

Piotr Cap
University of Łódź

Issues in cognitive discourse research: Positioning, representation, conceptualization

1. Introduction: Cognitive Linguistics and CDA

One of the most distinctive developments in discourse research in the past 15 years or so has been the emergence of ‘cognitive-linguistic CDA’ (Hart 2018; Cap 2018a; etc.), a critical approach incorporating vast amounts of work on spatial cognition and conceptualization (Talmy 2000; Fauconnier and Turner 2002; Levinson 2003; Evans and Chilton 2010; among many others) into various interdisciplinary studies of ideologically motivated construals of meaning within different discourse domains (e.g., Cienki, Kaal and Maks 2010; Hart 2010; Dunmire 2011; Kaal 2012; Filardo Llamas 2010, 2013). The cognitive-linguistic approach to CDA provides a disciplined theoretical account of the conceptual import of linguistic choices identified as potentially ideological and affords an excellent lens on persuasive, manipulative and coercive properties of discourse, worldview and conceptualization which have hitherto been beyond the radar of CDA (Hart 2014, 2018; Hart and Kaal 2016; Hart and Cap 2014).

As noted by Hart (2018), cognitive-linguistic contributions to CDA fall, roughly, into three areas of study. First, there is image schema analysis, which explores the structuring of situations and events in image schemas, that is abstract knowledge structures reflecting patterns of embodied experience (Mandler 2004). Second, a bulk of cognitive-linguistic tools are used in metaphor analysis, a vast area where the combination of cognitive and critical methodologies is perhaps the most acknowledged, having produced multiple empirical as well as theoretical studies under several, frequently overlapping banners such as Critical Metaphor Analysis (e.g. Charteris-Black 2005; Musolff and Zinken 2009), Critical Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Koller 2014, Hart 2014), and Political Metaphor Analysis (Musolff 2016). Third, cognitive-linguistic methodologies provide successfully for the study of *Discourse Space (DS)* – a conceptual structure including/representing the ontologies and worldviews defined or presupposed by the text (Chilton 2004, 2014). In this paper I describe how the cogni-

tive-critical analysis of DS proceeds with regard to *positioning*. Positioning is a complex strategy which concerns where we situate ourselves within a DS and where other actors and actions are located relative to this position (Gavins 2007; Chilton 2014; Hart 2018). In the words of Hart:

[positioning] can be spatial, temporal, social, epistemic and axiological. It may pertain to grammatical constructions effected through a given viewing arrangement in a mental space or to larger stretches of text effected through the construction of [a worldview] inside a discourse space. Positioning strategies are realized conceptually in point-of-view shifts and deictic organization. They rely on a more general cognitive capacity for perspective-taking (Hart 2018: 82).

In the first part of the paper (Section 2) I review the cognitive models and the models of spatial cognition in particular which made the most significant contribution to positioning and discourse space research in general. Discussing Chilton's Deictic Space Theory (Chilton 2005, 2010, 2014), as well as Levinson's (2003) spatial frames of reference and Text World Theory (Werth 1999; Gavins 2007), I describe the input of cognitive-linguistic research in the account of the basic deictic architecture of Discourse Space (Chilton 2005). I particularly acknowledge the role of that research in elucidating the DS center-periphery arrangement underpinning ideological and value-based positions in discourse. At the same time, I argue that models such as Werth's and especially Chilton's DST reveal further theoretical potential which has not yet been exploited. On their current assumptions, the cognitive contribution to CDA in the area of discourse space research involves primarily issues of mental processing and conceptual organization. It thus focuses on how people establish representations and ideologically charged worldviews, rather than explaining how they *are made* to establish a worldview, in the service of speaker's goals.

In response to this deficit, the second part of the paper (Section 3) outlines a more recent model – Proximization Theory (PT) (Cap 2013, 2017) – discussing its application in state interventionist discourse (specifically, anti-terrorist discourse) and, potentially, in other discourses of the public sphere. Proximization is a discursive strategy of crisis and conflict construction, which draws on the movement dynamics of entities positioned in Discourse Space. It consists in presenting physically and temporally distant events and states of affairs (including 'distant' and therefore adversarial ideologies) as increasingly consequential to the (public/political) speaker and his or her addressee positioned in the deictic center of the DS. Negative developments are envisioned to generate negative emotions, such as fear and general anxiety, facilitating realization of social goals such as legitimization of ideological postures and the ensuing policies. Projecting the distant entities as gradually encroaching upon the center, public/political speakers seek legitimization of actions aimed to neutralize the growing impact of the negative, 'foreign', 'alien', 'antagonistic', or just plainly 'hostile' adversarial entities. Thus, Proximization Theory has its lens on not only the bipolar static location of the center-periphery entities, but also on the discursive construal of *movement* from the DS periphery to the center. Unlike the other models, it fully cap-

tures the complex ideological positioning in political/public discourse and, crucially, the dynamics of emotively charged conflict between the opposing ideologies of the DS entities.

2. Formative Models: *Representing* Worldviews in Discourse Space

The most comprehensive of the established cognitive-linguistic (CL) models of discourse and (critical) discourse study seems Chilton's (2004, 2005, 2014) Deictic Space Theory (DST), though we must not brush aside several other approaches, such as Levinson's (2003), Werth's (1999) and Gavins's (2007).

In Chilton (2004: 57) a central claim is made that in processing any discourse people 'position' other entities in their 'world' (Werth 1999; Gavins 2007) by 'positioning' these entities in relation to themselves along three axes in three dimensions, 'spatial', 'temporal', and 'modal'. This arrangement presupposes the primacy of the spatial dimension as the remaining dimensions involve conceptualizations in spatial terms. Time is conceptualized in terms of motion through space ('the time to act has arrived') and modality is conceptualized in terms of distance ('remotely possible') or as a metaphoric extension of the binary opposition between the close of the remote (see below). The origin of the three dimensions is at the deictic center, which includes the symbolic Self, i.e. *I*, *we*, etc. All other entities and processes exist relative to ontological spaces defined by their coordinates on the space (*s*), time (*t*) and modality (*m*) axes (Figure 1). This makes it possible, Chilton argues, to conceptualize the ongoing kaleidoscope of ontological configurations activated by text.

