Abstract

Using a computer-assisted content analysis, this study analyzes a 32,000 word corpus drawn from media-ted political statements made in response to the July 2005 London bombing. This grounded research led to a focus on the deontic nature of these statements, and also revealed a relative absence of condoling. Although condemnatory, statements did not specifically attribute the “evil” to particular people. Particularly mindful of Widdowson’s distinction between analysis (text) and research (interpretation), the paper first identifies the textual features, but then “hermeneutically” interprets their meaning within a wider context of international political discourse. The paper concludes that the statements performed a positive epideictic purpose, although it tended to occlude the compassionate element of public grieving.
1. Introduction

On Thursday July 7, 2005, bombs were detonated on four trains and one bus in London killing over 50 civilians. In response, news media reported not only the details of the terrorist attack, but also political responses within the UK and worldwide. Using linguistic analysis and interpretation, this paper provides a description of the media-ted responses from politicians and officials. From this grounded method, we have identified a number of characteristics with which we tentatively propose to describe an emergent genre of discourse: the media-ted response to such terrorist events.

2. Methodology

2.1 Data Gathering

The data come from a 32,000 word corpus derived from ‘political’ announcements about the London bombings as disseminated by major electronic and press news outlets throughout the world. We used the electronic resource, Factiva (Reuters & Dow Jones Interactive, 2005) using the search terms “London” and “terrorism” to find either direct political quotations or journalistic paraphrasing of politicians’ words which were gathered to the point of content saturation. We were careful not to use either text from the same news event more than once or news events that effectively repeated the same words. The time range was the nine days from July 7 to 15, 2005, and saturation occurred after reviewing 10,449 stories. Furthermore, we were also careful to use only those reports directly attributed to politicians, their representatives (spokespersons), or those with apparent authority to make comment such as politically motivated public servants. All these people are categorized as public officials. However, because of our interest in political discourse, we have eliminated texts by spokespeople who, because of traditional separation-of-powers doctrines, are not authorized
to make ‘political’ statements. Words representing commentary of any type by journalists or spokespeople other than politicians and officials\textsuperscript{ii} are also discarded. Details considered peripheral to these news reports have also been removed from the text.\textsuperscript{iii}

\textbf{2.2 Researcher Position and Political News as Discourse}

Deriving intended meaning from text is a fraught concept in linguistic analysis. We are informed by Widdowson’s (2004: 10) distinction between first person ‘speaker’, second person audience, and third person interpreter. He argues that written language allows interpretation to be made only from a third person perspective. We argue that, as researchers, we operate from both second and third person perspectives in that we are part of the second person audience as media consumers hearing and reading about the London event, then later as third person analysts of text and interpreters of discourse.

As discourse researchers, we understand the processes of production (first person) that creates the media text that we consume (second person). Teams of political and media advisors craft media releases as strategic devices of political rhetoric within the discursive constraints of the topic (e.g., globalization, economy, terrorism). They operate in global, mass media systems of multiple, interlinked communication (Nacos, 2003: 23) using words from, in the case of the London bombings, an international discourse of terrorism with symbols and rituals made normative within everyday media reportage (see Zulaika & Douglass, 1996). Thus a “relationship between media institutions and the institutions of government and politics” builds up into an orthodoxy of practice (Swanson, 1997: 1264), allowing political teams to strategize their news in a way that controls to some extent what is disseminated (Croteau & Hoynes, 2003: 206). Political media teams and journalists thus form an
interdependent strategic relationship of news provision and dissemination where little distinguishes what is reported and what politicians want reported (Naveh, 2002).

Given this relationship within politics-media discourse, different nations’ leaders respond to conflictive bad news according to an embedded political response (McEntire, 1997: 222; Pant & Soellner, 1997: 11) which has been discursively constituted. However, in the case of jihad-terrorist attacks in cities outside the US, such as London, Barcelona, and (recently) New Delhi, the discursive characteristics are not strongly established. As researchers, we share with the world an emerging global discourse that brings us into closer proximity and more frequent contact with news that both informs and defines us (Meredith, Steele & Kikusova, 2001: 197). Consequently, from a second person perspective, we can simplify the “pragmatic process of meaning negotiation” wherein text is placed in context and discourse interpretation is thus activated (Widdowson, 2004: 8).

