



**HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS**

**Hugvísindasvið**

# **The Iraq war**

*Discourse analysis of Christopher Hitchens and Noam Chomsky*

**B.A. Essay**

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**january 2015**

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## **Abstract**

The war in Iraq is a sensitive subject which divides people. The invasion in 2003 by the US was not well appreciated by the international community and caused controversy and rage all over the world.

The main purpose of this discourse analysis is to examine how Christopher Hitchens and Noam Chomsky argue their opposing views on the war in Iraq. Articles by the authors were examined using methods of discourse analysis. This essay looked at how they argued their points and their argument was looked at more closely at the level of language.

In all, six articles were examined. The main results show that the Iraq war is a lot more personal to Christopher Hitchens than it is to Noam Chomsky. This is evidenced by looking at the use of nouns and pronouns. Hitchens is overall more positive than Noam Chomsky. Chomsky also seems to want to make his readers fearful about the prospect of war.

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Iraq war .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Biography .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Christopher Hitchens .....	8
Noam Chomsky .....	10
<b>Methodology .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Terrorist recruitment and the status quo .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Linguistic Analysis .....</b>	<b>18</b>
Nouns .....	18
Personal pronouns .....	19
Adjectives .....	20
Direct speech.....	21
Modalities .....	22
Evidentialities .....	23
<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Sources.....</b>	<b>28</b>

## **Introduction**

The Iraq war is arguably the most controversial event in recent history. The United States invaded Iraq in 2003 and it sparked harsh criticism from anti-war groups and many countries as well. Those in power in Washington at the time have been accused of lying to the public about weapons of mass destruction. One of the main accusations that was made at the hands of Washington was that the US craved the abundant Iraqi oil reserves. Thus sparking the slogan *No blood for oil*.

It was feared by prominent leftist like Noam Chomsky and Michael Moore that the war would increase anger and hate towards the US and the west, therefore increasing the risk of terrorist attacks. However, these allegations did not deter the proponents of war. They firmly believed that Saddam Hussein had plans to build weapons of mass destruction and posed a threat to the rest of the world.

Saddam Hussein did indeed violate sixteen United Nations Security Council Resolutions (Saddam Hussein's Defiance of United Nations Resolutions, n.d.). Two of the resolutions included further reaffirmation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The United States did therefore have actual concerns regarding Saddam Hussein. Those who opposed the war associate George W. Bush with the war and think it was his doing. However, the US congress passed the Iraq Liberation act in 1998 under Bill Clinton. The Bush administration only acted upon it.

The main purpose was to examine how the events leading to the Iraq war are reflected in the writings of the two political thinkers. Three were written by Christopher Hitchens and three by Noam Chomsky.

“The Case Against US Adventurism in Iraq“by Noam Chomsky was published on March 13, 2003 in Star Tribune. The second article by Chomsky „Deep Concerns“was

published on March 20, 2003 on ZNet. The third one, „The Iraq War and Contempt for Democracy“was published on ZNet on October 31, 2003.

“Machiavelli in Mesopotamia“by Christopher Hitchens was published on November 7, 2002 and the second article, "Recruitment", was published on February 5, 2003. The last and third article was "Drumbeat" published on February 24, 2003. All three articles were published by Slate, an online magazine.

The six articles were published just before the US invaded Iraq. The articles have an important point in common; most of them at some point raise the issue of “terrorist recruiting.” That is, the notion that the intervention in Iraq will create more terrorist and anger towards the US. It is a point upon which Hitchens and Chomsky disagreed fervently. Christopher Hitchens is for the intervention while Noam Chomsky firmly opposes it.

The articles will be analyzed following the steps provided in the methodology chapter where they can be applied.. The frequency of use of certain nouns, modalities, pronouns, direct and indirect speech along with other linguistic mechanisms will be looked at.

## **The Iraq war**

On August 2, 1990 Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and thus starting the Persian gulf war. Hussein did so in order to assimilate Kuwait into Iraq and in the process acquire it’s rich oil reserves. The following day, the UN called on Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. A US-led coalition put an end to the occupation in 1991. Following the defeat in Kuwait, Hussein had to repress uprisings by Kurds and Shiite Arabs. Iraq was no longer safe for Kurds so allies established a “safe haven” in northern Iraq. Allies patrolled so called “no-fly” zones in Northern and Southern Iraq where Iraqi aircrafts were banned. Furthermore, economic sanctions were implemented against Iraq in order to hinder Hussein from developing biological, nuclear and chemical weapons, commonly known as weapons of mass destruction (Iraq War, 2014).