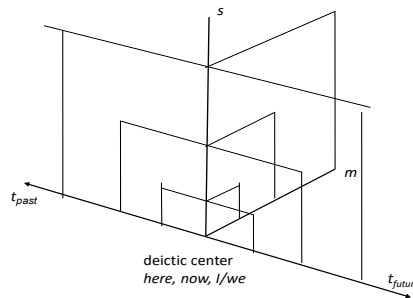


Figure 1. Dimensions of deixis (adapted from Chilton 2004: 58)

Figure 1 represents the basic interface of cognition and language shared by most of the CL models trying to account for the construal of discourse. At the heart of the account is the concept of deixis and, what follows, deictic markers. The spatial markers, such as *I/we* and *they*, 'located' on the *s* axis are the core of the linguistic representation, which is usually a representation in terms of binary oppositions extending

into all three dimensions. Typically, entities and processes construed as ‘close’ in the spatio-temporal dimension are assigned positive values within the modal dimension, while those construed as ‘distant’ are at the same time (or as a result) assigned negative values. In models other than Chilton’s, the central status of the spatial deixis is reflected at theoretical and terminological levels, where ‘US/THEM’ is more of a conceptual than solely linguistic dichotomy (cf. Text World Theory in Werth [1999], Gavins [2007] and Kaal [2012]).

How do models such as DST work for CDA? In his study of the discourse of the Kosovo war, Chilton (2004: 142) analyzes the following text, an excerpt from President Clinton’s TV address to the American nation on March 24, 1999^{1,2}:

(25) Ending this tragedy is a moral imperative. (26) It is also important to America’s national interest. (27) Take a look at this map. (28) Kosovo is a small place, but it sits on a major fault line between Europe, Asia and the Middle East, at the meeting place of Islam and both the Western and Orthodox branches of Christianity. (29) To the south are our allies, Greece and Turkey; to the north, our new democratic allies in Central Europe. (30) And all around Kosovo there are other small countries, struggling with their own economic and political challenges – countries that could be overwhelmed by a large, new wave of refugees from Kosovo. (31) All the ingredients for a major war are there: ancient grievances, struggling democracies, and in the center of it all a dictator in Serbia who has done nothing since the Cold War ended but start new wars and pour gasoline on the flames of ethnic and religious division. (32) Sarajevo, the capital of neighboring Bosnia, is where World War I began. (33) World War II and the Holocaust engulfed this region. (34) In both wars Europe was slow to recognize the dangers, and the United States waited even longer to enter the conflicts. (35) Just imagine if leaders back then had acted wisely and early enough, how many lives could have been saved, how many Americans would not have had to die. (36) We learned some of the same lessons in Bosnia just a few years ago. (37) The world did not act early enough to stop that war, either.

Chilton’s DST analysis can be summarized as follows. At the intersection point (the origin) of the three axes (see Figure 2 below; numbers refer to the sentences or [30’-31’] sentence parts responsible for a particular conceptual operation) is ‘this map’ (President Clinton is seen pointing to a visual aid). The map itself does not represent an objective reality; its task is to launch a reality space to be specified by the verbal commentary. A presupposition obtains: addressees must, in order to interpret the unfolding text as coherent, infer that (27) and the following sentences are intended to motivate (26) (that national interests are at stake) and (25) (that action is a moral imperative). On that presupposition, sentences (28), (29) and (30) can be regarded as setting up a ‘map representation’ space. This construal involves a conventional pragmatic function, by which cartographic images are taken to represent objective reality spaces (Fauconnier & Turner 2002). ‘This map’ in the studio (or ‘in’ the viewer’s area)

¹ The day the NATO intervention in Kosovo began.

² I have saved the original numbering of the sentences (25-37).

represents a conceptual space that is mutually understood as remote (viz. ‘there’ in [31]), but which the map presented ‘here’ and ‘now’ makes conceptually close. In the process of defining the map’s conceptual projection space the use of ‘could’ ([30] in ‘countries that could be overwhelmed by a large new wave of refugees from Kosovo’), prompts the viewer/addressee to launch a space at the possibility point of *m* and in the near future zone of *t*. This is *not* part of the televised map picture; it is part of the conceptual ‘picture’ produced by the discourse, which conflates the apparently remote Kosovo space and the viewer/addressee space. The resulting proximity of the Kosovo space and its negatively charged entities (as opposed to the positively charged entities [President Clinton, his audience, allies in Europe] in the deictic center) allows transition to (31), which expresses a generalized likelihood of a major military conflict and thus threat to American interests. In (31), the positioning of the (31’) embedded clause (‘... who has done nothing since the Cold War but start new wars and pour gasoline on the flames of ethnic and religious divisions’) as syntactic and intonational focus furthers this likelihood by a metaphoric phrase: the ‘flames of divisions’ (refugees fleeing from Kosovo) will cause a major ‘fire’ in the region as they ‘meet’ with (more) ‘gasoline’.

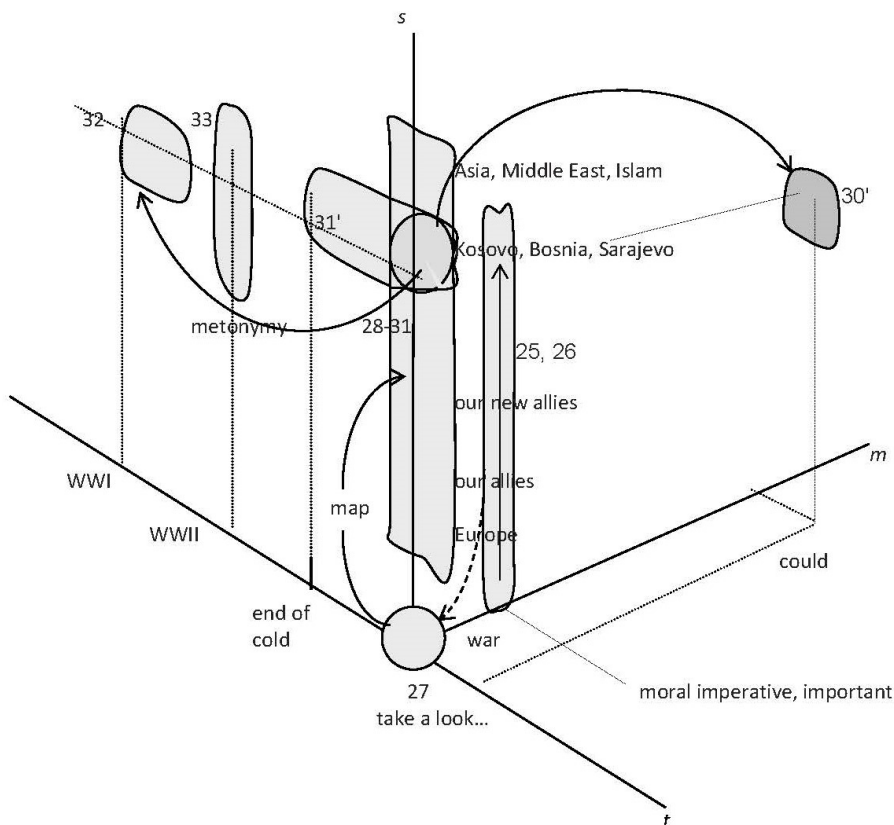


Figure 2. Events located on spatial, temporal and modal axes (adapted from Chilton 2004: 144)

