POLITE PROTECTIONISM, OR DEGLOBALISATION? A STUDY ON PERSUASION AND EMOTION IN US AND EU DISCOURSES AROUND AMERICA'S INFLATION REDUCTION ACT 2022

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Abstract

This study aims to explore persuasion and emotion in Western political discourse, as triggered by the passing of the American IRA, an utterly protectionist act, ostensibly aimed at curbing inflation and fighting climate change. An *ad hoc* corpus has been compiled containing propagandistic speeches by Joe Biden and responses to this law by EU leaders Von der Leyen and Vestager. A contrastive analysis was carried out, to unveil the lexical traits of persuasive and politically correct language, and then to analyse emotional polarity in either subcorpus. Finally, a discussion on narratives through the deployment of metaphors, personifications and presuppositions was undertaken. The ultimate goal of this study is to make translators and interpreters aware of the discursive traits deployed in modern political discourse defending or reacting to economic protectionism and unilateralism, and thus to reveal the inevitability of the defragmentation and deglobalisation trends that have started looming worldwide.

Keywords: IRA. Emotion discourse. Deglobalization. Critical genre analysis. Political discourse.

Resumen

Este estudio pretende explorar la persuasión y la emoción en el discurso político occidental, a raíz de la aprobación de la IRA, una ley estadounidense, de corte proteccionista pero presentada como freno a la inflación y a la lucha contra el cambio climático. Compilamos un corpus *ad hoc* con los discursos propagandísticos de Joe Biden y los de reacción a esta ley de las dirigentes de la UE von der Leyen y Vestager, y llevamos a cabo un análisis contrastivo para 1) desvelar los rasgos léxicos del lenguaje persuasivo y políticamente correcto y, 2) analizar la polaridad emocional en uno y otro subcorpus. Por último, analizamos ambas narrativas a través de sus metáforas, personificaciones y presuposiciones. Pretendemos así que traductores e intérpretes conozcan los matices del discurso político moderno en pro y contra el proteccionismo económico y el unilateralismo, conducente a la desfragmentación y la desglobalización latente a escala global.

Palabras clave: IRA. Emoción. Desglobalización. Análisis crítico del género. Discurso político.

1. Introduction

Our study delves into the intricacies of political persuasion within Western political discourse, using the American Inflation Reduction Act 2022 (IRA) as a focal point. Despite its presentation as a measure to combat inflation and address climate change, experts draw parallels between the IRA and past protectionist policies initiated by Donald Trump, highlighting a lack of commitment to free trade (Bacchus 2022; Krueger 2023). By analysing speeches from President Joe Biden and responses from European Union leaders Ursula von der Leyen and Margrethe Vestager, the study constructs dedicated corpora (subcorpus US and subcorpus EU) for in-depth analysis, unveiling the persuasive strategies employed by key political figures.

Ideologies frequently employ emotionally charged or biased language, which means that translators need to meticulously balance fidelity to the original message, while deftly manoeuvring through the complexities of political persuasion. This task gives rise to ethical dilemmas, as translators strive for accuracy while openly acknowledging potential biases inherent in speeches or texts (Rojo & Ramos 2014; Kuzderová & Bednárová-Gibová 2021). Integrating cultural nuances within protectionist or populist rhetoric further complicates the translator's task, necessitating the authentic

portrayal of these references. A profound understanding of political landscapes becomes indispensable for accurately conveying the nuanced implications within such discourse, requiring both linguistic prowess and political insight (Martín-Ruano 2014). Ultimately, discourse analysis serves as a fundamental tool that empowers translators to address these challenges, preserving the integrity and relevance of translated content amidst the intricacies of protectionist and populist language (Schäffner 2002).

The paper's central argument revolves around the key role of persuasion in politics, aligning this with the Aristotelian tripartite framework of *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos*. While *ethos* and *logos* traditionally dominated political rhetoric, this study incorporates the 'emotional turn' in linguistics, asserting that emotions are crucial components of political persuasion. Emotional attachment and conviction, encompassing *pathos*, *logos*, and *ethos*, form the foundation of political discourse in this evolving linguistic landscape (Charteris Black 2018; Hutchinson & Bleiker 2021; Koschut 2021).

This analysis serves a dual purpose: first, to make translators and interpreters aware of the shifting dynamics in global interconnectedness as globalisation retreats. Second, it highlights the imperative for language professionals to comprehend the emotional dimensions of political discourse. This insight helps in providing a more comprehensive translation that captures both explicit and implicit meanings, allowing the audience to grasp its full scope, including its protectionist or populist undertones. It contributes significantly to understanding the persuasion strategies fuelling unilateralism and decoupling in international business, economic, and diplomatic relations (Fairclough & Fairclough 2012; Partington & Taylor 2018; Mooney & Evans 2019). The study concludes by emphasising the relevance of emotional discourse analysis for translators and interpreters to identify specific linguistic patterns, emotional triggers, and persuasive techniques used by politicians delivering protectionist or populist messages (Orts 2023). This understanding should enable them to accurately convey the intended message while highlighting the rhetoric or bias present in the original speech and the complexities of political communication, ultimately enhancing their role in facilitating effective cross-cultural dialogue amid the evolving landscape of global politics.

2. Socio-political context: from global integration to global fragmentation

Globalisation is experiencing a reversal, referred to as "slowbalisation", with Western economies, especially the United States, struggling to fully recover from the 2008 financial crisis (Gong *et al.* 2022). This shift is marked by deglobalisation, decoupling and offshoring, influenced by the decline of US hegemony and the rise of China as a formidable power (Guillen 2019: 397). The restructuring of capitalism is evident through disintegrative forces such as Brexit, right-wing populism and trade tensions between the US and China, exacerbated by the anti-free trade policies of the Trump administration (Guillen 2019: 402; Gong *et al.* 2022: 169).

The aftermath of the Global Systemic Crisis has resulted in slowed international trade and financial openness, diminished profits for transnational corporations (TNCs), and reduced capital profitability (Guerrero 2014). Additional disruptions, including food crises, rising inequalities, cross-border movements, the war in Ukraine and climate change, contribute to economic stagnation (Guillen 2019: 397). Environmental protection initiatives, particularly the concept of green economy, aim to achieve sustainable growth without environmental harm, emphasising market-based approaches and the supply of critical raw materials like minerals and metals. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of globalisation and the dependence on foreign supply sources within global value chains (GVC) (Gong *et al.* 2022: 169). These centrifugal forces have hindered multilateralism, ushering in an era of zero-sum thinking, where countries and regions decentralise research and development (R&D) and focus on retaining manufacturing activities within their borders under the guise of industrial policy.

