that only the three combatant nations, the US, the UK and Australia believe that they can have the full authority of the United nations to go to war? *Prime Minister:*

I can't speak for other nations, I speak for Australia we have a very sound legal basis for this decision. We have never needed the 18th resolution of the Security Council to bolster our legal case. That's very clear, we wanted the 18th resolution to put more political pressure on Iraq. That's the reason why we wanted it. *Prime Minister:*

Iraq has a long history of acting in defiance of the United Nations resolutions. Iraq has chemical and biological weapons and an aspiration to acquire nuclear weapons. If Iraq does not have taken from it those chemical and biological weapons, other rogue states will think they can imitate Iraq and as more rogue states acquire chemical and biological weapons, so the danger of those weapons falling into the hands of terrorists will multiply.

If terrorists acquire weapons of that kind, that would represent a clear, undeniable and lethal threat to a western nation such as Australia. The action that might be taken as a result of this decision has a sound legal basis in the resolutions of the security council that have already been passed. If you go back to resolutions 678, 687 and 1441, you find ample legal authority. That is not only the legal advice that has been tendered to us but it is also almost identically the published view of the Attorney General of the United Kingdom government. It also corresponds with legal advice that has been tendered to the United States government. It is my intention to table in the parliament this afternoon the text of the legal advice that has been provided to the Australian government.

This, of course, is not just a question of legality, it is also a question of what is right in the international interest. We do live in a different world now, a world

made more menacing in a quite frightening way by terrorism in a borderless world. And the possibility of weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists and the need to take action to prevent that occurring is one of the very strong motivations for the actions that the government has taken. (Transcript: Prime Minister The Hon John Howard MP Press Conference, Parliament House, Canberra, 18 March 2003: http://www.pm.gov.au/news/ interviews/Interview286.html)

The principal form of argumentation in the text above (text 6) makes recourse to the legal authority strategy to support the policy on Iraq. For example:

' this decision has a sound legal basis';

'If you go back to resolution 678, 687 and 1441, you find ample legal authority'. ; 'the legal advice that has been tendered to us'

'the view of the Attorney general of the United Kingdom government';

' the legal advice that has been tendered to the United States government';

' the text of the legal advice that has been provided to the Australian government'

The speaker also uses the moral argument, supported by what Fowler has called (1991: 211) 'ethical vocabulary' such as '*what is right*' The presupposition is that '*what is right*' is agreed internationally; 'What is right' is part on an international 'common sense', that it is in the international interest.

2.1.2 Implicit discrimination and the legal argument

One significant aspect of the dialogue used by the Prime Minister with regard to the Tampa is the concentration on the legal aspect of the issue. The legal argument, although, it does not strictly regard a specific linguistic aspect of the text is significant in its role of positioning the speaker in his stance regarding the issue. Here the legal question involves, very closely, a neighbouring country of Australia. The Australian government at the time was maintaining the position that that the country legally obliged to give refuge to these people was Indonesia.

Thus, Mr. Howard, in his discourse in text 6 (above), makes recourse to the legal backing behind his argumentation: the question of law and order. Compliance with the law is presented as his main obligation in this controversial issue and this is paramount to the humanitarian question. The humanitarian question takes second place to the legal question (the rights of Australia to protect its borders), and, implicit in the discourse is the criticism of other countries who are not fulfilling their obligations according to international law.

e.g. 'there was a clear obligation under international law' 'The government having taken legal advice'

'It is our view that as a matter of international law'

This implicit criticism of the Indonesian government can also be seen in the following statement from the same press conference. Again, in this discourse, the argumentation is based on the appeal to law and includes an implicit criticism of Indonesia in the lines '... *irrespective of the obligation of others under international law*' (implicitly Indonesia).

Text 7

Prime Minister:

We stand ready to provide humanitarian help for the people on board the vessel. That does not in any way compromise the validity of our refusing permission for the vessel to land in Australia. Food, medical supplies medical attention and other humanitarian assistance will be readily made available by Australia. We will also in our communications with the Indonesian Government indicate our willingness to provide financial assistance to that Government to receive back the people in question.