On the *t* axis, the geopolitical and historical space is extended ‘backwards’, metonymically, by reference to the spatial location ‘Sarajevo’ (32). Kosovo is linked to Sarajevo, and Sarajevo is linked metonymically to World War I, and World War I to World War II and the Holocaust. The links can be considered metonymic since the relation between Kosovo, Sarajevo and WWI is one of conceptual ‘contiguity’ in a geopolitical frame which holds events progressing from the remote past toward the present. ‘Sarajevo’ is used to evoke the whole WWI frame, and ‘this region’ (33) is used in the same metonymic fashion to evoke the WWII and the Holocaust frames. These discursively linked frames constitute the groundwork for two sets of generalizations: (31) relating to the geographical space conceptualized ‘around’ Kosovo, and (34)-(35) relating to a flashback historical space conceptualized in connection with Sarajevo. These generalizations are used in turn to wrap up the entire representation ([36]-[37]) and justify its initial point (25), that is a moral imperative to act.

Altogether, generating analyses such as above, Paul Chilton’s DST provides CDA with excellent insights in the representation and positioning of entities in (political) discourse space (or ‘text world’, to use other terminologies such as Werth’s and Gavins’s). First, it recognizes the fundamental role of distance from the ‘Self’ entities (in the deictic center) in conceptualizing other entities and events in political/public discourse. Obvious as this may seem, it is a vital prerequisite for any further inquiry in linguistic ways of construing distant objects and happenings as close to the deictic center. Second, it acknowledges that the distance is *relative* and that it is *symbolically* represented through discourse. This in turn makes possible further explorations in how the symbolic representations can be evoked strategically, for pragmatic effects. Third, the DST model shows that ‘distance’ involves a number of mutually interactive dimensions, which make mental representations of entities and events arise from a combined activation of different cognitive domains such as spatial, temporal and modal.

There are at the same time some obviously unattended issues, in both DST and the related approaches grounded in the classical conception of deixis, deictic dimensions, and notably, deictic markers. As for DST and Text World Theory (Werth 1999; Gavins 2007), they can be described as models of general and relatively ‘fixed’ conceptual organization of entities in (public/political) discourse space. The aim of DST is, by Chilton’s own admission (2004), to demonstrate how people’s mental representations are positioned with respect to three cognitive dimensions; it is *not* to show – from a pragmatic standpoint – how *people are made to establish representations* that would suit the accomplishment of the discourse goals pursued by the speaker. The reason is that DST does not offer a systematic account of *quantifiable* lexico-grammatical items responsible for positioning entities and events at different (measurable) distances from the deictic center – distances that would mark the intensity of pragmatic powers of these entities/events. While it recognizes the ideological, legitimizing, coercive, etc. discourse roles of certain words and expressions, it arbitrarily assigns them a static position on one of the three axes, in fixed distance to/from the deictic center

(cf. Figure 2). Consequently, conceptual shifts from the DS periphery to the center are hardly accounted for; there is little systematic way to determine which *linguistic* items, in what numbers, and within which dimension, are the most effective in forcing a worldview on the addressee. This deficit follows from DST's (as well as TWT's) conventional arrangement of the Discourse Space which indexes entities and events by primarily nominal phrases and pronouns. At the same time, the role (as well as typology) of verbal forms, a core element in the conceptual shifts, is underappreciated as these do not belong to the standard arsenal of deictic expressions.

The above problem echoes Verhagen's (2007: 49) voice of skepticism concerning 'a substantial amount of arbitrariness' behind any classificatory systems in CL of language forms (especially deictic markers) reflecting different conceptualizations and the ultimate positioning of entities/events in Discourse Space. Werth (1999), Gavins (2007) and especially Levinson (2003) share this awareness. In his theory of spatio-temporal frames of reference, Levinson (2003) challenges the traditional Buehlerian (1934) view of deixis, on which deictic markers are considered a technical necessity for the possible interpretability of a language (Levelt 1989), rather than an instrument of strategic communication involving persuasion, legitimization and social coercion. Contesting the conception of deixis as a finite repository of 'deictic expressions', he argues for a much broader approach to deictic markers. This new approach involves bigger lexico-grammatical phrases and discourse stretches within which the 'conventional' deictic items (such as pronominals) combine with atypical indexical items (such as complex verb phrases) as the speaker constructs elaborate discourse forms to meet the changing contextual conditions. Levinson's (2003) perspective on the verbal element of the Discourse Space is productive as it helps understand how both an entity and (crucially) its *movement* become indexed and symbolically represented to establish the target vision construed by the speaker. This in turn opens up vistas for positioning analysis of expressions such as 'they have set their course to confront us and our civilization',³ which force conceptual shifts from the periphery of the Space to the center, in the service of constructing an ideologically charged worldview (entailing a specific act, e.g. a preventive action). Unfortunately, neither Levinson nor for instance Gavins (in many ways following up on Levinson in her 2007 work) attempt a formal lexico-grammatical typology of the extended deictic territory they argue for.

3. New Developments: Proximization Theory and the *Forcing* of Worldviews

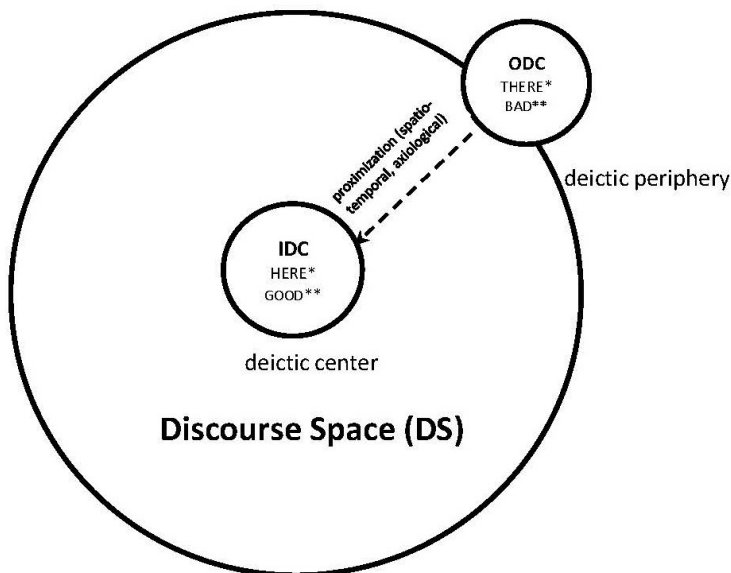
Chilton's (2004, 2005, 2014) DST, Werth's (1999) TWT and Levinson's (2003) spatio-temporal frames can be considered the most important reference models for several later works trying to revise and redefine the original account of DS positioning

³ G.W. Bush on Al-Qaeda terrorists allegedly harbored in Iraq (17 March 2003).

and conceptual shifts toward deictic center in strictly linguistic (lexical and grammatical) terms. Aiming to determine specific linguistic items construing the shifts in the service of forcing worldviews, most of these works employ the concept of ‘proximization’.

