1 Introduction

Politics and Semiotics

1.1 Politics and Discourse

Politics is inherently, if not solely, a symbolic practice. While it can involve physical acts of coercion, politics is largely accomplished through the production and consumption of symbols enshrined in texts and talk, which is to say through *discourse*. In his seminal book, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*, Edelman (1985: 5) argues that for most people politics is experienced as 'a passing parade of abstract symbols'. This parade is not fleeting or occasional, however. Neither is it restricted to key political speeches. Rather, it is a constant parade that takes place through many different genres to constitute a pervasive feature of our daily experience. As Wodak observes:

> In our daily lives, we are confronted with many other genres of political discourse apart from speeches, including, for example, televised press conferences, political debates on radio and TV, snippets on YouTube, or reports on political events in the press. Moreover, slogans and advertisements stare at us when we walk down the street, leaflets from political parties and interest groups come through the post, and during election campaigns we can hear politicians campaigning in town halls or at election rallies. (2009: 3)

Edelman makes a distinction between those for whom politics is a spectacle and those who are able to exploit this form of symbolic activity to obtain specific, tangible benefits for themselves. The latter belong to a small group of symbolic elites who possess the necessary capital, in all its forms, for their voice to count and be heard. For the majority of people, the majority of the time, politics exists as a 'series of pictures in the mind, placed there by television news, newspapers, magazines and discussions' (Edelman 1985: 5).

Symbols come in many forms, cutting across different semiotic modes. They include words, slogans, images, emblems, songs and gestures. Traceable back to classical rhetoric, however, the symbolic system that has been most studied in relation to politics is undoubtedly language. As Chilton and Schäffner (2002: vii) note, 'politics and language are intimately intertwined'. For instance, at the institutional and specifically governmental level, bills are debated in parliament through a (highly regulated and routinized)

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form of conversational exchange; and bills before parliament are passed through performative speech acts when they are then enshrined into law in the form of written statutes. In more ostensively public-facing forms of political discourse, political parties produce written texts in the form of manifestos while politicians deliver speeches, give interviews and participate in (televised) debates, all of which involve the use of language. The 'doing' of politics is therefore very much constituted in language (2002: 3).

While most people would immediately recognise the types of texts and talk just mentioned as instances of political discourse, there are many other forms of discourse that we might also intuitively wish to call 'political', including newspaper articles, opinion pieces or everyday conversations about matters considered 'political'. Academic accounts of political discourse, such as the one presented in this book, are in some sense themselves also examples of political discourse, especially when they adopt a critical stance. Exactly what counts as political discourse is therefore the subject of much discussion (Cap and Okulska 2013; Chilton and Schäffner 2002; Okulska and Cap 2010; van Dijk 1997; Wilson 2001).

Defining political discourse is a question of both topic and genre. On the one hand, political discourse may be defined according to who produces it and in what context. Discourse is political if it is produced by people who hold official positions within the institutions of politics and who are at the time acting within their capacity as members of those institutions. This would include politicians but also, for example, civil servants, local councillors, magistrates, journalists and trade union representatives. However, one need not hold an institutional political position to actively engage in political discourse. People commenting on 'political' subjects, whether in everyday encounters, such as a conversation between friends, or in forms of communication directed back to political institutions, as in letters to the editor or a placard held during a demonstration, are also engaging in political discourse. Of course, defining political discourse by topic begs the question what is politics? Providing an answer to this question is beyond the limits and purposes of this book. However, a useful working definition is given by Chilton:

On the one hand, politics is viewed as a struggle for power, between those who seek to assert and maintain their power and those who seek to resist it … On the other hand, politics is viewed as cooperation, as the practices and institutions that a society has for resolving clashes of interest over money, influence, liberty, and the like. (2004: 3)

By *political discourse*, I therefore mean discourse pertaining to issues of society and governance, such as social and economic policy, individual rights and freedoms, national and intra-national identities, and international relations, which takes place between political actors and institutions (including politicians, political parties and the news media) and the public. Political discourse

is instantiated in texts and talk belonging to many different genres from official political speeches to protest songs. It also spans semiotic modes beyond language. Political discourse can flow in multiple directions: downward from institutional authorities to citizens; upward from citizens to political institutions and horizontally between citizens or between political institutions. Within this complex matrix, the discourses of political institutions and citizens are not insulated from one another. The discourse of political elites finds its way into everyday political discourses. At the same time, in seeking to gain approval and appeal to public sentiment, elite political discourse may incorporate aspects of popular political discourse.