To sum up, two things can be said about prospects of deriving meaning from the corpus of this paper. First, the gap between the third person of the researcher and the first person of a politician or official is lessened by the politically prescribed nature of messages and their institutionalized media practices. Second, placing these messages in context is easier because, like all citizens, researchers are regularly “contracted into the conventions of belief and behavior” of (in our case) media and politics and the context that gives meaning to such discourse (Widdowson, 2004: 12).
3. Method

3.1 Using Leximancer in Grounded Research

This research is primarily grounded in that we did not bring \textit{a priori} assumptions to the corpus, although we acknowledge that ‘fully’ grounded research is not really possible (Malcolm & Alant, 2004: 86). Such concerns are minimized by \textit{Leximancer's} (Smith & Humphreys, 2005, in press) form of analysis because its concept mapping enhances grounded analysis by mathematically limiting the human element in interpretation. Leximancer is a computer-assisted content analysis tool recognizing that, even though “concepts” are known to correlate with “human learning and performance…they are still \textit{textual concepts}” [authors’ italics], which means their correlation with mental states is somewhat probabilistic (3). Therefore, within its content analysis, Leximancer caters for the “polysemic character of texts” represented by concepts “located in determinate semantic and discursive fields” (López, 2003: 143). To this end, Leximancer calculates concepts statistically and thus scientifies their interpretable range at no less than human level (3). But, in addition, Leximancer’s bootstrapping technique helps researchers to avoid “fixating on any particular anecdotal evidence that may be atypical or erroneous” (2), and therefore reduces expectation bias. Users of Leximancer, however, do have the option of changing parameter settings and thus influencing their results.

Leximancer systematically alternates between semantic and relational extraction from the co-occurrence of words within any textual corpus even though these functions are never independent of each other. Leximancer statistically analyzes text knowing it contains both an indirect (semantic) similarity of context and a direct (relational) similarity, the latter being extracted from the episodic segments of (defaulting to) three sentences. Stage 1 of Leximancer begins by developing a thesaurus from any corpus’s raw bank of words, without
any need for a prior dictionary. This involves semantic or indirect extraction to construct a hierarchy of “important lexical terms based on word frequency and co-occurrence usage” (2). Stage 2 performs semantic classification from this thesaurus to codify the concepts using a set of classifiers to produce an algorithmically derived concept index and concept co-occurrence matrix from the text, processes which become manifest in a concept map (4). This latter step uses relational (direct) extraction from the episodes defined by word representations “within each text segment classified within a concept” (4). The final classificatory step in Stage 2 returns to more general or indirect semantic extraction to isolate thematic groups of concepts based on concept collocation (7). Because the names of these theme groups are usually the most interconnected or “parent” concepts within the group, they characterize that region of the concept map (5).

3.2 Meaning Negotiation: Text/Discourse and Analysis/Interpretation

Leximancer’s analysis prepares and displays our corpus text as the “product” or raw material from which we derive a discourse (Widdowson, 2004: 19) of, in our case, political news. This derivation is based on Widdowson’s (2004: 20) notion that the distinction between analysis and interpretation equates to that between text and discourse. For him, analysis constitutes the “process of identifying what semantic features are manifested in a text”, while interpretation “involves recognizing how a text functions as discourse by discriminating which, and how, these features are pragmatically activated” (Widdowson, 2004: 20). This analysis-interpretation distinction also allays Widdowson’s (2000: 6, 7) concern that corpus linguistics (like this paper) cannot “represent the reality of first person awareness” or “account for the complex interplay of linguistic and contextual factors”. Leximancer acknowledges that text cannot be dissociated from context in assessing people’s mental concepts and is used only for
text analysis which, as described above, provides the resource for contextualization and thus discourse interpretation.

### 3.3 Validity

Validity is achieved in two ways, namely stability and reproducibility, which are foundational to qualitative research (Hoff & Witt, 2000: 146). Stability is found in research when little or no variance in content classification occurs over time (Tan & Wee, 2002: 326) within the process of analysis. This is achieved in Leximancer through its consistency of extraction and conceptualization when the parameter settings are constant (Smith & Humphreys, 2005, in press: 6–7). As discussed earlier, although research-users have the option of changing these settings to “generate customised views”, Leximancer’s strategy of deliberate and deterministic analysis ensures coder reliability no matter how often its corpus of text is coded and recoded (7). For this paper’s research, such stability was evident at 1,000 iterations.