The UN ordered inspection of Iraq in the mid-1990s and uncovered prohibited weapons and technology. This frustrated the international community greatly. In 1998, US president Bill Clinton ordered air strikes on targeted Iraqi military facilities. This action was code-named Operation Desert Fox.

After the bombing Hussein barred UN inspectors from re-entering Iraq causing the sanctions to slowly evaporate. Neighbouring countries began trading with Iraq once again. (Iraq War, 2014). In 1998 the US congress passed the Iraq Liberation act which states the following:

“10/5/1998. Declares that it should be the policy of the United States to seek to remove the Saddam Hussein regime from power in Iraq and to replace it with a democratic government. Authorizes the President, after notifying specified congressional committees, to provide to the Iraqi democratic opposition organizations: (1) grant assistance for radio and television broadcasting to Iraq; (2) Department of Defense (DOD) defense articles and services and military education and training (IMET); and (3) humanitarian assistance, with emphasis on addressing the needs of individuals who have fled from areas under the control of the Hussein regime. Prohibits assistance to any group or organization that is engaged in military cooperation with the Hussein regime. Authorizes appropriations. Directs the President to designate: (1) one or more Iraqi democratic opposition organizations that meet specified criteria as eligible to receive assistance under this Act; and (2) additional such organizations which satisfy the President's criteria. Urges the President to call upon the United Nations to establish an international criminal tribunal for the purpose of indicating, prosecuting, and imprisoning Saddam Hussein and other Iraqi officials who are responsible for crimes against humanity, genocide, and other criminal violations of international law. Expresses the sense of the Congress that once the Saddam Hussein regime is removed



from power in Iraq, the United States should support Iraq's transition to democracy by providing humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people and democracy transition assistance to Iraqi parties and movements with democratic goals, including convening Iraq's foreign creditors to develop a multilateral response to the foreign debt incurred by the Hussein regime” (Iraq Liberation Act of 1998, n.d.)

On September 11, 2001 two hijacked airplanes crashed into the World Trade Center killing around 3000 people. In 2002, president George W. Bush argued that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction in possession and in production. The Bush administration claimed that Iraq supported terrorist groups, such as al-Qaeda. The months following the September 11. attacks, the US considered disarming Iraq a renewed priority. The UN passed resolution 1441 in late 2002, demanding the re-entry of inspectors. The US claimed that Iraq hindered the inspectors again and subsequently gave Saddam Hussein an ultimatum, he had 48 hours to leave Iraq (Iraq War, 2014).

When Hussein failed to comply, the US launched an attack on a targeted bunker complex where Saddam was supposed to be hiding. US forces invaded from the south from Kuwait despite concerns that Iraqi forces would burn oil fields and cause damage to the environment. US forces in the south were met with little resistance and no harm was caused to the environment.

The greatest resistance the US met was from forces from the Ba’th party. The republican guard were stationed in central Iraq and were ordered to defend Baghdad. On April 4, US forces captured the international airport in Baghdad. Over the next following days allied forces were met with vigorous resistance from the republican guard but the city eventually fell into the hands of the US on April 9, 2003 (Iraq War, 2014).

British forces captured the city of Al-Basrah on the same day and the Northern cities of Kirkuk and Mosul fell in the two following days. Tikrit, Saddam's hometown, was the regime's last stronghold. It fell on April 13, 2003 with little resistance.

On May 1st US president George W. Bush declared an end to all major combat. Iraq leaders subsequently fled into hiding. The US focused on finding and capturing them, especially Saddam Hussein. US forces captured Saddam Hussein on December 13, 2003. He was handed over to Iraqi authorities in mid-2004 to stand trial. Saddam was sentenced to death for crimes against humanity and was executed on December 16, 2006 (Iraq War, 2014).

After the fall of the Ba'ath regime, the major cities of Iraq suffered a torrent of looting and violence. After 35 years of dictatorship, Iraq's economy was in ruins. It had suffered three major wars and many sanctions. Rebuilding and recovering would take a long time.

The violence against US troops quickly evolved into full-scale guerrilla warfare and allied deaths began to increase drastically. On May 1st 2003 the number of deaths were 150. By November 2004 the death toll was 1000 and by late 2007 the number was over 3000 (Iraq War, 2014). The total number of deaths of US and coalition forces and foreign contractors from 2003-2013 is 5272. The total number of Iraqi deaths from the same time period is 179,240. This includes civilians, insurgents and Iraqi soldiers (Total violent deaths including combatants, 2003-2013, 2013).

The war in Iraq was not without controversy. People split into two factions: pro-war and anti-war. Those who supported the war claimed that it was time to bring Saddam Hussein to justice for human rights violations and those who opposed the war accused the US of imperialism. Support for the war dwindled however as more and more atrocities committed by the US came to light. The most famous being the treatment of detainees at Abu Ghraib prison. US soldiers abused and humiliated Iraqi prisoners, which shocked the world and damaged the credibility of the war (Iraq War, 2014).