After an era of global integration where the US played a central role, the current system faces threats (The Economist 2023a). James Bacchus (2022) criticises Joe Biden's "polite protectionism" as a continuation of Trump's anti-free trade, unilateral approach, describing it as a failed attempt to "manage trade". The Biden administration's trade policy, as outlined in bills on infrastructure, semi-conductor chips, and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), reflects a turn away from global engagement (Bacchus 2022: 2). The IRA, dubbed a "greenery" act, subsidises American producers, provides tax

cuts on renewable energy, and supports the production of electric vehicles, solar panels, and batteries, potentially diverting investments from the EU to the US. This move, initially overlooked by the European Union, is now criticised for being discriminatory and violating fair competition principles (Euractiv 2022). Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Vice-President Margrethe Vestager express discontent with the IRA, advocating for a common industrial policy and continental-scale R&D investment funded by the European Sovereignty Fund (The Economist 2023b). The protectionist race between the US and EU raises concerns about distorted global production and trade patterns, with one country's deglobalisation measures prompting others to follow suit, negatively impacting every nation (The Economist 2023c). In this context, the study focuses on the contrasting "Made in America" and "Made in Europe" narratives, exploring the implications of protectionist measures on global trade and production patterns.

3. Method and materials

This study, in line with research by Crespo-Fernandez (2016: 15), is a qualitative analysis with a focus on the lexical-emotional mechanisms of political discourse. Using Antconc 4.0.2 and Lingmotif 1 and 2, our objective is to unveil discursive traits in two subcorpora, illustrating politicians' strategic use of powerful words to achieve specific objectives. We concentrate on names and adjectives for emotional potential, assessing their role in defending verisimilitude (*logos*), saving "face" for politicians (*ethos*), and conveying emotional meaning (*pathos*). Sentiment Analysis refines the results, and a rhetorical discussion explores emotion metaphors and e-implicatures as devices for emotionally compelling political storytelling. This analysis falls within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), revealing linguistic manipulations shaping narratives around defragmentation and deglobalisation, particularly in response to economic protectionism and unilateralism. The eclectic method utilises Antconc, Lingmotif 1, and Lingmotif 2 to draw comprehensive insights from the discourses of prominent political leaders, providing a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay

between language, emotion, and political agendas (Fairclough 1989/2014; Fairclough & Wodak 1997; Simpson & Mayr 2010).

As we have mentioned, our corpus is limited in size, and divided into two subcorpora, US and EU, containing the most relevant speeches relating to the passage of the IRA, and the European response to it. Table 1 and Table 2 below outline the contents of each subcorpus.

SPEAKER	TITLE	VENUE	DATE
Joseph Biden	Previous to the passage of the IRA	White House	28/07/2022
Joseph Biden	Passage of IRA by Senate	White House	7/8/2022
Joseph Biden	IRA signature	White House	16/8/2022
Joseph Biden	After the passage of the IRA	White House	13/9/2023
Joseph Biden	State of the Union Address	The US Capitol	7/2/2023

Table 1. Speeches contained in US

SPEAKER	TITLE	VENUE	DATE
Ursula von der Leyen	State of the Union Address	Strasbourg	14/09/2022
Ursula von der Leyen	Before the Plenary of the European Parliament	Strasbourg	15/12/2022
Margrethe Vestager	Before the Plenary of the European Parliament	Strasbourg	15/12/2022
Margrethe Vestager	Cleantech for Europe Summit	Brussels	25/01/2023
Ursula von der Leyen	World Economic Forum	Davos	17/01/2023
Ursula von der Leyen	Statement on the Green Deal Industrial Plan	Brussels	01/02/2023

Table 2. Speeches contained in EU

Figures 1 and 2 below show computational data on the texts extracted with the aid of *Lingmotif* 1 software (Moreno Ortiz 2017):

Text Analysis

	Text Stats			Sentences	Words by Function		Words by Form	
Tokens	Types	T/T Ratio			Lexical	Grammatical	Single Words	Multiwords
14373	2669	18.57%	1059		6885	7488	13544	829

Figure 1. Text Analysis of subcorpus US with *Lingmotif*

Text Analysis

	Text Stats			Sentences	Words by Function		Words by Form	
Tokens	Types	T/T Ratio			Lexical	Grammatical	Single Words	Multiwords
14167	2643	18.66%	1133		7028	7139	13196	971

Figure 2. Text Analysis of subcorpus NEWS with *Lingmotif* (Moreno Ortiz 2017)

Lingmotif 1, the initial version of the Sentiment Analysis software, facilitates a basic comparison between the US and EU subcorpora. The US subcorpus (Figure 1) comprises 14,373 tokens and 2,669 types, organised into 1,059 sentences. Functionally, it consists of 6,885 lexical items and 7,488 grammatical items. The EU subcorpus (Figure 2) is slightly smaller, with 14,167 tokens and 2,643 types, featuring 7,028 lexical words and 7,139 grammatical words across 1,133 sentences. Comparatively, the European subcorpus exhibits slightly higher lexical richness (18.66% TTR) than its American counterpart (18.57% TTR), suggesting a greater complexity and lexical originality in the speeches by the European leaders. Notably, the EU corpus boasts higher lexical density (49.6% lexical items and 50.4% grammatical items) compared to the US corpus (47.9% lexical items and 52.1% grammatical items). This indicates that the EU corpus contains a broader variety of word types and fewer pronouns and auxiliaries relative to nouns and lexical verbs. Additionally, the EU corpus exhibits less verbosity in terms of words per sentence (12.5 compared to 13.5 in the US corpus), implying a slightly higher information density.

After an initial bird's eye view of our corpus, the first step in our analysis was to deal with each subcorpus in turn, in order to find out which lexical-semantic orientation each of them had taken.

Our two-step approach involves using Antconc 4.0.2 to identify the 20 most impactful nouns in each subcorpus, based on frequency and relevance. We define impactful words as strategically selected, considering positive or negative connotations. Simultaneously, Lingmotif 2 aids in

analysing lexical sentiment, revealing the 20 most positive and negative words. This dual analysis informs our understanding of each subcorpus. Finally, exploring metaphors and emotional implicatures, we discuss the narratives present in each subcorpus. Narratives, as manipulative devices, generate identities, scripts, and meaning for emotional experiences, shaping our interpretation of events (Partington & Taylor 2018: 26-29).

