

## CHAPTER 5

### Conclusion and Recommendations

*Black Hawk Down* is a well-known war movie that tells the story of a conflict that occurred between American soldiers and the Somalis. The story is generally similar to other Hollywood battle movies, which present American soldiers as heroes and the opponents as villains. The general audience is framed and acknowledged by the Hollywood movie makers to believe that these American battles are part of a greater “war against terror.” Even though this movie is praised and has been considered a success in terms of revenue, it is actually a form of “naked propaganda masquerading as entertainment” since the film-makers tends to narrate the story only from the American soldiers’ point of view. However, it is not hard for the audience to perceive that “*Black Hawk Down* is an exercise in manipulation of mass consciousness” (Talbot, par.24).

The story is about American soldiers on their mission in Mogadishu, Somalia- to capture a tyrant warlord, Mohamed Farrah Aidid, and restore peace to the country. The hegemony concept is clearly portrayed throughout the movie via the characters. Their language use is significantly involved with certain strategies and characteristics of language that are used in politics, namely, coercion, legitimization and delegitimization, representation and misrepresentation, lexicon, syntax, rhetoric, expression structures, speech acts and interaction, entailment, presupposition and presumptions, all of which makeup the framework of this study. The purpose of this study was to investigate how

both political language and the language ideology employed within binary relations are used by the American soldiers to suppress and marginalize the Somalis, and how these actually negatively affect the Somalis.

The data analysis has shown an overview of the binary opposition between the American soldiers and the Somalis. An in-depth analysis reveals that political language is the main tool exercised by both the major American and Somali characters exposing a idea of superiority throughout the movie. The most frequent political characteristics and strategies notably employed are, respectively, syntax, rhetoric, coercion, and presumption.

To start with, every war movie is indeed created with a purpose of invoking a sense of patriotism. This movie is no different as the American soldiers are presented as the protagonists and appear to be the “heroes” because their mission is to arrest a tyrant and to free the innocent citizens of Somalia. And whoever fights against the Americans are apparently “villains.” Sinisa Malesevic in “Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State: Yugoslavia, Serbia and Croatia” clearly describes the characteristics of the villains, Villains are regularly shown as demonic personalities who are the real threats to society. The stronger and more dangerous the villains are, the weaker and more unprotected the society appears. At the same time, the heroes become important and their role meaningful (300). Thus, besides personalities and settings, the characters’ language use will help to differentiate the sides. As a result, the “syntax” of one-sided specific pronouns is exercised to address the relationships among the different groups of people. It is obviously seen that the “syntax” application of the pronouns “you,” “we” and “they” are regularly used because they are applicable to the character’s purpose to discriminate against the others; the “we” against “they” and the “us” against “them”. The specific pronouns are usually employed by the superior Americans, and are uttered

by the high-ranking commanders with regard to the other members of the alliance, by the Rangers toward the Delta forces and by the American soldiers toward the Somalis.

The political language in the war movie *Black Hawk Down* reflects the concept of hegemony, which is exercised by one social class or dominant group. Any application of the political language strategies and characteristics are tools used to exert power over those that are perceived to be inferiors. The main American characters, as individuals of a powerful country, frequently use those aforementioned political language strategies to show their authority and to force and control the others. The “others” here are not only meant to be the Somali citizens, but also the UN, the Pakistani troops and the other American armed force units. That is to say “syntax”, the use of “we” and “us” against “they” and “them” involve the use of pronouns, clearly denote the two different poles. The first is the side the speaker belongs to and the latter refers to those outside the circle. War truly involves the fighting between the two parties including the allies of each side. It is definitely one side against the other. A sense of belonging to a particular group is needed to create a sense of unity and comradeship, to unite certain people together to fight against the opponent to achieve victory. The enemy, the “they” and “them,” are certainly the others, the one to win over in a war or else the “we” and “us” will experience a loss of lives and a loss of control. Therefore, a definite side is denoted through the use of these pronouns as a definite necessity. The verbal analysis also reveals that political language creates binary relations between the Americans and the Somalis, the Somali dominant group and the Somali citizens and the American commanders and the subordinates. It is obviously seen that the idea of inequality, ethnocentrism and the abuse of power are vividly on display throughout the movie.

