Confrontational Argumentative Strategies in the Discourse of Foreign Policy Experts

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Abstract
The aim of this study is to explore the discursive practices of foreign policy experts. While policy decisions involving war and peace keep people alarmed all over the globe, most of these decisions are shaped by policy experts who work on influencing public opinion through the media (Manheim, 2011). This study adopts a critical discursive stance and uses argumentation analysis to examine the ideological backdrop to the discourse of thirty opinion articles authored by American foreign policy experts in print media. Drawing on the Pragma-dialectical method of augmentation analysis (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004), and more particularly on its notion of strategic maneuvering, the analysis examines the confrontational strategies used by this group of experts and attempts to determine the rhetorical goals pursued by these strategic maneuvers.

Keywords**:** argumentation, discourse, experts, foreign policy, strategic maneuvering.

1. Introduction

The political opinion sections of the print media offer a major forum for public debate. They bring together politicians, government officials, policy experts, and journalists to discuss the suitability of policies and put forward their analysis and resolutions about policy decisions. In matters which are hard for the public to access, however, such as foreign policy (FP henceforth), expert opinions help the public understand what is at stake in international relations and engage them in the processes of policy-making (Blower, et. al., 2005). Nonetheless, in practice, experts with their cognitive authority (Wilson, 1983) and their positions as knowledgeable people, tend to benefit and legitimize their partisan views. The problem lies in that "what is *agreed to be fact* is the product not of open debate, but of the authority of experts and even more, the public is more or less under the cultural or intellectual control of the experts" (Turner, 2001: 126, italics in original).

This study aims to explore the ideologies underlying the discourses of FP experts in the American print media. The analysis focuses on the debate about the Iraq war during what is referred to as "the Surge", a policy adopted for the period from late 2006 through September 2007. In their opinion articles issued in print media, FP experts debated the US military policy in Iraq and its counter-insurgency strategies. At that time, the US had launched a security plan dubbed "The New Way Forward" aimed at increasing the number of American troops who

would restrain sectarian violence in Iraq. The plan was harshly criticized, and Americans were worried about the war costs and the high death toll of the troops and expectant of troop withdrawal from Iraq. FP experts from different political factions in the meantime attempted to gear the debate to their respective benefits.

2. Argumentation in political discourse

The study of political discourse in the media requires particular awareness of its inherent argumentative nature and also knowledge of the most influential theories and analytic tools developed within the discipline of argumentation theory (Toulmin, 1958; Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969; van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004; Walton, 2015), as well as those in pragmatics (Johnson, 2000; Wilson 1990). Argumentation theory "contributes to a wide range of fundamental social processes, from political debates to legal disputes, scientific inquiry, and interpersonal conflicts (Lewiński and Mohammed, 2016: 1); it is hence crucial in the study of the discursive practices of any social group, not to mention those shaping public opinion and decisions involving war-waging. Indeed, political argumentation is "about gaining and using power, about collective decision-making for the public good, about mobilizing individuals in pursuit of common goals, about giving effective voice to shared hopes and fears" (Zarefsky, 2008: 318).

FP discourse, like most types of political discourse, is commonly mediated by the mass media and is produced not only by politicians, but more heavily by FP experts, such as policy analysts, media columnists and interest groups working for policy institutions (Morin and Pequin, 2018). Both the media and the political institutions jointly constrain the discursive practices of experts and shape their roles in discursively constructing political public opinion (Lauerbach and Fetzer, 2007). However, the power of these experts does not go unnoticed. They are considered "the interpretative elites of political journalism'' owing to their ''ability to interpret complex reality in ways which contribute directly to their readers' evaluation of political rhetoric and action'' (McNair, 2000: 208). Media argumentation "is a powerful force in our lives (…) and can mobilize political action, influence public opinion, market products and even enable a dictator to stay in power" (Walton, 2007: 5).