3.1. Powerful words: political stance and strategic goals in US

Using Antconc 4.0.2, we identified the 20 most frequent words in each subcorpus, focusing on nouns as powerful devices in political language (Crespo-Fernandez 2016; Vargas-Sierra 2021). Nouns provide stability and a concrete existence, and they are central to political narratives (Mooney & Evans 2019: 57). Adjectives were included for emotional content (*pathos*), while modality, expressed through modal verbs like *will* and *can* in the US, and *need to* and *should* in the EU, serves the purpose of political persuasion (Partington & Taylor 2018: 239). Our analysis prioritises these lexical elements, considering their significance in shaping political discourse.

Table 3 displays the 20 most powerful words in the US subcorpus, together with their collocations:

RANK	WORD	FREQUENCY	COLLOCATIONS
1.	America	89	made in America; the soul / future of America; America is vibrant, bright.
2.	people	78	American people; we, the people; young people
3.	American	68	American families, workers, labor, farmers, automakers, automobile companies, roads, bridges, highways, American-made products
4.	law	52	Law enforcement, CHIPS and Science Law, Inflation Reduction, Infrastructure law, this law, historic law
5.	act	42	Inflation Reduction Act, 19; PACT Act, Affordable Care, CHIPS and Science Act
6.	bill	42	This bill will fight / tackle reduce inflation, inflationary pressures; will cut costs.

7.	inflation	39	Fight inflation, reduce inflation, is coming down, has fallen. (We are) lowering inflation.
8.	tax	39	Tax credits, tax evaders, tax cheaters, (wealthy) taxpayers.
9.	families	38	Middle-class, working families, helping families
10.	jobs	37	Manufacturing jobs, good-paying jobs, decent, clean energy
11.	billion	32	Billion worth, billion in profits, billion-dollar companies
12.	nation	31	Our nation, unique, the best
13.	president	30	For all Americans, created more jobs than any President; mention to other Presidents.
14.	world	30	Leadership for the world, leading / we lead the world; (America) the most developed country in the world.
15.	country	29	Unite the country, your country, our country.
16.	energy	26	Energy security, solutions, costs, clean energy jobs, energy crisis.
17.	companies	24	Big drug companies, Fortune-500 companies, foreign shipping companies.
18.	reduction	24	Inflation Reduction Act, deficit reduction.
19.	good	23	good-paying jobs, good (American) people; good, decent, hardworking Americans.
20.	climate	23	Address / tackle / fight climate crisis, climate change, climate goals, climate leaders.

Table 3. Powerful words in US

As far as the subcorpus under scrutiny is concerned, nouns are in the majority in the 20 most frequent items; only two instances of adjectives being present. Hence, *America* (F89), *people* (F78) and *American* (F68)—the latter mostly in combination with *people*—are predominant above other nouns and combinatorial units. The central role of America, in a clear evocation of identity and emotion (Koschut 2020) is again underlined further in the list

below, with *nation* (F31) and *country* (F29) being defended against those who might threaten national identity and values, in a clear exercise of emotional othering (Koschut 2020: 10) that evokes populist devices. Examples of these are clear appeals to *pathos*:

(1) And today — today offers further proof that the soul of <u>America</u> is vibrant, the future of <u>America</u> is bright, and the promise of <u>America</u> is real and just beginning.

(2) It's about showing <u>America</u> and the <u>American</u> <u>people</u> that democracy still works in <u>America</u> — notwithstanding all the — all the talk of its demise — not just for the privileged few, but for all of us.

(3) And all this progress is part of our vision and plan and determined effort to get the job done for the <u>American</u> <u>people</u>.

This accent upon the country, the nation and its people seems to confirm that every politician uses populism to stir nationalistic emotions in their citizens' hearts (Freistein *et al.* 2020: 8), as shall be discussed.

(4) And when it does come, <u>people's</u> lives are better off — all <u>people</u>; the future becomes brighter; <u>the nation</u> is transformed.

(5) I believe in the very soul of this <u>nation</u>.

Furthermore, the subcorpus revolves around legal terms: the normative package which is the IRA and other laws passed to revamp the US economy—*law* (F52), *act* (F42) and *bill* (F42)—, and economic terms, such as *inflation*, (F39) which is most often collocated with *reduction* (F24), citing the name of the act itself, and *tax* (F39). Using technolects is a clear appeal to *logos*, since technical language contributes to evoking the use of intertextuality to transmit epistemic authority and expert knowledge on the part of the issuer of the message (Orts 2022):

(6) With the <u>Inflation Reduction Act</u> that I signed into <u>law</u>, we're taking on powerful interests to bring your health care costs down so you can sleep better at night.

(7)   From reauthorizing the Violence Against Women <u>Act</u>, to the Electoral Count Reform <u>Act</u>, to the Respect for Marriage <u>Act</u> that protects the right to marry the person you love.

Families (F38) and *jobs* (F37) are essential semantic items, as we will discuss below, as well as *billion* (F32). This is another clear appeal to *logos*, since numerical facts underline the current effort by the US Government to revamp the crisis:

(8)   We've reduced exorbitant bank overdraft fees, saving consumers more than $<u>1 billion</u> a year.

(9)   Third, it invests $<u>369 billion</u> — granted, I called for 500-plus — but it invests $<u>369 billion</u> to secure our future and to address the climate crisis, bringing down f<u>amily </u>bills by hundreds of dollars by providing working <u>families </u>tax credits.

(10)   Since we came to office, we've created nearly 10 million <u>jobs</u> — a record for any presidency up to this point.

President (F30) constitutes a self-reference. Together with the fact that the first person plural is as frequent as the singular, we could say that the President's presence and subjectivity is as important as his calls for patriotism and solidarity:

(11)   In fact, I signed over 300 bipartisan laws since becoming <u>President.</u>

References to his predecessors constitute a kind of "halo effect" (Thorndike 1920, in Arroyo 2012: 216) or "appeals to authority" (Partington & Taylor 2018: 48), from those whose opinions and judgments are valuable:

(12)   And fourth, last year Jill and I re-ignited the Cancer Moonshot that <u>President </u>Obama asked me to lead in our Administration.

