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The macropragmatics of follow-up sequences in political communication

1. Introduction

'Follow-ups' are nowadays increasingly difficult to define, posing a challenge to classical definitions, typologies, and analytic procedures. The traditional approaches (e.g. Sinclair and Coulthard 1975; Goffman 1981) view follow-ups as the final part of a three-move conversational/dialogic sequence, in which they are preceded by initiating moves and responses, and refer directly to either the moves or the responses. In so doing, they take up (some of) the content of the initiating moves/responses and, usually, their force as well (Fetzer 2012). Follow-ups are thus responsible for how a particular discourse, discourse topic or discourse contribution is taken up in discourse and how it is commented upon. On this general approach, follow-ups emerge as communicative acts, in and through which a prior communicative act is accepted, challenged, or otherwise negotiated.

This view, firmly anchored in Conversational Analysis and drawing only to an extent on (early) Discourse Studies (Fairclough 1992), presupposes an orthodox pattern of communicative interaction, involving 'genuine' co-presence of both/all parties engaged in the communicative event. As such, it reduces follow-ups to being predominantly a conversational phenomenon, occurring in temporally synchronous dialogic settings. Simultaneously, at general level, it assigns the status of 'interactional' to mostly those communicative contexts and situational embeddings where all parties are physically present at the same time.

Recent advances in discourse analysis, especially Critical Discourse Studies (see Wodak and Meyer 2009; Hart and Cap 2014; for overviews) and Political Linguistics (e.g. Cap and Okulska 2013), show that the nature of communicative exchange and interaction is far more complex, and is getting increasingly intricate as new communicative genres arise, multiply and mix. For instance, there are online genres, such as blogs (cf. Kopytowska 2013), which make use of conversational techniques and

ploys (e.g. advance hedging [Kecskes 2000] at the 'initiation stage'; 'sequential correction' [Mey 2001, 2013] at the 'follow-up stage'), even though, technically, they follow a standard monologue pattern. This effectively blurs traditional distinctions between dialogue and monologue, thus calling for revisiting the status of follow-ups as possible instances/parts of *monologic* discourses, especially the ones operating in temporally extensive, macro-contexts. The present paper is precisely such an attempt, aiming to implement the concept of follow-up in the analysis of a macro-discourse of political monologic communication.

The paper is structured in the following sections. Section 2 provides a concise overview of the recent work on follow-up sequences, focusing on the features of follow-ups in the contemporary genres of political communication which encourage the study of follow-ups beyond standard dialogic formats. Section 3 demonstrates that these features are well traceable in political macro-discourses, which carry out a functional macro-goal over a number of monologic texts produced consecutively in dynamically changing contextual conditions. These conditions have the speaker – analogously to a dialogue – continually 'follow up on' (that is, update and redefine) her rhetorical choices to keep realization of the macro-goal intact. Section 4, the core of the paper, illustrates this regularity in a study of the legitimization discourse of the Iraq War (2003-04), from the perspective of proximization theory (Cap 2013, 2017, 2022). Section 5 summarizes the findings, arguing for a complex approach to follow-ups, including, among others, a view from the territory of political (monologic) macro-discourses. This view posits that in political macro-discourses 'follow up' is a communicative event (realized in/through a text or a series of texts) which has been forcibly modified from a previous communicative event to keep enacting the speaker's macro-goal (e.g. legitimization) according to the rules dictated by the new context.

2. Follow-ups: from dialogue to monologue

In this section I give a necessarily brief review of recent studies in follow-up sequences. I concentrate on those political discourses in which follow-ups exhibit characteristics which sanction the extension of focus to cover dialogic, quasi-dialogic, as well as – eventually – explicitly monologic forms. I do *not* discuss the genres, such as e.g. political interviews, where follow-ups – though being a commonplace (Fetzer 2012; Fetzer and Bull 2013) – do not reveal features inviting such an extension.

As has been indicated above, follow-ups are at the fundamental level the matter of discourse content, or the force, or (usually) both. Accordingly, I look at the particular approaches from (2.1) a generic perspective (meaning 'what are the typical genres where follow-ups occur for certain reasons [functions]') and (2.2) a functional perspective (meaning 'what is the specific function that follow-ups may force in certain genres'). Mind, again, that only the cases promising well for monologue analysis are singled out from a vast catalogue of approaches and individual studies. These analytic promises and implications are discussed, collectively, at the end of the section (2.3).