Political argumentation in the media has been regarded in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) as crucial in the reproduction of power abuses in discourse, even though argumentative patterns have not been particularly the focus of political discourse analyses, at least not in the work of the main theorists of CDS. Indeed, argumentation has been commonly approached as part of (group) discursive practices (Fairclough, 1992: 71) or as a kind of discursive strategy in the discourse-historical approach, that is typically used to establish positive-Self and negative-Other representation (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001: 44), or as an ideological discursive strategy (van Dijk, 1998). More recently, however, and focusing not

only on the pragmatic and interactional dimension of discourse, but also on the role of cognition in discursive processes, argumentation has started to gain much attention in discourse analysis, in the study of Hart (2013), for instance, or Oswald, Herman and Jacquin (2018) and Ihnen and Richardson (2011), to name a few. Most of these studies carried out on argumentative strategies and their effects on discourse point to the need for synergy between cognitive linguistics and argumentation theory.

3. Theoretical framework

The current study on FP experts´ discourses relies on the multidisciplinary character of critical discourse studies mainly advocated by the socio-cognitive approach (van Dijk, 1998) and draws on the analytic framework proposed by Pragma-dialectics (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004). The study aims to reiterate the need for argumentation theory to assist the analysis and evaluation of the argumentative discourse of FP experts in the media. Pragma-dialectics specializes in argumentative discourse and picks up the traditional philosophical theories on argumentation in order to adapt them to more contemporary research needs by integrating a pragmatic dimension into the traditional and purely dialectal approaches (van Eemeren, 2018). The socio-cognitive approach, by contrast, extends its focus to all discourse and text types, as is the case with most CDS approaches, and pays specific attention to the discursive practices of social group members, mainly those delineating (power) abuses. However, these two approaches have more in common than one can perceive at first glance. The most crucial common features are related to the multidisciplinary critical stance they both adopt in the analysis of discourse, their emphasis on the pragmatic and interactional dimensions of discourse, and their agreement on the importance of the notions of context and relevance in the interpretation and the evaluation of the argumentative discursive practices of language users.

Pragma-dialectics as a theory of argumentation proposes a systematic method for critically analyzing argumentative discussions (van Eemeren and Grootendorst, 2004). It starts with the assumption that speakers or writers engage in "a critical discussion" for the purpose of resolving a difference of opinion and, it delineates an ideal model aimed at facilitating the systematic assessment of argumentation (van Eemeren and Houtlosser, 1999: 480). This model indicates the different stages involved in an ideal process of a difference of opinion resolution. Pragma-dialectics integrates the notion of strategic maneuvering aiming to create standards for reasonableness that have a functional, rather than a structural focus. Strategic maneuvering is defined as the "efforts arguers make in argumentative discourse to reconcile aiming for rhetorical effectiveness with maintaining dialectical standards of reasonableness" (Eemeren and Houtlosser 2006: 383). Three levels of strategic maneuvering, topic potential, adaptation to audience and presentational devices, are distinguished in Pragma-dialectics for

analytic purposes, while in practice, it is believed that they act together and synchronize to realize the argumentative goals of the discussion participants. Strategic maneuvering is believed to derail if the arguers mishandle the balance to maintain between their goal to persuade and their commitment to the dialectical norms. Van Eemeren and Houtlosser (2006: 387) contend that since the "derailments of strategic maneuvering always involve a violation of a rule for critical discussion; they are on a par with the wrong moves in argumentative discourse designated as fallacies (See the rules for a critical discussion: van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004: 187-196).

4. Methodology

4.1. The corpus

The corpus under study consists of thirty opinion articles authored by policy experts and published in American newspapers in 2007. Three main criteria are observed for data selection. First, the articles should be published in newspapers scoring highest in circulation (based on Audit Bureau of Circulation, 2007). These newspapers have the highest national and international reach and are, therefore, regarded as the most influential channels on public opinion. Second, the topics should revolve around the issue of the "Surge" in Iraq, an American policy implemented from late 2006 through September 2007, the date on which General Petraeus, the Commander-in-chief deployed in Iraq to control the insurgency, was scheduled to report to Congress. Third, the articles were exclusively retrieved from sections referred to as: "Op-ed" (opposite the editorial page), "Columns", "Commentary" or "Opinion", depending on the way each paper names the section in which an article states a FP expert opinion about current international events. The texts display an average length of 900 words per opinion article, an amount considered manageable for conducting a detailed critical analysis of the discursive and argumentative strategies of FP experts discussing the war. Table 1 below displays the list of newspapers from which the articles were retrieved.