All of these deictic references are a clear appeal to *ethos*. The *world* (F30) is measured as long as America is a *beacon* to it, and *energy* is also a central issue (F26); it is a problem, but also a solution to provide jobs. *Companies* (F24) are normally presented as powerful, rich tax evaders, again in an

emotional othering exercise, as opposed to the solid sense of identity evoked by the adjective *good* (F23), usually underlining the virtues of the American people. Compare:

(13) Fifty-five of the Fortune 500 <u>companies </u>made $40 billion in 2020, and didn't pay a single penny in federal income tax.

(14) We are a <u>good</u> people, the only nation in the world built on an idea.

Finally, *climate* (F23), the last word on the list, mainly collocates with *crisis* and *change*, but also links with the idea of Americans as leaders of innovation, with the aid of the IRA:

(15) This bill would be the most significant legislation in history to tackle the <u>climate crisis</u> and improve our security right away. And it'll give us a tool to meet the <u>climate</u> goals that are set — that we've agreed to — by cutting emissions and accelerating clean __ [sic].

We want to highlight another two words, outside the list. The populist slant of Biden's speeches is accentuated by the use of *folks* (F15), the casual (and overly familiar, compared to the EU speeches, as shall be seen) address by Biden to his fellow citizens, and, the pervading presence of *workers* (F15): American workers of every sector, constitutes one of the core concepts of Biden's narrative. Examples of Biden's colloquial, populist tone and his kind of *ethos* are found in the following fragments:

(16) <u>Folks</u>, the Inflation Reduction Act does so many things that, for so many years, so many of us have fought to make happen.

(17) I'm so sick and tired of companies breaking the law by preventing <u>workers</u> from organizing.

This data will be part of our discussion on metaphors and storytelling below.

3.2. In search of powerful words in the EU subcorpus

The same procedure adopted for the US subcorpus has been followed for the EU subcorpus. The use of powerful words will be discussed, showing the frequencies in the subcorpus and their collocations, while comparing the results with those found in the US subcorpus.

RANK	WORD	FREQUENCY	COLLOCATIONS
1.	Europe	94	Europe's inner strength, greatest success, Europe will prevail, made / produced in Europe, Europe at its best, long live Europe.
2.	European	80	European Union, Parliament, Commission, Council; European companies / industry / industrial policy; European Green Deal, European Chips Act, European Critical Raw Materials Act, European Sovereignty Fund, European Political Community, our European IRA
3.	market	60	Single Market (20), energy / hydrogen / gas / electricity/ labour market
4.	clean	50	Clean-tech (innovation, revolution, economy) / Clean Tech, clean transition / transformation / energy
5.	green	50	Green Deal, Green Industrial Future, green transition / transformation / subsidies / impact / projects
6.	energy	48	our energy, energy markets / system / prices / crisis / industrial base
7.	industry	42	Net-zero Industry Act, net-zero industry, clean-tech industry, European industry,
8.	tech	41	Clean-tech (innovation, revolution, economy) / Clean Tech, clean industry
9.	investment	39	investment plan, investment sector, strategic / new investment
10.	transition	38	Green transition, clean transition
11.	Union	37	Our Union, the European Union
12.	Ukraine	35	Our friends in Ukraine, people of Ukraine, Ukraine stands strong

13	states	36	Member States, The United States
14.	economy	45	Our / the EU's economy, market economy, green / clean / clean-tech / net-zero energy
15.	industrial	30	(Green Deal) Industrial Plan, industrial policy / power / prowess / innovation / transformation
16.	war	30	Putin's war, war on our / values / energy / economy, war in Europe, raging war, war of aggression, on Ukraine
17.	trade	28	Fair / war / international trade, trade agenda, trade with China
18.	companies	27	European companies, our companies, international companies
19.	members	27	Honourable members
20.	gas	23	gas prices / imports, our gas (imports), Russian gas, (oil and) gas

Table 4. Powerful words in EU subcorpus

A remarkable similarity with the US subcorpus can be seen, since the most frequent word is *Europe* (F94), referring to the political union or transnational unity the leaders belong to, followed by the adjective *Europeans* (F80). With no mention made of *people* in the 20 most powerful words in EU, this most likely suggests, as we shall see in our examples, that the populist hue is much softer in the EU subcorpus. The presence of Europe—also in the frequent use of the word *Union* (F37), which always refers to the continental coalition, *our Union*, and its Member States (F26)—as a tangible and solid reality, is akin to Biden's patriotic invocation of his country, and a powerful appeal to *pathos*. The second person plural possessive *our* (much scarcer in US) conveys a strong sense of solidarity that makes the audience part of the speaker's *persona*: the leader is the Union, in a clear appeal to *ethos*. There are also an important number of references to European bodies (the Council, the Parliament, the Commission), but, likewise, a high degree of intertextuality, bringing *logos* into the game, as several instruments passed by the Commission are mentioned, such as the European Green Deal, the European Chips Act, the European Critical Raw

Materials Act and the European Sovereignty Fund. All of this persuasive intertextual apparatus breathes pride into the discourse of both EU leaders, as the EU faces the war in Ukraine, which has led to a dearth of natural resources like gas, and trade failures, as an aftermath of the American IRA. Let's see some examples:

(18) We have brought <u>Europe</u>'s inner strength back to the surface.

(19) But <u>Europeans</u> are also coping courageously with this.

(20) That is why our <u>Union</u> will push for an ambitious global agreement for nature at the UN biodiversity conference in Montreal this year.

(21) We need to give our answer, our <u>European</u> IRA.

The word *market* mostly refers to another institution within the EU, the Single Market, but references to free trade (totally absent in Biden's discourse) are made with the expressions involving the international/energy/hydrogen/gas/electricity/labour markets, with clear examples of hyperbole:

(22) Our <u>Single Market</u> is unique. We have the largest <u>Single Market</u> worldwide.

(23) Our economies will rely ever more on international trade as the transition speeds up to open up more markets and to access the inputs needed for industry.

However, it is also used to express unity against a market rogue, China:

(24) When China gives subsidies to companies active on our Single Market, that amounts to an unfair advantage.

Similar to the US, the EU corpus features a predominant use of nouns. Notably, four adjectives, including the "hooray words" *green* and *clean*, contribute positive connotations, aligning with Whyte's classification (2003, in Partington & Taylor 2018: 29). The Green Deal Industrial Plan, REPowerEU, and the Clean Tech Plan emerge as EU responses to American industrial policy, strategically countering protectionist stances. These lexical choices shape a narrative emphasising environmental and technological

advancements, framing EU initiatives in a positive light amidst global economic shifts.