One of the main reasons for going into Iraq was to disarm Saddam Hussein but no weapons of mass destruction were found. Many people accused the Bush administration of lying to the public. A report published in 2004 by the September 11 commission claimed that there was no evidence of a relationship between Iraq and al-Qaeda.

In the final months of the Bush administration, the Iraq government and the US came to an agreement. The troops were to withdraw from the cities in 2009 and from the country entirely in December 2011. On December 15, 2011, a ceremony was held to declare an end to the Mission in Iraq (Iraq War, 2014).

## **Biography**

Before analyzing the content of the articles chosen, it is important to get acquainted with the two authors. It will give the reader a deeper insight of where the authors are coming from. What they have in common and what sets them apart. This chapter is a short overview of the authors lives and main work.

### **Christopher Hitchens**

Christopher Hitchens was born in Portsmouth, England in 1949. Son of Yvonne, a member of the Womens' Royal Naval Service and Eric, a commander in the British Royal Navy. Due to his fathers work the family moved frequently. He had one younger brother, Peter (Hitchens, C., 2010).

Hitchens' mother wanted good education for her sons. At the age of 8 Christopher was sent to Leys school in Camdrige and at 18 Christopher was accepted into Balliol Collage at Oxford. There he joined a group of Trotskyists and became a popular leftist.

Christopher moved to London in 1970 after graduating with a bachelor's degree in philosophy. He got a writing job at the Times Higher Education Supplement. In 1973 Christopher moved to the left-wing paper New Statesman. Later that year his mother

committed suicide in a pact with her new lover, which affected him greatly (Christopher Hitchens Biography, n.d.).

Hitchens started writing for the Evening standard and the Daily Express and later became foreign editor at the New Statesman. Christopher moved to New York in 1981 but only lived there for a short time. He said the city was too rich for his blood, hindering him from getting any work done (Hitchens, C., 2010).

After that he moved to Washington DC and got a writing job at The Nation. In the following years he wrote two books; *Cyprus* (1984) and *The Elgin Marbles: Should They Be Returned to Greece?* (1987). In 1988 Hitchens wrote *The Monarchy: A Critique of Britain's Favorite Fetish*, criticizing the media's obsession with the monarchy. *Blood, Class, and Nostalgia: Anglo-American Ironies* was released in 1990 in which Hitchens examines the cultural relationship between America and Britain. In 1992 he started writing for Vanity Fair (Christopher Hitchens, n.d.).

Hitchens was no stranger to controversy. In the 1990's he published books criticizing public figures. *The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice* came out in 1995. In it, Hitchens criticises her for befriending dictators and being a fraud. In the book *No One Left to Lie To: The Triangulations of William Jefferson Clinton* (1999), Hitchens goes after Bill Clinton. He attacks his policies and ethics, calling him liar. In 2001 *The Trial of Henry Kissinger* was published where Hitchens calls Kissinger out as a mass murderer and a liar. In the following years he wrote several biographical works, such as *Why Orwell Matters* in 2002, *Thomas Jefferson: Author of America* in 2005 and *Thomas Paine's Rights of Man: A Biography* in 2006 (Christopher Hitchens, n.d.).

Hitchens had been disappointed with the left for a long time for their failure to take decisive actions in foreign policy matters. After the 9/11 attacks in New York, Hitchens

became a loyal supporter of the war. This was the cause of great anger among the left and many of his friends condemned him.

He released in 2003 a series of essays in a short book called *A Long Short War: The Postponed Liberation of Iraq*, where he explains his position and makes the case for a post-Saddam Hussain era in Iraq. In 2007 Hitchens wrote *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* making him one of the most famous representative of Atheism in the world (Christopher Hitchens, n.d.).

Christopher published his memoir in 2010 called *Hitch 22*. During his book tour he was diagnosed with esophageal cancer just like his father. He frequently spoke and wrote about his condition and mortality. On December 15, 2011 Christopher Hitchens died in Houston, Texas. He was survived by his wife, Carol Blue and three children (Christopher Hitchens, n.d.).

## **Noam Chomsky**

Avram Noam Chomsky was born on December 7, 1928 in Philadelphia. He is the descendant of Jewish immigrants from Belarus and Ukraine. Both of his parents taught at Hebrew school so Chomsky became well acquainted with Hebrew literature and culture. Between the ages of two and twelve he studied at an experimental progressive school where he learned about the importance of the individual and that everyone has potential (Noam Chomsky – Biography, n.d.).