Table 1. The top 10 US newspapers by largest reported circulation in 2007
Source: *Audit Bureau of circulations* (2007)

Newspaper/ Ranking	Circulation figures
1. USA Today	2,528,437
2. Wall Street Journal N.Y	2,058,342
3. New York Times, N.Y.	1,683,855
4. Los Angeles Times	915,723
5. New York Post	724,748
6. The Daily News –NY	718,174
7. Washington Post	699,130
8. Chicago Tribune	566,827
9. Houston Chronicle	503,114
10. The Boston Globe	477,425

Research was also carried out on the authors of these opinion articles to examine their respective professional background and political affiliations, and the kinds of institutions they work for. Figure 1 reveals that more than half of the experts (53.3%) are think tank pundits and that the other half is divided between politicians (20%), policy analysts (13%) and columnists (13%). The findings conform to FP communication trends in the US, where the opinion sections in newspapers are highly exploited by experts working for think tanks. These are organizations that perform research and advocacy and focus on addressing political questions of national and international interest. Think tanks commit to holding themselves responsible in society for the accomplishment of democratic principles and for engaging citizens in decision making by "clarifying world issues and being a knowledge source for them" (Morin and Pequin, 2018: 196).
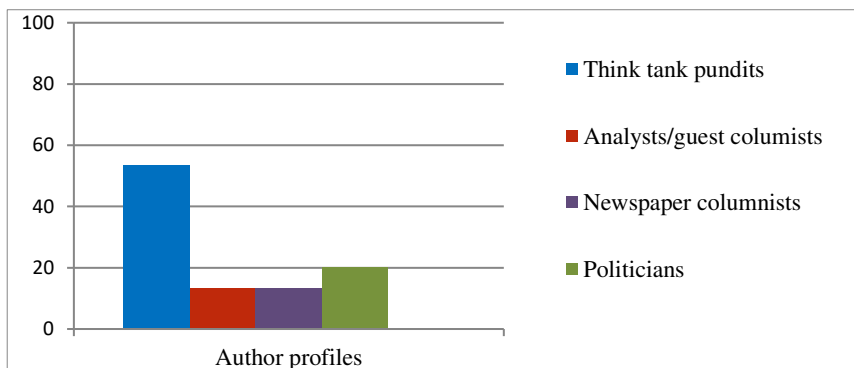

Figure 1: The professional profiles of authors in the data corpus

As for the politicians, their opinions on foreign policy events are expected to faithfully transmit their party's position and decisions on these issues. Even though their positions may be equally as scientifically founded as those of professional foreign policy experts, they are generally regarded as inclined towards the political interests of the party leaders. The analysis of the argumentative strategies employed by these FP experts focuses on their confrontations, which is the stage where they externalize a standpoint and advance a position for defense.

4.2. Research procedures

Based on Pragma-dialectics, the research proceeded as follows. First, a preliminary analysis of the data was initiated. It consisted in identifying the critical stages of each text, reconstructing the critical discussions and elaborating an analytic overview. Second, focusing on the confrontational stages, the topics selected for discussion were weighed up against the disagreement spaces available. This task involved classifying the standpoints and grouping them based on their themes and goals, so as to allow the delineation of the range of positions addressed, and to determine what topics came high in the agenda of experts in this corpus. The notion of disagreement spaces clarifies the arguer's decisions on topical choices. For Pragma-dialectics, a standpoint is a selection from a particular disagreement space which in turn is a collection of the entirety of "virtual" standpoints related to a given issue (Van Eemeren, et al., 1993: 95). Furthermore, van Eemeren and Garssen argue "whether to expand around one of the potential points of disagreement is a matter of strategy, for not all disagreements need resolutions" (2008: 17). This means that by deciding which area of the space is worth discussing, arguers leave evidence of their intentions, their political agendas and, more importantly, their ideological positions. Finally, the last step was concerned with determining the kinds of strategic maneuverings through which the authors attempted to gear the discussion towards the most effective results, and towards resolving the difference of opinion to their maximum benefits.