(25) Because in the end, the single most efficient thing we can do to support <u>Clean Tech</u> is to do the fundamentals of good governance, and to do them well. <u>Clean Tech</u> is a new sector under rapid development, but the basic role of government has not changed: To protect fair competition, uphold the rule of law and support a healthy, well-regulated business environment.

These are the main collocations for these two adjectives, but other mentions of *green* and *clean* are made, mainly with *tech* and *transition* (F41 and F38, respectively, in the list), accompanied with recurrent hyperbole, as in the following examples:

(26) Because the strength of our social market economy will drive the <u>green</u> and digital <u>transition</u>.

(27) This is unprecedented investment in <u>clean</u> technology across all sectors of the <u>green transition</u>.

(28) But this new competition environment also calls for a rethink on our side of how we support our industry's <u>green transition</u> and strengthen its global leadership.

Other words depicting the EU's ambitious activity are found in the uses of *energy* (F48), *industry* (F42), *economy* (F 45), *investment* (F 39), *trade* (F 28) and *gas* (F23), in a line that clearly departs from Biden's cosmology and unveils a future where sustainability and commerce are no longer incompatible. For example:

(29) So, the only sustainable way for our SMEs and our <u>industries</u> is the transition to <u>renewable</u> energy. <u>Renewable</u> <u>energy</u> is not only affordable but it is of course also home-grown. And it creates good jobs here in Europe.

(30) The right direction is clear: to transition the EU's economy to net-zero in under three decades.

(31)   Because we need the private investments and a capital market that supports those private <u>investments</u>, and the variety of <u>investment</u> forms.

(32)   The final pillar is open and fair <u>trade</u>.

(33)   And through collective effort, we brought down <u>gas</u> prices quicker than anyone expected.

A point of departure from the US subcorpus is the presence of the words *Ukraine* and *war*, normally in combination with each other. This is understandable, since the country's war is indelibly linked with the EU's economy and future, notwithstanding the US strong involvement in the conflict. Here are some examples, which are further clear appeals to *pathos*:

(34)   Let us be very clear: much is at stake here. Not just for Ukraine — but for all of Europe and the world at large.

(35)   This is not only a war unleashed by Russia against Ukraine. This is a war on our energy, a war on our economy, a war on our values and a war on our future.

Finally, one indication of how the EU leaders' tone departs from Biden's, is the use of the word *members* to address their audience, always accompanied with *Honourable*, in contrast to the informal, unsophisticated address of the US President:

(36)   Honourable Members; My fellow Europeans.

The pre-eminence of the word in the subcorpus sets a very different *ethos* in the more formal and courteous ways that the two European leaders address their audience.

4. Emotion words: describing positive and negative polarity in the corpus

For our comprehensive lexical-semantic study, Lingmotif 2 was employed to identify words with emotional polarity in the subcorpora. Lingmotif 2, an improvement on Lingmotif 1, calculates Text Sentiment Score (TSS) and Text Sentiment Intensity (TSI). TSS considers both the number and

position of sentiment items, while TSI evaluates the proportion of positive or negative sentences, offering nuanced sentiment analysis.

4.1. In search of emotional polarity in the US subcorpus

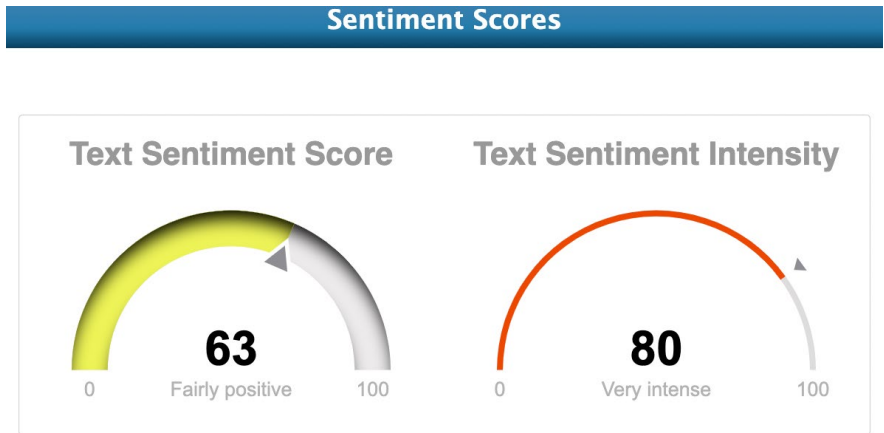Figures 3 and 4 show the visual representation of sentiment polarity and intensity:
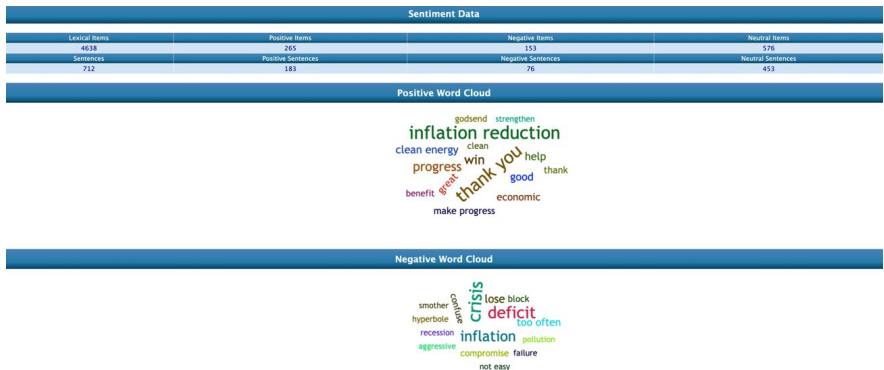

Figure 3. TSI, TSS in US

Figure 4. Sentiment data and word cloud with positive and negative words in US

The US subcorpus exhibits a predominantly positive and intense emotional polarity, as reflected in Biden's speeches. Figure 4 highlights the prevalence of positive words and sentences over negative ones. Notably, *inflation*, a frequent term, becomes the most positive item when associated with reduction, the focal point of our study. In fact, paradoxically, words like *inflation*, *crisis*, and *deficit*, which are conventionally negative, are strategically reversed to become positive in specific contexts. Lingmotif 2 identifies *crisis* and *deficit* as frequent negative words, but their euphemistic use in political discourse serves to address challenges without losing face, a tactic employed by politicians to mitigate harsh issues affecting citizens (Crespo-Fernandez 2016:2).

