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## Taking stock of critical discourse research – current work and new directions

### 1. What is Critical Discourse Analysis?<sup>1</sup>

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has now firmly established itself as a field within the humanities and social sciences, to the extent that the abbreviation ‘CDA’ is widely used to denote a recognizable approach to language study manifested across a range of different disciplines (Breeze 2011; Hart and Cap 2014). In the most recent handbooks, CDA is characterized as a “transdisciplinary, text-analytical approach to critical social research” (Hart and Cap 2014: 1; see also Wodak and Meyer 2009, 2015; Flowerdew and Richardson 2016; Cap 2022). Of course, this basic characterization cannot possibly do justice to the vast body of work produced within the field of CDA. It captures, however, one property that is central to all CDA research: the commitment to a systematic, text-based exploration of language to reveal its role in the workings of ideology and power in society (Fowler et al. 1979; Hodge and Kress 1993; Fairclough 1989, 1995; van Dijk 1999, 2003, 2006; Wodak and Meyer 2009; Wodak 2012; among others). It is exactly this core feature, or aspiration, that underlies any strand of CDA practice.

As a self-conscious movement bringing together scholars of linguistic, sociological, political, scientific and other backgrounds, CDA abounds in declarations of what it purports to do. These declarations range from the highly politicized: “to explain existing conventions as the outcome of power relations and power struggle” (Fairclough 1989: 2), to the almost anodyne “to answer questions about the relationships between language and society” (Rogers et al. 2005: 365), depending on the stance of the individual researcher (Breeze 2011). In an attempt to reconcile the different positions, Weiss and Wodak (2003) propose that “CDA takes a particular interest in the relationship between language and power (...). This research specifically considers more or less overt relations of struggle and conflict” (2003: 12). Drawing on this

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<sup>1</sup> Parts of sections 1-2 are based on Hart and Cap (2014).

perspective, and stressing the particular interest of CDA in the asymmetrical nature of these relations, we can conclude that the aim of CDA is to raise awareness of the power imbalance reflected in the use of language and patterns of dominance imposed through the use of language (Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999; Reisigl and Wodak 2001; Weiss and Wodak 2003; Wodak and Chilton 2005; among others).

As can be imagined from the above characterization, Critical Discourse Analysis is not confined to any specific methodology or area of research. On the contrary – it is and always has been multifaceted, dealing with data of very different kinds and applying a broad spectrum of theories sourced from across the humanities, social and cognitive sciences (Hart and Cap 2014; Wodak and Meyer 2015; Flowerdew and Richardson 2016). Hart and Cap (2014) note that, because of this heterogeneity, both the ‘discourse’ and the ‘analysis’ in the CDA designation tend to mean something different to different analysts. Discourse (see Fetzer in this volume) is a multidimensional, multimodal and multifunctional phenomenon. It is produced with reference to different dimensions of context, such as linguistic, intertextual, historical and – notably for CDA practitioners – socio-cultural and political. Functionally, it is used to represent, evaluate, argue for and against, and ultimately to legitimate or delegitimize social actions. In this way, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned (Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Wodak 2011). That is, on the one hand, all discourse is shaped by the situations, institutions and social structures which surround it. At the same time, however, discourse itself constitutes these situations and institutions, as well as the social identities and relationships between their members or participants. Altogether, the many faces of discourse preclude any uniform perception of how it can be investigated.

In CDA, analytical differences reflect conspicuously in the amount of space that different researchers devote to explore the ‘micro’ (linguistic) and the ‘macro’ (social) dimensions of discourse (Lemke 1995; Benke 2000). Some analysts focus *deductively* on the macro-level social structures which facilitate or motivate discursive events, while others concentrate *inductively* on the micro-level, looking at the particular chunks of language that make up these events. These preferences are, of course, never mutually exclusive but are a matter of analytical emphasis. Furthermore, many researchers steer a middle, ‘abductive’ course. In Luke’s (2002) words:

CDA involves a principled and transparent shunting backwards and forth between the microanalysis of texts using various tools of linguistic, semiotic and literary analysis, and the macroanalysis of social formations, institutions and power relations that these texts index and construct. (Luke 2002: 100)

Methods of studying discourse in CDA are thus diverse and depend on the domains and dimensions of discourse under consideration, plus the theoretical goals of the researcher. Analytical aspirations and the amount and kind of data available determine the tools analysts obtain from different macro- and micro-level theories. At the micro-level, one of the most addressed models is Hallidayan systemic functional

linguistics (1985, 1994), providing a viable handle on ideological properties of written texts (Fowler 1991; Hodge and Kress 1993). At the other end of the spectrum, cognitive approaches inform studies in the bottom-level lexico-grammatical structures of discourse in terms of the conceptual processes they invoke (Hart 2014; Chilton 2014). Finally, one must not disregard the explanatory power of hybrid approaches, such as critical metaphor analysis (Charteris-Black 2004; Koller 2004; Musolff 2010), which offers CDA practitioners a rich, integrated framework to capture the ideological import of metaphoric expressions occurring in specific text patterns and phraseological sequences. Needless to say, such a diversity and fluidity makes CDA a difficult discipline to pin down.