Reproducibility, also known as “inter-coder reliability”, pertains to the consistency of content classification when exposed to more than one coder (Tan & Wee, 2002: 326). Leximancer has been successfully tested for both “reproducibility”, comparisons between different (internal) Leximancer analyses, and “correlative validity”, comparisons with other (external) analyses (Smith & Humphreys, 2005, in press: 20). Internal reproducibility is achieved in Leximancer at the point of attention to the “similarity in concept network patterns” that are displayed in the stochastic concept map (12). As detailed above in this section, this map is derived over several stages of calculation that draw from other techniques of statistics such as Corpus Linguistics, Latent Semantic Analysis, and Computational Linguistics (2). These techniques come to Leximancer associated with validity measures tested over a significant
breadth of research in the disciplines of (particularly) psychology and statistics (see Smith & Humphreys, 2005, in press: 2–5).

4. Analysis

Consistent with Widdowson’s distinction between analysis and interpretation based on the division of text and discourse, we begin first with a lexical analysis. This process is iterative in that successive adjustments were made to the lexical concepts by eliminating and seeding words (see Method, 3.1).

4.1 Concept Mapping

The initial Leximancer analysis revealed 37 concepts. However, as some were unrelated to this paper’s search for political intention, they were eliminated. Consequently, a number of hand-seeded changes were made to eliminate concepts considered peripheral; to merge concepts that are expressed separately but signify similarly; and to determine the strength of researcher-defined concepts. Table 1 provides the seeding changes (deletions, mergers, and additions) and the rationale for each. As well, the word must was removed from the stopwords, which are those frequent words arbitrarily designated by Leximancer as having little semantic meaning. This was done because must as a modal verb is important to the intention of the communicator who uses them (see discussion below). These changes enhanced the relevance of the concept map.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deletions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acts</td>
<td>Only expressed as “acts of terrorism” or “terror”, or as “terrorists acts” or in some other ways in the context of terrorism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>added, think, told.</td>
<td>Only used as journalistic alternatives to “said” or “said to”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Britain, British, London.</td>
<td>The texts only refer to the specific British (London) terrorism of 7 July 2005.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>people</td>
<td>Generalizes victims, citizens (young or old), or perpetrators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time concepts like Thursday, today, week, year, yesterday.</td>
<td>Such reportage detail, typical of traditional journalistic practice (Pan &amp; Kosicki, 1993: 60) was unnecessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic term time.</td>
<td>Mainly used generally to denote the past or present or, for example, peripherally in expressions such as “at the same time” instead of also.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attack, attacks, and bombings.</td>
<td>Alternative expressions of the same events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>country &amp; countries; leader &amp; leaders</td>
<td>Only mentioned in a general context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added concept of condemning (combining condemn, condemned, &amp; condemning).</td>
<td>This concept appeared less strong at first until analysis of the thesis found strong representation in different forms of the root concept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added concept condolences</td>
<td>To test the extent of politically expressed humanity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added (tag class)\textsuperscript{vii} concept have to</td>
<td>This is the phrasal modal equivalent (Celce-Murcia, Larsen-Freeman &amp; Williams, 1999: 139) of modal verb, must\textsuperscript{viii}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Hand-seedings and Rationale

After these changes, a second iteration of the corpus was formulated and mapped using Leximancer extraction (see Figure 1). A face-value examination points to the emergence of certain terrains on the map that indicate the general compatibility of concepts in that terrain.

For example, terrorism and attacks are understandably central to the text and closely relate to terrorist concerns of all countries. Government officials (Blair, leaders, minister) are in the top right quadrant concerned predominantly with the attacks although much less so with condolence for the victims. The top left quadrant shows a proximity of police with security and other measures, including those of a more covert nature (intelligence). Interestingly, somewhat separate are expressive issues of how/why the world must condemn, what it should do about terrorists. Although being its phrasal, modal equivalent, have to is separate from
**must**, probably because the two indicate expression choice rather than intention. *Iraq* (bottom left quadrant) is such a weak concept that it is likely to display with any other concept.

The concept map displays 13 themes: *terrorism, attacks, country, terrorist, security, should, must, have to, leaders, minister, measures, work,* and *Blair.* These 13 themes organize 23 concepts viewed in a 100 percent Leximancer exposure. Displaying 100 percent of Leximancer-created concepts also allows focus on lesser concepts such as (weakest first) *condolences, Blair, work, measures,* and *Iraq.* A strength of Leximancer is that it supports analysis of less frequent (weaker) concepts such as these because the weakness can be semantically important in indicating the lexical focus of communicators and/or their
intention. Despite being the least frequent concept, we discuss *condolence* in both analysis (see 4.3, below) and *Interpretation* later.