(37) This bill tackles <u>inflation</u> by lowering the <u>deficit</u> and lowering costs for regular families.

(38) We have more to do, but here at home, <u>inflation</u> is coming down.

(39) Look, the Inflation Reduction Act is also the most significant investment ever to tackle the <u>climate crisis</u>.

These instances exemplify politically correct language, representing an ambiguous and open-ended use of the name of the act, reflecting the framework of US industrial policy (Bordoff 2022). A notable semantic inversion is the "hyperbolic euphemism" (Crespo Fernández 2016: 13), aiming to enhance challenging realities in a positive manner. For instance, the negative qualifier *aggressive* (appearing three times) is employed to portray the government's policies as valiant and well-intentioned in this subcorpus.

(40) And we are going to take <u>the most aggressive</u> action ever, ever, ever to confront the climate crisis and increase our energy security — ever in the whole world.

(41) And the Inflation Reduction Act takes <u>the most aggressive</u> action to combat climate as — as the Speaker said, "Ever, ever, ever."

The hooray word *clean*, which, as seen above, is very frequent in the EU subcorpus, appears here only in conjunction with *energy*, with seven occurrences. In the example below, the IRA is praised again, and several

traits of Biden's speeches are displayed, such as hyperbolic euphemism and repetition for emphasis:

(42)   [The IRA] It will — and it will be the most important investment — not hyperbole — the most important investment that we've ever made in our energy security, and developing cost savings and job-creating <u>clean energy</u> solutions for the future.

The word *godsend* (with a clearly religious hue) and positive epithets like *good* (a powerful word in the subcorpus, according also to Antconc)—with which the US leader compliments the working class—and *great* (*great day*, *great crowd*, *great American story*), are examples of the fairytale cosmos that Biden paints for his audience:

(43)   [The act] It's a <u>Godsend</u>. It'll literally be a <u>Godsend</u> for many families.

(44)   This law is for you and for the millions of people like you: <u>good</u>, decent, hardworking Americans.

(45)   As we gather here tonight, we are writing the next chapter in the <u>great American story</u>, a story of progress and resilience.

Negative words like *recession*, *failure* and *smother* are used as alienating elements to criticise the opposing party, the Republicans, in the common political duality identity vs otherness (Charteris Black 2018: 163; Partington & Taylor 2018: 519), where "emotional othering" (Koschut 2021: 11) is deployed to save face and attribute blame to others when dealing with bitter scenarios:

(46)   That doesn't sound like a <u>recession</u> to me.

(47)   All this progress was declared a <u>failure</u> before it was a success when we introduced it.

(48)   It includes ensuring that we create clean energy opportunities in frontline and fence-line communities that have been <u>smothered</u>

— <u>smothered</u> by the legacy of pollution, and fight environmental injustice that's been going on for so long.

Another good example of contempt and disgust toward the Other is the consistent use of *too often* (F6) to reproach those opposed to the policies of the government, which is in charge of *making progress* (F5):

(49)   <u>Too often</u> we hand the biggest microphone to the critics and the cynics who delight in declaring failure while those committed to making real progress do the hard work of governing.

4.2. A study on sentiment polarity in the EU subcorpus

Following on from our study on word frequency and relevance, we now look to the results provided by Lingmotif 2 on emotional words. Figures 5 and 6 summarise the findings:
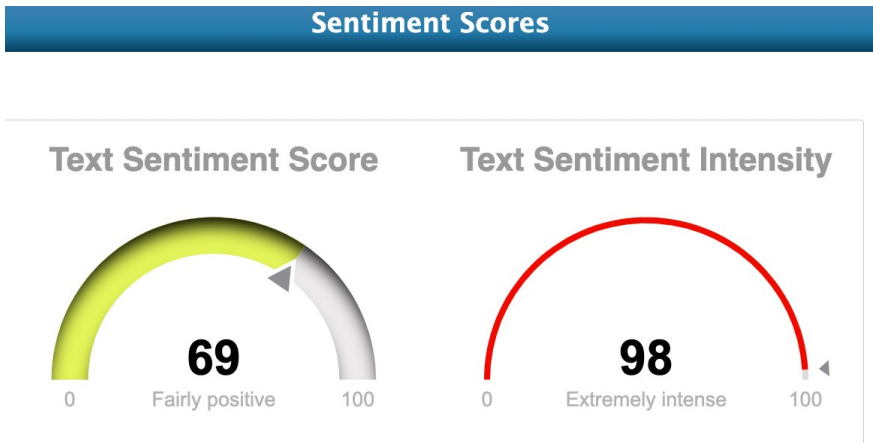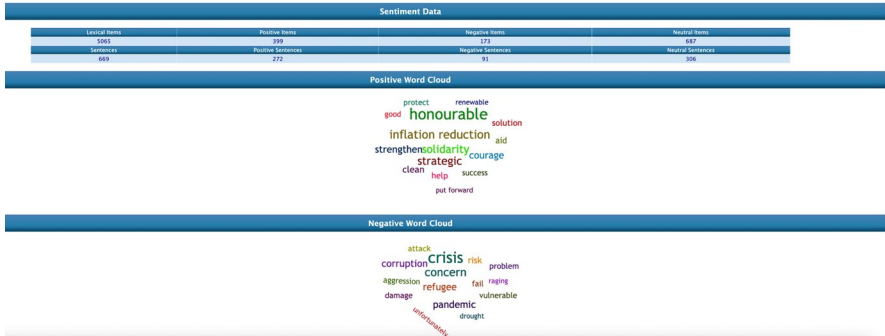

Figure 5. TSI, TSS in EU

Figure 6. Sentiment data and word cloud with positive and negative words in EU

The emotional activity in the EU subcorpus surpasses that of the US, with a slightly more "fairly positive" sentiment (TSS 69) and with higher intensity (TSI 98). The Lingmotif 1 analysis revealed the sophistication and informativeness of the EU subcorpus compared to the US subcorpus. Both EU texts employ *logos* and *pathos* for persuasion, but the EU leaders' discourse demonstrates greater sophistication, interpersonal politeness, and emotional activity. Notably, "honourable" and "inflation reduction" emerge as the most frequent positive items in EU, with the latter, initially cheerful in the US context, becoming a contentious reference in the EU due to objections against the US law.

(50)   While we keep working with our US partners to avoid negative consequences for Europe of the US Inflation Reduction Act, we need to continue pushing for Europe to become a decarbonised, low—energy—price continent.