Chomsky spent much of his time as a child reading books. At the age of ten he published his first article. It was in his school paper and was about the fall of Barcelona in the Spanish Civil War. Only two years later he published an anti-fascist article.

Chomsky claims that he received his political education whilst assisting his physically challenged uncle selling newspapers at a subway station in the 1930's where many discussions and ideas were shared at the news stand (Noam Chomsky – Biography, n.d.).

In 1945 Chomsky got accepted into the University of Pennsylvania where he studied under the renowned scientist C. West Churchman. He was also taught by Nelson Goodman and the linguist Zellig Harris. In 1955 Chomsky presented his doctoral thesis on syntactic structures. The title of the paper was "Transformational Analysis" and it paved the way to his groundbreaking concept of Transformational Grammar. That same year he joined Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge (Noam Chomsky – Biography, n.d.).

In 1966 Chomsky was promoted to take the Ferrari P. Ward chair. He had previously worked for a number of years as a professor in the Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics. In 1976 he was given the distinguished title Institute Professor. Given to those who have made great contributions to their field and to MIT. Noam Chomsky retired from MIT in 2005 after fifty years of teaching linguistics.

Noam Chomsky is perhaps best known for his theory of Transformational Generative Grammar. It caused a revolution in the field of cognitive and linguistic sciences. The theory suggests that we all have an innate language faculty. For example, when children learn their native language, they have built-in a set of rules without realising it. They use this set of rules to make sense of utterances and meanings (Noam Chomsky – Biography, n.d.).

Noam Chomsky is a self-proclaimed socialist anarchist. He was very active during the Vietnam war in protesting and criticising the US. Despite being Jewish himself, he remains highly critical of Israel in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Noam Chomsky has published numerous books and many of them critical of the United States and its supposed empirical nature. They include: *Human Rights and American Foreign Policy* (1978). *Pirates and Emperors: International Terrorism and the Real World* (1986). *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (1988). *Terrorizing the Neighborhood: American Foreign Policy in the post-Cold War Era* (1991).

*Democracy in a Neoliberal Order: Doctrines and Reality* (1997). *Media Control: The Spectacular Achievements of Propaganda* (1997).

Today, Noam Chomsky a retired professor of MIT and gives lectures around the world on various topics (Noam Chomsky – Biography, n.d.).

Noam Chomsky and Christopher Hitchens come from different backgrounds. They are born in different countries in different times. Hitchens being the son of two members of the British army while Chomsky is the son of immigrants who fled the Ukraine in 1913 as the country was on the frontline of WWI. Hitchens grew up in post-war England and was from a family with naval history. Accepting war as a viable solution was perhaps therefore easy for him. Chomsky on the other hand developed a pacifist world view at a very young age. Noam Chomsky is Jewish and therefore belongs to a persecuted group of people, as evidenced by the holocaust, for example.

## **Methodology**

Discourse analysis is a field which is growing and evolving with great momentum (Schiffrin, Tannen and Hamilton, 2001). The academic principles from which current research flows differ quite extensively. Methods and disciplines which are used to analyze discourse are of course included; linguistics, anthropology, and philosophy. It is no surprise, given the diversity, that the terms “discourse” and “discourse analysis” have different meanings to different people within academia. Linguistics generally define “discourse” as anything beyond the sentence. Others see the study of discourse as the study of language (Schiffrin, Tannen and Hamilton, 2001).

The purpose of discourse analysis is to increase our understanding of society rather than discovering facts. Discourse analysis is not a single specific method but rather a body of different methods (Björnsdóttir, 2003). Discourse is a process which takes place within

society and builds upon words, ideas and actions. Individuals within society take part in creating the discourse and affect it (Jóhannesson, 2006).

Discourse analysis can reveal how much the discourse has influenced and shaped the ideas and beliefs of the individual. The views and ideas portrayed in the media help to shape our reality. By using the methods of discourse analysis we can examine what message people are receiving regarding war, how language is used and where the knowledge comes from (Björnsdóttir, 2003).

This discourse analysis will follow steps that were put together by scholar and lecturer Florian Schneider. This essay used a toolbox for doing a text-based, qualitative discourse analysis. The idea of a discourse toolbox comes from Siegfried Jäger (Schneider, 2013). Florian Schneider expanded this method based on discourse analysts such as Paul Chilton (2004) and Norman Fairclough (1994).