5. Findings and discussions

This section presents the results dealing with the discursive strategies adopted by the FP experts in the confrontation stage of their discussions. Confrontation is the dialectical stage in which the arguers identify the issues at the origin of the conflict, advance their standpoints and contextualize their positions (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 2004: 57). The systematic analysis and reconstruction of this stage has given due insight into the arguers' strategic moves, including the kinds of rhetorical aims they pursue and the ideological motivations behind them.

After reconstructing the argumentative texts, the disagreement spaces representing the margins of the conflicting positions were examined in order to

find out how the arguers´ confrontations are built from them. Table 2 displays the main disagreement spaces from which the standpoints have been advanced in the corpus. The findings show that "withdrawing troops from Iraq" was the dominant space chosen by almost three quarters of the opinion authors. This overriding disagreement space may show the oratory nature of the positions, which is a deliberative posture inherent in decision-making. The remaining topics draw on different spaces, related to morality and justice.

Table 2. Top 3 disagreement spaces

Top 3 spaces	Disagreement spaces	%
1	Withdrawal from Iraq	73.3
2	Decision makers behavior	16.6
3	War legitimacy	6.6

Not only do the disagreement spaces point to the positions adopted by the arguers, but they also indicate the nature of the dispute. Indeed, the prevailing space concerned with the troop withdrawal designate a deliberative kind of debate in which the dispute focuses on either the expediency or the untimeliness of the proposed policy. Whether the proposal was equitable or not seems to remain a secondary consideration in this type of oratory, even though in most cases arguers in this corpus did integrate other oratory types for a more persuasive effect.

As indicated in table 2, most arguers (73.3%) in the corpus draw on the same disagreement space in advancing their positions over the most practical policy to adopt in Iraq. This is the same space under which conflicting views on what to do in Iraq were discussed, either by defending staying or leaving Iraq, or by proposing different types of action. Two different strategic maneuvers related to this disagreement space were identified. These were maneuvering by polarization and maneuvering by shifting the topic. In the first case, the arguers choose to present their positions by polarizing them with those of their opponents. This involves using moves which highlight a situation of disagreement in the debate and explicitly point to opposing views. The second kind of maneuvering, topic shifting, consists of starting a confrontation on a topic and then moving from there to a different disagreement space. A third confrontational strategy identified in the corpus was that of advancing objections to counterarguments. This strategy was adopted by those holding positions selected from various disagreement spaces including the ones related to the politicians' accountability and to the withdrawal of troops from Iraq.

5.1. Polarizing

Most of the arguers setting about a position related to the topic of withdrawal from Iraq introduce their own views by means of polarization. Standard dictionary definitions of polarization emphasize the simultaneous presence of opposing or conflicting principles, tendencies or points of view. Indeed, these arguers introduce the disagreement in the debate as originating from two extreme positions rather than multiple differences. Furthermore, these opponents´ views are often situated as irrational or extreme and balanced with moves emphasizing the credibility of the arguers. It is also somewhat surprising that, in the majority of these confrontations, reference to the opponents´ position is not followed by any refutation-based rhetorical strategy explaining the reason why the counter position is not valid in their view. A possible explanation for this strategy might be that the arguers aim to reduce the disagreement to a binary space by exaggerating one view of the opponents and ignoring other alternative differences of opinion. By polarizing opponents´ views, the arguers seem to accomplish two goals: weakening and disqualifying counter positions from being considered as valid positions, and establishing their own credibility by means of discrediting opponents. The latter goal may be recognized as an appeal to ethos, commonly used by arguers in this dialectical stage to establish credibility with the audience (Rhetoricae, 2003). The recurrent polarizing maneuvering, a common confrontational practice among arguers in this corpus, may give insight into their group shared cognitions such as the kinds of common dispositions behind their discursive behaviors.