It seems that the best way to define CDA, though by no means ideal, is by the word ‘critical’ in its designation (Hart and Cap 2014). This involves seeing CDA as a perspective, position or attitude, signposting a specific research agenda. The concept of critical in CDA, however, is understood in as broad a sense as the concept of discourse. For scholars working with a neo-Marxist notion of critique (Fairclough 1995; Chouliaraki and Fairclough 1999), or following the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School (Wodak 2011; Reisigl and Wodak 2001), critique presupposes a particular political stance on the part of the analyst and is intended to be instrumental in bringing about social change (Hart and Cap 2014). Notwithstanding its popularity, this attitude is often contested by researchers both within (Luke 2002; Martin 2004) and outside (or half-outside) the community of CDA (Widdowson 1998, 2005; Chilton 2005). Martin (2004) claims that it leads to the essentially ‘negative’ nature of analysis, which thus overlooks positive and potentially transformative uses of discourse. In response, Martin and Rose (2003) propose ‘positive discourse analysis’, encouraging critical scholars to devote more attention to the ‘discourse of positive change and discourse as the site of resistance’ (2003: 36).

For others, still, critique comes not so much from a particular political perspective but is concerned more with abuses of language per se and the cognitive and linguistic mechanisms involved (Hart and Cap 2014). At the same time, there are traditions in post-structuralist discourse analysis, which adopt a critical perspective (Slembrouck 2001) but which would not normally be considered as falling under the banner of CDA. Criticality, then, is in a way a necessary condition for defining CDA but it is not a sufficient condition. What sets CDA apart from other forms of critical research is its focus on the micro-level analysis of texts, which are considered the prime source of attested data. In its analysis of texts, CDA relies quite naturally on the field of linguistics – including pragmatics – though to different degrees in different works. Here, although CDA is a huge and complex field which is apparently without boundaries, both methodologically and in terms of the type of data it targets, some clear traditions *can* be identified and described. These traditions may be delineated in terms of particular methodological approaches (e.g. Wodak and Meyer 2009; Hart and Cap 2014) and in terms of the discourse domains targeted (e.g. Cap and Okulska 2013; Bhatia 2004; Martin and Rose 2008).

## 2. Approaches and domains in CDA

In one of the more recent and most comprehensive attempts at taking stock of the field, Hart and Cap (2014) distinguish eleven approaches to CDA. Because of space constraints, I will not describe each of these approaches in detail. Instead, I will focus on how the different approaches interrelate, forming analytical handles dealing with different types of data. Hart and Cap (2014) present the eleven approaches in relation to their specific ‘methodological attractors’, which indicate the underlying analytical traditions. Hart and Cap’s (2014) outline is reproduced in Figure 1. The white ovals mark the approaches, and the shaded ovals mark their attractors. The five constellations in the diagram demonstrate how different approaches are linked by common objects of analysis.