1.2 Politics and Linguistics

The relationship between politics and language is approached within different discourse-analytic traditions. Of those that are based in linguistic methods of description (as opposed, say, to the discourse theories of Foucault or Laclau and Mouffe), a broad distinction can be drawn between approaches that are more observational, focussed on speech acts and talk-in-interaction in the traditions of pragmatics and conversation analysis (e.g. Cap 2002; Clayman and Heritage 2002; Ekström and Patrona 2011; Hutchby 2006; Kampf 2009; Montgomery 2007; Weizman and Fetzer 2015), and approaches which are explicitly critical and focussed more on 'texts' in the tradition of critical discourse analysis (Caldas-Coulthard and Coulthard 1996; Fairclough 1989, 1995; Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Fowler 1991; Flowerdew and Richardson 2017; Hart and Cap 2014; Weiss and Wodak 2003; Wodak 2015a; Wodak and Meyer 2016; Wodak, KhosraviNik and Mral 2013).

At this point, an interjection is needed on the terms 'text' and 'discourse' as used in critical discourse analysis (CDA). The common understanding of a text is as a piece of written material, typically presenting as monologic, such as a poem. However, texts in CDA are understood in a more inclusive way. Texts may be spoken, as in political speeches, and dialogic, as in debates or interviews, which are necessarily more transient. A text may also be the written or audio-visual record of a spoken text, as in the Hansard records of parliamentary debates or video footage of a campaign rally. A text can be multimodal, involving language and other semiotic modes like images. Such texts can be static, involving written language and image stills as in a newspaper article, or dynamic, involving spoken language and moving images, as in broadcast television news. Texts like online news articles can involve a combination of static and dynamic material. A text need not actually contain language at all so that a photograph, painting, sculpture or piece of instrumental music are all examples of texts. Even the configuration of furniture in a room can be considered a text through which power relations may be

enshrined. In line with post-structuralist literary theory (Barthes 1977), then, a text is understood as any artefact or arrangement that can be 'read' as meaningful in a symbolic sense.

The term discourse is used with a proliferation of different senses across the social sciences, including within CDA. Discourse is used to refer to the act of meaning-making (semiosis) that takes place through the production and consumption of semiotic material in the form of texts. However, discourse is also used to designate specific fields or domains of semiotic practice, as in 'political discourse'. Finally, discourse is used to capture competing orientations or perspectives, expressed in texts, within a given domain or with respect to a given topic. That is, discourses provide a specific way of talking and thinking about a given subject. This last sense allows us to identify 'racist', 'anti-immigration' or 'neo-liberal' discourses and is closely tied with the concept of ideology.

Both approaches identified above are concerned with issues of power and discourse. Researchers in the first tradition take a 'discourse-internal' perspective and investigate power relations as they are established, maintained and negotiated between interlocutors in the moment of interaction. That is, they are concerned with power as it is constructed *in* discourse, which may of course be both reflective and reinforcing of wider power structures. Researchers in the second tradition, by contrast, take a 'discourse-external' perspective and investigate relations of power and inequality between groups in society as they are expressed in and legitimised by texts. That is, they are concerned with power as it is constructed *through* discourse.

