

*Rhetoric of Discourse: A Critical Discourse  
Analysis of Tony Blair's speech about Iraq  
War 2003* (1)

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**Abstract**

*The present study aims to investigate critically Tony Blair's speech about the Iraq War 2003 with special attention to argumentation (practical reasoning). He addressed this speech to the nation as he gave the order to the British forces into action in Iraq on Thursday 20 March 2003. The study also aims to establish a unified analysis of political discourse through taking goals to be imagined as states of affairs represented in circumstantial premises striped by a value premise. The goals of such a study are twofold: first, to gain a better understanding of political discourse, Blair's discourse as an example here from an argumentative point of view; second, to demonstrate, as held by modality of his speech, that he intends to persuade the British society, UN and all those who stand against invading Iraq. It is the first time a political discourse studied from the perspective of both CDA and practical reasoning*

**Keywords:** CDA, political discourse, Rhetoric, Argumentation, Practical reasoning, Tony Blair.

**خطاب الخطاب: تحليل الخطاب النقدي لخطاب توني بلير حول****حرب العراق ٢٠٠٣ (١)****الباحثة****الأستاذ الدكتور****رهيد حسن عداي****مجيد حميد جاسم****جامعة البصرة / كلية الآداب****المخلص:-**

هذه الدراسة هي تحليل نقدي لاحدى خطابات توني بلير (رئيس الوزراء السابق للمملكة المتحدة من عام ١٩٩٧-٢٠٠٧ ورئيس حزب العمال من عام ١٩٩٤-٢٠٠٧) حول حرب العراق مع تسليط الضوء على (الحُجج المنطقية) في تلك الخطابات. في هذا الخطاب يوجه توني بلير كلامه للأمة جمعاً اذ ان تاريخ الخطاب في ٢٠ اذار ٢٠٠٣ نفس اليوم الذي قام بلير بأعطاء الاذن للقوات المسلحة البريطانية بالذهاب للعراق لازاحة صدام عن الحكم والتخلص من اسلحة الدمار الشامل. تُركز هذه الدراسة على وضع اطر معينة في تحليل الخطاب السياسي، اذا انها تُبنى على نقطتين مهمتين وهما: اولاً:- الحصول على مفهوم افضل لتحليل الخطاب السياسي من وجهة نظر جدلية كما هو الحال في خطاب بلير هذا ، وثانياً:- اثبات أن بلير استخدم مفردات معينة وخاصة الافعال المساعدة لاقتناع المجتمع الدولي بأن الحرب ضد العراق في ٢٠٠٣ هي حرب مشروعة للحفاظ على الامن الدولي من صدام واسلحة الدمار الشامل. انها الدراسة الاولى من نوعها في الجمع بين التحليل النقدي والتحليل المقنع (ايجاد الحجج والبراهين) في تحليل الخطاب السياسي.

**Key words:** Critical discourse analysis, New York Times, Social actor approach, exclusion, inclusion

## I. Introduction

Language plays a vital role in human life. Via language people can express their feelings, ideas, attitudes, action, ideologies, as well as revealing their powers. The best place one could recognize this is in political discourse. This relation between language and politics occupies a significant place in recent studies because politicians use language in ways that need to put critical attention under study (Schaffner, 1996). Politicians depend on the power of their words and ideas to convince the others of the benefit of their leadership (Charteris-Black, 2005: 1).

The present study aims to analyse the political speech of Tony Blair, the ex-prime minister of the UK. The political speech under study is the one he delivered when he gave the order for the British forces to invade Iraq on Thursday, 20 March 2003. It seeks to prove two main points; the first one is that analysing the political discourse (in this case Blair's speech) is better analysed through the combination of both CDA and Argumentation because the political discourse is rhetoric and argumentative in nature. Rhetoric here does not mean mere words; Aristotle recognized rhetoric as a counterpart of both logic and politics as a way of persuading others (Trans. W. Rhys Roberts: I: 2:1358). So, rhetoric here means a persuasive way of convincing and the practical reasoning to achieve the goal (what to do) (Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012: 11). The second point is that through practical reasoning and the main premises of the speech and through modality one can interpret that Blair

was intending to be with the US through invading Iraq and all his statements and speeches before the war were a kind of propaganda to convince the public opinion and the international community that they tried everything to solve the Iraq issue peacefully but Saddam did not cooperate.

Although, many researches have studied Tony Blair's speeches about Iraq War 2003, there has been no attempt to combine CDA and rhetoric, or study Blair's political speeches from an argumentative point of view with regard to CDA. This study offers a new approach for analysing political discourse that is why it will be of value to those interested in CDA. Also, argumentation will help CDA to systematically extend these focuses of critique into analysis of texts. It poses critical questions which contribute to the analysis of relations of power and domination manifested in particular bodies of texts. As Fairclough & Fairclough (2012: 102) suggest, it "raises critical questions about how contexts of action, values and goals are represented in the premises of arguments which can feed into critique of ideology. It shows how particular beliefs and concerns shape practical reasoning".