The different functions of polarization are explored below in several revealing confrontational cases. In example (1) below, the arguer initiates her debate by polarizing the opposing views with her own by means of dissociation.

> (1)   In Washington, perception is often mistaken for reality. And as Congress prepares for a fresh debate on Iraq, the perception many members have is that the new strategy has already failed. This isn't an accurate reflection of what is happening on the ground, as I saw during my visit to Iraq in May. (Kimberly Kagan, *Wall Street Journal*)

In the confrontation of this opinion article, the arguer does not seem to refute any counter argument or show a predisposition to argue against any opposing views. Polarization here, realized only at a confrontational stage, indicates that the arguer uses the maneuver for a different purpose rather than engaging in argumentation against opponents´ claims. Indeed, using the terms "perception" and "reflection" discredits the opponents´ positions and presents them as subjective positions, rather than well-founded views. By framing them as mere "perception" and setting them against her own factual knowledge "reality", the arguer dissociates herself from her opponents through parallelism between her own advantage (knowledge) and her opponents´ defect (ignorance). The strategy risks derailment, even though it is widely adopted, as it can turn into the *ad hominem* fallacy recognized as the

attack on the person rather than the argument. This maneuver seems to be exploited by a great number of arguers where polarization is employed to discredit their opponents´ positions and suggest their untrustworthiness. Example (2) shows how the arguer dissociates himself from his opponents and frames their positions as a mere act of "bickering" which implies a state of unreasonable petty dispute, removed from the "real" event.

> (2) While American politicians bicker among themselves from eight-time zones away about whether the Surge led by Gen. David Petraeus is working or not, I turned to Iraq to see for myself. (Michael Totten, *Daily News*)

The arguer, here, does not engage in refuting his opponents' positions, but rather in framing them from this confrontation as not worth arguing against. Indeed, the discussion argumentative core does not consist of any refutation of counter-arguments. It focuses on proving that the Surge was working well based on factual evidence, presented as a warranty to his defense of staying in Iraq and continuing the fight there. The confrontational maneuver strengthens one´s position by weakening an opposing position. Furthermore, this move attempts to build the disagreement as binary, i.e. as representing two opposing poles rather than several.

Another example of maneuvering with counter-positions and presenting them as invalid claims (example 3) is advanced in a confrontational move wrapped up into a series of presuppositions. The arguer presents the decision to withdraw troops as "surrender" and a declaration of "defeat", hence an act of cowardice.

> (3) Congress will *finally* deliver on the president's request for emergency war spending for Iraq and Afghanistan - after more than 80 days (*yes*, 80 days) of needless dithering with our national security. (…) it includes a *completely* arbitrary timetable for surrender in . . . er, I mean, withdrawal from Iraq. Sure, Congress has the constitutional power to declare "war," but since when does it have the right to declare "defeat"? (Peter Brookes, *New York Post*)

Polarizing, therefore, seems to fulfill certain rhetorical aims. As seen in most of the above-mentioned examples, one of the aims is to strengthen the arguers´ positions by attacking the authority and the integrity of opponents and by contrasting them with their own credibility. The polarized views, hence, are not only referred to in negative terms, but they are in many cases distorted. The misrepresentation of opponents´ positions is generally identified as a fallacious move producing what is referred to as a *strawman* fallacy.

Derailing strategic moves does not seem to be an obstacle, as misrepresenting the opponents´ views by polarizing them against one´s position turns out to be a widely accepted move, judging from the high occurrence of this practice in the corpus. This is probably due to the lack of any explicit formal or informal institutional restrictions or official conditions on how the arguers should formulate

their opponents´ views in the first place. However, the maneuver turns out to have more consequences than the ones outwardly perceived.