There are several steps in the toolbox method but not all of them were applicable. The following three steps were used:

- The first goes into establishing the context. Six articles about the Iraq war were chosen. Three by Christopher Hitchens and three by Noam Chomsky. The reason for why these particular articles were chosen is that they were all published online and near the beginning of the invasion. They are all similar in length and most of them touch on the same subjects.
- The second step looked at the structure of the texts. The articles are examined to see if they deal overwhelmingly with one discourse.
- The third and final step is linguistic analysis. The articles are examined with the following in mind; Nouns, personal pronouns, adjectives, direct speech, modalities and evidentialities. Looking closely at these linguistic elements will give the reader a greater understanding of the mindset of the authors.



## **Terrorist recruitment and the status quo**

To understand how the two authors use language to make their opposing points it is important to look at where they collide. Examining their views on “terrorist recruitment” is quite revealing of their character and their mindset.. The fear of revenge is prevalent and therefore Chomsky argues for the prolonging of the status quo.

Christopher Hitchens on the other hand writes with near certainty and his opinion comes from an anti-totalitarian mindset. He sees the potential anger and hatred from despots and fascists as something to celebrate. This viewpoint is made clear in the last paragraph of his *Slate* article “Machiavelli in Mesopotamia“:

“Iraq is, for fairly obvious reasons, the keystone state here, and it is already at critical mass. Thus it seems to me idle to argue that a proactive policy is necessarily doomed to make more enemies. I have always disliked this argument viscerally, since it suggests that I should meekly avoid the further disapproval of those who hate me quite enough to begin with. Given some intelligence and foresight, however, I believe that an armed assistance to the imminent Iraqi and Kurdish revolutions can not only make some durable friends, it can also give the theocrats and their despotic patrons something to really hate us for” (Hitchens, C., 2002).

The last sentence in the paragraph is quite revealing and typical of Hitchens. For him, further raging his enemies is a clear motivation for conflict. Hitchens manages to shed light on positive results from a confrontation by mentioning that friends are potentially to be gained. Sitting idly by and watching Iraq crumble under self-destructive totalitarianism was to Hitchens a terrible crime.

Keeping the status quo was unthinkable. He referred to the sheer moral argument for regime-change as “unimpeachable” (Hitchens, 2002). People who are of this opinion are not

held in high regard by Hitchens as evidenced by the first paragraph of the 2003 Slate article "Recruitment":

“There is a parody of the old Uncle Sam "I Want YOU" recruiting poster in circulation. It shows Osama Bin Laden in the Uncle Sam finger-pointing pose, proclaiming that he wants us to invade Iraq and thus generate massive infusions of young and eager talent to his ranks. In different verbal and cartoon forms, this thought has become part of the standard repertoire of those who take the regime-preservation or regime-prolongation view of Iraq”( Hitchens, 2003a).

In the last sentence he refers to the anti-war proponents. He does not say “those who oppose the invasion” or “people of the anti-war movement.” Hitchens uses the verbs “preservation” and “prolongation.” He is indicating that the anti-war proponents are in some way supporters of Saddam Hussein and wish to see his regime continue.

Christopher Hitchens does not take the recruitment theory very seriously and does not think it makes a difference if it true. In one of his articles he claims that the opponents of the war think that killing Osama Bin Laden will create a thousand Osama’s in his stead. He does not think much of this notion:

“Moreover, it strikes me that Osama Bin Laden himself is a one-of-a-kind sort of guy, unlikely to clone widely. But what if he was able to reproduce himself in this way? Would this alchemy make him less of an enemy? Would it remove the obligation to defend civil society from theocratic nihilism? The proponents of the "recruitment" hypothesis are unclear on this point but then—they are unclear on the whole point to begin with” (Hitchens, 2003a).

This paragraph is a good example of Christopher’s anti-totalitarian, justice-seeking mindset. “If” the actions of the US create new terrorist then he sees it as something of no consequence.

If terrorist get recruited as a result, it does not remove the responsibility to defend the civil world from dictators and theocratic villains.

Noam Chomsky's takes of course the opposite view. However, there is a distinct difference in how they convey their view. Unlike Hitchens, Chomsky views the potential recruitment as a complete dealbreaker. In his article "The Case Against US Adventurism in Iraq" from 2003 he places emphases on revenge:

"Saddam remains a terrible threat to those within his reach. Today, his reach does not extend beyond his own domains, though it is likely that U.S. aggression could inspire a new generation of terrorists bent on revenge, and might induce Iraq to carry out terrorist actions suspected to be already in place"(Chomsky, 2003a).

He does not seem to want to discuss any conceivable positive outcome of an intervention. In the paragraph above it is clear who the victim and who is the aggressor. It seems, from his words, that Chomsky is trying to convince readers of his view by painting a grim picture of a world torn apart by war.