A good politician who delivers a significant speech needs three key ingredients: a serious argument which leaves the audience thinking of something new or resolved to act; friendly delivery that stirs the emotions as well as appealing to reason; and a sense of occasion. Why Blair? One may ask why choosing Blair, why Iraq War 2003 in particular? This due to two reasons:

1. Iraq War 2003 was a turning point in the Middle East and in Europe as well; it is because of this war that Iraq is still facing several difficulties.

2. Blair is a public figure who was known for his persuasive powers but after this war he lost this credibility and eventually resigned his job. Moreover, he was questioned in the Chilcot Inquiry in 2010 and 2011.

Rhetoric is the art of using language to persuade and influence others. Unquestionably, the use of language is an important element of politics but it is a sharp element and sometimes it is used to misrepresent as well as represent realities. Fairclough (2006:1) notes that rhetoric can 'weave visions and imaginaries which can be implemented to change realities, and in some cases improve human well-being... but it can also rhetorically obfuscate realities and construe them ideologically to serve unjust power relations'. Political discourse looks after a goal to persuade audience of the validity of the political claims in which politicians use such resources as shedding light on some pieces of information and neglecting other ones.

## 1.2 The Model

In (2012) Norman Fairclough and Isabela Fairclough developed a model in their book, *Political Discourse Analysis: A Method for Advanced Students*. They have integrated CDA with argumentation theory to produce a systematic account of political discourse as an arena of public action, justified and critiqued through practical argumentation and deliberation. Their approach carries two important points: first, it is complementary to the

theoretical and analytical of CDA. Second, it handles political discourse as a form of argumentation, for or against particular ways of acting and making decision. That is to say, politics primarily deals with making choices about how to act in response to circumstances and goals. In other words, it sets the reader with an integration of critical discourse analytical concepts and the analytical framework of argumentation theory on the basis of regarding political discourse as an argumentative discourse (2012: 18).

Fairclough & Fairclough suggest that practical argumentation can be seen as means-ends argumentation where the claim or conclusion (we should do A) is a judgment about what means should be pursued to attain the end (goal). Practical argumentation is characterized by complex chains, not only of means and ends (goals), but of goals and circumstances where the goals of one action (once turned into reality) become the context of action (the circumstances) of a further action (2012: 86). The structure of practical reasoning suggests where the hypothesis that action A might enable the agent to reach his goal (G), starting from his circumstances (C), and in accordance with certain values (V), leads to the presumptive claim that he ought to do A. The value premise may refer either to the agent's actual concerns (what he actually values) or to what the agent ought to be concerned with (what he ought to value) (2012: 44-48).

Toulmin (2003), Chilton (2004), Audi (2006), Walton (2007) and Fairclough & Fairclough (2012) defined the following terms; claim as a judgement about what means

should be persuaded to attain the end, in Fairclough & Fairclough word ‘agent (presumably) ought to do A’. Goal is defined as the object or the aim which describes the future state of affairs agents an agent wants to bring into action; in Fairclough & Fairclough words it is ‘a future state of affairs in which values are realized’. Circumstances are the facts or the conditions relevant to the action and may affect it. According to Fairclough & Fairclough, they are ‘Agent’s context

of action: natural, social, institutional facts’. Means-Goal is one of the premises that represents the proposed line of action; Faircough & Fairlough state that ‘If the Agent does A, he will (presumably) achieve G’. Finally, Value is one of the important cornerstones in an argument which expresses the concerns underlying the agent’s goals. Fairclough & Fairclough define them as ‘what the Agent is actually concerned with or ought to be concerned with’.

Every crisis requires different accounts, different descriptions, narratives and explanations of the course of action, which are present in the (circumstantial) premises of arguments with the goals of arguers (goal premise) which may involve various ‘imaginaries’ or visions beside a means–goal premise. All of these are presenting reasons in favour of particular courses of action (the conclusion of that argument). Arguments in this sense are both conductive and plausible. As a conductive argument, practical reasoning involves the ‘weighing’ of pros and cons, of various considerations that are thought to have a bearing on the claim, and the conclusion is drawn ‘on balance’



(Fairclough & Fairclough, 2012: 38). The plausible arguments are important for the evaluation of the practical reasoning of Blair's speeches. By choosing this model, the study wants to emphasize the role of argumentation to analyse the political speeches, especially the model that involves both CDA and argumentation (practical reasoning).