2.1. The genre perspective

From the generic standpoint, a bulk of work on follow-ups in political communication has been done in the area of *debates*. This is not surprising at all, given the earlier observation that communicative acts involving follow-ups are typically used to challenge or negotiate the prior communicative act(s) in the dialogic sequence. Thus, models such as Positioning Theory (Harre and van Langenhove 1999) or Multilayered Model of Context (e.g. Berlin 2011) consider follow-ups mostly in their second order positioning, in which the second speaker challenges or refutes the self- as well as other-presentation claims made by the first speaker (Berlin 2013). Further, research in political debates often focuses on follow-ups as *entextualization* devices (Park and Bucholtz 2009; Oishi 2013, etc). The entextualization mechanism of follow-ups can be described as a process in which an initiating move and the response to it are introduced to the present discourse as the stipulation under which the follow-up utterance as a particular illocutionary act is performed (Oishi 2013). The interpretation of the content and force of the initiating move and the response are thus (also) introduced to and stay in the discourse as long as the illocutionary act of the follow-up is accepted. As can be seen, the entextualization approach to follow-ups is essentially macro-structural and macro-functional; it highlights the potential of follow-ups for a *post factum* ('backward', so to say) defense of the validity of prior claims and assertions. Finally, political debates reveal not only the pragmatic 'strengths' of follow-ups (such as challenging, claim rejection or the maintaining of consistency through entextualization), but also their 'weak(er) points', that is how the pragmatic powers of follow-ups can be hampered or (pre-)neutralized. Along these lines, Patzelt (2011) argues that one powerful way to pre-counter the force of the opponent's follow-up is to end the initiating move with a rhetorical question, rather than e.g. a direct statement or accusation. The irony and sarcasm implied in a rhetorical question, says Patzelt, represent a strong means for the speaker to exert power over the opponent and to appear superior. To regain control of the situation, the opponent needs to search for an equally powerful answer spontaneously and this psychological pressure often results in rhetorical blunders.

The other genre (or, rather, a network of interacting sub-genres) which makes a substantial and relevant contribution is, as has been noted in the Introduction, the domain of political online communications (including of course all kinds of online debating as well), where different functions of follow-ups emerge in both more and less synchronous forms of interaction. In general, most online follow-ups are analyzed in terms of their capacity to introduce/enhance/control the interaction element in otherwise asynchronous discussions, the capacity to contribute to discursive sequences enabling citizens' participation in political discourse space (e.g. Herring 2010; Kopytowska 2013, etc.). That said, the central (sub-)genre scrutinized is political blog (understood as both 'politician's blog' and any blog 'about politics'), which essentializes most of the potential of online communication to enact or restore (more) 'synchronous', 'horizontal', 'democratic' patterns of interaction between

the 'political elites' and 'ordinary citizens' (Giltrow and Stein 2009; Lomborg 2009). Follow-ups in political blogs are thus researched from a linguistic-thematic perspective (involving micro issues of 'dialogic' continuity and overlap between initial posts, audience's comments, and follow-up posts) and from a related macro-social perspective (involving issues of 'collaborative co-creation' of the social space [e.g. Baumer et al. 2011]).

Political blogs, as well as other political online forums, reveal – apart from the above general (social) function – some situation-specific functions of follow-ups (and entire follow-up sequences) at both ends of the communication axis (i.e. the politicians' end and the citizens' end). These include the earlier mentioned 'sequential correction' and 'advance hedging', which can both be described as rhetorical safety tools of political speaker, but also – and notably – evaluation acts, which are part of the arsenal of the general public making a response. Hence research in follow-ups on topics of broad public concern, occurring in written-to-be-spoken macro-structural discourses such as e.g. addresses of national leaders. For instance, Granato and Parini (2013) conduct a quantitative-qualitative study of as many as 300 postings published on different internet forums in response to four speeches made by the president of Argentina during her visit to the US in 2012. Granato and Parini's analysis, which focuses on participants' evaluations conveyed in the speech acts produced and the reporting verbs used to introduce projecting clauses, is quite representative of research in the evaluation element in follow-ups. It uses a sizeable corpus, it concentrates on the micro-pragmatic builders of evaluation, it is situated within the Appraisal and SFL frameworks, but most of all, it presupposes the speaker's awareness of the addressee expectations, thus establishing a quasi-dialogic link between the speech (a monologue) and the comments from the forums' participants. The follow-up comments (or rather their anticipations) can thus be described in terms of (projected) context elements, affecting lexical and pragmatic choices in the monologue delivery by the speaker.

2.2. The function perspective

Although the procedural boundary is admittedly fuzzy, much research in political follow-ups and the follow-up sequences does not depart from genres as hosts of various follow-ups, but instead focuses directly on different, form-related functions of follow-ups, only later situating them in relevant genre. In this vein, scholars work with roughly the same functions as emerging, viz. above, from the genre perspective. Still, they also identify a complex 'hyper-function' of follow-up forms, involving different discourse concepts (intertextuality, framing) as well as linguistic/discursive forms and mechanisms (quotation, historical flashback, etc.). For space reasons, I do not elaborate on the functions already covered (though there is much to add if the reverse perspective is taken), but go on to explain the intricacies and the importance of what I have termed the 'hyper-function'.

Follow-ups are, then, often used as tools to force a retrospective view on a past event or a state of affairs, in order to construe analogy and thereby build up a conceptual consistency with the current situation or state of affairs. This can be exemplified, at a most basic level, by the mechanism of *quotation*. Quotation is a communicative act which follows up on some prior communicative act, importing entextualized excerpts from prior discourse and thus assigning them the status of quote-worthiness (Clayman 1995). As such, many quotations in political discourse, especially those invoking historically indisputable facts, actions and beliefs, are introduced in current discourse to prescribe a future course of action based on the construed consistency/analogy of the past situation with the present situation, and, notably, the knowledge acquired from the development of the past situation (Johansson 2007; Linell 2009). Conceptually, such quotations make the 'right boundary' of a historical frame spanning the 'initiation' (the past situation and its discourse) and the 'follow-up' (the present situation and its discourse, including the quotation) construing all its constitutive elements (including the decision on a particular course of action in the future) as continually consistent.