This of course is a very difficult and challenging issue for the Australian community. We have endeavoured and it is evident again in this decision to respond in a humanitarian fashion. But we simply cannot allow a situation to develop where Australia is seen around the world as a country of easy destination, irrespective of the circumstances, irrespective of the obligation of others under international law and irrespective of the legal status of the people who would seek to come to Australia. *Journalist:*

What's been the response of the Indonesian government? *Prime Minister:*

We have not had a response yet Robert, we have only just communicated. We discussed the matter this morning at length and we had available to us the advice of our law offices, the advice of customs, the advice of the Defence Force and the advice of DFAT. We had a very lengthy discussion about it and we have put in train the course of action that I have outlined.

Given the circumstances that have given rise to this situation, given that the nearest point of possible disembarkation was an Indonesian port, and given as I understand it that it was the intention of the ships captain to take the vessel and the people back to Indonesia it seemed the right thing for Australia to do what it has done.

[Transcript of the Prime Minister The Hon. John Howard MP, joint press conference with the Minister for Immigration – the Hon Philip Ruddock, MP, Parliament House, Canberra http://www.pm.gov.au/news/interviews/2001/interview1187.htm]

In his use of the law and order argument the Prime Minister cites a number of legal authorities to support his argument.

'we had available to us the advice of our law offices '

' the advice of customs'

' the advice of the Defence Force'

' the advice of DFAT'

Again there is implicit criticism of Indonesia: *'it seemed the right thing for Australia to do what it has done'* (implying, on the other hand that Indonesia has not done the right thing).

As the events of the 'Tampa' crisis evolved it became evident that Indonesia was remaining on the edge by not responding to the Howard's attempts to communicate. Also implicit in the interview is the information that the Indonesian authorities are snubbing the Australians, avoiding contact so as not to have to deal with the problem, or so as not to be told by the Australians what their international responsibilities are.

2.2. Implicit discrimination and passive forms: The 'political passive'

The following text, again taken from speeches and interviews made by the Australian Prime Minister in regard to a group of asylum seekers who were refused entry into Australia in August 2000 illustrate how the passive form can be used politically – what may be referred to as 'the political passive'.

Text 8 - The Tampa

As has been widely reported in the news, the vessel took on board several hundred people as a result of the vessel on which they had been traveling being becalmed, in circumstances where there was a clear obligation under international law for those people to be taken to the nearest feasible point of disembarkation which we are informed was an Indonesian port called, I think, Merak. I further understand that arrangements had already been tentatively put in place by the Indonesians to receive those people. There have been reports verified by the ship's captain to the effect that some of the people taken on board threatened him and insisted that the vessel set sail for Australian waters. The government having taken legal advice on this matter and having considered it very carefully this morning had indicated to the ship's captain that it does not have permission to enter Australian territorial waters. It will not be given permission to land in Australia or any Australian territories. It is our view that as a matter of international law this matter is that must be resolved between the Government of Indonesia and the something Government of Norway. We have already communicated to Norwegian and Indonesian authorities the decision we've taken and the communication made to the ship's captain.

(From Transcript of the Prime Minister (John Howard) Joint Press Conference with the Minister for Immigration (Philip Ruddock), Parliament House Canberra – 27 August 2001)

The agentless passive is used in text 8 to avoid placing parties held to be responsible by the speaker in the active position. The speaker is attempting to be as politically correct as possible in his discourse. Using the passive form enables the person speaking to implicitly criticise the Indonesian government without saying who is responsible. As we go through the press report the implicit criticism of Indonesia is evident. For example:

'there was a clear obligation under international law' 'for those people to be taken to the nearest feasible port of disembarkation' 'which we are informed was an Indonesian port called, I think, Merak' 'arrangements had already been tentatively put in place by the Indonesians to receive those people'

The speaker in this section of discourse dos not directly accuse Indonesia. The criticism is made only cautiously and indirectly with a careful use of verbs in the passive form.

2.3 The Agentless Passive

The agentless passive can be used to avoid naming the active (responsible) parties. This can work in two ways. Firstly, it may help the person speaking or writing to implicitly criticize the actor without stating directly who is responsible for the action (the agent is implied). Or, secondly, it can be used to avoid naming the actor responsible for the action so that the agent cannot be criticized (the agent conveniently remains vague, or anonymous). If the agent of the action is mentioned as the subject the 'doer' of the action has importance that can be interpreted either negatively, or positively. Alternatively the agent of the action can, in a sense, be protected if left unmentioned in the discourse. The agent can also be implied if left unmentioned. Thus, the language structure choices made in the discourse can be a significant factor in directing the listener/reader's attention to what the speaker/writer wishes to emphasise. For Fowler (1991: 78), the passive form can be used so as to delete part of the clause: the agent can be 'deleted leaving responsibility unspecified'.