## II. Theoretical Underpinnings

### 2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

CDA is a method for analyzing texts to deal with the question of inequality and power, the relation between language and power and how language is used to represent an attitude and an ideology (Fowler, 1991: 10). CDA is regarded as a method, instrument, a view or set of tools which allow people to analyse discourse in a certain way. According to Van Dijk, CDA is occupied with the ways discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power and dominance in society. That is to say, CDA does not view language as neutral, it helps to reveal more or less hidden agendas of power and dominance expressed in different discourse types (2003:353).

Fairclough (1995) clarified that CDA aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices, events and texts, and wider social and cultural structures, relations, and processes. CDA aims to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and



to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (134-135). CDA is expected to help hunt down and challenge the taken- for- granted truths (van Dijk, 2001: 352). CDA can be traced back to the Aristotelian study of rhetoric, contemporary philosophy and Marxism. It is influenced by the critical theory of the Frankfurt school as well as the works of the sociologist Habermas. The theories of Foucault have provided basis for CDA and hence counted (Hart, 2010:3). CDA has also its roots in text linguistics and sociolinguistics, applied linguistics and pragmatics (Wodak & Meyer, 2001:3).

## 2.2 Rhetoric

For centuries, there was a curse over the term ‘rhetoric’ as it is associated with empty talk, deception, elusive speech or a knack that serves merely a competitive quest for persuasive success (Herrick, 2008: 2). In the popular understanding, ‘rhetoric’ gives the meaning of manipulative way of using language into persuading people of something that they would not believe on the basis of evidence alone (Crosswhite, 2013: 16).

The word ‘Rhetoric’ derives from Greek “rhètotikè”, which means ‘the art of speaking’, and it overlaps in modern English with ‘oratory’ (Connor, 1996: 62), a word of Latin origin that denotes the meaning of skills in public speaking. Its classical origins help to define it as an ‘art of using language to persuade or influence’ others. Aristotle maintains that rhetoric is a skill to influence the readers’ or audiences’ opinions (Goodnow, 2011: xi). Leith (2011: 1-

2) defines 'rhetoric' as the art of persuasion; it is the art by which one attempts to influence others with words. It is an art with a goal, a means to an end. One cannot be a rhetorician and convince others with his/her speech unless he/she has something in the first place like knowledge, attitudes, values and other concepts.

So, rhetoric is the art and the body of rules to persuasive speech and writing (Richards , 2008: 156). The English word 'rhetoric' and its various equivalents in European languages denote the speaker, especially that one in the public meeting or court of law. Sometimes, it is equivalent to what we might call a politician (Kennedy, 2007: 8). According to Malmkjaer (2002), rhetoric is primarily defined as the art and science of deploying words for the purpose of persuasion in which it originates from the theory of how best a speaker or writer can, by application of linguistic devices, achieve persuasion.

Deliberation is the process of a cooperative discussion or thinking which happens to form an opinion in an argumentative way (Van Eemeren, 2010: 141). It is a kind of practical thinking which leads to decision and action. Politics is inherently connected with argumentation and deliberation because it is oriented to decision-making. Rhetorical deliberation is an indispensable part of political discourse; CDA is insufficient if it does not address the deliberational element in political discourse. Moreover, rhetorical analysis should be an essential part of CDA analysis since political discourse relies heavily on rhetorical deliberation. Sauer was one of the linguists who tried to

bring rhetoric to the study of political discourses. He discussed the development of rhetorical analyses of political addresses from classical antiquity to modern political communication, but rhetoric was accused of being untruthful because it was regarded as an aesthetic norm relating to style (Sauer, 1997:33). Both rhetoric and CDA are interested in language in use; CDA seeks to reveal the inequality of power through language and rhetoric (argumentation) wants to reveal how pieces of text and talk function to persuade readers and audience. It seems that each completes the other, in which the basic material for rhetoric is language, and CDA benefits from this material in its analysis. It is a two-way relation, rhetoric describes participants as good or bad rhetoricians and CDA analyses their speeches or their debates. Rhetoric is talking about probability to make the best choices and CDA is paying attention to the future too (Johnstone, 2008: 8-11).

### **2.3 Political Discourse**

Michel Foucault defines the term 'discourse' to describe the conversations and the meaning behind them by a group of people who hold certain ideas in common (1966:38). Fairclough (1989: 24) defines the term as a process of interaction of which a text is just a part; discourses refer to expressing oneself using words which can be used for asserting power and knowledge, and for resistance and critique. Burr defines 'discourse' as a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, stories, statements and so on which produced a particular version of events (1995:48). Titscher (2000: 42) illustrates that the term

'discourse' is defined in many ways which cover a large area from linguistics, sociology, philosophy, rhetoric and other disciplines. Gee defines the term as a particular way of saying and doing which has meaning (2011, 30). So, the meaning of the word 'discourse' varies according to the different surrounding context and the system of beliefs of speakers when they are communicated in different aspects of social life (Phillips and Jørgensen, 2002: 1). According to Schaffner (1996), political discourse is a sub-category of discourse that can be based on two criteria: functional and thematic. Political discourse is a result of politics and it is historically and culturally determined. It fulfills different functions due to different political activities. It is thematic because its topics are primarily related to politics such as political activities, political ideas, political relations and political actions.