In the iterative process of this research, we further decided that analysis and interpretation would not be relevant to all concepts displayed by Leximancer, despite their strength or weaknesses in occurrence or co-occurrence. This led to a final iteration guided by the realization that many concepts (e.g., the most prominent, *attacks* and *terrorism*) obviously emerge because they reflect news reportage, much of which presents self-contained statements of media fact. Therefore, at this stage in a hermeneutic moment, we chose six concepts, combined in related pairs, that we decided either underscore political intention or are crucial in expressing it: *terrorism/terror; condemn/condolence*; and those of deontic modality, *should/must (have to)*.

### 4.2 Terror & Terrorism

Because of our interest in the way politicians’ responses conflate these words, *terrorism*, *terrorists* (and the adjectival, *terrorist*), and *terror* have been allowed to occur and be mapped as separate themes and/or concepts given their obvious relationship. This conflation or interchangeableness occurs even though both terms describe different “functional notions” (Indecki, 2005: 711). This is reflected in the equation of usage shown in Table 2 where, in these examples from the corpus, little distinction is made. As a general term, “terror serves to maintain power” in a broad political context, while “terrorism is directed against a social or legal order… [and] may be of a political or criminal character” (Indecki, 2005: 712).
Bush vowed Thursday the war on terrorism would continue following deadly blasts in London. Bush emphasized a two-tier strategy…in the global war on terror.

All countries should join efforts in fighting against terrorism. Bush will lay out his short and long-term strategies in the fight against terror.

yesterday’s terrorist attacks on London served no cause except the cause of evil. I have received the news of co-ordinated series of terror attacks in the city of London.

### Table 2: Parallel Usage of Terrorism and Terror

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Terrorism</th>
<th>Terror</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>…members of the public draw(s) the same link when acts of terrorism occur here in the United Kingdom</td>
<td>…performers of these acts of terror should be found and punished as soon as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush vowed Thursday the war on terrorism would continue following deadly blasts in London.</td>
<td>Bush emphasized a two-tier strategy…in the global war on terror.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All countries should join efforts in fighting against terrorism.</td>
<td>Bush will lay out his short and long-term strategies in the fight against terror.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yesterday’s terrorist attacks on London served no cause except the cause of evil.</td>
<td>I have received the news of co-ordinated series of terror attacks in the city of London.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3 Condemn and Condolence

Two user-defined lemma concepts, *condemn* and *condolence*, were identified to compare the relative strength of the two notions as expressions of affect and judgment by politicians (this is explained in Section 5, below). Although these two concepts were hand seeded, that seeding was based on Leximancer’s analysis and display of what was already in the corpus and thus not imposed on this analysis. As a lemma concept, *condemn* was strong (appearing at the 62nd percentage point in the concept map), but needed to be hand-seeded to combine it with other forms of the same word. On the other hand, *condolence* was comparatively weak, appearing only at the 99th percentage point in Leximancer’s concept map. In the entire corpus, the *condolence* concept was used either in singular or plural forms only 22 times. Even if combined with (close) synonyms, *sympathy* (8 times), *compassion* (3), *sorrow* (3) and *regret* (2), the concept would still display weakly. Similar words like *commiseration*, *pity*, or *consideration* were not used at all by politicians and officials.

It is interesting that two of the public statements that actually expressed *condolence* were from Ireland. Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister), Mary Harney, offered “my deepest sympathy and solidarity to the families of the bereaved and to all the injured,” while Green
Party leader, Trevor Sargent, expressed “our solidarity with the victims and all those bereaved, injured and traumatised by the unpalatable cruelty of these explosions.” The U.S. Homeland Security Secretary, Michael Chertoff stated, “From all of us on the Homeland Security Committee, we wish the very best for the people of London, and especially the families of the dead and wounded. We share in your grief, and we pray for the speedy recovery of the survivors”. Chancellor, Gordon Brown, mixed condolence with epideictic resolve:

A. While buses and buildings can be destroyed, our values are indestructible. While hearts are broken, hope is unbreakable. Every generation is tested with the problems and dilemmas of the time and each era calls on great men and women to come forward and it is they who determine the character of an age.

4.4 Deontic Modality

*Should* and *must* are grammatically related insofar that they are both modal verbs. Modality is a concept shared by linguistics and formal logic. However, we are concerned only with deontic modality because it modalizes the lexical verbs of political statements and, therefore, the degree of judgment and obligation. The modal verbs *should* and *must*, and *may* and *might* express epistemic modality (knowledge and belief) as well as the deontic form expressing permission and obligation (Groefsema, 1995: 53). But because of our specific interest in the deontic within intention, we left *may*, and *might* in the stopwords because they both appeared infrequently in the corpus (23 and 9 times respectively), and predominantly as epistemic rather than deontic modality (20 to 3 and 8 to 1 respectively).