Polarizing positions makes the disagreement space a two-dimensional kind of space and presents it to the audience as a choice between two options rather than a range of alternatives. The strategy reduces the disagreement to a more recognizable and manageable issue, by simplifying it for the audience. This increases the chance of persuading the audience of one option against another, rather than having to persuade them against many options or complex positions. Polarizing makes an "extremely diversified public coalesced into two or more highly contrasting, mutually exclusive groups sharing a high degree of internal solidarity in those beliefs which the persuader considers salient" (King and Anderson, 1971: 244). Polarizing political views in the US has a long and established tradition, given that the variety of political and moral value systems, ranging from traditional to progressive, from absolutist to relativistic, have often been reduced and categorized as falling either into liberal or conservative groups (Prior, 2013). Using this strategy in opinion pieces may ostensibly be oriented towards producing the usual effect of political campaigns and discourses, which appeals to the solidarity and commitment of the group adherents based on sharing the same moral or political values.

5.2. Shifting the topic

Confrontational maneuvering by topic shifts has also been identified in significant numbers in the corpus. In this kind of maneuvering, confrontation is initiated on a topic selected from a certain disagreement space and then moves on to another topic that seems to better serve the interest and goals of the arguers. In most cases, confrontation apparently draws on a topic selected from a small-scale disagreement space, but shifts (usually in a smooth manner) to a higher scale, more polemical disagreement space. In most cases, the arguers tend to set off the debate from a previously settled disagreement, such as the issue of Islamic terrorism and the US leadership on the matter of fighting it (widely shared and accepted views among the American public), to later move to the controversial debate on troop withdrawal. This strategic maneuver is discussed in the examples below, by pointing to their ideological significance.

In example (4), the arguer opens his discussion with an account of some cruel terrorist attacks in Iraq, which powerfully relate to the kinds of images drawn upon in debates on terrorism linking them to a larger space on the legitimacy of the war on Iraq and the very essence of the US interventions in "rogue" states. The arguer exploits this space to bring another issue to the table, namely that of the same predominant disagreement space of troop withdrawal, this time from a different angle and seemingly differentiating it from the deliberative debate over the decisions to be made in Iraq.

(4) Two days ago, al Qaeda detonated four massive truck bombs in three Iraqi villages, killing at least 250 civilians (perhaps as many as 500) and wounding many more. The bombings were a sign of al Qaeda's frustration, desperation and fear. The victims were ethnic Kurd Yazidis, (…) the reason for those dramatic bombings was that al Qaeda needs to portray Iraq as a continuing failure of U.S. policy. Those dead and maimed Yazidis were just props: The intended audience was Congress. (Ralph Peters, *New York Post*)

This kind of confrontational maneuver serves to initiate discussion from the topic of terrorism – related to the disagreement space of war legitimacy - and then shift to the topic related to the deliberation on whether to retreat or not from Iraq. Hence, by starting from a topic of shared agreement, the arguer attempts to build a tension-free confrontation and engage in a concurring discussion on Al Qaeda´s terrorism. The maneuver is obviously aimed at securing communion with the audience (van Eemeren and Houtlosser, 2006: 384) before getting to the actual disagreement space from which the position is taken. Even though the strategy seems to undertake the positive function of mitigating the difference of opinion, it may be identified as manipulative, as it distracts the audience from the arguer´s intended position. Furthermore, confrontation is initiated from the assumption of a common threat of terrorist attacks, hence implying the inevitable obligation of Americans to fight. This kind of maneuver may function as a smokescreen to the actual positions to defend in the discussion and may have crucial consequences on the audience's processing of, and even reactions to, these kinds of standpoints.