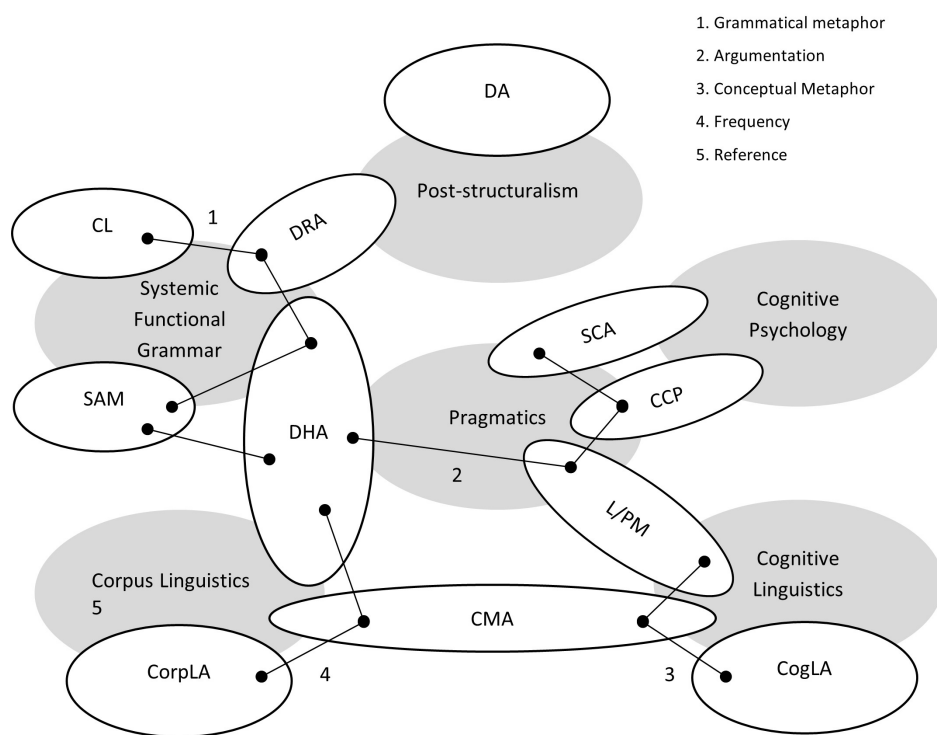


Figure 1. Approaches and methodological attractors in CDA (reproduced from Hart and Cap 2014: 7)

(CL: Critical linguistics; DRA: Dialectical-relational approach; DA: Dispositive analysis; SAM: Social actor model; DHA: Discourse-historical approach; SCA: Socio-cognitive approach; CCP: Critical cognitive pragmatics; L/PM: Legitimization-proximization model; CogLA: Cognitive linguistics approach; CMA: Critical metaphor analysis; CorpLA: Corpus linguistics approach)

The representation in Figure 1 illustrates the variety and interconnectedness of different research traditions in CDA. For example, the discourse-historical (Wodak 2011; Reisigl and Wodak 2001; etc.) and socio-cognitive (van Dijk 2008) approaches

are both related in their focus on argumentation, although the discourse-historical approach deals with argumentation in more detail, proposing tools to locate and describe fallacy triggers and argumentative topoi (van Eemeren and Grootendorst 1992) in different discourse domains. At the same time, the discourse-historical approach borrows in its framework of ‘referential strategies’ from the social actor model (Koller 2004; van Leeuwen 2005; etc.). In turn, the social actor model is presented as a grammar in the format of Halliday’s functional network (van Leeuwen 1996; Halliday 1994). We thus observe direct as well as indirect connections between the particular models.

As Hart and Cap (2014) demonstrate, the contemporary CDA is a genuine mix of social and linguistic theory, lending itself to different typological procedures. While different approaches can be mapped out according to the social theories they are influenced by, they may equally be distinguished by the linguistic fields and models that provide for their text-analytical methodologies. One model that has turned particularly influential is Halliday’s systemic functional grammar (e.g. Halliday 1985, 1994), implementing analytical formalizations in much of the early CDA and in critical linguistics in particular (Wodak 2011; Chilton 2005). It has thus helped critical linguistics, or the ‘East Anglian’ school (Fowler et al. 1979; Fowler 1991; Hodge and Kress 1993), to retain its central role in the development of CDA. As noted by Fairclough and Wodak (1997), critical linguistics is more than a historical precursor to CDA. Influenced over years by text-analytical frameworks such as systemic functional grammar, it has been able to upgrade its tools to produce comprehensive, qualitative-quantitative studies (Hart and Cap 2014; Flowerdew and Richardson 2016). As a result, it can be considered a major approach in the landscape of modern CDA (Fairclough and Wodak 1997).

Notwithstanding the revisions of older theories, CDA has grown considerably in the last few years to develop several completely new schools. This rapid expansion can be understood as a response to recent advances in linguistics and other communication sciences. The nature of this response is, first of all, that such advances make it possible to address and, in many cases, offset certain criticisms raised against CDA. Second, modern developments in linguistics and communication science provide new tools to better capture and document the ideological potential of discourse. Third, there are new frameworks being developed or refined to account for newly formed genres, such as, recently, genres of computer mediated communication (Giltrow and Stein 2009; Yus 2011). One development in linguistics that CDA has incorporated almost immediately is, undoubtedly, corpus studies (Stubbs 2002, 2004; Partington 2006; Baker 2006; Baker et al. 2008; O’Halloran 2010)<sup>2</sup>. Hart and Cap (2014) argue that the corpus linguistic approach in CDA helps answer criticisms pertaining to possible bias in data selection and to the statistical value of findings (Stubbs 1997; Wid-

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<sup>2</sup> It should be stressed that approaches in CDA do not simply borrow and apply ready-made frameworks from linguistics. Rather, CDA scrutinizes, adapts and re-thinks linguistic theories abductively in response to data and operationalization (Wodak and Meyer 2009: 30). In this sense, one must be cautious about characterizing CDA as an area of *applied linguistics*.

dowson 2004). It is, however, not just a ‘problem solver’ which can be applied together with other approaches to ensure against subjectivity and overgeneralization (Wodak and Meyer 2009). As noted recently by Flowerdew and Richardson (2016), the corpus linguistic approach brings along its own unique analytical techniques, such as collocation and prosody analysis, which have been more and more productive in studying set chunks of texts for their ideological properties (Baker 2006; Baker et al. 2008).