For example, from text 6 above, '*If Iraq does not have taken from it those chemical and biological weapons*.' This clause omits the agent(s) of the action (eventually: The US, The UK and Australia). The emphasis is on Iraq - Iraq is forgrounded, Iraq is the country that is associated with the negative action, rather than the countries who are intending to take the action. There is no mention of who is to carry out the action of removing its weapons: Iraq has to have its weapons 'taken from it'. Iraq seems to be the

actor in the phrase. Moreover, in order to leave responsibility only with Iraq in this sentence Howard has had to formulate an awkwardly expressed sentence: 'If Iraq does not have taken from it those chemical and biological weapons, other rogue states will think they can imitate Iraq and as more rogue states acquire chemical and biological weapons, so the danger of those weapons falling into the hands of terrorists will multiply'.

The following clauses also omit the agent of the action. In the first case possibly because it is convenient for Howard to camouflage the agents (the US, the UK, and the Australian troops) of the military action that eventually is to be carried out.

'The action that might be taken as a result off this decision' In the second case because it is convenient to remain vague about who or where the legal advice is coming from.

'the legal advice that has been tendered to us'

'the legal advice that has been tendered to the United states government.'

' the legal advice that has been provided to the Australian government.'

For Fairclough (1989: 125): 'Agentless passives again leave causality and agency unclear.' Thus, there 'can be obfuscation of agency and causality.'

With regard to Mr. Howard's speech on the 'Tampa crisis' in text 10 (below) when the speaker wishes to praise Australia and the Australian people for their exemplary treatment of refugees, possibly for the sake of modesty, he leaves the actor of his statements vague: he chooses to omit the subjects in many of his statements.

For example, 'But equally it has to be said that, in the last 20 years no country has been as generous to refugees as Australia.'

The passive form is used in a way that leaves the responsibility of who it is that is making the statement (*'it has to be said ...'*) vague: it is a presupposition of a generally agreed opinion (or 'common sense') that Australia has a reputation of being generous to refugees. The effect of the passive form in this sentence is to de-personalize the speaker, to concentrate on the nation Australia and not on the person making the statement. Thus, the result is that it is not simply the Prime Minister of Australia who believes this, but it is a kind of common is done only cautiously and indirectly with a careful use of verbs in the passive

2.4 Generalization and discrimination

What has become a well known issue in can be generalized, or leveled through language. Fowler (1991: 175) defines this as 'linguistic conceptual formula' (for example: 'the Y + X affair'). New instances of an issue can be generated using this kind of equation, thus causing 'different matters to be perceived as instances of the same thing'. This can apply to media discourse as well as to political discourse. For example, Fowler's formula may be used to illustrate the leveling of different issues into one general issue.

According to John Howard with regard to Iraq (text 6) the problem begins with the Iraq + weapons of mass destruction issue (X + Y Affair) and then a list of new instances is generated.

The other rogue states + weapons of mass destruction issue

The terrorism + weapons of mass destruction issue

The terrorism + threat to the western world issue

The terrorism + threat to Australia issue

The terrorism + borderless world issue

In other words controversial issues are leveled according the same X + Y formula and new instances are created by filling in the slots (Fowler, 1991). Thus, with the rhetoric used in the Iraq and weapons of mass destruction issue different questions become part of the same problem. In this way new terminology can also be created: terminology such as, *'a borderless world'*, or *'rogue states'*.

2.5.1 'We': Iraq

The discourse above, in text 6, also uses the strategy of the inclusive 'we' form:

'We have a very sound legal basis'

'We have never needed'

'we wanted the 18th resolution'

'we wanted it'

'our legal case'

The use of 'we' not only gives support to Howard's decisions in that it is not just Howard who is taking the decisions. He is supported by another general category of people such as the nation (the Australian people), but also 'we' the government and thus the support also of a powerful authority: 'we' Australia is 'inclusive' of a powerful institution and an entire population, it thus carries a vast margin of consensus. '*Our*' is used in a similar way (e.g. 'our legal case'). 'Inclusive uses of *we* are a common feature of political discourse. On the one hand they claim solidarity by placing everyone in the same boat, but on the other hand they claim authority in that the leader is claiming the right to speak for the people as a whole. Vagueness about who exactly we identifies and the constantly shifting reference of we are important resources in political discourse' (Fairclough, 1995: 181).