In its broadest sense, proximization is a discursive strategy of presenting physically and temporally distant events and states of affairs (including ‘distant’ adversarial ideologies) as increasingly consequential to the speaker and her addressee. The speaker constructs an appealing scenario to generate negative emotions in the addressee, such as fear and general anxiety. Projecting adversarial entities as gradually encroaching upon the speaker-addressee territory (both physical and ideological), the speaker seeks legitimization of actions and/or policies she proposes to neutralize the growing impact of the negative, ‘foreign’, ‘alien’, ‘antagonistic’, entities.

The term ‘proximization’ was first proposed by Cap to analyze coercion patterns in the US anti-terrorist rhetoric following 9/11 (Cap 2006, 2008, 2010). Since then it has been used within different discourse domains, though most commonly in studies of *state political discourses*: crisis construction and war rhetoric (Chovanec 2010), anti-migration discourse (e.g. Hart 2010), political party representation (Cienki, Kaal and Maks 2010), construction of national memory (Filardo Llamas 2010), and design of foreign policy documents (Dunmire 2011). Findings from these studies have been integrated in Proximization Theory (PT) put forward by Cap (2013). The theory follows the original concept of proximization, which is defined as a forced construal operation meant to evoke closeness of the external threat, to solicit legitimization of preventive measures. The threat comes from DS-peripheral entities, referred to as ODCs (‘outside-deictic-center’), which are conceptualized to be crossing the Space to invade the IDC (‘inside-deictic-center’) entities, the speaker and her addressee. The threat possesses a spatio-temporal as well as ideological nature, which means proximization can be considered in three aspects. ‘Spatial proximization’ is a forced construal of the DS peripheral entities encroaching *physically* upon the DS central entities (speaker, addressee). Analogously to Chilton’s DST, the spatial aspect of proximization is primary as the remaining aspects/strategies involve conceptualizations in spatial terms. ‘Temporal proximization’ is a forced construal of the envisaged conflict as not only imminent, but also momentous, historic and thus needing immediate response and unique preventive measures. Spatial and temporal proximization involve fear appeals (becoming particularly strong in reactionary political projects⁴) and typically use analogies to conflate the growing threat with an actual disastrous occurrence in the past, to endorse the current scenario. Lastly, ‘axiological proximization’ involves construal of a gathering ideological clash between the ‘home values’ of the DS central entities (IDCs) and the alien and antagonistic (ODC) values. Importantly, the ODC values are construed to reveal potential to materialize (that is, prompt a physical impact) within the IDC, the speaker’s and the addressee’s, home territory.



* center-periphery opposites in spatio-temporal proximization
 **center-periphery opposites in axiological proximization

Figure 3. Discourse Space, IDC-ODC positioning, and proximization

Proximization Theory posits, viz. Figure 3 above, that all the three aspects or strategies of proximization contribute to the *continual narrowing of the symbolic distance* between the entities/values positioned in the Discourse Space and their negative impact⁵ on the speaker and her addressee. This does not mean, however, that all the three strategies are linguistically present (to the same degree) throughout each stretch of the unfolding discourse. While any use of proximization principally subsumes all of its strategies, spatial, temporal and axiological, the degree of their actual representation is continually motivated by their effectiveness in the evolving context. Extralinguistic contextual developments may thus cause the speaker to limit the use of one strategy and compensate it by an increased use of another, in the interest of the continuity of legitimization.

Compared to approaches such as Chilton's, Werth's or Levinson's, Proximization Theory makes a new contribution at two levels, (i) cognitive-pragmatic and (ii) linguistic, or more precisely, lexico-grammatical. At the (i) cognitive-pragmatic conceptual level, the Spatial-Temporal-Axiological (STA) model of proximization revisits the ontological status and pragmatic function of deixis and deictic markers. As has been said, on classical views deixis is primarily a technical necessity for the possible interpretability of communication in the first place. Within the proximization approach

⁵ For the best legitimization of response, the speaker tends to project ODC actions as maximally consequential (i.e. threatening) to the IDC entities.

deixis goes beyond its ‘primary’ status of a formal tool for the coding of elements of context to make all communication possible. It becomes, eventually, an instrument (or a component thereof) for legitimization, persuasion and social coercion. On the proximization view, the concept of deixis is not *reduced* to a finite set of ‘deictic expressions’, but rather *expanded* to cover bigger lexico-grammatical phrases and discourse expressions which the ‘conventional’ deictic markers (e.g. pronominals) get part of as the speaker constructs complex discourse forms to meet the changing contextual conditions. As a result, the ‘component’ deictic markers partake in forced conceptual shifts. An example of the proximization approach to deixis and deictic expressions is Cap’s (2013: 109) spatial proximization framework (Table 1), which not only reflects the very constituents and the mechanism of proximization in the Discourse Space, but also plays a key role in abstracting the relevant (i.e. ‘spatial’) lexico-grammatical items. It thus allows a quantitative analysis yielding the intensity of spatial proximization (and thus the intensity with which a given worldview is forced) in a discourse timeframe.