Figure 1 includes four new approaches in CDA, which had not been acknowledged prior to Hart and Cap’s (2014) work. These increasingly influential paradigms can be identified as: critical metaphor analysis (Charteris-Black 2004; Koller 2004; Musolff 2004, 2010; Zinken 2007, among others); the cognitive linguistic approach (Hart 2011a/b/c, 2013a/b; Marín Arrese 2011; Filardo Llamas et al. 2016); the legitimization-proximization model (Cap 2006, 2008, 2013; 2016; Chilton 2004, 2011b; Dunmire 2011); and the ‘Neuchatel/Fribourg’ school of critical cognitive pragmatics (Saussure and Schulz 2005; Maillat and Oswald 2009, 2011; Lewiński and Oswald 2013). Each of these new agendas represents, like most strands in CDA, an individual yet interdisciplinary research program. Moreover, similarly as other schools in CDA, each of them constitutes a specific line of inquiry aiming to reveal the otherwise unexplored characteristics of discourse in its socio-political, cultural and anthropological dimensions. Critical metaphor studies, for instance, document the fundamental role that metaphor plays not only in our understanding of the socio-political world we inhabit but also in the way we argue about socio-political issues. They show that metaphorical expressions in language cannot be treated as isolated entities but, rather, as manifestations of knowledge networks in the form of conceptual metaphors, which provide structure and coherence to our experience, including social experience (Goatly 2007).

The second approach, cognitive linguistic, is more comprehensive and moves beyond metaphor (Hart 2011b/c) to consider the ideological load of other linguistic structures in terms of the conceptual processes they invoke. It focuses mainly on categorization, modality, and deixis, which bring into effect a range of ideological discursive strategies. The legitimization-proximization model is more concentrated on a single conceptual operation – proximization – and the different forms of its realization (spatial, temporal, axiological) which ensure the continuity of legitimization in changing geopolitical context. As will be demonstrated in a case study later in this paper, the focus of the legitimization-proximization model on the dynamics of context and the resulting variability of legitimization patterns makes this approach a truly ‘pragmatic’ enterprise. The Neuchatel/Fribourg school presents, in turn, an almost exclusively explanatory framework in which the manipulative facility of language, as manifested in fallacious arguments, is theorized as a kind of ‘cognitive illusion’ (Maillat and Oswald 2009). This form of manipulation is made possible by the fact that ‘people are nearly-incorrigible “cognitive optimists”’ (Sperber et al. 1995: 11) who take for granted that their spontaneous cognitive processes are highly reliable and that the output of these processes does not need double checking (Maillat and Oswald

2009). The Neuchatel/Fribourg school is thus, again, a timely response to modern developments in cognitive science. Like the three other approaches, it treats the ideological and persuasive potential of discourse not as a property of language itself but of the cognitive processes which language reflects and mobilizes. Altogether, the new schools captured in Figure 1 provide a transdisciplinary, cognitive-scientific insight into the conceptual underpinnings of the social-linguistic interface and as such remain in the forefront of the contemporary CDA (Hart and Cap 2014; Filardo Llamas et al. 2016; Flowerdew and Richardson 2016).

### 3. CDA and pragmatics

The relationship between CDA and pragmatics is complex and difficult to capture. This is because neither pragmatics nor CDA are confined to one specific methodology or one particular area of study. Pragmatics is often understood as an analytical stance, offering a unique, function-based account of all aspects of human communication (Verschueren 1999; Fetzer 2002). As noted by Bublitz et al. (2011), “pragmatics is defined by its *point of view* more than by its objects of investigation”, which means that “researchers in pragmatics work in all areas of linguistics (and beyond), but from a distinctive [functional] perspective that makes their work ‘pragmatic’ and leads to new findings and to reinterpretations of old findings” (Bublitz, Jucker and Schneider 2011: v). As such, pragmatics is concerned with all facets of communicative acts, such as the speaker, his/her background knowledge and contextual assumptions, the lexical and grammatical constituents of an utterance, the hearer’s interpretations and patterns of inferencing, etc. All these are explored against a broad network of social factors, preconditions, norms and expectations that govern communication, both within a culture and across cultures. Since communicative acts involve linguistic units, whose choice is dictated by language-internal rules, as well as their interpersonal, social and cultural embedding, pragmatic studies bridge the system and the use side of language. They examine what is lexically and grammatically available for a speaker to accomplish a communicative goal, and at the same time explore the ways in which the linguistic potential is realized in a specific social context.