4.4.1 *Must*

The collocation of *must* and its phrasal equivalent *have to* are set out in Table 3. Even though as mentioned earlier, these concepts are mapped separately by Leximancer, they play strong individual roles in expressing political intention. *Must* occurred as deontic modality 47 times and *have to* 24 (there are six other occurrences of *have to* as epistemic modality).
The 71 instances of *must* modality displays only one collocation with *condemn*—logical perhaps, because (strong) condemnation is unlikely to be modalized—and only once does it refer to the exigency of solving the crime. The strongest usage of *must* modality is to insist on winning a battle against terrorism.

B. The G-8 leaders are in agreement that the international community must do everything to combat terrorism together with all the means at our disposal, he added. (German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder)

C. The attacks were a direct challenge to an emerging unity of approach, and the attackers must not be allowed succeed. (Mr Kenny, US Ambassador to Ireland)

D. This is public enemy number one. We have to get them. (Kevin Rudd, Australian Opposition Foreign Minister)

The only instance of *must* being related to evil is in a statement by a Muslim Labour MP in the British parliament, Shahid Malik:

E. Condemnation is not enough and British Muslims must, and I believe are prepared to, confront the voices of evil head on.

The need for vigilance is also evident as in:

F. …but it is an issue of international concern and all countries have to be vigilant in fighting these barbaric acts. (Alfred Mutua, Kenyan Government Spokesman)

as is the need for opponents of terrorism to maintain and strengthen their resolve:

G. The terrorist attacks in London must strengthen the resolve of the global society to wage an uncompromising battle against the terrorism. (Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov)
An important feature evident is the need for cooperation and unity among nations opposing such political tactics:

H. Europe had to work together to fight terrorism which posed a threat to the whole continent. (Dutch Prime Minister, Jan Peter Balkenende)

4.4.2 Should

Whereas must modality supports the expression of stronger obligation, its greater certitude paradoxically lessens its degree of modality compared to should (Rahimian, 1999: 157). In Leximancer conceptualization, should displays 72 times compared to 71 for must modality. However, half of should examples were eliminated from our analysis for two reasons. Information peripheral to the London bombings, usually relating to domestic issues, was eliminated, for example:

I. (border protection) should not come at the cost of migrant immigrants who come to the US to find work. (Michael Chertoff, US Homeland Secretary)

The other reason for exclusion occurred where should expressed epistemic modality, as in:

J. Muslims living in their adopted countries should contribute meaningfully to the success… (Malaysian Prime Minister, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi)

The 39 usable instances of should modality considered directly relevant to this study were categorized into six motifs:

a) Promoting Practical Political Action (17)

b) Solidarity, Collaboration, Cooperation (11)

c) Condemnation & Punishment (6)

d) Desire to Maintain Normal Liberties and Freedom (3)

e) Supporting Moderate Muslims (2)

The rhetorical purpose of solidarity and collaboration evident in the must log is stronger here, as is the element of condemnation. However, what is evident in this log of words is the
importance of promoting a particular political objective, and the relative weakness of the cautionary statements in support of civil liberty and freedom.

a) Promoting Practical Political Action: There were 13 instances of this motif promoting practical political action related to terrorism. In some cases, these were politically partisan statements in the sense that the cause advocated was contested politically in the democratic process. For example, President, George W. Bush, stated

K. The terrorist threats against us will not expire at the end of this year, and neither should the protections of the Patriot Act.

The Russian Defense Minister, Sergei Ivanov, said

L. We should pay greater attention to the problem of extraditing terrorists at the request of the states concerned.

Australian Prime Minister, John Howard, advocated a national identity card system:

M. We haven’t made a decision to have an ID card in this country but it should properly be on the table.

Even the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, used the occasion to argue that

N. The deadly London attacks should spur world leaders to revive long-stalled talks to craft a convention against terrorism.

Britain’s U.N. Ambassador Emyr Jones Parry said that

O. leaders should at least agree that any acts targeting civilians be defined as terrorism.

A subset of this rhetorical purpose is the call for practical action (4 instances). For example, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says

P. Terrorists cannot be given refuge. … and none of the terrorists or those who harbour them should be given refuge in any civilised country.