Any political action is prepared, accompanied, controlled and influenced by language (Partington, 2003: 26). Van Dijk (1997) adds that political discourse is identified via actors, authors or politicians; political discourse is about the text and talks of professional politicians or political institutions, such as presidents, prime ministers and other members of government, parliament or political parties, at the local, national and international levels. Political discourse is used by politicians to argue, to reason, to sustain their ideas, to continue in power, to oppress people and nations, to establish and perpetuate ideas, and or to defend people in their needs and to promote civil rights, and peace. Political discourse has to offer not only policies but

also identities which can help people make sense of what they are experiencing as well as giving them hope for the future (Mouffe, 2005:29).

### III Methodology and Data

#### 3.1 Introduction

The present study is divided into two kinds: the first one is the argument reconstruction with regards to the modality of the current speech. In other words, the study is directed to show how the analysis of the political speech is strengthened if it is built around the practical argument. While the second one is to reveal how such speeches (as the one selected in this study) can be connected to the analysis of practical argumentation. It aims to clarify that the analysis and evaluation of arguments can increase the capacity of CDA.

There is an agreement that language is not neutral at all simply because any speaker of any language wants to arrive to something (persuade others of his/her opinion or his/ her speech). Most of the time people claim that they have been injured, insulted or threatened by language; language acts with or against us (Butler, 1997: 1-2). The basic core for using argumentation is to support CDA on the principle that CDA cannot by itself carry out normative or explanatory critique. So, in bringing CDA and argumentation theory to the analysis, together they will do normative, practical reasoning and evaluation. This integration of the two approaches of Fairclough is required to assert that besides the main idea of the practical reasoning of Blair's speech and statement, his uses of the linguistic elements,

particularly modal verbs, indicates his unflinching determination in going to the war and rules out any other options. Blair's speech has been taken from *The Guardian* newspaper.

### 3.1.1 Modality

Modal verbs operate like other aspects of language; they can be analysed from a pragmatic perspective; they are also used to indicate different meanings or perform a variety of different functions like request, obligation, order, permission, etc. The present study treats modality as a rhetorical device in the same way as metaphors. Thompson and Hunston (2000, 6) regard modality as one sub-category of evaluation. They have displayed three main functions; express the speaker's or writer's opinion which reflects the value system of that person, construct and maintain relations between the speaker /writer and hearer/ reader; and organize the discourse. This means that modality is able to help reflect the value system of the speaker which is part of the uncovering of ideologies. Fairclough (2001) shows that modality has to do with speaker (or writer) authority, that it is the implicit authority, power and ideology (105-106).

Modal verbs in English are regarded as a small class of auxiliary verbs which do not have participle or infinitive forms (Halliday, 2004, 143). Quirk et al (1985) define modality as the manner in which the meaning of a clause is qualified so as to reflect the speaker's judgment of the likelihood of the proposition it expresses being true (219). Leech (2004: 87) deals with a logical system underlying

modality that is apparent in modal verbs: there are close relations of meaning between the four verbs “can, may, must and have to”. He says:

What makes it so difficult to account for the use of these words (modal verbs)

is that their meaning has both a logical and a practical (or pragmatic element).

We can talk about them in terms of such logical notions as ‘permission’ and

‘necessity’, but this done, we still have to consider ways in which these notions

become remoulded by the psychological pressures of everyday communication

between human beings: factors such as condescension, politeness, tact, and irony.

(Leech 2004: 71)

In CDA, modality is not mere occurrence of overt modal auxiliaries; rather it is associated with the writer’s/speaker’s attitude towards what s/he is talking about. In Halliday’s system, modality is primarily located in the interpersonal component of the grammar, and choices in this component are independent of grammatical choices in other components (Halliday 2002: 200). Halliday maintains that through modality one can figure out the speaker’s attitude about certain subject. Modality can be realized through different ways like modal auxiliary, adverbs, intonation and mental-process verbs (Halliday, 2004:147).