"Even before the Bush administration sharply escalated these fears in recent months, intelligence and international affairs specialists were informing anyone who wanted to listen that the policies Washington is pursuing are likely to lead to an increase in terror and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, for revenge or simply deterrence. There are two ways for Washington to respond to the threats engendered by its actions and startling proclamations. One way is to try to alleviate the threats by paying some attention to legitimate grievances, and by agreeing to become a civilized member of a world community, with some respect for world order and its institutions. The other way is to construct even more awesome engines of destruction and domination, so that any perceived challenge, however remote, can be crushed –

provoking new and greater challenges. That way poses serious dangers to the people of the US and the world, and may, very possibly, lead to extinction of the species”(Chomsky, 2003b).

This is a paragraph from his aptly named article “Deep Concerns.” Chomsky makes a vague suggestion that the United States should become a civilized member of a world community yet he gives no example of what that means or would entail.

His main fear is the fear of revenge of current and newly recruited terrorist. At the time of writing these articles there was a high level of uncertainty. Predicting what would happen to Iraq and what the consequences would be was difficult. One can not blame Chomsky for having grave concerns regarding the invasion. He seems to be preparing for the worst, a reasonable reaction to war.

Christopher Hitchens on the other hand is absolutely certain of the inevitability of war:

“Those who now call for "more time"—for inspections or what have you—are acting as if the confrontation with Saddam Hussein began only a few months ago, as if he did not seek such a confrontation, and as if it were avoidable” (Hitchens, 2003b).

This hardcore belief in the unavoidable war is worrisome. There is a statement by Joseph S. Nye, a professor at Harvard University and former assistant Secretary of Defense: “War is never inevitable, though the belief that it is can become one of its causes” (Nye, 2014).

Even though Christopher Hitchens makes an excellent case for regime-change one can not help but to be sceptical at times. Was the war really unavoidable? It is common knowledge that Baghdad is a ruined city where murder is part of daily life. Would it be different if Saddam had been left alone? These questions are impossible to answer. Some of Noam Chomsky’s speculations about the end of the world may seem far fetched today but in 2003 they were real concerns because dictators can be unpredictable.

## Linguistic Analysis

The articles were examined closely with nouns, verbs and adjectives in mind. The point was to see if there was any contextual background to the words. One can not easily say that the vocabulary they use is derived directly from military language, religious language etc. They are both very experienced writers and write in a professional manner. However, they do represent opposite sides of the argument.

## Nouns

Their choice of nouns is interesting. Hitchens and Chomsky both employ the following nouns when referring to the United States of America; *Bush, U.S, United States, Washington, America*. However, Noam Chomsky uses the word *empire* on more than one occasion. By doing so he is accusing the US of extreme cruelty and mercilessness without really saying so.

When reading the articles one can see that for Christopher Hitchens the topic is quite personal while Noam Chomsky seems to want to keep himself at a good distance, yet remain critical. What potentially gives this statement validity is the frequency of the nouns *Saddam* and *Iraq* in their articles. When referring to “the enemy.” Noam Chomsky uses *Saddam* 17 times and *Iraq* 29 times. Christopher Hitchens on the other hand uses *Saddam* 27 times and *Iraq* 23 times. To Hitchens, it seems that the fight is between his cause and Saddam Hussein, not Iraq. When Hitchens speaks of Iraq as a country it is with a sympathetic tone;

“While he survives not only are the Iraqi and Kurdish peoples compelled to live in misery and fear (the sheerly moral case for regime-change is unimpeachable on its own), but their neighbors are compelled to live in fear as well” (Hitchens, 2002).

Chomsky sees it as a conflict with a whole country, not a person with a name.

The use of the noun *war* is interesting to look at. Chomsky employs the word *war* 38 times throughout the articles while Hitchens uses it merely 10 times. It is obvious that he refrains from using it. The word *war* has a negative meaning to it and people associate it with death and terror. That is probably the reason for Chomsky's frequent use of the word. Chomsky even expressed the urge to go even further, stating that *war* is hardly the proper term, given the gross mismatch of forces (Chomsky, 2003a).

Hitchens speaks of *regime change* and *intervention* instead. Given Chomsky's strong emphasis on the word *war* it comes as no surprise that he does not once speak of an *intervention*. However, he does use the word *invasion* on four occasions. A word Hitchens never uses.

In conclusion, both Chomsky and Hitchens choose only nouns that fit their view of the war. They probably do not want to seem sympathetic to the other side, not even slightly.

### **Personal pronouns**

Given the nature of the argument it is blatantly obvious who the antagonists and protagonists are in both of the cases. The pronoun *we* is used only twice by Chomsky while Hitchens uses it nine times. Hitchens' heavier use of the personal pronoun *we* shows even more how personal the conflict is to him. Again, Chomsky keeps himself at a distance, this time by refraining from utilizing the pronoun *we*.