Of course, the strategic construal of discourse and action consistency would not deserve any 'hyper-' prefix, were it for its reliance on quotation alone. The thing is, however, that there are plenty of other and less obviously 'dialogic' lexical means which resemble the follow-up force of quotation. These ploys, like historical flashbacks and other recall means (Chilton 2004; Cap 2013), work in the very same way as regards 'follow-up' activation of past experience and its discourse as a basis on which the current discourse (particularly the discourse of political responsibility and credibility as a pre-requisite for action) is constructed. The problem is that these means are far more difficult (than quotation) to pin down, demarcate or classify; furthermore, they mostly occur in monologic forms. This is however only more indicative of the relativity of distinction between truly 'dialogic follow-ups' (which employ quotation as a standard lexical tool) and those follow-ups which exercise their forces elsewhere.

2.3. Implications for monologue analysis

The last few sentences have paved the way for a summary word. Apparently, the features of follow-ups in modern political communication encourage the study of follow-ups beyond standard dialogic exchanges (e.g., on-site studio debates). The entextualization capacity of follow-ups emerges as one of the primary means whereby the speaker maintains factual, attitudinal and evaluative consistency in the course of her entire performance, be it a single text or a (long) series of texts. These texts may involve dialogue(s), or monologue, or both. A variety of cognitive-pragmatic as well as lexical tools – quotation, historical flashback, experiential analogy – may be used in (or as) follow-ups in such texts. Research shows they can function as framing devices, helping accomplish not only discursive, but also psychological consistency, in the service of personal and political credibility.

Follow-ups are also effective carriers of evaluation. This pertains not only to response follow-ups, but equally to initiation follow-ups, whether or not a 'typical', 'conversational' response occurs. If it does not occur, or the 'initiation' does not presuppose a response (thus initiating a monologic discourse), follow-up evaluation acts can still be used in the discourse of the initiator. For instance, a need may arise to re-assess a (new) context and re-structure the rhetoric accordingly. Studies such as Granato and Parini's (2013) in the dialogic awareness of monologue producers and receivers go a long way toward showing how addressee expectations in dynamically developing contexts define the function of follow-ups as context-sensitive, macro-structural discourse builders[1]. As such, they invite research in the relevant lexico-grammatical ploys (viz. advance hedging, sequential correction) as not only dialogic, but also monologic devices.

Note that none of the modern approaches to follow-up sequences prescribes the *length* of the follow-up element. This can be viewed, again, as encouragement to consider follow-ups as units of different discourse size, potentially a text series size. In turn, the length factor makes follow-ups simultaneously a macro-temporal concept, considering that it often takes much time for a text series to unfold (adjusting in the meantime to the evolving context), to successfully realize the (macro-)goal of the discourse. Altogether then, follow-up emerges as a candidate concept to account for strategic rhetorical modifications (in both kind and amount of linguistic material) which occur in temporally extensive discourses realizing a set macro-goal in the face of changing contextual conditions. It thus seems applicable to the analysis of political monologic macro-discourse – and legitimization macro-discourse in particular – which I define next.

3. Political (legitimization) macro-discourses as follow-up venues

Political macro-discourses are generally defined (Wodak 2012; Cap 2013; Van Dijk 2014; Hart 2010) as large-scale discourse structures which carry out a central functional goal, a 'macro-goal', over a substantial number of (typically) monologic texts produced consecutively in fast-changing contextual conditions. The dynamic contextual developments make discourse producers 'follow up on' (update, modify, redefine) their rhetorical choices to keep realization of the macro-goal intact. The discourse producer is usually a political leader possessing strong executive powers (thus often a state leader), though it can also be another voice (e.g. a party or media voice) representing the line of the leader.

[1] It must be noted that the crucial role of addressee expectations in the interpersonal positioning of apparently monologic texts has been investigated widely beyond the domain of political communication. For example, much research has been conducted in applied linguistics, whose findings are earlier (though many intriguingly similar) than findings of political discourse analysts. See e.g. Swales (1995), Hyland (1998, 2000), among others.

This definition is, as has been noted, a necessarily general one, bringing together the most common characteristics of numerous current approaches to political macro-discourses, including the (non-synonymous) approaches represented by the scholars above. There are indeed many deviations and thus individual analytic procedures reflecting, for instance, different perceptions of 'the political', different ideas of what counts as (or into) 'political leadership', or, from a text-analytic standpoint, different conceptions of the range and contents of the macro-discourse (i.e. how many texts, of what length, etc.). For reasons of space, I do not discuss these differences here. The central common views that all of the approaches to political macro-discourse seem to share is the view of political context (including its factual basis, as well as social and discursive reflections) as highly dynamic, and the view of discourse and its lexico-grammatical arsenal as fully capable to respond to changes forced by the context dynamics. On these provisos, a large number of urgent socio-political discourses are studied from the macro-structural and macro-functional perspective, especially within the rapidly expanding CDS paradigm. The empirical domains include, among many others, the macro-discourses of racism, xenophobia and national identity (e.g. Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Wodak 2012), immigration and anti-immigration (e.g. Hart 2010), gender identity and inequality (Koller 2008; Morrish and Sauntson 2007), and security aspects of climate change (Krzyżanowski 2013). In all these studies, systematic attempts are made to abstract the macro-goal of the discourse, and analyze its realization versus contextual developments.