The next example (example 5), is a further illustration of an ideologically biased strategic maneuver, possibly motivated by the arguer´s aim of wining the debate in his favor. After an extensive description of some terrorist attacks in Iraq, the arguer disapproves of his opponents´ claims that the US provoked a civil war instead of establishing democracy. The arguer makes a strategic move by means of a series of *erotema* (rhetorical questions); the first is the exact wording of the counter-argument and the next one is a re-formulation of this view, which very probably derails into a *straw man* fallacy. He uses this strategy of topic shift by placing his position within a different disagreement space, namely that of intervention and war legitimacy while in fact, the global speech act may be interpreted as dissuasion from withdrawal of troops from Iraq.

(5) Tens of thousands of Iraqis have died, the overwhelming majority of them killed by Sunni insurgents, Baathist dead-enders and their al-Qaeda allies who carry on the Saddamist pogroms (…). Iraqis were given their freedom, and yet many have chosen civil war. (…) We gave them a civil war? Why? Because we failed to prevent it? (…) Thousands of brave American soldiers have died trying to counter, put down and prevent civil strife. (…) we've been doing everything we can to bring reconciliation. (Charles Krauthammer, *Washington Post*)

Indeed, the analysis reveals that the maneuvering by shifting topic serves to foreground the threat of terrorism and the duty to fight against Al Qaeda to prepare

favorably for the actual position defending the policies adopted in Iraq and eventually staying to accomplish the mission. This position is framed within the US global leadership and its mission of fighting terrorism as a major international threat, and is shifted from the space of the deliberation over withdrawal from Iraq, which evokes the mismanagement of the war and the public condemnation of it. Hence, by blaming Iraqis and Arabs for failure, the arguer recreates solidarity and consensus against others (here Iraqis) and implicitly absolves the Bush Administration from criticism. Furthermore, he shifts the attention away from the controversial issue of withdrawal and seems to initiate a discussion on the US mission and fight against terrorism, while, indeed, he advances (implicitly) a position against withdrawal.

Confronting the audience based on the accommodating topic of national values and virtues, rather than bringing up the responsibility of a political group, is a confrontational strategic maneuver aimed at avoiding the tension produced by the highly controversial topic of withdrawal. Nevertheless, it proves to be a case of manipulation, as the arguer´s basic goals and intention become hard to infer from the discursive construction of a misleading confrontational situation in which the issue is defined in a complex and evasive way.

5.3. Objections to opponents´ positions

Around a quarter of the arguers in the current study choose to frame their confrontation departing from a counter-position of some opponents. Indeed, 24% of them advance argumentation as a reaction and resort, hence, to refutation strategies. This strategy, widely used in mixed discussions where the participants hold a face to face argumentation, points, in the case of op-ed pieces´ non-mixed argumentation, to an explicit reference to disagreement and the disposition to exploit an existent discussion and expand it. This strategy is different from the cases of polarized views in the sense that arguers identify opposing views and commit to refute them within all discussion stages. In all the objection cases inspected, the arguers show consistency when confronting counter-arguments, in the sense that they attempt to report the difference of opinion in a relatively "objective" or fair way, clearly stating their opponents´ views instead of hastily referring to them as an "impression" or perception as is the case for polarizers. This does not mean that they do not harshly criticize them, a task they tend to reserve for the argumentation stage.

5.4. Confrontational maneuvering at the level of presentation

The presentational devices below displayed indicate the ways through which polarizing and topic shifting have been rhetorically accomplished in the confrontation stage. In practice, the three levels of strategic moves, topic selection, audience adaptation and the selection of presentational devices, work together to produce the maneuvers aimed at. Table 3 below displays the top 5 presentational

maneuverings in confrontations, headed by *propositio, apostrophe and enargia,* and illustrated with examples.