### 3.2 Speech Analysis

This is Blair's full speech addressed to the nation as the British forces went into action in Iraq on Thursday 20 March 2003. The basic argument of this text is the reasons by which Tony Blair justifies his action for giving the order to the British forces to take action in Iraq. Here, the circumstances are the facts that Saddam Hussein gave them no other choice. There is no other way to act with him but force. There are many goals in this text: immediate goals, i.e. removing Saddam Hussein, medium-term goals, i.e. helping the Iraqi people get ride of the brutal states of Saddam, and more distant goals such as protecting Britain, its security and its economy from the threat of disorder and chaos.

Given these circumstances and goals, the speaker (Tony Blair) announces his intention of taking fair and responsible steps (i.e. concrete action (removing Saddam)) informed by the values of fairness and responsibility. This is the core of any normative practical argument: given certain circumstances and certain goals, a certain type of action, informed by certain values, is advocated in the claim as the right thing to do.

From the very beginning, the speaker makes it clear that what is presented is the 'only single initiative' (only a single action) that is removing Saddam Hussein without a full plan for what will be going on in Iraq and the people later on. In his speech, there is no choice. There is no alternative option, and he has already given the order for the British military to go to Iraq. Although he knows that

some of the British people refuse this war “I know that this course of action has produced deep division of opinion in our country”, he made that decision anyway, as a final step to resolve the issue of Iraq and Saddam’s Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).

Blair in this speech is emphasizing the goal of sending the forces against Saddam. Tony Blair’s mission is clear: to remove Saddam; he makes reference to this in different ways throughout the speech. He describes the threat and terrorism Britain and the world are facing. As a matter of fact, he mentioned the word “threat” nine times during this speech. He relies on reliable sources of his information, on the UN inspectors to justify his decision to wage war on Iraq.

Positive consequences: In his speech, Blair focuses on the positive solution for removing Saddam from power. There will be no threat anymore from this ‘brutal dictator’ and Iraqi people will have new future in their country within their oil revenues.

Negative consequences: According to Blair, there are no negative consequences of sending his military forces to Iraq. He focuses on the positive side of removing Saddam but neglects the whole picture of what else will happen later on.

Here, there is an individual deliberation. Blair did not make a clear comparison between doing it (sending his forces to Iraq) or not sending them. But he seemed to weigh reasons in favour of doing it and against doing it; then arrived at a practical judgement about what he ought to do (sending his forces to Iraq).

### 3.3 Argument reconstruction

The argument in support of action by identifying the premises involved:

Claim: the claim of this speech is that: “this new world faces a new threat of disorder and chaos of brutal states like Iraq armed with weapons of mass destruction or of extreme terrorist groups”. They will step forward to achieve order by removing Saddam. As one can see, this sentence is a declarative one holding such expressions as (threat, disorder, chaos, brutal and WMD). They are sturdy descriptions on the part of Blair with his authority as prime minister against Iraq. Furthermore, he compared the threat of Saddam has WMD to terrorist groups.

Circumstances: The reasons that Blair suggests fall within lines (10-18). He claims that this threat of Iraq having WMD is real, because it means that this unstable situation in the Middle East will affect the UN. They want to change that and remove Saddam but without any chaos. Blair declares that this threat is against ‘our way of life, our freedom, our democracy’. Here he focuses on “our” good things like freedom and democracy against “their” threat and tyrannical states.

Goals: The main goal of this speech is to get rid of Saddam’s regime and his WMD. This goal falls within lines (4&5) “Their (British forces) mission: to remove Saddam Hussein from power and disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction”.

Values/concerns: According to the argumentation theory and practical reasoning, there should be values or concerns which are considered one of the main premises in every political speech. Here, in this speech, the values are:

1. The European economy will be at risk because of such weapons.
2. The European security will face chaos and disorder.
3. Tony Blair gives his opinion as a trustworthy man and as a prime minister that this threat is real and should be dealt with it right now.
4. For 12 years the UN tried to disarm Iraq peacefully but Saddam neglected their attitudes.
5. Because of Saddam's wars, hundreds of thousands have died.
6. Iraqi people will be blessed and saved by removing the dictator.
7. By removing Saddam, the UN will help the Iraqi people develop their economic conditions.

The first five points are related to Blair's and the UN's sake, which reveal his ideological trends, while the last two points are addressed to Iraqi people. One may ask, why now? Are Blair and the UN caring for Iraqi people? If yes, then where were they before 2003?

Means-goal: This premise expresses a particularly strong relation (if and only if we adopt the means, we can reach the goals); that is to say, there is no alternative choice. In this speech, the means- goals are: "some say if we act we become a target the truth is all nations are targets" (line 19). "It is true Saddam is not the only threat but it is also as we

British know that the best way to deal with future threats peacefully is to deal with present threats with resolve” (lines 37-39). So, in order to remove Saddam, Blair should send his military forces into Iraq. The UN cannot bear Saddam’s disrespect for the orders and the resolutions they have set.