In this paper, my focus is on anti-terrorist discourse, specifically the US macro-discourse of the Iraq War (2003-04). Though almost twenty-years-old now, the discourse of the Iraq War is often described as a prototypical macro-discourse of political communication at state level (Silberstein 2004; Chang and Mehan 2006; Hodges 2011; Cap 2013, 2017, 2022). First, it reveals a salient, continual goal, legitimization of pre-emptive military action and the ensuing military as well as non-military (economic, diplomatic) involvement. Second, the goal is realized within an extensive timeframe, which spans the initial strike (19 March 2003) and the end of the principal military operation (30 June 2004[2]). Third, the goal is forced consistently in the face of dynamic contextual developments occurring at different points of the frame. Fourth, the discourse used to force the legitimization goal reacts promptly to the contextual factors (most notably, the WMD[3] presence in Iraq) to keep legitimization at a continual high. Accordingly, relevant adjustments are made to the controlling discursive strategy. Fifth, the US legitimization discourse of the Iraq War is essentially the White House discourse, whose instantiations are mostly the consecutive Iraq War speeches by the ruling President George W. Bush. Thus, in terms of the format of the follow-up sequence, the follow-ups in the Iraq War discourse are typically entire texts of Bush's speeches (or their large parts), which discursively update, modify and redefine the rhetoric of his earlier speeches, in response to context. As will be easy to notice, these

[2] Delegation of selected executive powers to the new government of Iraq.

[3] Weapons of mass destruction.

updates and adjustments involve some of the most common follow-up mechanisms found, viz. above, in the 'dialogic' discourse, which here occur subordinate to the specifically legitimization oriented strategy of *proximization*.

4. Follow-ups in the discourse of the Iraq War: a view from proximization theory

Proximization is, generally speaking, a cognitive-pragmatic discourse strategy of presenting physically and temporally distant events or states of affairs (including 'distant', i.e. adversarial ideologies) as increasingly and negatively consequential to the speaker and her addressee (Cap 2006, 2008, 2010, 2013; Chilton 2011; Hart 2010; Dunmire 2011; Filardo Llamas 2010, 2013). In state interventionist discourses, such as discourse of the Iraq War, proximization can be defined in somewhat narrower yet more precise and formal terms, as a forced construal operation presupposing the dichotomous 'US/GOOD' vs. 'THEM/BAD' arrangement of the Discourse Space (DS). The operation consists in a symbolic, discursively constructed shift from the DS 'periphery' to the DS 'center', whose function is to evoke closeness of the external threat, to solicit legitimization of pre-emptive measures. In short, then, proximization is a strategic construal of growing threat from DS peripheral entities, the THEM party, which sanctions an immediate response from the DS-central, US party.

Proximization theory (Cap 2013) considers the threat element in spatio-temporal as well as ideological terms, thus recognizing three aspects/strategies of proximization, spatial, temporal, and axiological. Spatial proximization is a forced construal of DS peripheral entities encroaching physically upon DS central entities. Temporal proximization is a forced construal of the envisaged conflict as not only imminent, but also momentous, historic and thus needing an immediate response and unique pre-emptive measures. Spatial and temporal proximization involve strong fear appeals and typically use analogies to conflate the growing threat with an actual disastrous occurrence in the past, to endorse the current scenario. Finally, axiological proximization is a construal of gathering ideological clash between the 'home values' of the DS central entities (US) and the alien and antagonistic THEM values. Importantly, the THEM values are construed to reveal a potential to materialize (i.e. prompt a physical impact) within the US, the speaker's and her addressee's, home territory.

Crucially for its relevance to the macro-discursive follow-up sequences, proximization is an intrinsically *compensatory* mechanism. Although, on proximization theory, any use of proximization subsumes all of its strategies, spatial, temporal and axiological, the actual degree of their textual representation in discourse is continually motivated by their effectiveness in the evolving context. Thus, extralinguistic contextual developments may cause the speaker to limit the use of one strategy and compensate it by an increased use of another, in the interest of the continuity of the macro-goal such as legitimization. The analysis that follows illustrates this regularity by focusing on the change in the White House rhetoric of the Iraq War caused by the

loss of the main premise for going to war, the (alleged) presence of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq. In 4.1 I describe the 'initiation' rhetoric, grounded in the WMD premise. In 4.2 I analyze the 'follow-up' rhetoric, updating, modifying and redefining the initiation discourse in view of the loss of the premise.

4.1. Initiating legitimization of the Iraq War

Following is a substantial excerpt from G.W. Bush's address at the American Enterprise Institute that took place on February 26, 2003[4]. Given its themes, as well as the time of delivery – only three weeks before the first US and coalition troops entered Iraq on March 19 – the AEI address is frequently considered (e.g. Silberstein 2004) a manifesto of the Iraq war. Its goal was to list direct reasons for the intervention, while also locating the operation in the global context of the war-on-terror declared by Bush on the night of the 9/11/2001 attacks.