The perspectivist view of pragmatics reveals several features which pragmatics and CDA have in common. These include the fundamental interest in the functionality of language, the sensitivity to the macro/social dimension of language and discourse, as well as the interest in linguistic choices that speakers make to carry out specific functional goals in particular social contexts. At the same time there are differences, or at least asymmetries. The analytical focus of pragmatics is still broader than the CDA focus, both in terms of the discourse domains which it extends over and the levels of language organization it encompasses. While pragmatics is concerned quite equally with the macro dimension of discourse and the micro dimension of the lexico-grammatical features of individual utterances, the interest of CDA has for a long time been primarily in the macro (social) level of analysis. Pragmatics is preoccupied with the

functions fulfilled by language in real contexts, and with the relationships between form and social function, however it also focuses on the detailed study of specific instances of language use. In comparison, although CDA practitioners have long called for ‘triangulation’ in the sense of obtaining multiple perspectives on the phenomenon under scrutiny (Reisigl and Wodak 2001; van Dijk 2006; etc.), or at least for “constant movement back and forth between theory and data” (Meyer 2001: 27), there has been and still is an observable trend for many research projects in CDA to operate in a top-down manner. Presupposing a particular theory of social relations, they tend to single out the most interesting aspects of language that tie in with a particular theoretical approach, rather than embarking on an all-round, in-depth study covering the multiple dimensions of a text to determine how language works in a particular setting (Blommaert 2001; Breeze 2011). If this trend has been changing recently, the credit goes to the critique levelled at CDA by, indeed, pragmatics, as well as conversation analysts, ethnographers of communication and other scholars committed to the notion that all interpretations should clearly emerge from the underlying data (Breeze 2011; Verschueren 2011).

While work in linguistic pragmatics has helped CDA in the search for attested textual data to support theoretical claims at the macro level, CDA attracts pragmatics to new empirical territories, where discourse serves to (re-)enact, negotiate, modify and/or reproduce ideology and individual as well as collective identity in accordance with socio-political goals. There, pragmatics – and the pragmatics of discourse (macropragmatics; see Cap 2011) in particular – benefit from the interdisciplinarity of CDA and its tendency to look for and engage new conceptual frameworks in social research. The results are interdisciplinary studies bridging different disciplines and approaches at the intersection of social and political science and linguistics. The role of pragmatics in such studies is often to appropriate findings in disciplines other than linguistics to the rigid requirements of linguistic micro-analysis. For instance, findings in cognitive science and anthropology, the disciplines frequently addressed in CDA, are used to build frameworks that serve as conceptual handles on a specific kind of linguistic data (Chilton 2004, 2014; Cap 2013, 2022; Dunmire 2011; Hart 2014). These frameworks are ‘pragmatic’ in the sense that they elucidate the functional potential of lexical and grammatical choices drawn from non-linguistic, cognitive domains, such as space or time. The best example of such a framework seems the legitimization-proximization model, which has been included in the panorama of the contemporary CDA in Figure 1. In the remainder of the paper we discuss this model further as an instance of the dynamic interaction between CDA and pragmatics. Apart from elucidating links that connect the macro-social and micro-linguistic dimensions of research, the legitimization-proximization model also illustrates the most important interdisciplinary elements of the modern CDA research in their typical configuration. The central principles of this configuration involve the top-level position of cognitive and anthropological categories and the bottom-level position of lexico-grammatical categories, with pragmatics acting as an analytical mediator between the two positions.



#### 4. The legitimization-proximization model in CDA

In its broadest sense, proximization can be defined as a discursive strategy of presenting physically and temporally distant occurrences, events and states of affairs (including ‘distant’, i.e. adversarial ideologies) as increasingly and negatively consequential to the political speaker and her addressee. Projecting the distant entities as encroaching on the speaker-addressee territory (both physical and ideological), the speaker seeks justification of actions and/or policies that she proposes to neutralize the growing impact of the negative, ‘foreign’, ‘alien’, ‘antagonistic’, entities. Proximization is thus a cognitive-pragmatic strategy of legitimization of interventionist policies.

The term ‘proximization’ was first proposed by Cap to analyze coercion patterns in the American 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 (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, etc.). Findings from these studies have been integrated in the legitimization-proximization model put forward by Cap (2013). The model defines proximization as a forced construal operation meant to evoke closeness of an external threat to solicit legitimization of preventive measures. It presupposes a bipolar, dichotomous architecture of the political Discourse Space (DS), in which meanings are construed from conceptual oppositions between the in-group (DS-central) and the out-group (DS-peripheral). The threat is posed by the DS-peripheral entities, which the model refers to as ODCs (‘outside-deictic-center’). The ODC entities are construed as moving across the DS to invade the IDC (‘inside-deictic-center’) entities, the speaker and her addressee. Since the ODC threat can be conceptualized in spatio-temporal (physical) as well as ideological terms, the strategy of proximization falls into three categories. ‘Spatial proximization’ is a forced construal of the DS-peripheral entities encroaching physically upon the DS central entities (speaker, addressee). ‘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 projects) 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 home territory.