Category	Key items
1. (Noun phrases (NPs) construed as elements of the deictic center of the DS (IDCs))	['USA', 'United States', 'America']; ['American people', 'Americans', 'our people/nation/country/society']; ['free people/nations/countries/societies/world']; ['democratic people/nations/countries/societies/world']
2. (Noun phrases (NPs) construed as elements outside the deictic center of the DS (ODCs))	['Iraq', 'Saddam Hussein', 'Saddam', 'Hussein']; ['Iraqi regime/dictatorship']; ['terrorists']; ['terrorist organizations/networks', 'Al-Qaeda']; ['extremists/radicals']; ['foreign regimes/dictatorships']
3. (Verb phrases (VPs) of motion and directionality construed as markers of movement of ODCs towards the deictic center)	['are determined/intend to seek/acquire WMD']; ['might/may/could/can use WMD against an IDC']; ['expand/grow in military capacity that could be directed against an IDC']; ['move/are moving/head/are heading/have set their course toward confrontation with an IDC']
4. (Verb phrases (VPs) of action construed as markers of impact of ODCs upon IDCs)	['destroy an IDC']; ['set aflame/burn down an IDC or IDC values']
5. (Noun phrases (NPs) denoting abstract concepts construed as anticipations of impact of ODCs upon IDCs)	['threat']; ['danger']
6. (Noun phrases (NPs) denoting abstract concepts construed as effects of impact of ODCs upon IDCs)	['catastrophe']; ['tragedy']

Table 1. Spatial proximization framework and its key lexico-grammatical items (adapted from Cap 2013: 109)

The six categories depicted in the left-hand column of Table 1 are a stable element of the spatial proximization framework. The key items provided in the right-hand column depend on the actual discourse under investigation. In Table 1, they come from the domain of anti-terrorist rhetoric, which has been widely analyzed within the proximization paradigm. Table 1 includes the most frequent of the spatial proximization items in the 2001-2010 corpus of the US presidential addresses on the US anti-terrorist policies and actions⁶. Quantifiable items appear in square brackets and include combinations of words separated by slashes with the head word. For example, the item ['free people/nations/countries/societies/world'] includes the following combinations, all of which contribute to the general count of the first category: 'free people', 'free nations', 'free countries', 'free societies', 'free world'. The italicized phrases indicate parts that allow synonymous phrases to fill in the item and thus increase its count. For example, the item ['destroy *an IDC*'] in category 4 subsumes several quantifiable variations, such as 'destroy America', 'destroy our land' or 'destroy the free and democratic world'⁷.

The framework and its 6 categories capture not only the initial arrangement of the DS in the way of the IDC-ODC static positioning (ctg. 1, 2), but also (and crucially) the shift leading to the ODC-IDC clash (3, 4) and the (anticipated) effects of the clash (5, 6). The third category, central to the design of the framework, sets 'traditional' deictic expressions such as personal pronouns to work *pragmatically* together with the other elements of the superordinate VP. As a result, the VP acquires a deictic status, in the sense that on top of conventionally denoting static DS entities (marked by pronominals), it also helps index a more challenging element of context, their movement, which establishes the target perspective construed by the speaker. Recall Bush's words, 'they [terrorists] have set their course to confront us and our civilization' (fn. 3). The person deixis ('they') combines with the verb phrase that follows into a complex deictic structure marking *both* the antagonistic entity and its movement toward home entities in the deictic center.

Emerging from the spatial proximization framework (as well as the temporal and axiological frameworks [Cap 2013]) is the (ii) lexico-grammatical contribution of the STA model. The model makes it possible to extract *quantifiable* linguistic evidence of the use of different proximization strategies within a specific timeframe. The STA model can thus also account quantitatively for – as will be shown in 3.1 – the cases where one proximization strategy is dropped in favor of another one, for contextual reasons.

⁶ The corpus contains 402 texts (601,856 words) of *speeches and remarks*, downloaded from the White House website <http://www.whitehouse.gov> in January 2011. It includes only the texts matching at least two of the three issue tags: *defense, foreign policy, homeland security*.

⁷ See Cap (2013: 108-109) for details. See also the two other frameworks, temporal (: 116) and axiological (: 122), which we do not have space to discuss here.

3.1. A case study of proximization in (state) political discourse

As has been mentioned, the main application of Proximization Theory so far has been to critical studies of state political discourse seeking legitimization of interventionist preventive measures against an external threat. In this section I give an example of this application, discussing instances of the US discourse of the war-on-terror⁸. Specifically, I outline what proximization strategies were used to legitimize the US government's decision to go to war in Iraq (March 2003), and what adjustments in the use of the strategies were made later (from November 2003) as a result of contextual changes which took place in the meantime.

3.1.1. Initiating legitimization through proximization

Below I look at parts of G.W. Bush's speech at the American Enterprise Institute, which was delivered on February 26, 2003⁹. The speech took place only three weeks before the first US and coalition troops entered Iraq on March 19, and has often been considered (Silberstein 2004) a manifesto of the Iraq war. The goal of the speech was to list direct reasons for the intervention, while also locating it in the global context of the war-on-terror declared by G.W. Bush on the night of the 9/11 attacks. The realization of this goal involved a strategic use of various lexico-grammatical forms reflecting different proximization strategies.

Providing his rationale for war, President Bush had to confront the kind of public reluctance faced by many of his White House predecessors: how to legitimize the US involvement in military action in a far-away place, among a far-away people, of whom the American people knew little (Bacevich 2010). The AEI speech is remarkable in its consistent continuity of attempts to overcome this reluctance. It amply applies spatio-temporal and axiological proximization strategies, which are performed in diligently designed pragmatic patterns drawing from more general conceptual premises for legitimization:

We are facing a crucial period in the history of our nation, and of the civilized world. (...) On a September morning, threats that had gathered for years, in secret and far away, led to murder in our country on a massive scale. As a result, we must look at security in a new way, because our country is a battlefield in the first war of the 21st century. (...) We learned a lesson: the dangers of our time must be confronted actively and forcefully, before we see them again in our skies and our cities. And we will not allow the flames of hatred and violence in the affairs of men. (...) The world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed

⁸ Other proximization studies of the US war-on-terror appeared in Cap (2006, 2008, 2010, 2013), Dunmire (2011), Oddo (2018), among others. Recently, the model has been used in the analysis of Brexit discourse (e.g. Cap 2019; Koller et al. 2019), as well as Polish anti-immigration discourse (e.g. Cap 2018b).

⁹ The parts are quoted according to the chronology of the speech.

the ideologies of murder. (...) Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction are a direct threat to our people and to all free people. (...) My job is to protect the American people. When it comes to our security and freedom, we really don't need anybody's permission. (...) We've tried diplomacy for 12 years. It hasn't worked. Saddam Hussein hasn't disarmed, he's armed. Today the goal is to remove the Iraqi regime and to rid Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. (...) The liberation of millions is the fulfillment of America's founding promise. The objectives we've set in this war are worthy of America, worthy of all the acts of heroism and generosity that have come before.