Russian Federation Council’s Committee for International Affairs, Mikhail Margelov, says
Q. Countries should abandon the policy of double standards, clearly define the terrorist threat and combine their intelligence and skills to fight this problem.

b) Solidarity, Collaboration, Cooperation (11 instances): As stated above, the motif of solidarity is relatively strongly associated with this deontic modal. For example, Turkish Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gul, says

R. The world should establish a joint platform to fight terrorism, which, he argued, is a common responsibility of all countries.

Indian Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, says that the London bombings

S. have demonstratively made it evident that all of us should work together to evolve a collective strategy to free the world from this scourge

Bangladesh Prime Minister, Khaleda Zia, states

T. This tragic event should strengthen the resolve of our nations to work together in fighting the menace of terrorism.

c) Condemnation and Punishment (6 instances): The motif encompassing condemnation and punishment is relatively weak in the deontic modality aspect of the corpus. The Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ statement is typical:

U. We vehemently condemn committed criminal actions. Clients and performers of these acts of terror should be found and punished as soon as possible.

d) Desire to Maintain Normal Liberties and Freedom (3 instances): A minor motif is that normal liberties should be maintained:

V. The recent terrorist attacks have underscored the need for political leaders to join efforts, as they did in their joint fight against fascism…We should not restrict civil freedoms. (Russian Defense Minister, Sergei Ivanov)

Related to this was a mood of defiance towards the bombers by allowing life to go on relatively unaffected:
e) Supporting Moderate Muslims (2 instances): There were two deontic instances related to a desire by British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, to incorporate Muslims (see 4.5, following).

4.5 Work

For our analysis, we decided to choose work as a concept despite its minor frequency and co-occurrence status—only 14 instances. This choice was made iteratively following the assumption that work would appear primarily as a reportage noun as the venue of Londoners day-to-day activities. In fact, work is predominantly in verb form to denote that government should collaborate (9 instances). All were coupled with the adverb together, for example:

X. All countries must work together against terrorism.” (British Prime Minister, Tony Blair).

Of the other five instances, two signified similarly, asking governments to work for a common goal against terrorism, even to the point of crossing political boundaries. Significantly, Blair twice looked to home unity in supporting “the moderate and true voice of Islam” by “root(ing) out extremists”. The minor motif of normalcy is worthy of mention here as we approach interpretation in this paper where

Y. The men, women, and children of England will continue to work, learn, and help others…(despite) these cowardly attacks on innocent civilians. (British House Homeland Security Committee Chairman, Christopher Cox)

As we show in our interpretation of this corpus, this statement is unusual in pointing away from the political agenda, and towards the everyday life and future of the victims of the London bombings.
5. Interpretation

Public political discourse has two intentions. First, it seeks to give meaning to circumstances affecting citizens’ lives within the framework of political values and beliefs ordered by the normative procedures that collectively legitimate the international conduct of ‘good’ nations (Reus-Smit, 1997: 567). A secondary intention is to show their voters that politician’s ideas are appropriate with the aim of securing public appeal and commitment (Williams, 1995: 129). Notwithstanding that much of this discourse is gray rhetoric—a form of vacuous talk and other language games that masquerade as meaning-making (Waddell & McKenna, 2005: 2)—significant events, such as economic turmoil, natural disasters, and terrorist incidents, provide political leaders with a rare opportunity to declare their values and proposed actions to a world audience. Despite the scepticism about political rhetoric being ‘hot air’, on occasions such as the London bombings, public political statements form an important part of the meaning-making generated by media who, often limited to journalistic speculation, provide a mixture of ‘fact’, hope, and human interest perspectives (Taylor, 2000: 33). In other words, we argue that public political discourse plays an important role in shaping the public response to such horrible events. This was evident after the 9/11 bombings when US President, George Bush’s first public response, referring to the terrorists as “folks”, was seen as ineffectual; he later referred to them as “evildoers” (Altheide, 2004: 294). It was also evident when New York Mayor, Rudi Giuliani, rejected a ten million dollar donation from a Saudi prince whom he regarded as critical of America (Chetwynd, 2001, Oct 12).

Our analysis reveals some defining characteristics of public political discourse that accompanied the London bombings. While these characteristics cannot be described as generalizable, they do provide a template by which other terrorist events can be compared. Of particular interest is the political use of deontic modality. After a tragedy like the London
bombings, it is not a simple task for political leaders to express ‘black and white’ statements of fact. What follows are modalized versions of the ‘black and white’ that attempt to promise a positive turn that set human obligations to be fulfilled at some time in the future (Hoye, 1997: 43). The next section (5.1 & 5.2) discussed this deontic modality and their orientation to the concepts of condemn and condolence.