(51)   First of all, the 'Buy American' logic, that underpins large parts of the Inflation Reduction Act […].

Truer to the software analysis—and pronounced appeals to *pathos*—are the positive words *solidarity* (F11) and *courage* (F9), both constituting references to brotherhood with struggling Ukraine, which is mentioned as a strong country, as noted in our frequency study:

(52) And I stand here with the conviction that with <u>courage and solidarity</u>, Putin will fail and Europe will prevail.

(53) The first one is of course the enormous bravery and the enormous <u>courage</u> of the Ukrainian people.

We also see very positive uses of the adjectives *strategic* (F11), *clean* (F8)—the latter of which was already discussed in our initial analysis on EU lexis—and *renewable* (F5), also a hooray word. All of them link *logos* with *pathos*, as an optimistic future of transition to green energy is being carefully mapped out by its leaders. These ideas are reinforced with the words *strengthen* (F9) and *strength* (F4), which convey the EU's strategic and commercial stance, critically responsive to US measures:

(54) And that is important to ensure that when we achieve our <u>strategic</u> targets, we do that with sufficient flexibility to adjust to a change of circumstance around us so that we will fight climate change, but we will do that by also enabling our industrial strategy.

(55) With REPowerEU, we have doubled our target: we want to produce ten million tonnes of <u>renewable</u> hydrogen in the EU every year by 2030.

(56) And when I say that we want <u>to strengthen</u> the relationship with the US within the TTC, it is also to say that we will not let the Inflation Reduction Act destroy this relationship.

Regarding negative words, most of them are examples of hyperbolic euphemism, devised to dress dreary certainties with positive hues. The most frequent item (as in the US corpus), *crisis*, has 11 occurrences and, even if it does not appear in the list of the 20 most powerful words, its noteworthiness is clear. Together with *concern* (F7), *refugee* (F5) (in the context of the Ukrainian war) and *pandemic* (F5), they denote grim realities, yet their meaning in context becomes positive, since they turn into challenges that the EU is ready to overcome:

(57) <u>We need fair and quick procedure</u>s, a system that is <u>crisis proof</u> and quick to deploy, and a permanent and legally binding mechanism that ensures solidarity.

(58) A braver Union. Bolder in responding to historic challenges and daily <u>concerns</u> of Europeans.

(59) Europe <u>has stood at Ukraine's side.</u> With weapons. With funds. With hospitality for <u>refugees</u>.

(60) After an unprecedented <u>pandemic</u>, our economic output overtook pre-crisis levels in record time.

At other times, negative items such as *corruption* (5) and *risk* (4) are enemies that haunt the EU. The latter mostly appears in reference to the American IRA, regarding the fact that it is an act that can threaten fair trade globally and that the EU must react to, as discussed above:

(61) <u>Corruption</u> erodes trust in our institutions.

(62) Yet, there is a <u>risk</u> that the Inflation Reduction Act can lead to unfair competition.

(63) The fact that we find that it [the IRA] contains a number of <u>questionable provisions</u> and runs the <u>risk</u> of diluting our shared sense of purpose when it comes to tackling the climate crisis is <u>something we need to respond to.</u>

5. Narratives about the end of globalisation; a conclusion

As Freistein *et al.* (2020: 8) affirm, language is not a neutral instrument, but a medium of construction of social reality, "with all its performative effects on power relations". Narratives are, then, the key device to make sense of social action and organise experiences in everyday life. Metaphors and emotional implicatures are used in the political storytelling of our two subcorpora in such a way that citizens from both the United States and the European Union closely interlink their existential causes with abstract deglobalisation issues that may or may not—directly, or indirectly—play a part in their daily life. This is where emotions come into the scenario, since abstract constructs such as *free trade* or *protectionism* can be instilled into people's sentiments through discourse when emotions are deployed as persuasive tools to make them emotionally appealing. Plots, roles and metaphors interconnect the sphere of human experience (our everyday

lives) with the political sphere through narratives: in this case the narrative (common to both subcorpora) that national, or, in the case of the EU, trans-national, sovereignty should be utterly protected, since such sovereignty symbolically fosters growth and unity and excludes potential foes that may damage its core. Narratives and emotions then become deeply intertwined, since storytelling "triggers emotions and emotions contribute, in turn, to the powerful effects of storytelling" (Freistein *et al.* 2020: 11). Both subcorpora contain speeches of a deliberative kind (Charteris Black 2018: 7-9). They are not really celebratory, but strategic pieces of rhetoric. Laws, treaties, conventions and other legal constructs must be passed, decisions must be taken, controversial policies must be displayed and defended, which require the utmost persuasion on the part of their issuers. The world is changing swiftly, and so must strategy.

In terms of the US subcorpus, even though Biden's politics should be ostensibly different from Trump's (certainly his discourse, as we have seen, is far from the dysphemistic nature of his predecessor's), he has been accused by the WTO of exerting a—soft, but blatant—polite protectionism. He uses a colloquial style of address and has a penchant for repetition and emphasis, as shown in these words of praise for American workers:

(64)   Folks, <u>they're the people — they're the people</u>, under my leadership, who are going to <u>get help first.</u> <u>They're </u>going to be<u> the people helped first</u>—,

These factors, together with the imagery of everyday experience in his speeches ("America's story of progress and resilience"), make his discourse very close to the simplified language and affective triggers of populist discourse. America, *the nation* is the main metaphorical ontology at its core, the country (which has suffered, which has been scorned, which has been accused of not being the Empire it once was) is, again, as ever, a bright beacon for the West. And when defending his legislation in front of the nation, the president talks about the IRA—and, by extension, about all the normative apparatus passed by his administration—as the enabling mechanism to pursue love, welfare and dignity for "good, hardworking Americans". The notion of America as a space from which the dangers of a hostile world must be kept out is activated with the metaphor *America*

is a house, connecting with "the natural human instinct to protect one's possessions" (Freistein *et al.* 2020: 14): American people, American-made products, American workers.

The two main silent metaphors in Biden's argumentation are the word *trade* (in the belief that "increasing trade has been harmful to the American economy and workforce", in Bacchus 2022: 7), and the collocation *industrial policy*, neither of them ever mentioned or considered, despite the strong protectionist character of the IRA. The only kind of human rights to be cherished are those of American workers and American families. After all, as Bacchus (2022: 8) affirms, Biden's "worker-centric trade is merely a new rhetorical cloak for long-familiar forms of protectionism", which aligns with Trump's unilateral approach. And along the same lines of populism, Us vs the Other, everything that threatens the *house* is conceived as coming from outside, whereby economic problems (*debt*, *deficit*, *unemployment*) are not denied, but externalised, and convert into challenges already overcome under his presidency:

> (65)   Because of those record <u>deficits</u>, no president added more to the national <u>debt</u> in any four years <u>than my predecessor</u>.