In its conceptual design, the legitimization-proximization model subsumes a dynamic view of the Discourse Space, which involves not only the opposition between IDC and ODC entities, but also the discursively constructed movement of the latter

toward the deictic center of the DS (Figure 2). It thus focuses, from a linguistic standpoint, on the lexical and grammatical deictic choices which speakers make to, first, index the existing socio-political and ideological distinctions and, second, demonstrate the capacity of the out-group (ODC) to erase these distinctions by forcibly colonizing the in-group's (IDC's) space.

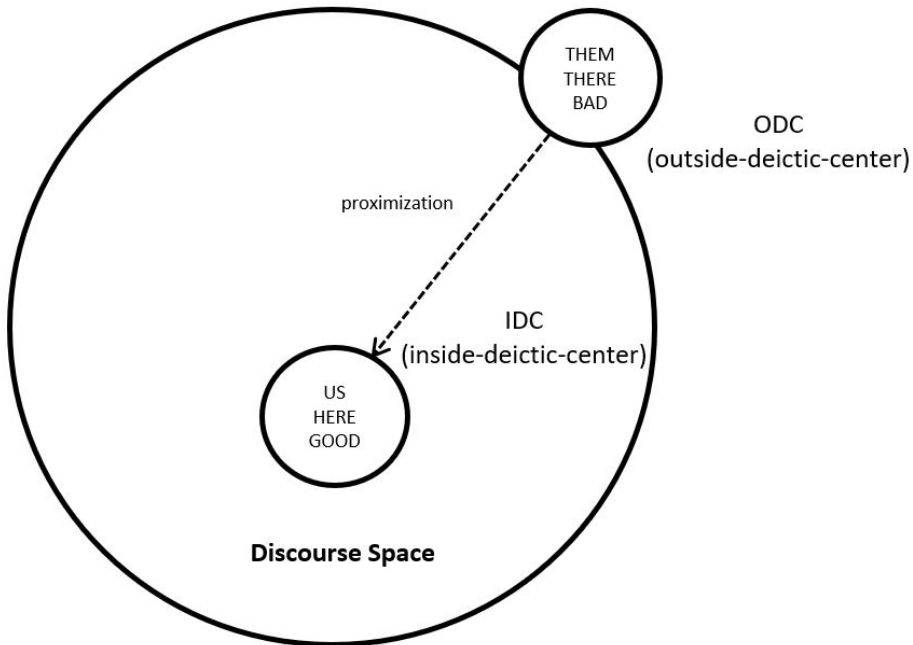


Figure 2. Proximization in Discourse Space (DS)

Furthermore, the legitimization-proximization model assumes that all the three strategies/aspects of proximization contribute to the continual narrowing of the symbolic distance between the entities and values in the Discourse Space and their negative impact 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 or density of their actual linguistic representation is continually motivated by their effectiveness in the evolving context. As will be shown in a case study below, extralinguistic contextual developments may 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.

As a theoretical proposal in CDA, the legitimization-proximization model 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) paradigm revisits the ontological status and the pragmatic function of deixis and deictic markers. While on classical views (Levinson 1983; Levelt 1989; etc.) deixis is considered primarily a technical necessity and a formal tool for the coding of elements of context so communication and interpretation could take place, the proximization approach makes deixis an instrument of legitimization, persuasion and social coercion. Within the legitimization-proximization model, 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 chunks. As a result, the ‘component’ deictic markers partake in forced conceptual shifts. An example of the legitimization-proximization approach to deixis and deictic expressions is Cap’s (2013: 109) spatial proximization framework (Table 1). It defines the main constituents and the mechanism of proximization in the Discourse Space, as well as makes possible abstracting the relevant (i.e. ‘spatial’) lexico-grammatical items. It thus allows a quantitative analysis of the lexical intensity of spatial proximization in a given 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 <i>an IDC</i> ’]; [‘expand/grow in <i>military capacity that could be directed against an IDC</i> ’]; [‘move/are moving/head/are heading/have set their course toward confrontation <i>with an IDC</i> ’]
4. (Verb phrases (VPs) of action construed as markers of impact of ODCs upon IDCs)	[‘destroy <i>an IDC</i> ’]; [‘set aflame/burn down <i>an IDC or IDC values</i> ’]
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 (reproduced 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 the anti-terrorist rhetoric, which has been widely analyzed within the legitimization-proximization paradigm (Cap 2006, 2008, 2010). Table 1 includes the most frequent of the spatial proximization items in the 2001-2010 corpus of the US presidential addresses on the American anti-terrorist policies and actions<sup>3</sup>. 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 five 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'<sup>4</sup>.