However, Chomsky does use *they* with some regularity, as does Hitchens. The pronoun *they* can be quite revealing as it indicates who the author views as the enemy. Fifteen out of the twenty-one times Chomsky uses *they* he is referring to the United States. While on a few occasions acknowledging that Saddam Hussein is a murderous tyrant he still views America as the enemy. Christopher Hitchens uses *they* when referring to both the terrorists and the anti-war group. This could indicate that he sees those who oppose the intervention as much of an enemy as those who rule Iraq.

Both writers use the pronouns *we* and *they* very differently and that difference shows exactly who they view as the true enemy.

### **Adjectives**

Both Hitchens and Chomsky seem to refrain from over-using adjectives. The judgement they pass on their opponents is to be found in the argument they make. The way they write is sophisticated and professional. Majority of adjectives they use are somewhat rare and formal. One can see that when these adjectives by Hitchens are put in order; *bad, ghastly, arcane, vertiginous, prudently, viscerally, confessional, venal, ignominiously, energetically, absurdly.*

Christopher Hitchens loathes dictators so he displays immense restraint when talking about how bad Saddam Hussein is:

“Taking the points in order, it's fairly easy to demonstrate that Saddam Hussein is a bad guy's bad guy. He's not just bad in himself but the cause of badness in others” (Hitchens, 2002).

The same goes for Noam Chomsky. He is quite harsher in his critique of his opponents than Hitchens is. Yet he is very restraint when it comes to adjectives. This is perhaps a testament to the high quality of Chomsky's writing. The adjectives he uses are: *lofty, obligatory, ambiguously, oblique, ultrareactionary.* This restraint is what they both have in common.

## Direct speech

Chomsky and Hitchens treat statements from other sources differently. Chomsky always writes them as direct speech and cites them clearly while Hitchens always paraphrases. This could indicate that Chomsky is writing as an academic whilst Hitchens' writing is of journalistic nature. That comes as no surprise as Hitchens was indeed a journalist and Chomsky has a fifty year career as an educator at MIT. In the article "The Case Against US; Adventurism in Iraq" Chomsky makes this direct quote:

"G. John Ikenberry wrote in the September/October issue of *Foreign Affairs* -- "a unipolar world in which the United States has no peer competitor" and in which "no state or coalition could ever challenge it as global leader, protector and enforcer" (Chomsky, 2003a).

To make a valid point about the immense power the US holds he directly quotes a respected professor at Princeton. He even mentions what issue of *Foreign Affairs* the quote comes from. He treats his text in an academic manner which increases his credibility. Hitchens on the other hand paraphrases and does not mention details about the origin of the words. From the article "Drumbeat":

"The other day I caught Sen. Hillary Clinton on some show from Albany, N.Y., where she said, with a knowing intonation, that obviously there were people in the Bush administration who had "an old score" to settle with Saddam Hussein"

(Hitchens, 2003b).

He does not give the reader information regarding the context. He interprets her words "an old score" like members of the Bush administration are going into war because of some personal reasons. It may be true that Hillary Clinton did mean it that way but Christopher Hitchens does not give the reader the opportunity to interpret her words directly.



## Modalities

When the articles are scanned with the modalities *could* and *should* in mind one finds that they are used when speculating hypothetical situations. It was interesting to find that Noam Chomsky used *could* more frequently than Hitchens, who barely used it. Every single use of the word *could* by Chomsky was to speculate on the potential consequences of the Iraq war and of the actions taken by the US. They were not prosaic speculations either:

“The consequences could be catastrophic in Iraq and around the world. The United States may reap a whirlwind of terrorist retaliation -- and step up the possibility of nuclear Armageddon” (Chomsky, 2003a).

Christopher Hitchens seems to use *could* almost solely when making a satirical speculation, exposing the supposed folly of his opponents:

“Saddam Hussein could have bought his regime a fresh lease on its ghastly life if he had been even slightly willing to "make nice," and the United States could have lowered its muzzle deep into Iraqi oil-wells on the same unspoken understanding” (Hitchens, 2003b).

Hitchens knows fully that this would never happen yet he hypothesizes on the situation.

Hitchens did use *should* on a few occasions. The most important use of the word is the closing statement of his article “Recruitment”:

“But to argue that nothing can be done lest it incur the displeasure of the second group is to surrender without a fight, and then to get a fight anyway. American support for elections and for women's rights would infuriate the second group just as much as American action against Saddam. There is, to put it very mildly, no pleasing some people. Nor should there be. Self-respect as well as sound strategy demands that we

make the enemy worry what we will do, and not waste away worrying what he may think of us” (Hitchens, 2003a).

