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# Empirical Insights in Methodological Integration of Critical Discourse Analysis and Cognitive Linguistics: A View from Political Discourse Study

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## **Abstract**

Much of today's CDA is taking a 'cognitive turn', drawing upon advances in cognitive science and incorporating vast amounts of work on spatial-temporal cognition and conceptualization into various interdisciplinary studies of ideologically motivated construals of meaning within different discourse domains. 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.

In the first part of the paper I review the cognitive models and the models of spatial cognition in particular which have been making the most significant contribution to CDA. Discussing Levinson's spatial frames of reference, Text World Theory, and Deictic Space Theory), among others, I describe the input of cognitive-linguistic research in the account of the basic deictic architecture of the Discourse Space (DS). 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, however,

I argue that cognitive models reveal further theoretical potential which has not yet been exploited. As of today, the cognitive contribution to CDA 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 outlines Proximization Theory (PT), showing its application to a state interventionist discourse (the US anti-terrorist discourse) and, potentially, to other important discourses of the public sphere. Proximization is a discursive strategy of crisis and conflict construction in the dynamic Discourse Space (DS). It consists in presenting physically and temporally distant events and states of affairs (including 'distant' and therefore adversarial ideologies) as increasingly and negatively consequential to the speaker and the addressee positioned in the deictic center of the DS. Projecting the distant entities as gradually encroaching upon the center, the speaker seeks legitimization of actions aimed to neutralize the growing impact of the negative, 'foreign', 'alien', 'antagonistic', 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 periphery to the center. Unlike the other models, it fully captures the complex ideological positioning in political/public discourse and, crucially, the dynamics of conflict between the opposing ideologies of the DS entities.

**Key words:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Cognitive Linguistics, Discourse Space, Proximization, political discourse

## Introduction

Much of today's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is taking a 'cognitive turn', drawing upon advances in cognitive science and incorporating vast amounts of work on spatial-temporal cognition and conceptualization (Talmy, 2000; Fauconnier, & Turner, 2002; Levinson, 2003; Evans, & Chilton, 2010; among many others) into various interdisciplinary studies of ideologically motivated construals of meaning within different discourse domains (e.g., Cienki, Kaal, & 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; Hart, & Cap, 2014).

In the first part of the present paper (Section 2) I review the cognitive models and the models of spatial cognition in particular which have been making the most significant contribution to CDA. 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 the Discourse Space (DS) (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, however, I argue that cognitive models reveal further theoretical potential which has not yet been exploited. As of today, the cognitive contribution to CDA 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 Proximization Theory (PT) (Cap, 2013; 2017), showing its application to a state interventionist discourse (the US anti-terrorist discourse) and, potentially, to other important discourses of the public sphere. Proximization is a discursive strategy of crisis and conflict construction in the dynamic Discourse Space (DS). It consists in presenting physically and temporally distant events and states of affairs (including 'distant' and therefore adversarial ideologies) as increasingly consequential to the speaker and the addressee positioned in the deictic center of the DS. Negative developments are envisioned to generate negative emotions, such as fear and general anxiety, paving the way for swift policy legitimization. Projecting the distant entities as gradually encroaching upon the center, the speaker seeks legitimization of actions aimed to neutralize the growing impact of the negative, 'foreign', 'alien', 'antagonistic', entities. Thus, Proximization Theory has its lens on not only the bipolar static location

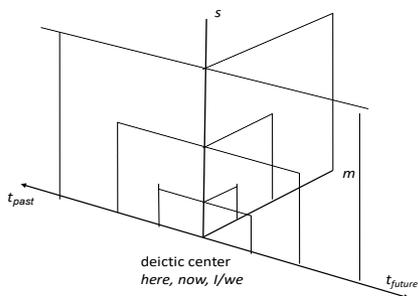
of the center-periphery entities, but also on the discursive construal of movement from the periphery to the center. Unlike the other models, it fully captures the complex ideological positioning in political/public discourse and, crucially, the dynamics of emotively charged conflict between the opposing ideologies of the DS entities.

## 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) Discourse 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, p. 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



Source: adapted from Chilton (2004, p. 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, p. 142) analyzes the following text, an excerpt from President Clinton’s TV address to the American nation on March 24, 1999<sup>1,2</sup>:

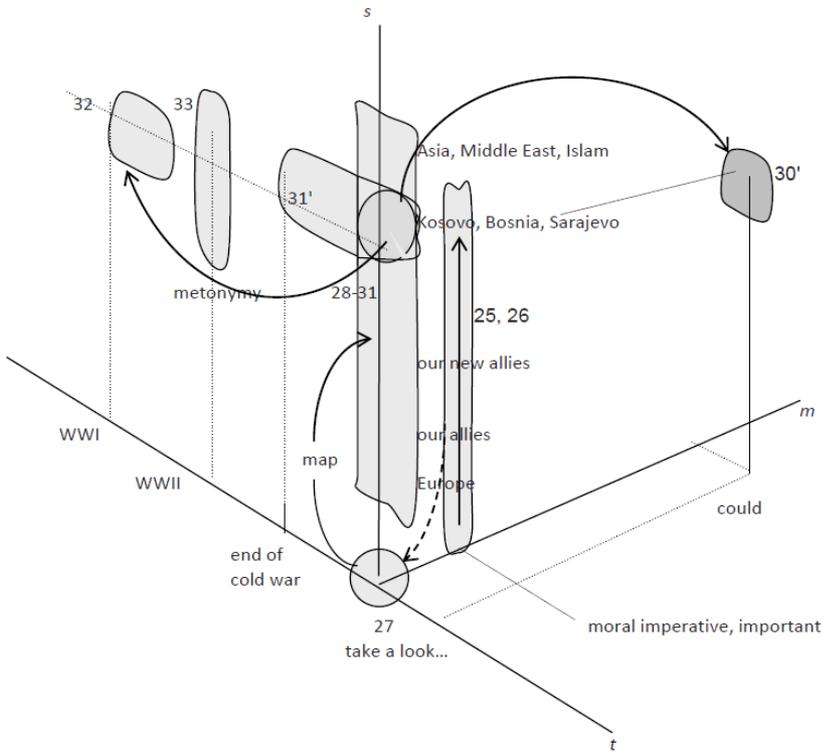
- .....
1. The day the NATO intervention in Kosovo began.
  2. I have saved the original numbering of the sentences (25–37).

(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) 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



Source: adapted from Chilton (2004, p. 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, Chilton's DST provides CDA with excellent insights in the representation of entities in political discourse space. 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 other approaches grounded in the classical conception of deixis, deictic dimensions, and notably, deictic markers. As for DST, it can be described as a theory of general and relatively 'fixed' conceptual organization of entities in political discourse space. Its aim is to demonstrate how people's mental representations are positioned with respect to three cognitive dimensions; it is clearly not to show how people are made to establish representations that would suit the accomplishment of the discourse goals pursued by political speaker. The reason is that DST does not offer a systematic account of quantifiable lexico-grammatical items responsible for locating entities and events at different (measurable) distances from the deictic center determining the intensity of pragmatic powers of these entities/events. While it recognizes 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 upon the addressee. This ‘deficit’ follows from DST’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, p. 49) skepticism concerning ‘a substantial amount of arbitrariness’ behind any classificatory systems in CL of language forms (especially deixis) reflecting different conceptualizations. Werth (1999), Gavins (2007) and especially Levinson (2003) demonstrate similar awareness. In his theory of spatio-temporal frames of reference, Levinson (2003) challenges the traditional Bühlerian view of deixis, on which deictic markers are considered merely a technical necessity for the possible interpretability of a language, 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 analysis of expressions such as ‘they have set their course to confront us and our

civilization<sup>3</sup>, 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.

## New developments: Proximization Theory and the forcing of worldviews

Chilton's (2004; 2005) DST 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 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

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

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, & 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 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, the speaker's and the addressee's, home territory.

Proximization Theory holds that all the three aspects or strategies of proximization contribute to the continual narrowing of the symbolic distance between the entities/values in the Discourse Space and their negative

impact<sup>4</sup> 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 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 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 (Lehman, Sułkowski, & Cap, 2020). 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, p. 109) spatial proximization framework (Table 1), which not only reflects the very constituents and the mechanism of

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

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.

Table 1. Spatial proximization framework and its key lexico-grammatical items

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']

Source: adapted from Cap (2013, p. 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 actions.<sup>5</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 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>6</sup>

The framework and its 6 categories capture not only the initial arrangement of the DS (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

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5. 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.

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

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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.

## 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-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.

### 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.<sup>7</sup> 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 (Oddo, 2018). The realization of this goal involved a strategic use of various lexico-grammatical forms reflecting different proximization strategies.

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

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; Blum, 2004). 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 (Lehman, Sułkowski, & Cap, 2020):

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 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 WMD<sup>8</sup> in Iraq and that, given historical context and experience, ideological characteristics of

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8. Weapons of mass destruction.

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 action<sup>9</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 assertoric sequences, which fall within the addressee's 'latitude of acceptance' (Jowett, & O'Donnell, 1992).<sup>10</sup> 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

9. 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.

10. 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. See also Lehman, Sutkowski and Cap (2020).

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, 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, 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. 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).

## 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 promises a vast applicability of Proximization Theory as a truly 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 representations 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’<sup>11</sup>, 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.

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11. 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.

## Conclusion

Proximization Theory (PT) is where spatial cognition and CDA meet in a conspicuous fashion, paving the way for an integrated account of conflicting ideological positions in (political) 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 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 such as Chilton's DST 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 proximization could help CDA in its descriptive commitments and practices seems enormous. The domains addressed in CDA in the last 30 years have been 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 seems 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 may

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need the apparatus of proximization to account for both the original and the target setup of the DS. Crucial for such an account is the proven capacity of the STA model 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/identities. This is evidently 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. It seems also the case with many national discourses, where similar opposition is construed between ‘central-national’ and ‘peripheral-international’ interests – the ongoing debate over the future of the EU is a case in point.

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