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Metaphor and Persuasion in Strategic Communication. Sustainable Perspectives
Routledge, New York/London, 2020, 270 pp.

Metaphor and Persuasion in Strategic Communication. Sustainable Perspectives offers readers an innovative approach to the analysis of strategic metaphors in the language of political speech. With an emphasis on the communicative strategies adopted in the United States post 9/11, Ferrari, a researcher at the Università di Bologna, investigates the use of strategic discourse and how it can be framed to create a metaphorical political scenario able to sway public opinion. Her holistic approach to researching political discourse reflects her belief that words are powerful forces, especially when spoken by leaders; they can change the balance of power and ultimately world order. Ferrari emphasizes this by going as far as using the provocative phrase 'Words are killers' (p. 36) in the title of chapter one of this book. She aims to show that metaphorical thought and language can build a dangerous persuasive scenario as happened through the strategic rhetoric surrounding post 9/11 discourse. She quotes Lakoff (1992, p. 481), who had already, in reference to the first Gulf War, said "...metaphors backed up by bombs can kill" (p. 65). She sustains that to arrive at a complete comprehension of strategic discourse, the whole framework constructed around it by the speaker must be examined in its entirety. Ferrari aims to help the listener detect persuasive language through a novel approach that is both theoretical and methodological. She posits that a better understanding of persuasion will eventually allow speakers to adopt what she defines as a sustainable persuasive style which she promotes as less conflictual and more inclusive.

Although the power of persuasive metaphors in the political realm has been widely investigated, Ferrari examines persuasion as a complex process rather than as "mere manipulation or spin" (p.1). Her theoretical approach is pragmatic and is reflected in the methodological process she has developed to analyze political speech. A speaker's thoughts and intentions are not always palpable, so the analysis must start from the language the speaker uses as the only tangible evidence at hand. Ferrari conceives persuasion as a gradable continuum from 'sustainable' to 'unsustainable,' depending on the approaches used by the speakers and the outcomes that they will have on listeners and society. But how can the word 'sustainable,' more frequently relegated to the realm of ecology, be applied to persuasion in strategic discourse? Herein, together with the analytical tools she has devised, lies what makes Ferrari's innovative approach truly groundbreaking.

The book is organized into eight chapters and an introduction. The Introduction deals with the definition of persuasion and sustainability in the post 9/11 security discourse arena. Here, the author chooses a cognitive approach, defining how linguistic features are connected to conceptual mechanisms and human behavior. In this section of the book, the author defines persuasion as a dynamic exchange where both parties attempt to influence the other using strategy, whether consciously planned or in a spontaneous way. She makes it clear that this is a communicative process and when it involves a well-planned communicative strategy as impactful on public opinion as the post 9/11 US preventive war persuasion strategy, whether discourse can or cannot be considered

sustainable in the long term is of eminent importance. It is widely held that persuasion is a tool of the trade for all politicians. Ferrari claims that the very rationale of political discourse is rooted in public consent. (p. 12) Departing from Van Dijk's definition of manipulation as "abuse of power", "domination" and "illegitimate influence" (van Dijk, 2006, pp. 360-361) she begins outlining her concept of sustainability in persuasion. She states that she has substituted the distinction between "(illegitimate) manipulation and (legitimate) persuasion" (p. 20) with a more flexible perspective. She views sustainability in communication as a gradable continuum where sustainable persuasion is defined as the ability to reach foreseen goals with the greatest level of long-term satisfaction possible for all parties involved. Ferrari further defines sustainable persuasion versus mere manipulation in power relationships with the development of her concept of "White (Queen) power" vs "Red (Queen) power", (p. 12) The White Queen and the Red Queen represent stereotypical, fairy tale extremes of political power play. Red Queen power is based on tyranny with the aim of fulfilling personal goals. Ferrari claims this power strategy is unsustainable in the long run as it exposes the Red Queen to menace because her position is based on fear and on destructive forces such as hatred or violence. This position is only apparently strong, but as a tyrant, unless she finds a way to make herself beloved to her subjects (what Ferrari calls the 'liking effect' (pp. 16-17), she will eventually fall. White Queen power relies on more sustainable strengths like concern for public well-being, wisdom, and delicacy which promote more positive emotions such as respect and reliance. While apparently weaker, it is less challenging for the White Queen to build her liking effect' and ideally, to maintain power. Her position is based on constructive elements that spark positive emotions. Ferrari states that these emotions are 'independent', whereas the emotions associated with the Red Queen are 'dependent'. The latter must enforce her subjects' emotions and behavior (p. 16) while the same is not true for the White Queen, whose subjects come to her side more willingly.