The following table lists the modal verbs in this speech:

The modal	Can	Could	May	Might	Must	Shall	Should	Will	Would	Wouldn't
Times	1	1	X	1	X	1	2	4	2	1

The above table shows that the most prominent modal verb is “will”. Here are some examples from the speech:

- “I know also the British people will now be united in sending our armed forces our thoughts and prayers”, line (7)
- “Removing Saddam will be a blessing to the Iraqi people”, line (40).
- “Our commitment to the post-Saddam humanitarian effort will be total”, line (46).
- “We will strive to see it done”, line (51).

Blair seems to be manipulating readers through a presupposition in which he uses language in a way that appears to take certain ideas for granted, as if there were no other ideas that may be taken in consideration as alternative. He uses language in a very simple but convincing way; his words play a decisive role in persuading the UN and the British people of the Iraq War.

He uses positive modal verbs to indicate that his decision is a positive one and that there will be positive consequences. He uses “will” just four times which denotes willingness, instant decisions, determination, a promise or certain prediction. The four sentences are addressed in the right directions; the first one to the British people telling them that it is time to unite not be apart because they are all together in this war. He uses the word ‘prayers’ to make people sympathize with the soldiers and uses ‘our’ as if he were saying they are all together and now it is time for authority. The second sentence sheds light on the fact that removing Saddam is good for everyone, to the UN, to the Middle East and to the Iraqi people. The last two sentences are promises (imaginaries) to the Iraqi people telling them that they will not be alone.

He justifies that decision by using rationalization and legitimation by supporting his claim of action, by using his authority as a prime minister of a powerful country. He describes Iraq and Saddam in these words: ‘new threat’, ‘disorder’, ‘chaos’, ‘brutal states’, ‘armed with WMD’, ‘hate our way of life, our freedom, our democracy’, and ‘tyrannical states’. He maintains that even the UK’s economy will be affected by Saddam. He reveals that Saddam has breached the rules for 12 years and that UN weapon inspectors say that Iraq has chemical and biological poisons such as anthrax, VX nerve and mustard gas. These claims are made by the prime minister of the UK who was elected twice at that time, and who has known for his reliability especially after leading the country through his

'third way'. As for legitimation, Blair used his authority; one may notice from the very first line of the speech, he is using the first person pronoun 'I'. Further, he constructs his goal and action upon moral values and through this way he could persuade the international community of that action.

The speech is a short one but is full of powerful expressions and metaphor. He uses the name Saddam (7) times associating it with WMD, threat or dictator. He emphasizes that Saddam is bad and that the listeners must have this image with them. He also uses "imaginaries" in the sense of the positive consequences of removing Saddam, such as stable security for the British and their democracy and constant economy. Also, he uses the word 'blessing' to the Iraqi people because they have faced a lot of wars, death because of hunger, murders, exile and diseases. Such future visions guide Blair's actions and eventually lead him to achieve his goal, that is taking the decision of invading Iraq. In every premise he draws a metaphorical picture of the positive consequences of removing Saddam and dropping any other counter-argument that there is an alternative choice. In lines (34-36) Blair somehow gives another choice but refutes it immediately; it is either leaving Saddam to get stronger than now or disarming him by force now. It is another futile comparison because no reasonable man can say that I trust these weapons in Saddam's hands due to his war history. In Blair's words, it is 'retreat' now but 'years of repentance at our weakness' at future. This speech contains conductive and plausible argument in which premises complement



each other; Blair uses this argument to be plausible because there is no other choice, the threat is real, Saddam is a dictator having WMD and international security is in risk now.

- Blair has a goal  $G \rightarrow$  removing Saddam Hussein from power and disarming Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction.

-  $G$  is supported by his set of values,  $V \rightarrow$  the goal ( $G$ ), that of removing Saddam Hussein from power and disarming Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction is supported by the values ( $V$ ) which are: keeping Saddam in power with his weapons of mass destruction which will affect the British economy, British security, and the world peace. Hundreds of thousands have died because of Saddam's wars. Four million Iraqis are in exile, 60% of the population depend on food aid, thousands of children die every year through malnutrition and disease; hundreds of thousands have been driven from their homes or murdered. Also, Blair declares that one of the UN's priorities is helping Iraq move towards democracy and helping Iraqi people make benefit of the oil.

- Bringing about  $A$  is necessary (or sufficient) for Blair to bring about  $G \rightarrow$  the action ( $A$ ) of giving the order for British forces to take part in military action in Iraq which is necessary for achieving the main goal, that is removing Saddam from power and disarming Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction.

- Therefore, Blair should (practically ought to) bring about  $A \rightarrow$  So, Blair ought to send his forces to take action in Iraq.