Table 3: Maneuvering strategies at the presentational level in the American corpus

Presentational Device	Device characteristics	Functions	Example	%
Propositio	provides a summary of the issues, or concisely puts forth the charges or accusation	defining the origin of difference	The mission in Iraq is spiraling to failure. American voters have sent a clear message: bring our troops home, but don´t lose. (W. Clark, USA Today)	46.6
Apostrophe	directly address audience	evoke an emotional response	Keep in mind (…) (**Clifford D. May** *Houston Chronicle)*	33.3
Enargia	vivid, lively description. of an action	inherently moving evoke an emotional response	A female Sunni suicide bomber blew herself up amid students who were ready to sit for exams, killing 40 (T. Friedman, *New York Times*)	23.3
Erotema/ Rhetorical Questions	any question asked for a purpose other than to obtain the information the question asks	affirm or deny a point strongly expressing wonder, indignation, sarcasm, etc.	Sure, Congress has the constitutional power to declare "war," but since when does it have the right to declare "defeat"? (P. Brookes, New York Post)	20
Metaphor	comparison made by referring to one thing as another	various effects/ deviations	When a lame duck, in his 45th month of a failing foreign war and occupation bides his time with warning. (referring to G.W. Bush) (C. Hines, Houston Chronicle)	13.3

It is essential for arguers in such an argumentation activity type to contextualize their positions within the debate and make it clearer for the audience to join the debate. The considerable use of *propositio* demonstrates that the arguers find it optimal to contextualize their claims for their audience by formulating the disagreement in a way that aligns the audience with their own position. Even though this rhetorical device is not commonly recognized for producing bias, such as those devices appealing to emotions for instance, the choice of wording gives the arguers the opportunity to handle and present events the way that suits their

interests by downplaying, exaggerating, highlighting or simply formulating the disagreement in their own terms. The remaining devices employed in the corpus, are equally significant as most are accomplished for emotional effect. A substantial number of maneuvers were indeed performed to appeal to the audience, namely through *apostrophe* (addressing the audience), *enargia*, (vivid description of events), and *erotema* (rhetorical questions). An extract from Ralph Peter´s confrontation illustrates, in example (8) below, a case of a strategic move, maneuvered using different presentational devices, probably aiming at having the maximum emotional effect on the audience. The arguer talks directly to his addressees (*apostrophe*), states a potential doubt they may be cast on his claim (*prolepsis*) and formulates it in the form of a question to shed verisimilitude on the interaction he is having with his antagonists and come across as close to them.

(8)   Wait a minute, you say: What about all those recent deadly bombings? (Ralph Peter, *New York Post*)

By involving the audience more directly into the discussion, these devices (among others) make explicit the dialogical nature of the interaction, but also are supposed to produce a positive reception of the positions in question.

6. Conclusions

This article presented the findings from a discursive analysis of foreign policy argumentation in the media. The study aimed to uncover the ideologically driven maneuvering strategies performed by the American FP experts in their debate on the Iraq war. The analysis followed the Pragma-dialectical method and exploited its notion of strategic maneuvering to determine the kinds of moves that indicated the arguers´ effort to reconcile their dialectical and persuasive goals. Strategic maneuverings, as ideologically-prone discourse moves, were examined in the confrontation stage of each text and were guided by the ideal model of a critical discussion, and inspected for cases of derailment. The results showed how the FP experts in the corpus maneuvered when pursing their rhetorical goals in the confrontational stage. The most prominent strategy used by American experts was the polarization of their views with one opposing view, which they framed as invalid, reducing options for their audiences. Others chose topics of shared agreement in their confrontation from which they shifted to a more controversial issue. The topic shifting maneuvering often functioned as a diversion from the real position meant to presume agreement rather than engage in the defense of an acknowledged difference of opinion. Finally, most experts rhetorically maneuvered using *propositio*, a presentational device that lexically influenced the account of the disagreement in their favor.

The notion of strategic maneuvering has sustained the systematic analysis of the ideological structures underlying the argumentative discourse of the FP

experts under study. Indeed, the maneuvers were identified within the discourse moves which marked prominent arguers´ efforts to reconcile their dialectical goals with their rhetorical goals. These maneuvers provided for the interpretation of the arguers' motives put forward through different dialectical moves, such as their briefing on the disagreement. The dialectical goals helped along the characterization of the experts´ rhetorical moves and the ideological structures underlying them. This study has intended to highlight the significance of argumentation theory and methods in tackling the discourse of foreign policy experts and in systematically evaluating its bearing.

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