To adopt a critical stance means several things. In the first instance, it means disclosing the manifest or latent ideological properties of discourse that help legitimise and sustain power and discrimination (Reisigl and Wodak 2001). However, in line with the aims of Critical Theory (e.g. Habermas 1971; Horkheimer 1972), to be critical means to go beyond the standard scientific tasks of observing and describing to instead assume a normative position and actively seek social transformation through critical understanding. In the case of CDA, that means raising the kind of *critical language awareness* (Fairclough 1989) – an increased consciousness, based on metalinguistic understanding, of how language contributes to the production, maintenance and change of social conditions – that enables resistance and facilitates social change.

CDA is not itself homogeneous and several distinct 'approaches' can be identified that adopt different methods of analysis to focus on different social, semiotic, historical or psychological aspects of discourse (see Hart and Cap 2014; Wodak and Meyer 2016). This book provides a detailed description and advancement of the burgeoning programme that uses cognitive linguistics to investigate the links between language, cognition and the legitimation of social

actions and relations in contexts of political communication from an explicitly critical perspective. This programme may be referred to as either Critical Cognitive Linguistics (CCL) or Cognitive Critical Discourse Analysis (Cognitive CDA) depending on one's disciplinary vantage point. From the perspective of cognitive linguistics, CCL constitutes an effort to extend cognitive linguistics beyond the traditional areas of morphology, syntax and semantics to the social realm of discourse where, as Stockwell (2001: 515) has observed, 'the common method of discussion in cognitive linguistics is to examine individual sentences asocially'. From this perspective, CCL belongs to the broader area of Cognitive Sociolinguistics (Kristiansen and Dirven 2008). From the perspective of CDA, where the reader remains otherwise under-theorised (Fowler 1996: 7), Cognitive CDA represents an attempt to take a more readerly approach and describe the cognitive processes of meaning construction to which audiences, by virtue of the representational choices presented in texts, are disposed and which account for ideological textual effects that contribute to legitimation. While the primary object of analysis in most CDA is the semiotic material or artefacts produced through discourse, the object of investigation in Cognitive CDA is therefore not texts and talk per se but the conceptual structures that are evoked in the minds of readers in the course of discourse to constitute their knowledge and understanding of the situations and events described and which necessarily mediate in the dialectical relation between structures of discourse and structures of society (Hart 2010). Thus, as Dirven, Frank and Pütz (2003a: 3) point out, the synergy between cognitive linguistics and CDA can be seen both as an invitation to CDA scholars not yet familiar with the tenets and analytical tools that cognitive linguistics has to offer to find out more about them and as an invitation to cognitive linguists to look beyond the traditional rank levels of linguistic structure to study the social belief and value systems (ideologies) that linguistic structures serve to maintain and perpetuate. With no particularly strong preference either way, throughout the book I shall adopt the designation and disciplinary perspective of *Cognitive CDA*.[1]

CDA is both theoretical and practical. At the theoretical level, CDA provides a conceptualisation of discourse as social practice (Fairclough 1995). Such a view entails that discourse is constitutive of social conditions. CDA is specifically concerned with the way ideology is encoded in and enacted through discourse to normalise or otherwise legitimise social actions that are

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[1] It should be noted that there are broader 'cognitive' trends within CDA which are not based in cognitive linguistics (e.g. O'Halloran 2003; van Dijk 2014). Here, in keeping with neighbouring disciplines like Cognitive Poetics (Stockwell 2020), I use 'cognitive' as a modifier to designate an area of applied linguistics approached specifically from the perspective of cognitive linguistics.

violent and/or which lead to relations of dominance and inequality.[2] That is, CDA is concerned with the discursive processes involved in achieving hegemony (Gramsci 1971). At the practical level, CDA involves close engagement with texts to reveal, through detailed linguistic analysis, the specific sites of discourse where ideology is at stake and the precise discursive mechanisms through which it operates.