5.1 Deontic Modality: Should and Must (Have to)

The social rules that regulate contemporary discourse (in our case, media reportage) also define the linguistic utterances (in our case, political statements) that are its manifestation (Meijers, 2003: 170). These utterances are motivated by intentionality but, distinct from individual intentionality, it is the “collective intentionality” of international polity expressed by individual heads “in the form of ‘we intend,’ and ‘I intend only as part of our intending’” (Ruggie, 1998: 870). Such statements have been shown exemplified throughout this paper. As well as anticipating future action, this deontic modality seeks human action, but also seeks commitment to bringing that action about (Bandura, 2001: 6). Collective intentionality is distinctive because it is practiced and communicated according to an international discourse determined by constitutive rules that decide how political leaders act and behave (Ruggie, 1998: 871). Within such a domain, collective intentionality is deontic in that “it creates new rights and responsibilities” (Ruggie, 1998: 870, 879). The grounded analysis of our corpus identified must and should, and the minor concept work as important concepts. Their deontic purpose led us to consider in our interpretation the epideictic role they play in such political statements.

A significant characteristic of the collective response is the absence of specific references, even to “Muslim extremism”, with the focus being on “terror” and “terrorism”. This focus on
the action (the instance of terrorism) rather than on those who may be implicated by
association suggests a high degree of restraint, features of nobility and diplomacy. This led to
abstract nominals such as “forces of evil” or the neutral term, “the attackers” being deployed
rather than more specific nominals. Evident in both the *should* and *must* deontics was another
distinctive characteristic, that of solidarity and cooperation, or working together. In this
sense, the effect of the bombing—in public discourse at least—was to unify rather than
divide, another ennobling feature of the discourse.

The deontic nature of this modality is important, we claim, because of the way that politicians
attempt to persuade citizens to settle on a moral position as it is desired and just (Whetstone,
2003: 345). This morality underlay Aristotle’s conception of the epideictic speaker who was
“concerned with virtue and vice, praising the one and censuring the other” (Aristotle, 1991:
Ch 9, 1366b). The most obvious virtues in this instance are courage, magnificence and
prudence, but particularly courage which he defines as that which disposes people “to do
noble deeds in situations of danger, in accordance with the law and in obedience to its
commands” (Aristotle, 1991: Ch 9, 1366b).

Underlying these epideictic calls are various international agendas, particularly since the US
and UK governments have so clearly established themselves as leading the “fight against
terrorism” and are committed in the Second Iraq War. However, other countries such as
Russia and Spain are also victims of separatist terrorist violence, unrelated to the Muslim-
based jihad. These countries and other countries clearly need to position themselves in terms
of the Muslim-based jihad, although not necessarily in a way that indicates support for the
UK government’s involvement in the Iraq war. Significantly, the only reference to Iraq in this
log of statements is uttered by Charles Kennedy, the Leader of the Social Democrats in the
UK:
Z. We have to recognise the occupation of Iraq by the multinational force itself contributes to the insurgency and attracts those from abroad who see the opportunity to spread violent fundamentalism.

However, a less noble characteristic of the statements is the high incidence of promoting particular agendas. In some instances, such as George Bush’s advocacy for the *Patriot Act* or the Australian Prime Minister introducing the possibility of an identity card, these were plainly partisan, and so unworthy and inappropriate. Perhaps less culpable were calls for international agencies to work better together.

### 5.2 Condemn and Condolence

The relative lexical weakness of *condolence* is surprising given the natural expectation that politicians would prioritize their condoling with victims, particularly considering the widespread contemporary world focus on terrorism. This contrasts with the relative lexical strength of *condemn*. This contrast, when considered using the linguistic concept of evaluation provides a useful characteristic of this form of discourse. Evaluation is “the speaker’s or writer’s attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about” (Thompson & Hunston, 2000: 5, 14), and is linguistically and grammatically realized. Thus, evaluation is comparative, subjective, and value-laden (Thompson & Hunston, 2000: 21). Martin and Rose (2003: 22, 25) similarly identify appraisal as “a system of interpersonal meanings” revealing attitude about affect (feelings), judgement (character), and appreciation (value).

We infer from this lexical contrast that the discourse is primarily evaluative as speakers clearly render the bombing as an unspeakably evil act. This, for most of us, is uncontentious and shared. However, the relative weakness of affect is worth noting. That is, there is
relatively little said about the sadness of lost lives and horrible injuries. In a sense, the victims and their loved ones are not (we would say) sufficiently mourned. There is no time set aside in these early stages for ‘the world’ to share this grief (such events in the public domain are often much later and appropriately ordered). The epideictic function of defining virtue and vice overwhelms the panegyric function of mourning.