In a nutshell, the AEI speech states that there are WMD¹⁰ in Iraq and that, given historical context and experience, ideological characteristics of the adversary as opposed to American values and national legacy, and Bush's obligations as standing US president, there is a case for legitimate military intervention. This complex picture involves historical flashbacks, as well as descriptions of the current situation, which both engage proximization strategies. These strategies operate at two interrelated levels, which can be described as 'diachronic' and 'synchronic'. At the diachronic level, Bush evokes ideological representations of the remote past, which are 'proximized' to underline the continuity and steadfastness of purpose, thus linking with and sanctioning current actions as acts of faithfulness to long-accepted principles and values. An example is the final part: 'The liberation is (...) promise. The objectives (...) have come before'. It launches a temporal analogy 'axis' which links a past reference point (the founding of America) with the present point, creating a common conceptual space for both the proximized historical 'acts of heroism' and the current and/or prospective acts construed as their natural 'follow-ups'. This kind of legitimization, performed by mostly temporal and axiological proximization (the originally past values become the 'here and now' premises for action¹¹), draws, in many ways, upon the socio-psychological predispositions of the US addressee (Dunmire 2011). On the pragmatic-lexical plane, the job of establishing the link and thus winning credibility is performed by assertoric sequences, which fall within the addressee's 'latitude of acceptance' (Jowett & O'Donnell 1992)¹². The assertions there demonstrate different degrees of acceptability, from being indisputably acceptable ('My job is (...)'); 'The liberation of millions (...)'), to being acceptable due to credibility developed progressively within a 'fact-belief series' ('We've tried diplomacy for 12 years [FACT] (...) he's armed [BELIEF]'), but none of them is inconsistent with the key predispositions of the addressee.

¹⁰ Weapons of mass destruction.

¹¹ This is a secondary variant of axiological proximization. As will be shown, axiological proximization mostly involves the adversary (ODC); antagonistic values are 'dormant' triggers for a possible ODC impact.

¹² Jowett and O'Donnell (1992) posit that the best credibility and thus legitimization effects can be expected if the speaker produces her message in line with the psychological, social, political, cultural, etc., predispositions of the addressee. However, since a full compliance is almost never possible, it is essential that a novel message is at least tentatively or partly acceptable; then, its acceptability and the speaker's credibility tend to increase over time.

At the synchronic level, historical flashbacks are not completely abandoned, but they involve proximization of *near* history and the main legitimization premise is not (continuing) ideological commitments, but the *direct physical threats* looming over the country ('a battlefield', in President Bush's words). As the threats require a swift and strong pre-emptive response, the 'default' proximization strategy operating at the synchronic level is spatial proximization, often featuring a temporal element. Its task is to raise fears of imminence of the threat, which might be 'external' and 'distant' apparently, but in fact able to materialize anytime. The lexico-grammatical carriers of the spatial proximization include such items and phrases as 'secret and far away', 'all free people', 'stable and free nations', 'Saddam Hussein and his weapons of mass destruction', etc., which force dichotomous, 'good against evil' representations of the IDCs (America, Western [free, democratic] world) and the ODCs (Saddam Hussein, Iraqi regime, terrorists), located at a relative distance from each other. **This geographical and geopolitical distance is symbolically construed as shrinking due to the changes occurring to the initial bipolar positioning of IDC and ODC entities.** On the one hand, the ODC entities are construed to cross the DS towards its deictic center and, on the other, the center (IDC) entities declare a reaction. The ODC shift is enacted by forced inference and metaphorization. The inference involves an analogy to 9/11 ('On a September morning [...]), whereby the event stage is construed as facing another physical impact, whose ('current') consequences are scrupulously described ('before we see them [flames] again in our skies and our cities'). This fear appeal is strengthened by the FIRE metaphor, which contributes the imminence and the speed of the external impact (Hart 2010).

While all spatial proximization in the text draws upon the presumed WMD presence in Iraq – and its potential availability to terrorists for acts far more destructive than the 9/11 attacks – Bush does not disregard the possibility of having to resort to an alternative rationale for war in the future. Consequently, the speech contains 'supporting' ideological premises, however tied to the principal premise. An example is the use of axiological proximization in 'The world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder'. This ideological argument is not synonymous with Bush's proximization of remote history we have seen before, as its current line subsumes acts of the adversary rather than his/America's own acts. As such it involves a more 'typical' axiological proximization, where the initially ideological conflict turns, over time, into a physical clash. Notably, in its ideological-physical duality it forces a spectrum of speculations over whether the current threat is 'still' ideological or 'already' physical. Any result of these speculations can be effectively cancelled in a prospective discourse, because, as in the example quoted ('The world...'), they are all based on implicatures (Grice 1975).

3.1.2. Maintaining legitimization through adjustments in proximization strategies

Political legitimization pursued in temporally extensive contexts – such as the timeframe of the Iraq war – often involves redefinition of the initial legitimization premises and coercion patterns and proximization is very well suited to enact these redefinitions in discourse. This seems to endorse applicability of Proximization Theory as a dynamic cognitive-pragmatic model in CDA. The legitimization obtained in the AEI speech and, mainly, how the unfolding geopolitical context has put it to test is an illuminating case in point. Recall that although Bush has made the ‘WMD factor’ the central premise for the Iraq war, he has left half-open an ‘emergency door’ to be able to reach for an alternative rationale. Come November 2003 (the mere eight months into the Iraq war), and Bush’s pro-war rhetoric adopts (or rather has to adopt) such an emergency alternative rationale, as it becomes evident that there have never been weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, at least not in the ready-to-use product sense. The change of Bush’s stance is a swift change from strong fear appeals (forced before then by spatial proximization of the ‘direct threat’) to a more subtle ideological argument for legitimization, involving predominantly axiological proximization. The following quote from G.W. Bush’s Whitehall Palace address of November 19 is a good illustration:

By advancing freedom in the greater Middle East, we help end a cycle of dictatorship and radicalism that brings millions of people to misery and brings danger to our own people. By struggling for justice in Iraq, Burma, in Sudan, and in Zimbabwe, we give hope to suffering people and improve the chances for stability and progress. Had we failed to act, the dictator’s programs for weapons of mass destruction would continue to this day. Had we failed to act, Iraq’s torture chambers would still be filled with victims, terrified and innocent. (...) For all who love freedom and peace, the world without Saddam Hussein’s regime is a better and safer place.