The next form of political expression that is conveyed involves “rhetoric.” It is vividly seen that “rhetoric” is one of the commonly applied language strategies and is employed by the main characters. It is normally practiced by the higher-ranking soldiers and is used to show support and to encourage their men to complete a mission. Apparently, they can be found in the scenes in which the experienced American soldiers try to calm the disheartened soldiers and motivate them to continue their mission. In those scenes, the leaders choose effective words to arouse a sense of heroism in their soldiers, such as in the exclamation “*Everyone feels the same way you do, all right? It's what you do right now that makes a difference. It's your call.*” The audience will feel that this American leader is manipulating the psychology of motivation. His cogency works and it encourages his soldiers to go on fighting and to complete their mission. The scene in which Eversmann feels guilty for not being a dependable leader, which leads to the loss of his soldier’s lives, is a clear example. Hoot soothes and stimulates him with just two short utterances “*Sgt, you got your men this far. You did it right today.*” After that, Eversmann is back on track and shows the viewer his heroic sense, the spirit of being a leader. “Rhetoric” in this movie does not only work to arouse and calm the soldiers, it also persuades and draws the audience’s attention to feel for the American soldiers and to side with them. It could be said that speaking the right word at the right time to the right person will bring about full effectiveness. It could be said that “rhetoric” is how an individual expresses power. Rhetoric is also an expression of how an individual gets ahead, or exercises leadership” (Walker, par.2). Thus, this strategy is significant to the leader who, in the case of necessity, becomes a good speaker to soothe, cheer up and encourage his subordinates, especially in warfare situations as in this movie. It could be seen that this strategy works well to arouse a sense of heroism in

the American soldiers. Therefore, it is important for the leaders to choose effective, influential and powerful words to accomplish their mission's goal.

Additionally, “coercion” is considered the main characteristic of political language establishing hegemony owing to its main involvement with force and power. “Power covers all social relationships, which serve that end, from physical violence to the most subtle psychological ties by which one mind controls another” (Behr and Rosch 44). In *Black Hawk Down*, the characters who possess high ranks on both sides – the leaders and the powerful persons such as General Garrison, Captain Steele, Lieutenant Colonel Harrell and Aidid's henchman, all employ this strategy to show their authority over their inferiors. The sentences that are considered “coercion” in the authoritative sense are, for example, *“I'll shoot him myself, Tell him I want..., He's not getting paid until he does exactly that, I need the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain now, I want their tanks and APCs, I want every vehicle possible that's got four wheels and armor and Mohammed Farah Aidid claims this prisoner alive*, for example. The audience can well realize the authority expressed in those previously mentioned sentences. Moreover, powerful persons do not merely manipulate coercion in their utterances, but they also practice it in their actions. For example, in the first chapter, the audience notices that Aidid's right-hand man is shooting at the Somali people in order to drive them away from the food which Aidid's underlings claim belong to them. Thus, “coercion” is a means of domination by which the superior exerts power and force to exploit the others, the underdogs.

Lastly, “presumption” is employed. This strategy is used to combine the meaning of claim and implication. The audience should have some social knowledge in order to comprehend the circumstance in terms of coherence. The forms of utterances

will be granted as true if the presumption belongs to the speaker and is accepted by the receptor. For instance, during the interrogation, Atto asks Garrison “*Do you think bringing me in would make him suddenly come to you? Make him more agreeable?*” He wants to warn Garrison that what the American soldiers are doing right now is only their own presumption. There is not a guarantee if they lock Atto up, Aidid would show up and come to his rescue. This strategy is often used by the American soldiers because they are framed by old perceptions in which other countries are seen as inferior. Owing to their perceptions, being the citizens of a powerful country like America empowers them to be superior. The way they treat and talk about the others is quite discriminating. Thus, underestimating the Somalis according to their perceptions is a means by which the American soldiers exercise their supremacy.

To summarize, as this movie influences many forms of media and the curriculum used in some schools in America, it means the movie’s content and embedded construction could urge people to try to deconstruct what lies beneath the story. This can possibly lead to more research studies among enthusiasts. Since this study analyzes only the political language usage in *Black Hawk Down*, there can still be other aspects of the movie that would be of significant interest for researchers who are concerned with conducting further analysis, for instance, on the perceptions in the politic activities, political ideology, power relations and other embedded notions in political language used in this film.