The inclusive 'we' form is not restricted to spoken language, it is found also in written political discourse. Text 9 (below) represents the government's position with regard to Australia's participation in the war in Iraq: here is a wide use of the inclusive 'we' pronoun. The text is a written response to a criticism to the government made by a citizen regarding the war in Iraq, and also regarding the Australian government's claim to be upholding commonly agreed social and national values. The government's reply (text 9) contains several presuppositions supported by the use of the 'we' form. The citizen questioned the government's claims to be acting in defence of Australian values: Australian values of 'openness, freedom and democracy'. The citizens letter queried not the government's right to defend the values of the nation, but, rather, the government, in reality, supported incorrect values of morality. A clear difference in views regarding 'common sense ' values of the society was expressed by the citizen. The following is the government's reply.

14 November 2003

Thank you for your letter to the Prime Minister dated 4 October 2003 regarding the war on terrorism. Your letter has been forwarded to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and I have been asked to reply on Mr. Downer's behalf.

Australia is a terrorist target because of our values of openness, freedom, and democracy. These values are non-negotiable. Australia will not be blackmailed by terrorists or extremists, and we will continue to stand up for the things that we believe in. Our participation in the war on terrorism is not a war against Islam or any other religion and we will continue to work together with moderate Islamic countries, our friends and allies, in our common struggle to overcome terrorism, which has taken such a terrible toll in our region and elsewhere. There can be no possible justification for terrorist acts, regardless of who the perpetrators of these acts may be.

Thank you for bringing your views to the attention of the Government.

Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and trade

In the government's reply a sense of a 'common sense' group is created through use of the 'we' form. The function of the 'we' pronoun in the text above has a similar function to its use in text 8. 'We' includes the government and the Australian people as a commonly identified group. The statements represented in the letter represent the government and the people of Australia. and contributes to the construction of the common sense identity between government and people.

'our values of openness, freedom and democracy'
'we will continue to stand up for the things that we believe in'
'Our participation in the war against terrorism'
'we will continue to work together with moderate Islamic countries'
'our friends and allies'
'in our common struggle to overcome terrorism
'which has taken such a terrible toll in our region'

The presupposition in text 9 is the statement that it is the values of 'openness, freedom and democracy' that are under attack by terrorists, and that this is the reason for the war in

Iraq. There is the presupposition that the whole nation agrees that the war in Iraq is connected to terrorism, that terrorism is an attack on the values of openness, freedom and democracy and that the whole population agrees on a definition of these values. The '*we*' pronoun presumes that there is consensus amongst the whole population with regard to Australian values and that there is consensus among the population that these values are under attack. '*We*' creates a sense of a relationship between government and public.

2.5.2. 'We': The Tampa

In the following speech by Mr. Howard (text 10) the pronoun 'we' is used inclusively. At the same time it refers to the Australian people and the government. The construction of the concept of 'we' as a nation can be consolidated by the power of authorities and their use of language of power. 'We' referring to both government and people is a rhetorical device that can appeal to peoples' sense of common sense, or of 'ideology' (ideology perceived as in the aspects of society that are taken for granted, that connects it to 'common sense' [Fairclough, 1989]). Use of the inclusive 'we' pronoun is common in political speeches. The following is a statement given by the Australian Prime Minister during the August 2001 'Tampa Crisis'. The inclusive 'we' in the text below refers to the speaker (writer) and also the listener (reader)

Text 10

Nobody pretends for a moment that the circumstances from which many people flee are not very distressing. But, equally it has to be said that, in the last 20 years no country has been more generous to refugees than Australia. After the Indo-Chinese events of the 1970s, this country took on a per capita basis, more Indo-Chinese refugees than any other country on earth. We have continued to be a warm, generous recipient of refugees, but we have become increasingly concerned about the increasing flow of people into this country. Every nation has the right to effectively control its borders and to decide who comes here and under what circumstances, and Australia has no intention of surrendering or compromising that right. We have taken this action in furtherance of that view. It remains our very strong determination not to allow this vessel or its occupants, save and excepting humanitarian circumstances clearly demonstrated, to land in Australia, and we will take whatever action is needed-within the law, of course-to prevent that occurring.