Giving the rationale for war in his AEI speech, Bush confronts a socio-psychological problem faced by most of his White House predecessors[5]: how to legitimize the US involvement in military action in a far-away place, among a far-away people, of whom the American people know little. The AEI speech is remarkable in its continuity of attempts to overcome this reluctance. Bush's rhetoric is heavily based on proximization, whose spatio-temporal as well as axiological strategies are enacted in different pragmalinguistic patterns.

(1)

> We are facing a crucial period in the history of our nation, and of the civilized world. (…) On a September morning, threats that had gathered for years, in secret and far away, led to murder in our country on a massive scale. As a result, we must look at security in a new way, because our country is a battlefield in the first war of the 21st century. (…) We learned a lesson: the dangers of our time must be confronted actively and forcefully, before we see them again in our skies and our cities. And we will not allow the flames of hatred and violence in the affairs of men. (…) The world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder. (…) Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction are a direct threat to our people and to all free people. (…) My job is to protect the American people. When it comes to our security and freedom, we really don't need anybody's permission. (…) We've tried diplomacy for 12 years. It hasn't worked. Saddam Hussein hasn't disarmed, he's armed. Today the goal is to remove the Iraqi regime and to rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. (…) The liberation of millions is the fulfillment of America's founding promise. The objectives we've set in this war are worthy of America, worthy of all the acts of heroism and generosity that have come before.

[4] The parts are quoted according to the chronology of the speech.

[5] See Bacevich (2010), Dunmire (2011); among others.

In a nutshell, the AEI speech states that there are WMD in Iraq and that, given historical context and experience, ideological characteristics of the adversary as opposed to American values and national legacy, and Bush's legal obligations as the ruling US president, there is a case for legitimate military intervention. This complex picture involves historical flashbacks, as well as descriptions of the current situation, which both involve proximization strategies. These strategies operate at two interrelated levels, which can be described as 'diachronic' and 'synchronic'. At the diachronic level, Bush evokes ideological representations of the remote past, which are 'proximized' to underscore continuity and steadfastness of purpose, thus linking with and sanctioning current actions as acts of faithfulness to the long-accepted beliefs and values. An example is the final part in (1) 'The liberation is (…) promise. The objectives (…) have come before', which launches a temporal analogy 'axis' that connects a past reference point (the founding of America) with the present point, creating a common conceptual space for both the proximized historical 'acts of heroism' and the current and/or prospective acts construed as their follow-ups. This kind of legitimization, enforced by mostly temporal and axiological proximization (originally past values become the 'here and now' premises for action[6]), draws upon the socio-psychological predispositions of the US addressee (and, in obvious ways, of the 'Western world' addressee generally), which are targeted by assertoric sequences (Jary 2010). The assertions there are responsible for the build-up of speaker's credibility as a pre-requisite for announcement of future policies. Some of the assertions are indisputably acceptable ('My job is […]'; 'The liberation of millions […]'), while some others earn their acceptability from the credibility that has already been accomplished. The latter often occur within 'fact-belief sequences', where the factive part precedes and endorses the assertion of the belief ('We've tried diplomacy for 12 years […] he's armed').

At the 'synchronic' level, much denser with relevant lexical and pragmatic material, historical flashbacks are not absent, but they involve near history and the main legitimization premise is not (continuing) ideological commitments but direct physical threats looming ominously over the country ('a battlefield', in Bush's words) and requiring a swift and strong pre-emptive response. The 'default' proximization strategy operating at the synchronic level is spatial proximization (often featuring a temporal component), whose function is to raise fears of imminence of the threat, which might be 'external' apparently but could materialize within the American borders virtually anytime. The lexical carriers of the spatial proximization in (1) include such items and phrases as 'secret and far away', 'all free people', 'stable and free nations', 'Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction', etc., which build up dichotomous, 'good vs. evil' representations of the US-group (America, the Western democratic world) and the THEM-group (Saddam Hussein, Iraqi regime, Al-Qaeda terrorists[7]), located

[6] This is a secondary function of axiological proximization. Axiological proximization, viz. 4, mostly involves the adversary; antagonistic values are construed as dormant triggers for a possible impact.

[7] The WMD premise for intervention in Iraq involved a belief that the weapons could fall in the hands of the Al-Qaeda terrorist network (either accidentally or through the alleged terrorist connections of

at a relative distance from each other. This geographical and geopolitical distance is symbolically (discursively) construed as shrinking: on the one hand, the THEM entities are crossing the Discourse Space towards its center and, on the other, the DS center (US) entities declare a reaction. The THEM-group shift is enacted by forced inference and metaphorization. The inference involves an analogy to 9/11 ('On a September morning […]'), whereby the current event stage is construed as facing another physical impact, whose consequences are scrupulously *pre*-scribed ('before we see them [flames] again in our skies and our cities'). As can be noticed, this fear appeal is strengthened by the Fire metaphor, which adds to the imminence and the speed of the impact. The US-group shift is less symbolic; it involves an explicit declaration of a pre-emptive move to neutralize the threat ('must be confronted actively and forcefully before…', 'we will not allow the flames…', 'When it comes to our security and freedom, we really don't need anybody's permission').