The aggressor in Biden's tale is the Republican party, who have failed the people "too often", and big corporations, "who have not paid their fair share". But the *world* as a veritable foe is embodied in fear towards, and hatred to, China:

> (66)   And let's be clear: winning the competition with <u>China</u> should unite all of us.

This reinforcement of the cosmos within the *house* against those who could threaten it might explain the integration, unilateralism and withdrawal of the outside world (of trade) which seeps into Biden's narrative. This administration seems as deglobalising as the administration of his predecessor, albeit without the populist brand-name.

On another note, regarding the European subcorpus, EU leaders overall have more frequently been accused of having a—far from populist—rationalist, technocratic character (Stie 2015). However, the truth is that, according to the data gathered in this study, the speeches by its leaders are

emotion-stirring and passionate; they are imbued with feelings of attachment and love for those who are part of the Union, as well as for their suffering neighbours, the valiant Ukrainians. This subcorpus, with all its emotional intensity (significantly higher than in Biden's speeches) and its positive tone, seems to symbolise a new departure from technocracy represented by Von der Leyen and Vestager, whose discourse is still much more ritualistic and ceremonial, and less repetitive (hence, lexically slightly richer, as our initial study showed) than Biden's. This is palpable when addressing the "Honourable Members" that constitute the Union, yet the rhetorical schemas in the speeches are sophisticated, when, for instance, repetition and parallelism are combined:

(67) <u>From that very moment</u>, Europeans neither hid nor hesitated. They found the courage to do the right thing. And <u>from that very moment</u>, our Union as a whole has risen to the occasion.

The ontology which is Europe manifests itself in the metaphor that *Europe is a human being,* whose "inner strength" and "success" must make this *Union* (which is neither a nation not a country, but a much more complex reality) "prevail". What is more, the sense of identity is reinforced by the leaders' deixis, that points to the Union to be "ours"; "we", "Europeans" are Europe and should also be proud by what is "made/produced in Europe". The Union, Europe, the Europeans, are coping courageously with the energy crisis. Moreover, they are helping their Ukrainian neighbours: refugees, who are normally targeted as the Other in populist discourse, are "welcome" and "sheltered" in Von der Leyen's discourse. The Other bears the name of a nation, Russia, and its leader, Putin, who is going to be vanquished with Ukraine's bravery, courage and the EU's unity, three very inspiring hooray words:

(68) But <u>Russia</u> keeps on actively <u>manipulating</u> our energy market.

(69) <u>Putin's war of aggression</u> will fail mainly for two reasons, the first one being the the enormous <u>bravery and the enormous courage</u> of the Ukrainian people; but the second reason is the international community's remarkable <u>unity.</u>

The sense of unity is emphasised precisely because the Union is not a nation, but an array of many multi-cultured countries who must take difficult decisions together to face a *green* and *clean*—the most powerful hooray words in the subcorpus, deftly deployed—transition to "renewable energy", demonstrating that climatic issues are taken much more to heart by the Union than in the IRA, and notwithstanding the sustainability that the American act seems to pursue. Precisely for that reason, the IRA is another metaphorical ontology that represents a different embodiment of the Other; another enemy who is presenting Europe with momentous challenges in their trade affairs. There is no personification of the USA, or reference to Biden other than with cold politeness. It is the law itself that embodies a menace, but Europe's leaders are warily negotiating its consequences:

(70) We are working very closely with the Biden administration <u>on the most concerning aspects of the IRA.</u>

And Vestager's censure of the new American law is clear:

(71) The <u>Inflation Reduction Act</u> is therefore a very strong pull factor to move investment and jobs to the US <u>at the cost of partners and allies like the EU</u>. This is <u>counterproductive</u> in terms of climate and sustainability outcomes. It's also a <u>violation</u> of international trade rules. But in a wider sense, it goes <u>against the spirit</u> of our transatlantic partnership. And we have made this clear with the Biden Administration.

Both leaders ardently bolster the questioned European identity, steadfastly championing Ukraine, nurturing climate transition, and guarding against unfair market practices, primarily from China, alongside the metaphorical construct of the IRA, depicted as an imminent threat.

This study underscores the fundamental role of discourse analysis in comprehensively exploring the nuances of political persuasion and emotion within Western political discourse, particularly highlighting its significance for translation amidst an evolving landscape marked by deglobalising trends. Echoing Freistein et al.'s (2020: 8) assertion that language is not impartial but shapes social reality and power dynamics, this analysis reveals narratives as essential tools for interpreting societal actions and

everyday experiences. It illuminates how emotional triggers and metaphors intricately intertwine citizens' existential concerns with the abstract issues of deglobalisation, profoundly shaping their lives. Emotions, serving as persuasive tools, infuse abstract concepts like free trade or protectionism with compelling emotional appeal. The interplay of narratives and emotions accentuates their substantial influence, mutually reinforcing in a persuasive cycle. For translators, this intricate fabric of emotion-laden discourse presents both challenges and opportunities in faithfully conveying these nuanced messages. While the EU leaders' discourse exhibits a more explicit communicative intent, Biden's seemingly straightforward language conceals complexities, encapsulating profound messages within a dynamically shifting global context. Ultimately, this study humbly endeavours to offer insights into the intricate web of emotion and persuasion in political discourse, recognising the profound importance of discourse analysis in aiding translation within an ever-evolving global landscape.

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BIONOTE

MARÍA ÁNGELES ORTS LLOPIS has dedicated her career to teaching and translating English in the realms of law, economy, and business. Over the years, she has conducted research and administered postgraduate courses both internationally–IIT, Chicago; Brooklyn Law School, NY; Bergamo, Italy; Aarhus, Denmark; Vaasa, Finland and the Norwegian School of Economics–and domestically (Pompeu-Fabra University; University of Valencia; UPC). Currently serving as a Full Professor at the University of Murcia's Department of Translation and Interpreting, she focuses on Legal and Economic Translation in her lectures. Her extensive publications, particularly in legal and economic English, underscore her academic contributions. Presently, her research investigates the emotional dimensions of economic crises and those of gender violence and discrimination through

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