The now dominant axiological proximization involves a dense concentration of ideological and value-oriented lexical items (e.g. ‘freedom’, ‘justice’, ‘stability’, ‘progress’, ‘peace’ vs. ‘dictatorship’, ‘radicalism’) as well as of items/phrases indicating the human dimension of the conflict (‘misery’, ‘suffering people’, ‘terrified victims’ vs. ‘the world’ [being] ‘a better and safer place’). All of these lexico-grammatical forms serve to build, as in the case of the AEI address, dichotomous positionings of the DS ‘home’ and ‘peripheral/adversarial’ entities (IDCs vs. ODCs), and the representation of impact upon the DS ‘home’ entities. In contrast to the AEI speech, however, all the entities (both IDCs and ODCs) are construed in abstract, rather than physical, ‘tangible’ terms, as respective lexical items are not explicitly but only inferentially attributed to concrete parties/groups. For example, compare phrases such as ‘all free people’, ‘stable and free nations’, [terrorist] ‘flames of hatred’, etc., in the AEI address, with the single-word abstract items of general reference such as ‘dictatorship’ and ‘radicalism’, in the Whitehall speech. Apparently, proximization in the Whitehall speech is essentially

a proximization of antagonistic values, and not so much of physical entities as embodiments of these values. The consequences for maintaining legitimization stance which began with the AEI address are enormous.

First, there is no longer a commitment to a material threat posed by a physical entity. Second, the relief of this commitment does not completely disqualify the original WMD premise, as the antagonistic “peripheral” values retain a capacity to materialize within the DS deictic center (viz. ‘...a cycle of dictatorship and radicalism that brings millions of people to misery and brings danger to our own people’, reiterating ‘The world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder’ from the AEI speech). Third, as the nature of ideological principles is such that they are (considered) global or broadly shared, the socio-ideological argument helps extend the spectrum of the US (military) engagement (‘Burma’, ‘Sudan’, ‘Zimbabwe’), which in turn forces the construal of failure to detect WMD in Iraq as merely an unlucky incident amongst other (successful) operations, and not as something that could potentially ruin the US credibility. Add to these general factors the power of legitimization ploys in specific pragmalinguistic constructs (‘programs for weapons of mass destruction’¹³, the enumeration of the ‘new’ foreign fields of engagement [viz. ‘Burma’, etc., above], the always effective appeals for solidarity in compassion [viz. ‘terrified victims’ in ‘torture chambers’]) and there are reasons to conclude that the autumn 2003 change to essentially axiological discourse (subsuming axiological proximization) has helped a lot towards saving credibility and thus maintaining legitimization of not only the Iraq war, but the later anti-terrorist campaigns as well. The flexible interplay and the discursive switches between spatial and axiological proximization (both aided by temporal projections) in the early stages of the US anti-terrorist policy rhetoric have indeed made a major contribution.

4. Conclusion

As evidenced by the brief case study above, Proximization Theory (PT) is where discourse space research in conceptual positioning and CDA meet in a conspicuous fashion, paving the way for an integrated account of conflicting ideological positions in public discourse. While drawing on the essentially cognitive-linguistic approach to discourse (viz. Section 2), PT provides the CL representation of Discourse Space with a dynamic element reflecting the speaker’s awareness of the constantly evolving context. In its account of discourse dynamics, PT focuses on the strategic, ideological and goal-oriented essence of construals of the near and the remote. Most importantly, it

¹³ The nominal phrase ‘[Iraq’s] programs for WMD’ is essentially an implicature able to legitimize, in response to contextual needs, any of the following inferences: ‘Iraq possesses WMD’, ‘Iraq is developing WMD’, ‘Iraq intends to develop WMD’, ‘Iraq intended to develop WMD’, and more. The phrase was among G.W. Bush’s rhetorical favorites in later stages of the Iraq war, when the original premises for war were called into question.

focuses on how the imagining of the closeness and remoteness can be manipulated in the public sphere and bound up with fear, security and conflict. Proximization Theory is thus a critically minded revision of the classical models of Discourse Space and positioning such as Chilton's DST, Werth's TWT, or Levinson's spatio-temporal frames of reference. It is also a truly *linguistic* revision, in terms of linking specific construals to stable and recurrent sets of lexico-grammatical items.

The landscape of discourses where PT can promote implementation of cognitive linguistic methodology in critical research – in regard to positioning and beyond – seems enormous. The domains addressed in CDA in the last 30 years have been multiple: racism, xenophobia, national identity, gender identity and inequality, media discourse, discourses of national vs. international politics, and many more. This list, by no means exhaustive, gives a sense of the spectrum of discourses where proximization, as well as other cognitive-critical models, seem applicable. Since the central commitments of CDA include exploring the many ways in which ideologies and identities are reflected, (re)-enacted, negotiated, modified, reproduced, etc., in discourse, any 'doing' of CDA must involve, first of all, studying the original positioning of the different/conflicting ideologies and identities, and, in the majority of cases, studying also the 'target positioning', that is the *change* the analyst claims is taking place through the speaker's *use* of discourse. Doing CDA means thus handling issues of the conceptual arrangement of the Discourse Space (DS), and most notably, the core issue of the DS *symbolic re-arrangement*. As such, any CDA practice needs a dynamic apparatus to account for both the original and the target setup of the DS. The discourse space models, and proximization in particular, provide such an apparatus. A unique feature of the proximization STA model is its capacity to pinpoint specific, quantifiable lexico-grammatical choices responsible for strategic enactment of conceptual shifts. Anti-terrorist discourse clearly holds a lot of lexical material deployed, legitimization-wise, to force such strategic shifts. Among other domains, the most analytically relevant seem those whose discourses force the distinction between different ideologies and/or identities in a particularly clear-cut and appealing manner – to construe a conflict between 'better' and 'worse' ideologies and/or identities. This is the case with the discourses of xenophobia, racism, nationalism or social exclusion, all of which presuppose a rigid in-group vs. out-group distinction, arguing for a 'growing' threat from the out-group. Further discourse space research in these domains will not only endorse the validity of models such as PT; it will effectively foster the image of Cognitive Linguistics as an extremely rich paradigm from which to draw in the vast area of discourse studies.

REFERENCES

- Bacevich, Andrew. 2010. *Washington Rules: America's Path to Permanent War*. New York, NY: Metropolitan Books.
- Buehler, Karl. 1934. *Sprachtheorie. Die Darstellungsfunktion der Sprache*. Stuttgart: Fischer.
- Cap, Piotr. 2006. *Legitimization in Political Discourse: A Cross-disciplinary Perspective on the Modern US War Rhetoric*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press.