It is fair to say that the prevailing method for detailed linguistic analysis at the practical level has been provided by Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (SFL). Indeed, the use of SFL in CDA is so widespread as to be paradigmatic. This is not surprising given its focus on language as a social semiotic system rather than as a set of abstract rules or procedures governing syntactic form. However, CDA is methodologically plural and, as an area of applied linguistics, must be responsive to the latest developments in linguistic theory and methodology for the new insights, opportunities and perspectives that they provide. Currently, it is cognitive linguistics that presents the most exciting new paradigm for application in CDA. This book is an exploration in CDA using cognitive linguistics.

1.3   The 'Cognitive Turn'

Cognitive linguistics emerged as a radical alternative to Chomsky's formalist approach to syntactic analysis, which emphasises form over meaning and assumes that language is an autonomous cognitive faculty that operates independently of other areas of cognition. Cognitive linguistics, by contrast, sees language as operating on the same underlying systems and processes that are found to govern and function in other domains of cognition, such as memory, perception, imagination and reason, and places meaning and usage at the centre of its analyses. Cognitive linguistics, thus, belongs to the same broader functionalist tradition as SFL (Nuyts 2007). From this perspective, meaning construction in discourse (semiosis) is based on a process of **conceptualisation** – a rich, dynamic and imaginative process which, in contrast with symbol-manipulation accounts, results in fully modal rather than amodal mental representations. Linguistic forms – lexical and grammatical – are paired inside a system of symbolic assemblies with meanings at different levels of abstraction which, when indexed in discourse, contribute to the overall conceptualisation evoked. Thus, language usages act as prompts for an array of conceptual processes responsible for defining and shaping our understanding of the target situation. Such conceptual processes are

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[2] The field of ecolinguistics (Stibbe 2021) extends principles of CDA to relations of power between humans and non-human animals and the discursive legitimation of environmental vandalism.

manifestations of more general cognitive systems and processes, such as our ability to analyse complex objects, scenes and events as gestalts, our ability to compare aspects of experience, or our ability to focus attention and assume a given perspective in our experiences of the world. It follows that every language usage promotes a particular **construal** of the situation it describes. As Croft and Cruse (2004: 40) state: 'all aspects of the grammatical expression of a situation involve conceptualisation in one way or another . . . Whenever we utter a sentence, we unconsciously structure every aspect of the experience we intend to convey'.

I have shown elsewhere (Hart 2015a: 323–326) how cognitive linguistics resounds with CDA in several respects (see also Dirven, Polzenhagen and Wolf 2007; Stockwell 2001). For example, the philosophical orientation of cognitive linguistics toward linguistic relativism (Lakoff 1987) is consistent with the social constructionism of CDA. More generally, the focus found in cognitive linguistics on meaning in usage events makes it particularly amenable to application in various forms of text and discourse analysis from poetics to politics (Hart 2019a). In the case of CDA, the notion of construal that is central to cognitive linguistics makes it an especially useful tool for analysing the ideological properties of political texts and talk, where ideology in discourse is defined as 'a systematically organised presentation of reality' (Hodge and Kress 1993: 15) that is reflective of a particular set of beliefs and values. Ideology in discourse is made possible by the options a language provides for representing the same material situation in different ways (Haynes 1989: 119) where, as Fairclough (1989: 92) states, 'the set of formal features we find in a specific text can be regarded as particular choices from among the options (e.g. of vocabulary and grammar) available in the discourse types which the text draws upon'. It follows that 'in order to interpret the features which are actually present in a text, it is generally necessary to take account of what other choices might have been made' (1989: 92), which is to enquire what alternative construal might have been proffered.[3] The aim of Cognitive CDA is then to delineate the linguistic and conceptual parameters along which ideology is enacted in discourse to legitimate social actions and relations which, from a particular normative standpoint, are problematic. A range of different **construal operations** are identified as significant in this regard, including schematisation, distribution of attention, viewpoint and metaphor.

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[3] The term 'choice', it should be noted, is not necessarily meant to suggest any conscious or deliberate decision on the part of the individual text-producer. Journalistic texts, for example, are the products of institutional frameworks and conventionalised discourse practices. It is meant only to recognise that the features presented by a text are selections from a system of possible alternatives.