Both authors used the modals *could* and *should* differently. Chomsky is highly speculative regarding the future whilst Hitchens uses these words for almost satirical purposes.

### **Evidentialities**

Christopher Hitchens is not afraid to assert things that might be controversial. For example, he employs such phrases as “unimpeachable” when referring to the moral case for regime-change. That Saddam Hussein was not going to survive and that his regime was on the verge of implosion was to Hitchens, an obvious point. Hitchens explains that the consequences of an imploded Iraq will be dire.

He states that Sunni-Shi'a rivalry, conflict over the boundaries of Kurdistan, possible meddling from Turkey or Iran, vertiginous fluctuations in oil prices and production and social chaos will plague Iraq regardless of an American Invasion or not. Hitchens words it thus;; “The choices are two and only two—to experience these consequences with an American or international presence or to watch them unfold as if they were none of our business.” Hitchens immediately follows this statement by referring to it as a “self-evident point” (Hitchens, 2002).

Noam Chomsky does this as well. From the article “The Case Against US Adventurism“in Iraq:

“The most powerful state in history has proclaimed that it intends to control the world by force, the dimension in which it reigns supreme. President Bush and his cohorts evidently believe that the means of violence in their hands are so extraordinary that they can dismiss anyone who stands in their way”(Chomsky, 2003a).

This paragraph is certainly controversial as it makes subjective statements about the United States. He uses the word *evidently* to state that the US uses extraordinary violence to get their way in the world. He can not know for certain that this is the case. However, it is true that the United States is the most powerful state in the world and because of that his concerns are legitimate. It is important to criticize those in power and Noam Chomsky does that well.

The use of these words and phrases indicate that the authors know exactly where they stand on the subject and what their feelings are. Someone who is in some doubt about the subject would not use the phrase “self-evident point” about a crucial point like future of Iraq.

## Summary

The discourse analysis examined six articles on the Iraq war. Three by Christopher Hitchens and three by Noam Chomsky. It revealed that they argued quite differently. The essay looked at the idea of “terrorist recruitment” and examined how both writers approached the matter.

Christopher Hitchens believes that “terrorist recruitment” is not something to worry about. He states that it would not matter if it were true or not. We still have an obligation to fight theocratic despots. Noam Chomsky on the other hand considers this a major concern. He even postulates about the end of the world because of retaliation.

Next was to examine their argument at the level of language. The essay looked at what nouns were used to refer to both the United States and the enemy. Both authors used the same nouns when referring to the United States except Chomsky used *empire* on more than one occasion. When the articles are analyzed it is revealed that Chomsky thinks of the United States as the enemy and Hitchens thinks of Saddam Hussein. The use of personal pronouns indicated that the topic is more personal to Hitchens than it is to Chomsky.

The adjectives they use are mostly rare and are used with restraint. They do not seem to rely much on adjectives in order to pass judgement on their opponents. Their use of adjectives, or lack thereof, is a testament to their professionalism and sophistication.

Christopher Hitchens writes about the subject like a journalist, unlike Noam Chomsky who writes like an academic. This is evidenced by how they use direct speech. Hitchens paraphrases while Chomsky quotes directly as cites his sources well.

The modalities *could* and *should* were used by both authors to speculate on the Iraq war. For Chomsky it was mostly about the potential devastating aftermath of the invasion while Hitchens made satirical speculations.

Both authors are guilty of treating controversial statements as facts. Hitchens refers to Iraq's imposition as a self-evident point. Chomsky states that the United States want to rule the world with force and use violence as a tool to get what they want.

## **Conclusion**

People get emotional very quickly when discussing the war in Iraq. There is not a lot of fence sitting in this matter. Either you are for the war or you are against it. This essay looked at the history of the Iraq war and the number of controversies that plagued it. There was evidence to suggest that Saddam Hussein posed a great threat to world peace and on the other hand there are legitimate concerns from the anti-war side.

The methods of discourse analysis used revealed a number of things. It is clear that both authors are very well educated and well read. They politely argue their points while still being firm and highly critical.

Hitchens did not waste time worrying about the aftermath of the war. He believed it to be inevitable. There was no choice but to invade. Chomsky thought more about the long term. Given the uncertainty of war, he gave his readers excellent worst case scenarios. Noam Chomsky is still active today in criticizing war and foreign policy. The US officially withdrew their presence shortly after the death of Christopher Hitchens. It would have been interesting to see what he would have written about that event.

Christopher Hitchens and Noam Chomsky contributed great arguments and insight into either side. They influenced a large group of people and their words are still relevant today.

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