Chapters one through three lay out the theoretical basis underpinning Ferrari's concept of sustainable persuasion introduced above and the enormous impact of metaphor in strategic persuasion. In the first chapter, after discussing the importance and function of conceptual metaphor in persuasive discourse across its theoretical evolution from Burke's initial intuitions that metaphors were more than mere tropes (Burke 1941) to Lakoff's (1993, p. 210) revelations on the metaphor as a "mode of thought". Cognitive metaphor theory is based on the idea that metaphor is not merely a linguistic feature, but is fundamental to the way people's minds work. Cognitively speaking, Ferrari defines the relationship between thought and language as bi-univocal. She states that language is formed by thought and thought is expressed through language, thus they are intrinsically linked. Since thought is language driven, language is consequently also linked to the realm of psychology and in this research, to politics as well, inasmuch as Ferrari affirms that the emotional dimension of metaphor is crucial in the formation of political positions. Therefore, the metaphors used by speakers not only characterize their speech, but define their way of thinking and their very culture rendering the metaphor key in the analysis of persuasive discourse. To describe the complexity of the transformative power of metaphor, Ferrari introduces the concept of the "integrated conceptual metaphor" (p. 41) which she defines as "three dimensional (MIND/EMOTIONS/BODY) and presides over how and what we think, feel and act" (p. 42). If thought informs our reality, and language is intrinsically linked to thought, since language is metaphorically based, those who are able to create new metaphors, especially in the political realm, can create a new reality. With this in mind, she introduces the category of "strategic metaphors" (p. 63) which she defines as "those that are potentially coincident with the decisional process (to be) taken as

'reality' by public leaders, news media and others constructing the meaning of international affairs" (p. 66). She describes their power to transform political ideas and action when used in strategic discourse and emphasizes the importance of the temporal dimension of strategic metaphors or what she defines as "synchronic co-incidence" (p. 66). The right metaphor used at the right moment can re-enforce a persuasion strategy as a conceptual tool that increases the impact of both frames and narratives (pp. 66-67).

In chapter two, she proposes a framework to detect persuasive language with an analytical procedure composed of three levels: (I) the macro or contextual level devoted to the detection of genre and to understanding the text's contextualization, (II) the textual level devoted to heuristics such as frames, discourse worlds, and narratives and (III) the micro or cognitive level that delves into metaphor analyses by means of her novel "four-step procedure" (p. 80).

In chapter three, the author proceeds by outlining the four-step procedure anticipated in chapter two to identify strategic metaphors in persuasion. This procedure, inspired by Steen's five-step model (Steen 1999) and then developed in a persuasion-oriented direction, is conceived to detect strategic metaphors and their cognitive, emotional impact at both the microtextual level (conceptual metaphors and their emotional impact/appeal) as well as the ideological persuasive strategy in force at the macrotextual level. The four steps begin with the identification of the non-literal part of the metaphor or the metaphor's focus, then proceeds to the metaphor's conceptual implications, its appeal to emotions, and finally in the fourth step, to the evaluation of the results obtained in the previous steps with respect to the construction of an ideological persuasive strategy at the macrotextual level.

In the following chapters the author makes a shift from the theoretical realm to the practical one, by putting the analytical tool she has envisioned to work. In chapter four, the author performs the first moves (levels I/II) with a quantitative analysis of an extensive selection of the speeches of George W. Bush gathered over the time period from January 2001 to January 2004, using key-word driven corpus analysis ending with a preliminary exploratory qualitative analysis in which rhetorical tendencies can already be detected. A sub-corpus called "minibush" (p. 122) was created for further qualitative textual analysis. A disproportionate number of references emerge in 'minibush', in favor of words related to the national domain, namely "our", "Americans" and "we" (p. 123) which the author claims "...constitutes a premise for the Manichean characterization of the conflict frame and its typical disproportion in favor of the American side..." (p. 123) This, together with a rigidity of the Bush position within his 'us vs. them' vision, Ferrari finds that Bush adopts 'Absolute Rhetoric,' (p. 142) a persuasive strategy where the listener is asked to make forced decisions based on extreme or absolute values. His discourse attempts to align the American position with all that is good and even with God's will so that misaligning with him, indicates betrayal, evil, and condemnation. "Rhetoric of Conflict" (p. 148) can also be detected in Bush's discourse. Ferrari defines "Rhetoric of Conflict" as a peculiar or particular mode of persuasion that involves the argumentative, narrative, and conceptual levels all working together to create an 'us vs. them' persuasive strategy. "Rhetoric of Conflict", has often been used in US politics throughout the nation's history to push certain political agendas for example, during the Cold War. Ferrari asks if this is not just a re-manifestation of the classic 'cold war rhetoric' or is it perhaps "...a more radicalized version of a Manichean logic presiding over the birth of another conceptual model for making, transmitting, and ultimately understanding the future world order?" (p. 162). Still at level II, but with a greater emphasis on the tools of frames and structures, in order to discover whether Bush's "Contemporary Rhetoric of Conflict" (p. 164) is simply a