The framework and its 6 categories capture not only the initial arrangement of the Discourse Space (categories 1, 2), but also (in 3, 4) the shift leading to a clash between the out-group (ODC) and the in-group (IDC), as well as 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. The VP in the third category holds a deictic status; apart from denoting the static DS entities (marked by pronominals), it indexes their movement, which the latter establishes the target perspective construed by the speaker. Category 3 can thus process and yield counts from complex lexico-grammatical phrases, such as, for instance, 'they [terrorists] have set their course to confront us and our civilization' (G.W. Bush, 17 March 2003). In this phrase, the person deixis ('they') combines with the following VP into a complex deictic structure marking both the antagonistic entity and its movement toward home entities in the deictic center.

The spatial proximization framework (as well as the temporal and axiological frameworks [Cap 2013]) endorses the (ii) linguistic/lexico-grammatical contribution of the legitimization-proximization model. The model makes it possible to extract quantifiable lexical evidence of the strategic use of different proximization strategies within different timeframes of policy legitimization. Most importantly, it can account quantitatively for cases – such as below – where one proximization strategy is dropped in favor of another one, for contextual reasons.

<sup>3</sup> 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*.

<sup>4</sup> See Cap (2013: 108–109) for details. See also the two other frameworks, temporal (2013: 116) and axiological (2013: 122), which we do not have space to discuss here.

## 5. A case study

As has been mentioned, the main application of the legitimization-proximization model so far has been to critical studies of state political discourse seeking legitimization of interventionist preventive measures against an external threat. In what follows I give an example of this application, discussing instances of the American discourse of the war-on-terror. 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.

### 5.1. 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, 2003. 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 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 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

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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. (Bush 2003a)

In a nutshell, the AEI speech states that there are WMD<sup>5</sup> in Iraq and that, given historical context and experience, ideological characteristics of the adversary as opposed to American values and national legacy, and G.W. 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 connects 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 prompt action<sup>6</sup>), 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 sequences of assertions, which fall within the addressee's 'latitude of acceptance' (Jowett and O'Donnell 1992)<sup>7</sup>. The assertions reveal different degrees of acceptability, from being indisputably and universally acceptable ("My job is (...)"; "The liberation of millions (...)") to being acceptable due to the credibility developed step-by-step 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.

At the synchronic level, the historical flashbacks are not completely abandoned, but they involve proximization of near history and the main legitimization premise is not the (continuing) ideological commitments, but the direct physical threats looming over the country ("a battlefield", in President Bush's words). As the threats require a fast and strong pre-emptive response, the main proximization strategy operating at

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<sup>5</sup> Weapons of mass destruction.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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.

the synchronic level is spatial proximization, often encompassing 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, as, on the one hand, the ODC entities 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. Thus the speech contains ‘supporting’ ideological premises, ‘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, since its current line subsumes acts of the adversary rather than his and/or America’s own acts. It involves a more ‘typical’ axiological proximization, where an initially ideological conflict changes, 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. Since any conclusion from these speculations can be denied in the prospective discourse, the example quoted (“The world...”) shows how proximization can interrelate, at the pragmalinguistic level, with the mechanism of implicature (Grice 1975).

## **5.2. 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 promise a vast applicability of the legitimization-proximization model as a truly dynamic cognitive-pragmatic development 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 (just 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 and spatio-temporal proximization 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. (Bush 2003b)

The now dominant axiological proximization involves a dense concentration of ideological and value-oriented lexical items (such as ‘freedom’, ‘justice’, ‘stability’, ‘progress’, ‘peace’, vs. ‘dictatorship’, ‘radicalism’) as well as items/phrases marking the human dimension of the conflict (e.g. ‘misery’, ‘suffering people’, ‘terrified victims’, vs. ‘the world’ [being] ‘a better and safer place’). All these lexico-grammatical forms serve to construe, as in the case of the AEI address, clearly dichotomous representations of the DS ‘home’ and ‘peripheral/adversarial’ entities (IDCs vs. ODCs), and the vision 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 the particular lexical items (‘dictatorship’, ‘radicalism’) are not explicitly but only inferentially attributed to concrete groups. Proximization in the Whitehall speech is thus mainly a proximization of antagonistic values, and not so much of physical entities recognized as embodiments of these values. The consequences for maintaining the legitimization stance which began with the AEI address are enormous.

First, there is no longer a commitment to material threat posed by a physical entity. Second, the relief of this commitment, however leading to a new premise for war, does not disqualify the original (WMD) premise since the antagonistic ‘peripheral’ values retain a capacity to materialize within the deictic center (see “...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 ideological principles possess a global appeal, 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.

Add to these general factors the power of legitimization ploys in specific pragma-linguistic constructs ('programs for weapons of mass destruction'<sup>8</sup>, the enumeration of the 'new' fields of engagement ['Burma', etc.], the always effective appeals for solidarity in compassion ['terrified victims' in 'torture chambers']) and there are reasons to conclude that the fall 2003 change to essentially axiological discourse (subsuming axiological proximization) has helped a lot toward 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 (aided by temporal projections) in the early stages of the US anti-terrorist policy rhetoric have made a major contribution.