While all spatial proximization in the text draws upon the presumed WMD presence in Iraq – and its potential availability to terrorists for acts far more destructive than the 9/11 attacks – Bush does not disregard the possibility of having to switch to an alternative rationale for the war in the future. Consequently, the speech contains 'supporting', ideological premises, however tied to the principal material premise. An example is 'The world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder', which counts as an instance of axiological proximization. This ideological argument is not synonymous with Bush's proximization of remote history we have seen before, as its current line subsumes acts of the adversary rather than his/America's own acts (cf. fn. 6). As such it demonstrates a more 'typical' axiological proximization where initially ideological conflict turns, over time, into a physical clash. Notably, in its ideological-physical duality it forces a whole spectrum of speculations over whether the current threat is 'still' ideological or 'already' physical. The axiological proximization as described above is thus essentially an implicature-based mechanism to handle a variety of addressee attitudes, expectations and discourse interpretations.

Although initiating a legitimization macro-goal usually entails speaker's extensive care for the logical connectivity and evidence in her discourse (e.g. Hart 2010), the AEI text contains a relatively moderate number of logical terms and markers of inferential relationships. Furthermore, the text is not too rich in explicit or specific, 'source tags' (i.e. references to external 'authority voices'; cf. Bednarek 2006). This seems to be a direct consequence of the 'WMD factor': the very strong fear appeals provide for legitimization of response anyway. However, the items / phrases such as 'As a result, we must look at security in a new way, because (…)', 'must be confronted actively and forcefully, before we see them (…)', or 'The world has a clear interest in (…), because (…)', do contribute to the legitimization of the respective assertions, most of which (all of the three above) perform proximization strategies. In turn, 'The world has a clear interest in (…)' is an instance of legitimization through evidentiality

Saddam Hussein; cf. e.g. Silberstein 2004).

(e.g. Bednarek 2006) and the proximization-oriented reference to 'America's founding promise' involves an implicit source-tagging.

In terms of the follow-up sequence, the AEI speech is largely an 'initiation move', awaiting – to put it metaphorically – a 'response move' from the context, and presupposing a 'follow-up' (i.e. another communicative move, most likely another Bush's address) responding to context response. Still, its initiation status does not preclude several 'canonical' follow-up ploys from occurring in the text of the speech. This is hardly surprising given that, as any textual instance of macro-discourse, the AEI speech not only prescribes or otherwise refers to the future, but also (and often) draws upon past events, as well as their discourses, even those which do not directly or explicitly belong to the principal timeframe of the macro-discourse (i.e., here, the 2003-04 frame). Thus, the WMD argument in the AEI speech engages historical flashbacks and experiential analogy, which combine the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the current WMD and Al-Qaeda threat in a common reality frame presupposing continual and ceaseless antagonism of the adversary. In that sense, the WMD argument is a follow-up on (the discourse of) the 9/11 (especially its aftermath), which sets up conceptual as well as inter-textual connections to confirm that the '9/11 lesson' has been well-learned (the claim 'We learned a lesson: the dangers of our time must be confronted actively and forcefully, before we see them again in our skies and our cities' is in fact a reiteration of several similar claims made immediately after the WTC and Pentagon attacks). This brings us to a more general point: much of the AEI speech can be described as a follow-up evaluation act, which assesses the past developments to propose the best possible course of action for the future. In several places throughout the AEI speech this assessment takes the form of a quasi-dialogue which confronts the preferred or 'privileged' future (i.e. the future course of action favored by the speaker) with the 'oppositional' future, the anticipated developments which the speaker tries to pre-neutralize (Dunmire 2011). Such a confrontation is implicit in the claim 'We've tried diplomacy for 12 years. It hasn't worked', but in fact there are many more examples in the AEI speech which are not quoted in (1), for instance: 'We must act against the emerging threats before they are fully formed (…). Waiting is the riskiest of all options because the longer we wait, the stronger and bolder Saddam Hussein will become'. Notably, such arguments reveal a twofold follow-up status. On the one hand, they count – altogether – as assessment/evaluation follow-ups in terms of their relation to past events and their discourses, with which they connect to form a macro follow-up sequence. However, at the same time they form (micro, in-text) follow-up sequences themselves, in the sense that their second part (which usually expresses oppositional future) takes up and usually counters the content of the first part (which expresses privileged future).

Finally, the ideological legitimization element in the AEI speech can be considered a peculiar macro-discursive manifestation of 'advance hedging' (cf. Kecskes 2000), which 'half-opens' the doors to adopting an alternative premise for the intervention, should the principal WMD premise collapse. Of course, this strategy relies, same

as any other conceptual-linguistic ploys occurring in the initiation and follow-up 'moves' of the AEI and later discourses, on continual monitoring and high awareness of the addressee attitudes and expectations, which dictate whether and when to switch (completely or partly) to the new premise.