continuation of the old bipolar cold war rhetoric or if it is indeed something new, she asks how it has influenced the discourse worlds of two European leaders, Tony Blair and Silvio Berlusconi who were also involved in the Iraqi conflict and thus needed to present their own preemptive war strategies to their electorate. Through a contrastive analysis of Blair's and Berlusconi's speeches, the author finds that indeed, this cold war style bipolarity permeates this international political scenario, thus confirming its appeal. However, Bush's radicalization of the opposing sides in 'good' vs. 'evil'/'us' vs. 'them', when adapted to Blair's and Berlusconi's national socio-political needs, proved less effective and ultimately damaging to the political status of both leaders.

Thus, Ferrari claims, 'Rhetoric of Conflict', unless supported by the necessary political, cultural, and economic positions and without clear categories of references (Who is the enemy? Who is the victim?) is neither successful nor sustainable. Ferrari claims, "The Radical Manicheanism of the Contemporary Rhetoric of Conflict is the sign of an ideological decadence, the less creative and original idea for answering the demands of a world which has evidently changed." (p.187).

In chapter 6, the analysis goes back to Bush's discourse with the aim to address it by means of a metaphor-based analysis, (level III) so as to show the functioning of the four-step procedure in the practice on the one hand, and on the other to show the relationship between the conflict frame as an ideological basis and the strategy of fear as a persuasive strategy Bush's 'Framework of Conflict' in terms of 'Absolute Rhetoric,' resonated strongly with his US audience allowing him to carry forward his unprecedented preemptive attack on Saddam Hussein with minimal dissent. Ferrari claims that the strategy of fear is an easy way for politicians to confront the complexities of today's world. Depicting the world as black and white is simpler than describing the many shades of gray in the spectrum of today's complicated world. However, she warns, when a population is sent into a state of permanent alarm, it is no longer able to make rational decisions and democracy is effectively dead. In a democratic society, this persuasive strategy is unsustainable.

In chapter seven, Ferrari asks if there is not a better way to use persuasive discourse, that is, a sustainable way. Going back to level II, through a contrastive analysis of conflictual vs. more inclusive rhetoric, the author proceeds to identify this latter more sustainable option through the examination of Barack Obama's 'A More Perfect Union' speech where he uses what Ferrari calls "Inclusive Rhetoric" (p. 215). Using her methodological procedures to detect conceptual metaphors, structures, and frames in Obama's political discourse, she determines that this style of "Inclusive Rhetoric" has a more sustainable impact on the world and at a persuasive level in the long term. Obama's emphasis on unity and the ideal of coming together to work towards a common goal is less disruptive and helps the listener feel that he is working not just in his own interest, but in the interest of all Americans. This is closer to what Ferrari previously designated as "White (Queen) power", that is, the sustainable end of the persuasion spectrum.

In the eighth and final chapter, Ferrari proposes themes for future investigation including the possibility of practicing persuasion sustainably. Her conclusion is that using sustainable discourse as she defines it, it is possible to reach an outcome that is agreeable to both parties to the exchange. She emphasizes that, an extreme continued strategy of fear, or what she calls the "fearland" scenario (p.234), grants *carte blanche* to those in power. It leads listeners to identifying solely with fear, which grants control not only over an individual's political destiny, but over their inner reality as well. Constant fear applied strategically leads to a reduction of critical thinking in the population and an increase in fundamentalism, which Ferrari asserts goes hand in hand with fear, arrogance, and

ignorance. Her claim is that fundamentalism is linked to need. While she defines truth as free, she claims that needs are forced, thus a fear-based strategy is unsustainable in the long term. She posits that for long term political success, strategic discourse is more successful if it is sustainable, as she defines it. She outlines some strategies to build persuasive skills with an eye to self-reliance, motivation, and goal building as well as how persuasive approaches can enhance an individual's attraction. She even dares to touch on aspects of those ever-elusive, intangible charms-charisma and magnetism.

Ferrari's work is thought provoking and relevant, but could be stronger if it were proved that the procedures defined could be replicated successfully. A more specific definition of the criteria for the four-step procedure would also be useful. That said, the trans-disciplinary approach of the author is indeed impressive and makes this a strong contribution to the literature both at the theoretical level as well as the methodological level.

This book is interesting for anyone who is passionate about political discourse and strategy. For those in the political arena, it could be useful to hone a more sustainable discourse style and develop a personal persuasive strategy. For those who study linguistics and communication, it is an interesting analysis of the use of language in strategic discourse. It is also interesting for those who are focused on Metaphor Theory as it is an in-depth analysis of conceptual metaphors in action.

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