## **6. Conclusion: proximization as a method and territories for a pragmatic CDA**

The legitimization-proximization model is where pragmatics, spatial cognition, and CDA meet in a conspicuous way. While drawing on the essentially cognitive-anthropological theories of discourse, proximization provides the conceptual representation of Discourse Space with a pragmatic element involving the speaker's awareness of the changing context. In its account of discourse, the model focuses on the strategic, ideological and goal-oriented essence of construals of the near and the remote. Specifically, it focuses on how the imagining of the closeness and remoteness can be manipulated in the political sphere and bound up with fear, security and conflict. At the linguistic level, it draws from critical-corpus approaches (cf. Figure 1) to offer a rigorous scrutiny of the lexical and grammatical choices which (political) speakers make to enact the conceptual affiliations and distinctions. Along with the other modern developments in CDA (especially the cognitive models, such as critical metaphor analysis; cf. Figure 1), the legitimization-proximization model is an example of how CDA realizes its commitments by engaging cognitive, socio-psychological and anthropological concepts and approaches in a joint work with a text-analytical pragmatological apparatus. As a method, it structures these concepts and tools in a hierarchical analytical mechanism processing data in a comprehensive, abductive manner. At the top level, cognitive and anthropological categories are responsible for

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<sup>8</sup> 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.

the conceptual framework of analysis. This involves defining two geopolitically and ideologically disparate ‘camps’ (in-group vs. out-group) in the Discourse Space and setting them at a relative distance from each other. This distance is symbolically construed as shrinking; first, because the out-group aims to encroach on the in-group’s territory (both physical and ideological), second, because the in-group declares a preventive reaction. The ability to capture this shift in the setup of the Discourse Space in linguistic terms constitutes the central methodological advantage of the legitimization-proximization model. As has been documented in the case study, the model expresses this conceptual change in terms of pragmatically-minded variations, at the bottom level, in the use of specific lexico-grammatical constructs, such as deictic builders of spatial and ideological dichotomies. While the case study in the present paper has been essentially qualitative, the legitimization-proximization model opens up further vistas to endorse the findings (such as the change from spatial to axiological proximization, or, generally, from the rhetoric of a direct physical threat to a milder rhetoric of an ideological conflict) in rigorous quantitative analysis. This is possible by engaging the spatial proximization framework (cf. Section 3), together with the axiological proximization framework (Cap 2013), to produce counts of specific lexico-grammatical items in set periods of time.

The landscape of discourses where such transdisciplinary, qualitative-quantitative projects are possible is huge. The domains addressed in CDA in the last 30 years have been racism, xenophobia, national identity (notably, Czyżewski 2018), gender identity and inequality, media discourse, discourses of national vs. international politics (notably, Piekot et al. 2019), and many more. This list, by no means exhaustive, gives a sense of the spectrum of discourses where models such as legitimization-proximization can contribute. 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 studying, in conceptual terms, the ‘original positioning’ of the different ideologies and identities, and, in the majority of cases, studying also the ‘target positioning’, that is the conceptual change which the analyst claims is taking place through the speaker’s strategic *use* of discourse. Doing CDA means thus handling issues of the original arrangement of the Discourse Space, and most notably, the core issue of the DS symbolic re-arrangement. As such, any CDA practice clearly needs a pragmalinguistic approach to account for the original and later the target setup of the DS. At the heart of this account are bottom-level, quantifiable lexico-grammatical choices responsible for strategic enactment of the conceptual shifts. The anti-terrorist discourse, such as the one analyzed in the case study, clearly contains a lot of lexical material that is used to force such strategic shifts. Among other domains and discourses, the most analytically promising appear those in which distinctions between different ideologies and identities are enacted in a particularly clear-cut and appealing manner – to construe strong oppositions between ‘better’ and ‘worse’ ideologies or identities. This applies to 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 (Cap 2022). Each of these discourses constitutes a fruitful field for critical-pragmatic explorations. In that sense, CDA not only draws from pragmatics, but also takes it to new and exciting territories.

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## **Taking stock of critical discourse research – current work and new directions**

**Abstract:** This paper gives an overview of the theoretical underpinnings and current work in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). It defines CDA as a transdisciplinary, text-analytical approach to critical social research, aimed at revealing the power imbalance reflected in the use of language and patterns of dominance imposed through the use of language. Describing the most important schools and models in CDA, the paper demonstrates how critical approaches draw on recent developments in different areas of linguistics, such as pragmatics, cognitive linguistics and corpus studies. At the same time, it shows how the interdisciplinary research agenda of CDA attracts the ‘classic’ theories and tools of linguistics to new empirical territories in political/public discourse. The final part of the paper illustrates the explanatory power of the legitimization-proximization model in CDA in a case study of the discourse of the war-on-terror.

**Keywords:** discourse, discourse studies, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), approaches to CDA, domains in CDA