- Cap, Piotr. 2008. Towards the Proximization Model of the Analysis of Legitimization in Political Discourse. *Journal of Pragmatics* 40: 17-41.
- Cap, Piotr. 2010. Axiological Aspects of Proximization. *Journal of Pragmatics* 42: 392-407.
- Cap, Piotr. 2013. *Proximization: The Pragmatics of Symbolic Distance Crossing*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Cap, Piotr. 2017. *The Language of Fear. Communicating Threat in Public Discourse*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Cap, Piotr. 2018a. Spatial Cognition. In *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies*, John Flowerdew and John Richardson (eds), 92-105. London: Routledge.
- Cap, Piotr. 2018b. 'We Don't Want Any Immigrants or Terrorists Here': The Linguistic Manufacturing of Xenophobia in the post-2015 Poland. *Discourse & Society* 29: 380-398.
- Cap, Piotr. 2019. 'Britain Is Full to Bursting Point!' Immigration Themes in the Brexit Discourse of the UK Independence Party". In V. Koller, S. Kopf & M. Miglbauer eds. *Discourses of Brexit*, 69-85. London: Routledge.
- Charteris-Black, Jonathan. 2005. *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Chilton, Paul. 2004. *Analysing Political Discourse: Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge.
- Chilton, Paul. 2005. Discourse Space Theory: Geometry, Brain and Shifting Viewpoints. *Annual Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 3: 78-116.
- Chilton, Paul. 2010. From Mind to Grammar: Coordinate Systems, Prepositions, Constructions. In *Language, Cognition and Space: The State of the Art and New Directions*, Vyvyan Evans and Paul Chilton (eds), 640-671. London: Equinox.
- Chilton, Paul. 2014. *Language, Space and Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chovanec, Jan. 2010. Legitimation through Differentiation: Discursive Construction of Jacques Le Worm Chirac as an Opponent to Military Action. In *Perspectives in Politics and Discourse*, Urszula Okulska and Piotr Cap (eds), 61-82. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Cienki, Alan, Kaal, Bertie and Maks, Isa. 2010. Mapping World View in Political Texts Using Discourse Space Theory: Metaphor as an Analytical Tool. Paper presented at RaAM 8 conference, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.
- Dunmire, Patricia. 2011. *Projecting the Future through Political Discourse: The Case of the Bush Doctrine*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Evans, Vyvyan and Chilton, Paul (eds). 2010. *Language, Cognition and Space: The State of the Art and New Directions*. London: Equinox.
- Fauconnier, Gilles and Turner, Mark. 2002. *The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind's Hidden Complexities*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Filardo Llamas, Laura. 2010. Discourse Worlds in Northern Ireland: The Legitimation of the 1998 Agreement. In *Political Discourse and Conflict Resolution. Debating Peace in Northern Ireland*, Katy Hayward and Catherine O'Donnell (eds), 62-76. London: Routledge.
- Filardo Llamas, Laura. 2013. Committed to the Ideals of 1916. The Language of Paramilitary Groups: The Case of the Irish Republican Army. *Critical Discourse Studies* 10(1): 1-17
- Filardo Llamas, Laura et al. (eds). 2015. *Time, Space and Evaluation in Ideological Discourse*. Special issue of *Critical Discourse Studies*.
- Gavins, Joanna. 2007. *Text World Theory: An Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

- Grice, Paul. 1975. Logic and Conversation. In *Syntax and Semantics 3: Speech Acts*, Peter Cole and Jerry L. Morgan (eds), 41-58. New York, NY: Academic Press.
- Hart, Christopher. 2010. *Critical Discourse Analysis and Cognitive Science: New Perspectives on Immigration Discourse*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Hart, Christopher. 2014. *Discourse, Grammar and Ideology: Functional and Cognitive Perspectives*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Hart, Christopher. 2018. Cognitive Linguistic Critical Discourse Studies. In *The Routledge Handbook of Critical Discourse Studies*, John Flowerdew and John Richardson (eds), 77-91. London: Routledge.
- Hart, Christopher and Cap, Piotr (eds). 2014. *Contemporary Critical Discourse Studies*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Jowett, Garth S. and O'Donnell, Victoria. 1992. *Propaganda and Persuasion*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kaal, Bertie. 2012. Worldviews: The Spatial Ground of Political Reasoning in Dutch Election Manifestos. *CADAAD* 6(1): 1-22.
- Koller, Veronika. 2014. Cognitive Linguistics and Ideology. In *The Bloomsbury Companion to Cognitive Linguistics*, J. Littlemore and J. Taylor (eds), 234-252. London: Bloomsbury.
- Koller, Veronika, Susanne Kopf & M. Miglbauer (eds). 2019. *Discourses of Brexit*. London: Routledge.
- Levelt, Willem J. 1989. *Speaking: From Intention to Articulation*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Levinson, Stephen C. 2003. *Space in Language and Cognition: Explorations in Cognitive Diversity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mandler, Jean M. 2004. *The Foundations of Mind: Origins of Conceptual Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Musolff, Andreas. 2016. *Political Metaphor Analysis: Discourse and Scenarios*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Musolff, Andreas and J. Zinken. 2009. *Metaphor and Discourse*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Oddo, John. 2018. *The Discourse of Propaganda*. University Park, PA: PSU Press.
- Silberstein, Sandra. 2004. *War of Words*. London: Routledge.
- Talmy, Leonard. 2000. *Toward a Cognitive Semantics*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Verhagen, Arie. 2007. Construal and Perspectivization. In *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*, Dirk Geeraerts and Hubert Cuyckens (eds), 48-81. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Werth, Paul. 1999. *Text Worlds: Representing Conceptual Space in Discourse*. Harlow: Longman.

Issues in cognitive discourse research: Positioning, representation, conceptualization

Abstract: The present paper explores the current nexus between Cognitive Linguistics (CL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), focusing on theories of conceptual positioning, distancing and perspective-taking in discourse space. It assesses the strengths, limitations, and prospects for further operationalization of positioning as a valid methodology in CDA, and

political discourse studies in particular. In the first part, I review the cognitive models of positioning that have made the most significant contribution to CDA. Discussing Deictic Space Theory and Text World Theory, among others, I argue that these models reveal further theoretical potential which has not been exploited yet. While they offer a comprehensive and plausible account of how representations and ideologically charged worldviews are established, they fail to deliver a pragmatic explanation of how addressees *are made* to establish a worldview, in the service of speaker's goals. The second part of the paper outlines Proximization Theory, a discursive model of crisis and conflict construction in political discourse. I argue that, unlike the other models, it fully captures the complex geopolitical and ideological positioning in political discourse space, providing a viable handle on the dynamics of conflict between the opposing ideologies of the space.

Keywords: Cognitive Linguistics; Critical Discourse Analysis; positioning; discourse space; proximization

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34864/heteroglossia.issn.2084-1302.nr10.art4>