4.2. The follow-up: maintaining the legitimization

As has been argued, socio-political legitimization pursued in temporally extensive, dynamic contexts often entails redefinition of the initial legitimization premises and coercion patterns. Given its status as a functional compensatory mechanism, proximization is ideally suited to enact these redefinitions in macro-discourse, where proximization strategies provide a cognitive-pragmatic framework for the 'updated', follow-up rhetoric involving new lexical choices and modified lexico-grammatical patterns. The legitimization accomplished in the AEI speech and how the unfolding geopolitical context has put it to test is a good case in point, endorsing proximization and its three strategies as a viable follow-up device. Recall that although Bush made the WMD argument the central premise for the Iraq War, he still left half-open an 'emergency passage' to reach, if necessary, for an alternative premise. Come November 2003 (the mere eight months into the Iraq War), and Bush's pro-war discourse indeed adopts (or rather has to adopt) such an alternative emergency premise, as it becomes evident (to all political players worldwide) that there have *never* been weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, at least not in the ready-to-use product sense[8]. This radically new context immediately results in a major rhetorical change, from strong fear appeals (forced by the spatial proximization of a 'direct threat'), to a more subtle ideological argument for legitimization, involving mostly axiological proximization. A good example is the following quote from Bush's Whitehall Palace address of November 19, 2003:

(2)

> By advancing freedom in the greater Middle East, we help end a cycle of dictatorship and radicalism that brings millions of people to misery and brings danger to our own people. By struggling for justice in Iraq, Burma, in Sudan, and in Zimbabwe, we give hope to suffering people and improve the chances for stability and progress. Had we failed to act, the dictator's programs for weapons of mass destruction would continue to this day. Had we failed to act, Iraq's torture chambers would still be filled with victims, terrified and innocent. (…) For all who love freedom and peace, the world without Saddam Hussein's regime is a better and safer place.

[8] In the first few months of the Iraq War Bush refers to the WMD as an existing, tangible entity. This is reflected in phrases such as 'Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction' or 'The WMD in Iraq are a direct threat to all free people'. Later on, he repeatedly uses an alternative phrase, 'programs for weapons of mass destruction', which forces an implicature subject to multiple interpretations. These may range from seeing the WMD as a finished product, to seeing them as a remote project (Silberstein 2004; Bacevich 2010).

The now dominant axiological proximization involves a dense concentration of ideological and value-loaded lexical items ('freedom', 'justice', 'stability', 'progress', 'peace', vs. 'dictatorship', 'radicalism') as well as items/phrases indicating a human dimension of the conflict ('misery', 'suffering people', 'terrified victims', vs. 'the world' [being] 'a better and safer place'). Most of these lexico-grammatical forms serve to build, as in the case of the AEI address, dichotomous representations of the DS 'home' (US) and DS 'peripheral/adversarial' (THEM) entities, which the latter can (or aim to) encroach upon the 'home territory' of the DS central entities. In contrast to the AEI speech, however, all the entities (both central and peripheral) are construed in abstract, rather than physical, 'tangible' terms, as the respective lexical items are not explicitly (though sometimes inferentially) assigned to any specific parties. Thus, instead of ideologically loaded *combinations* (such as 'all free people', 'stable and free nations', [terrorist] 'flames of hatred', viz. the AEI address), the current argument involves ideological items which stand *alone* ('dictatorship', 'radicalism'), bearing a global yet underdetermined reference and expressing a necessarily vague meaning.

Proximization in the Whitehall speech is mainly the proximization of antagonistic values, and not so much of physical entities as embodiments of these values. The consequences for maintaining the legitimization stance which began with the AEI address are enormous. First, there is no longer a commitment to a material threat posed by a physical entity. Second, the relief of this commitment does not completely disqualify the original WMD premise as antagonistic 'peripheral' values retain a capacity to materialize in the DS center (cf. 'a cycle of dictatorship and radicalism that brings millions of people to misery and brings danger to our own people', an obvious reiteration of 'The world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder' from the AEI speech). Third, as the nature of ideological values is such that they are considered global and widely adhered to, the ideological argument helps extend the spectrum of the US engagement ('Burma', 'Sudan', 'Zimbabwe'), which in turn forces the construal of failure to find WMD as a simple mishap among the other successful operations – and not as the prime fact to consider when legitimizing a further involvement in Iraq. Add to these general factors the power of legitimization ploys in specific pragma-linguistic constructs (as in the 'programs for weapons of mass destruction', viz. fn. 8), the impressive list of the 'new' foreign fields of peace-keeping engagement ('Burma', 'Sudan', etc.), the always effective appeals for solidarity in compassion ('terrified victims', 'torture chambers') and there are clear reasons to conclude that the fall 2003 change to essentially axiological rhetoric (involving axiological proximization as a follow-up on the earlier spatio-temporal proximization) has contributed a lot towards saving credibility and thus maintaining legitimization of not only the Iraq War, but the later US anti-terrorist campaigns and policies as well.

On the account so far, axiological proximization emerges as a follow-up concept and strategy which is inherently macro-structural and macro-temporal. In other words, text(s) engaging axiological proximization emerge as effective follow-ups on

earlier text(s) where the same discourse function – legitimization – used to be carried out by a different (spatio-temporal) proximization strategy. This picture (a macro-sequential correction picture, in Mey's 2013 words) is however incomplete without a micro-level element that relates to the second legitimization point above. Axiological proximization involves also, at the intra-text level, a formal syntactic framework wherein relevant lexical material is grouped in a strategically designed linear sequence. Consider another example from the Whitehall speech:

(3) This evil [dictatorship, radicalism][9] might not have reached us yet but it is in plain sight, as plain as the horror sight of the collapsing towers.