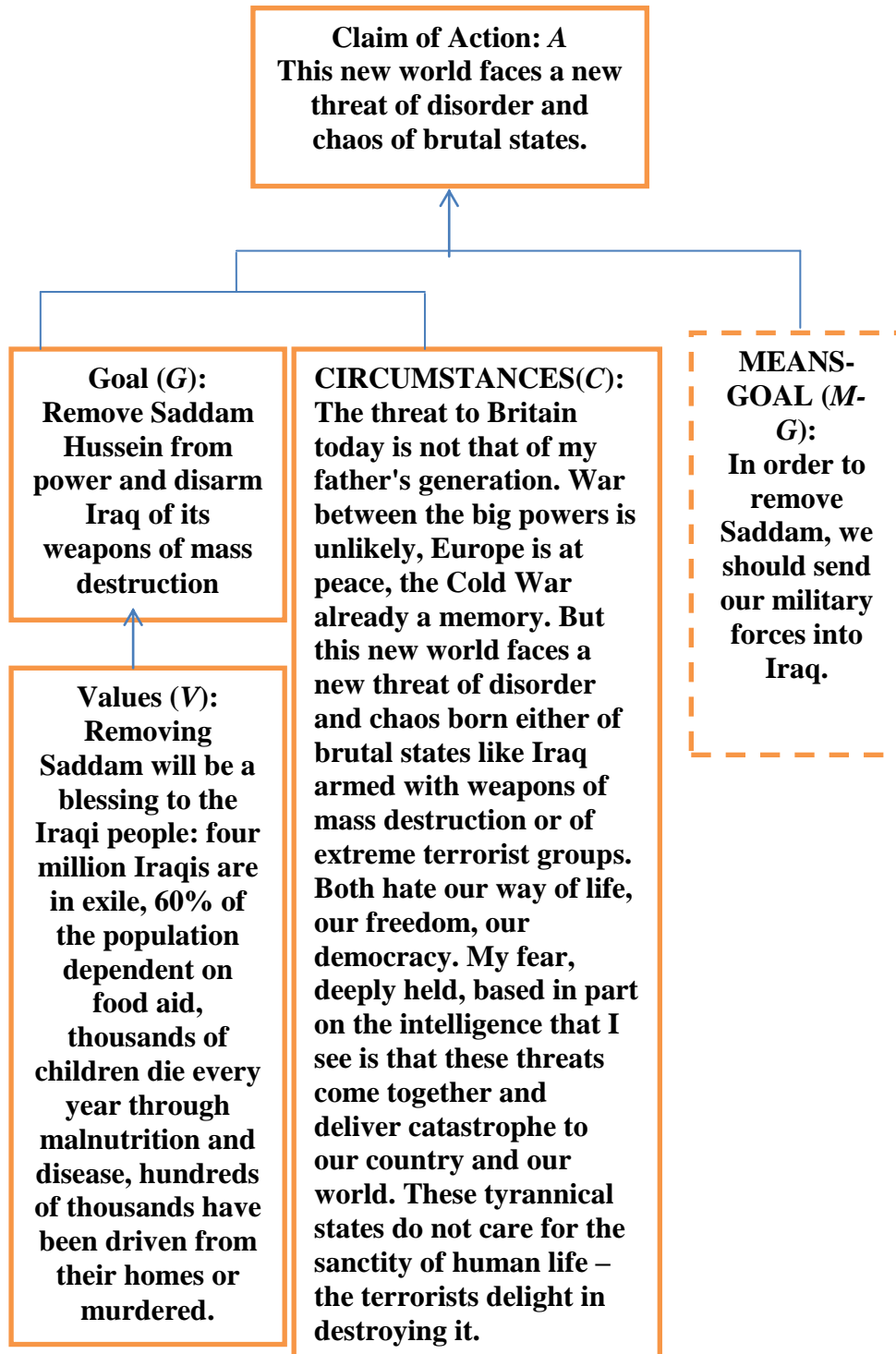


Figure: Blair's speech argument of action

#### 4.1 Conclusions

In his claim, Blair says that the threat of Saddam's possession of WMD is the same as that of the extreme terrorist groups. Blair's speech has both theoretical and practical reasoning. The theoretical reasoning has the negative attitude of what will happen if they let Saddam have such weapons. Blair describes Saddam as a dictator, barbarous ruler and his regime as a brutal and tyrannical state. That is to say, there will be a real threat and everyone is a potential target for such a dictator. On the other hand, the practical reasoning which is concerned with what ought to be done in response to such a crisis is lightning with positive attitude that disarming Iraq and removing Saddam is the only and the best choice put in front of the UN and the international community.