(Ministerial Statement: Prime Minister of Australia, 29 August 2001)

The speech uses the rhetorical device of indirect reference to the nation (Australia): '*no country*,' '*this country*' (2 mentions), '*any other country*', '*Every nation*', '*we*' (2 mentions), '*our*'. Through this kind of indirect reference the speaker is underlining the concept of nation and a common constructed identity. The lexical cohesion throughout the text links the speech to nation and nationality ('*we*') through the constant repetition of these concepts through the same words or through words that are semantically related.

'We have continued to be a warm, generous recipient of refugee'

'we have become increasingly concerned'

'We have taken this action'

'we will take whatever action is needed-within the law'

The pronoun 'our' is used in a similar way.

'our very strong determination'

2.6 Modality

For Halliday (1994, 80) modality lies somewhere between 'yes' and 'no'. Modality implies polarity: polarity between 'yes' and 'no'. In text 6 (above - Iraq) the speaker's use of '*will*' expresses the strong conviction of being right about his judgment of Iraq and the possibility of Iraq possessing chemical and biological weapons. In this case the polarity is strongly leaning in the 'yes' direction. An ideological stance is expressed.

In text 6 the speaker speaks with the certainty of a Prime Minister towards a situation such as Iraq and chemical weapons. This kind of certainty can be expressed through the use of modal verbs. Also "adverbs such as 'probably', 'certainly', or constructions such as 'It is certain that ...' " can express modality (Reah, 1998: 116).

The following clauses from text 6 are examples of modality with modal verbs.

'other rogue states will think they can imitate Iraq'

'the danger of those weapons falling into the hands of terrorist will multilply.' The speaker, in the case above, has assumed a position of authority on the matter of chemical weapons, on the question of terrorism as well as on the right action to be taken.

Modal expressions signify judgments as to truth ('correct'), likelihood ('certainly', 'might'), desirability ('regrettable'); other modal usages stipulate obligations ('should', 'ought to') and grant permission ('may'). The significance of modality as far as the cueing of an oral model is concerned is that it suggests the presence of an individual subjectivity behind the printed text, who is qualified with

the knowledge required to pass judgment, the status to grant leave or assign responsibility' (Fowler, 1991: 64).

The use of 'might' expresses likelihood rather than conviction: Howard's language in the following statement is less polarized. He is more cautious with regard to the action that '*might*' be taken: '*The action that might be taken as a result of this decision has a sound legal basis in the resolutions of the security council that have already been passed.*' For Fowler (1991) with the use of this kind of modal expression (for example: *would, might, will*) the authority can include 'the claim to know inevitably what is going to happen.' (ibid).

A large part of Howard's discourse in relation to the Tampa issue uses relational modality with both modal and non modal verbs. For example, in text 8 (above – The Tampa) : *'The government has indicated to the ship's captain that it does not have permission to land in Australia'*. Relational modality is expressed here through the non modal verb *'indicated'*. The government has the authority to 'indicate' rules to others. There is also relational modality in this clause in the non modal verb form *'does not have'*.

Modality is also expressed with the modal verb '*must*': '... this matter is something that must be resolved between the Government of Indonesia and the Government of Norway': it expresses a judgment with regard to the duty of others. Mr. Howard speaks from a position of authority with regard to other countries' duties, a categorical position regarding the duties of others, or of other countries is expressed. For Fowler (1991,64), with modality suppositions can be made as to 'who is qualified with the knowledge required to pass judgment, the status to grant leave or assign responsibility'.

6. Conclusion

Language is not only a means of communicating meaning, but it is also a means of creating meaning. Language can express both explicit and implicit meaning. Discourse can carry implied ideological positions. The implied ideological position can be expressed through language such as the way certain language features are used: for example, choice of grammatical forms, choice of lexis, the order of items or words in the discourse, juxtaposition choice, choices regarding what is included and what is not included in a piece of discourse.

Amongst the specific aspects of language the critical linguists use to analyse discourse are, for example, how the grammar is organized, (e.g. choice of passive or active forms, use of modality, use of negation, nominalization, use of questions instead of statements to create implicature). Lexical choices such as metaphor, antonyms, synonyms, or the group of three are also important.

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