Sentence (3) can be divided in four lexico-grammatical segments, two noun phrases (NP1, NP2) and two verb phrases (VP1, VP2). NP1 ('This evil [dictatorship, radicalism]') is used to initiate a *remote possibility* script which is further enacted by VP1 ('might not have reached us yet'). The modality of VP1 forces construal of a *departure stage* of the US-THEM conflict scenario (thus we may call VP1 a 'departure VP'), without yet construing the antagonistic values in terms of tangible threats. Further on, there unfolds a *destination stage* of the scenario, at which final point the conflict materializes within the US territory (viz. the 9/11 analogy to the 'collapsing towers'). The materialization of the conflict is forced in an *actual occurrence* script, which involves two elements. First, there is VP2 ('is in plain sight' – which may be called a 'destination VP'), raising probability of the conflict. Immediately following is NP2 ('the horror sight'), which denotes the conflict's broadly devastating effects. In sum, the axiological proximization of the THEM impact involves the $(NP1–VP1)_{DEPARTURE}$–$(VP2–NP2)_{DESTINATION}$ lexico-grammatical segments forming a linear sequence which construes a progressive shift from an ideological conflict to the physical clash. On this account, the destination part is a follow-up on the departure part. Notably, the destination part sanctions, through entextualization, the threat element in the departure part. As a result, the entire structure, while conveying a new ideological premise for legitimization of the war, defends to some extent the material premise.

The syntactic follow-up structure in (3) is by no means an isolated occurrence in the revisited, 'post-WMD' rhetoric of the Iraq War. Quantitative analyses in Cap (2010, 2013) reveal that linear sequences identical to (3) in both their functional and lexical characterization are in fact seven times (!) more frequent in Bush's speeches between November 2003 and June 2004, compared to the first months of the war. This invites a hypothesis that, at least in state political discourse, interventionist solicitation of legitimization is firstly reliant on material premises since these are initially easier to obtain and possess a more direct appeal to the audience, which thus grants an immediate approval of the speaker's actions. Yet, attachment to a material premise for intervention is, in the long run, disadvantaged by geopolitical changes and evolution of the discourse stage, which often make the initial premise disappear – as has been the case with the WMD argument. This may activate a follow-up com-

[9] Anaphoric reference to previous sentence.

pensatory rhetoric based on axiological premises (and technically, axiological proximization), for two reasons. First, axiological groundworks are much less vulnerable to the impact of (further) geopolitical changes. Second, they contribute to setting up discourses which are essentially abstract and involve less specific interpretations (viz. the defense of two apparently contradictory premises in [3]). As such, they are well suited to neutralize the face losses incurred by the collapse of the original legitimization groundworks.

5. Conclusion

The features of the macro-discourse of the Iraq War identified in George W. Bush's speeches endorse follow-ups as a viable analytic concept to handle complex rhetorical phenomena occurring in macro-structural, temporally extensive monologic sequences. This finding pertains directly to interventionist legitimization discourse and possibly also to other macro-discourses constructed in long and dynamic contextual timeframes. In the interventionist legitimization discourse, such as the discourse of the Iraq War, follow-ups – and the entire follow-up sequences – can be considered at two levels. First, there is a macro level, at which follow-ups serve as cognitive-pragmatic devices to maintain (or save) speaker's continuity and consistency in forcing the global legitimization goal. They involve a text, its part or even a series of texts which advance an updated, redefined rhetorical strategy (viz. axiological proximization) in response to the context's negative impact (viz. Bush's loss of the WMD premise) on the initial rhetorical strategy (viz. spatio-temporal proximization). This function emerges as the most important and promising for further studies. However, follow-ups are also traceable at a micro-level, where they make parts of relatively formal and well demarcated textual and syntactic structures (viz. example [3]). In these structures, they reveal/repeat most of their distinctive functions and features originally identified in dialogue and conversation studies. These include entextualization, evaluation, framing, flashback and analogy, (advance) hedging and, foreseeably, a variety of other coherence (and thus credibility) builders.

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The macropragmatics of follow-up sequences in political communication

Abstract: Follow-ups have been often considered a primarily dialogic/conversational phenomenon. In this paper I demonstrate that the concept of the follow-up could be extended to cover monologic discourses as well, especially those in which the speaker realizes a macro-goal over a number of texts produced in different contextual conditions. These dynamically evolving conditions make the speaker – as happens in dialogue – continually update and redefine her rhetorical choices to maintain realization of the macro-goal intact. Such an approach subsumes a 'dialogic' relation between the speaker and the shifting discourse context – rather than between the speaker and her specific interlocutor – and views follow-up as an instance of rhetoric that has been forcibly modified from the previous/initial instance, to keep enacting the speaker's macro-goal against requirements of the new context. As an illustration, I show how monologic follow-ups work in G.W. Bush's War-on-Terror discourse. In particular, I discuss how the macro-goal of Bush's 2003-04 rhetoric of the Iraq War (legitimization of the pre-emptive military strike and the later US involvement) has been maintained in the 'follow-up speeches' responding to loss of the initial legitimization premise, i.e. the alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction by the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

Keywords: follow-ups; political macro-discourse; context analysis; legitimization, Iraq War; proximization

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