5.2 Summing Up

As happened in the ancient Greek agora, citizens, even postmodern ones, look to their leaders to provide meaning, give sense to, significant events, especially in times of crisis and grief. Global media assisted this process as it went beyond mere reportage to provide statements by world leaders. Our analysis has shown that there was, surprisingly, a relative absence of mourning for the lives of those who died, although it was obviously implied in many statements. The statements did epideictically provide deontic counsel about what must and should happen, although some leaders used this to promote partisan political causes. While there was a clear statement of good and evil, the tone was not shrill; indeed there seemed a clear intention to avoid specific prejudicial statements about who was responsible. Taking these characteristics into account, one could say that the media-ted messages of world leaders was appropriate, responsible, and respectful. We would suggest, however, that we could also collectively have taken more time to think quietly about those who weep for the ones they love.
References

The notion of a genre of discourse might seem an awkward concept. However, we understand discourse as a comprehensive notion that determines the epistemic boundaries and interpersonal relations of any utterance. Genre is a replicable textual instantiation of discourse. Discourse in this paper describes that which is instantiated in text, providing the ‘speaker’ with a range of utterance possibilities. It is constructed in the sense that it makes “objects perceptible in certain ways” and provides textual coherence (Bannet, 1989: 161). Put another way, discourse is a way “of signifying areas of experience from a particular perspective” (Fairclough, 1995: 134). At the epistemic level, discourse is an “unconscious structure of conscious thought as the a priori organising principle” of what people think and say, and so constrains the expression of thought to operate within certain limits (Bannet, 1989: 164). Thus it allows humans to share sets of understandings about a particular aspect of the world. However, discourse also serves to establish and maintain relations among discourse participants according to their role (and relations of power) in particular discursive sites. Thus, people are limited by the macrostructurally determined boundary constructions of knowledge, values, and subjectivities contained in any particular discourse (Foucault, 1972, p. 191). However, discourse diachronically alters as dialogical and dialectical interactions of discourse participants re-
shape the epistemic base, the subjective relations, and the ethics inherent in such configurations at any spatio-temporal moment.

Genre is realized through the schematic structure of a text (how it is organized into sections, if at all) and the realizational patterns (in particular lexicogrammatical choices) (Eggins, 1994: 25-26; Martin, 1992: 26). Thus by emergent genre of discourse we mean that the textual instantiations (media releases; official media websites; newspaper, television and radio stories) occur within the discourse of terrorism related media-ted texts.

ii For example, eliminated were situational statements from the corpus such as “Fifty-one bodies have been removed from the scenes of the bombings…” and “As authorities in London continue to hunt those responsible for last week’s horror attacks…”.

iii For example, a statement such as “Prime Minister, Tony Blair’s Thursday briefing to reporters told them…” has been replaced by “Tony Blair said”, and instead of using “Townsend told ‘Fox News Sunday’ that…”, we use “Townsend said…”. As well, we have reduced titular description to the minimum necessary, such as “Congresswoman Jane Harman”.

iv In justifying methods in this section, we will refer regularly to Leximancer and the paper by Smith and Humphreys (2005). Any further such references will be signified by a single page number in brackets at the end of sentences expressing them.

v By intention, we simply mean the human property of mind tied to “those mental acts which lead to, guide and accompany actions” (Simons, 2001: 16). It is important to this paper because discourse, as the “pragmatic process of meaning negotiation” becomes manifest at the “convergence of intention and interpretation” (Widdowson, 2004: 8, 12).

vi More specific usage of “time” came from politicians in estimations of how long both new anti-terrorism measures and perpetrator apprehension would take.

vii Table 1 showed examples of seeding word-forms to produce a lemma and thus allow a concept to emerge. This is not possible with must and its phrasal equivalent have to because Leximancer does not have the capacity to deal with compound words at this stage unless, as we have done with have to, seeded as a ‘tag class’.

viii We also tested the phrasal modals of should but they not appear in the corpus.

ix The logician, G.H. von Wright’s (1951) seminal paper divides modal concepts into alethic, epistemic, deontic, and existential.

x It is worth noting that three weeks later, on 22 July 2005, an innocent man was shot dead at the Stockwell, a London underground station because he “refused to obey an order” (BBC News, 2005, July 22).