Pre-empted by Turner (1991: vii), who noted that 'humanistic subjects will be centred once again upon the study of the human mind', the dawn of the twenty-first century witnessed a 'cognitive turn' in the humanities with aspects of cognitive science – and cognitive linguistics in particular – being applied to subjects like art, literature and politics (Turner 2002). This gave rise to new cognitive paradigms in fields adjacent to CDA, including Cognitive Stylistics (Semino and Culpeper 2002), Cognitive Poetics (Gavins and Steen 2003; Stockwell 2002) and Cognitive Rhetoric (Browse 2018). In step with this broader cognitive turn, Cognitive CDA began to emerge from the 1990s onwards (e.g. Chilton 1996) but became more firmly established through a series of publications that appeared in tight succession at the start of the millennium (Charteris-Black 2004; Chilton 2004; Koller 2004; Musolff 2004; Santa Ana 2002; Stockwell 2001). These works were not produced under the label of Cognitive CDA, which did not come into use until later, but they did seek to incorporate within CDA a key aspect of cognitive linguistics in the form of conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). As such, they can be regarded as seminal examples of what is now recognisable as Cognitive CDA. The initial focus on metaphor is not surprising given (a) the central importance of conceptual metaphor theory in the development of cognitive linguistics and (b) the fact that metaphor does not figure in Hallidayan systemic functional linguistics. Metaphor is one form of construal through which ideologised conceptions of reality may be engendered in discourse and it remains a key aspect of Cognitive CDA. Indeed, the subject of metaphor occupies a significant portion of this book. However, cognitive linguistics has more strings to its bow than conceptual metaphor theory. Cognitive linguistics is not a single theory but a paradigm made up of several frameworks which have in common a specific set of assumptions about the nature of language, namely that it is non-autonomous and experientially grounded, that linguistic knowledge is world knowledge, that meaning is conceptualisation, that all aspects of linguistic structure are meaningful, including grammatical constructions, and that grammar emerges through usage. Cognitive CDA has since expanded to address a broader range of linguistic and conceptual phenomena described in other frameworks of cognitive linguistics, including image schemas and various attentional and perspectival phenomena as described in cognitive grammar (Langacker 2008) (e.g. Hart 2013, 2015b; Marín Arrese 2011) as well as deictic and 'world-building' phenomena of the kind described in text world theory (Werth 1999; Gavins 2007) and discourse space theory (Chilton 2004) (e.g. Cap 2008; Filardo-Llamas 2010). The result is a rich and burgeoning paradigm in which various aspects of cognitive linguistics are applied in the vein of CDA to reveal the ideological qualities of conceptualisations evoked in political discourse and their legitimating potential.

A question sometimes asked is what is cognitive about cognitive linguistics (see Fesmire 1994 for discussion). Cognitive linguistics is cognitive in so far as it draws on what is already known about the way the human mind and brain work from other disciplines of cognitive science to provide a characterisation of language that is *psychologically plausible* (Lakoff 1987; Langacker 1999). This means that cognitive linguistic analyses make frequent appeal to models in cognitive psychology. There is also now a rapidly expanding body of empirical psycholinguistic evidence to support the kind of analyses given in cognitive linguistics (for overviews see Bergen 2007; Matlock and Winter 2015). It follows that Cognitive CDA is able to theorise, in psychologically plausible terms, the cognitive mechanisms by which ideological textual influence is achieved in political discourse. It provides an explanatory framework in which the ideological dimensions of language-use are related to general conceptual principles (Dirven, Polzenhagen and Wolf 2007: 1236). As Jeffries puts it:

> While sub-disciplines of linguistics like Critical Discourse Analysis have long asserted the truth of a Whorfian-style effect of culturally dominant texts, they have also been criticised for making too much of this in the absence of hard evidence of the process by which such hegemonic power is wielded and the objection that readers are not so vulnerable to ideological manipulation as the statements may suggest. However, the use of cognitive theories ... as an 'explanatory' device could help us to understand the mechanisms by which some such ideological influence may indeed operate. (2010: 128)