Discourses provide agents with reasons for action and only by understanding representations as premises in arguments for action that CDA can provide an adequate understanding of the relations between structures of the discourse. Political discourse is a primarily argumentative discourse which mainly involves practical argumentation for or against lines of action in response to political problems. Rhetoric, argumentation and practical reasoning are not a mere knack. They provide techniques of thought and a way of arguing and deliberating which can identify, explain, critique and open the way to the changing of the terms of the discourses with respect to the exchanges happening in reality.

In terms of the Aristotelian sequence, CDA contributes to deliberation but decision and action are not part of CDA, rather they are part of the political action. The perspective of political action should be consistently brought into what do and it is important to seek for more reflection on the connections and the differences between analytical (critical-explanatory) concerns and political concerns. The study set out to investigate how the study of action adds to the study of representation. Blair's discourse serves an ideological purpose in an argumentative way to justify, legitimize and convince the international community that Iraq is as a real threat and eventually removing Saddam by force is the right decision. Blair does this through the creation of claim of action which embeds by the circumstances of WMD (political justification) from a moral (value/concern) and political justification. It is built on an idea that Britain not only needs to act, but also is right to act.

The study has investigated what makes a politician persuasive by examining what can be found in the linguistic choices and rhetorical devices used by Tony Blair. In many ways, Blair is not looking for overwhelming support for his actions, but rather mere acceptance. Here comes the role of the evaluation of the discourse and because of it Blair finally reaches a point where he is inquiring about his decision of Iraq War 2003.

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## Appendix

**Tony Blair's speech address to the nation given**

**Thursday 20 March 2003**

"On Tuesday night I gave the order for British forces to take part in military action in Iraq.

"Tonight, British servicemen and women are engaged from air, land and sea. Their mission: to remove Saddam Hussein from power, and disarm [Iraq](#) of its weapons of mass destruction.

"I know this course of action has produced deep divisions of opinion in our country. But I know also the British people will now be united in sending our armed forces our thoughts and prayers. They are the finest in the world and their families and all of Britain can have great pride in them.

"The threat to Britain today is not that of my father's generation. War between the big powers is unlikely. Europe is at peace. The cold war already a memory.

"But this new world faces a new threat: of disorder and chaos born either of brutal states like Iraq, armed with weapons of mass destruction; or of extreme terrorist groups. Both hate our way of life, our freedom, our democracy.

"My fear, deeply held, based in part on the intelligence that I see, is that these threats come together and deliver catastrophe to our country and world. These tyrannical

states do not care for the sanctity of human life. The terrorists delight in destroying it.

"Some say if we act, we become a target. The truth is, all nations are targets. Bali was never in the frontline of action against terrorism. America didn't attack al Qaida. They attacked America.

"Britain has never been a nation to hide at the back. But even if we were, it wouldn't avail us.

"Should terrorists obtain these weapons now being manufactured and traded round the world, the carnage they could inflict to our economies, our security, to world peace, would be beyond our most vivid imagination.

"My judgment, as prime minister, is that this threat is real, growing and of an entirely different nature to any conventional threat to our security that Britain has faced before.

"For 12 years, the world tried to disarm Saddam; after his wars in which hundreds of thousands died. UN weapons inspectors say vast amounts of chemical and biological poisons, such as anthrax, VX nerve agent, and mustard gas remain unaccounted for in Iraq.

"So our choice is clear: back down and leave Saddam hugely strengthened; or proceed to disarm him by force. Retreat might give us a moment of respite but years of repentance at our weakness would, I believe, follow.

"It is true Saddam is not the only threat. But it is true also - as we British know - that the best way to deal with

future threats peacefully, is to deal with present threats with results.

"Removing Saddam will be a blessing to the Iraqi people. Four million Iraqis are in exile. Sixty per cent of the population are dependent on food aid. Thousands of children die every year through malnutrition and disease. Hundreds of thousands have been driven from their homes or murdered.

"I hope the Iraqi people hear this message. We are with you. Our enemy is not you, but your barbarous rulers.

"Our commitment to the post-Saddam humanitarian effort will be total. We shall help Iraq move towards democracy. And put the money from Iraqi oil in a UN trust fund so that it benefits Iraq and no one else.

"Neither should Iraq be our only concern. President Bush and I have committed ourselves to peace in the Middle East based on a secure state of Israel and a viable Palestinian state. We will strive to see it done.

"But these challenges and others that confront us - poverty, the environment, the ravages of disease - require a world of order and stability. Dictators like Saddam, terrorist groups like al-Qaida, threaten the very existence of such a world.

"That is why I have asked our troops to go into action tonight. As so often before, on the courage and determination of British men and women, serving our country, the fate of many nations rests.

"Thank you."