Principle aims of Cognitive CDA are therefore (i) to model the conceptualisations invoked by language usages and (ii) to consider the ideological qualities and legitimating potentials which those conceptualisations have in specific contexts of political communication. In the first stage, Cognitive CDA thus typically presents detailed semantic characterisations of the linguistic forms found in political texts. Frequently, this involves recourse to the kind of diagrams that have come to be notoriously characteristic of cognitive linguistics in general (see Langacker 2008: 9–12). Indeed, this book is replete with such diagrams. It is important to recognise, however, that such diagrams are not just informal illustrations intended to give an impression of meaning (as interpreted by the analyst). While they evidently fall short of the rigour of a mathematical formalism, they are born out of theoretical frameworks and follow specific conventions to represent meanings, and capture certain fundamental semantic properties and distinctions, in a way that is intuitive but also principled and systematic. The use of diagrams is particularly well motivated given the claim that meaning is imagistic.

While Cognitive CDA is a largely European tradition, cognitive linguistics has also been applied to issues of politics and ideology in North American scholarship, albeit with much less focus on detailed textual analysis (Coulson

2006; Lakoff 1996; Oakley 2005). Starting from the position that 'any ideology is a conceptual system of a particular kind' (Lakoff 1996: 37), scholars in this tradition seek to identify the **idealised cognitive models** (ICMs) that underlie different ideologies. For example, in Lakoff's (1996) classic work, he argues that American conservatism and liberalism are underpinned by ICMs representing two different familial scenarios: the STRICT FATHER versus the NURTURANT PARENT respectively. It is worth noting that this work, while no doubt valuable, has been criticised for its lack of engagement with social theory and ignoring in particular the kind of critical social theory, found in the works of Habermas, Foucault, Bakhtin and Bourdieu among others, which has heavily influenced CDA (O'Grady 2019: 477). As O'Grady (477) states, 'despite Lakoff's well-known political activism, I can find no reference to social theory in his work'. Cognitive CDA is distinct from this North American tradition in so far as it is founded upon social theory of the kind that informs CDA more generally.

Across the Atlantic there is also to be found a growing body of experimental research investigating, within the cognitive linguistics paradigm, the impact of language choices on attitudes toward various social and political issues (e.g. Fausey and Matlock 2011; Jiminez, Arndt and Landau 2021; Marshall and Shapiro 2018; Thibodeau and Boroditsky 2011). For example, Jiminez, Arndt and Landau (2021) show that inundation metaphors in immigration discourse, which describe immigrants as 'pouring in', 'flooding across borders' and coming in 'waves', increase support for the erection of a border wall. A principle of Cognitive CDA is to draw on such experimental findings or else conduct experimental research (Hart 2018a, 2018b) in support of critical analyses.

Cognitive CDA, like Cognitive Poetics, proceeds in a way that may be characterised as 'artful science' (Stockwell 2015). Cognitive CDA is scientific in so far as it draws on cognitive science and cognitive linguistics specifically to generate and test hypotheses concerning the ideological effects that texts can have on cognition. For example, in attitudes, opinions, perceptions, evaluations and decisions etc., which can, in principle, be quantified and measured (the causative impact of texts on social action is inferable but remains empirically unobservable). It therefore adheres to general methodological principles of science. Following Harrison and Stockwell (2015: 219), these include (i) the object of investigation (whether it is a semiotic feature or effect) must exist or potentially exist so that it can be subject to analysis; (ii) analyses must be motivated, that is conducted against a theoretical backdrop that gives cause to the investigation; (iii) analyses must be systematic and rigorous, exploiting theoretical frameworks faithfully and consistently; (iv) analyses must be supported by evidence and (v) analyses must be transparent so that they are potentially replicable or refutable. At the same time, however, Cognitive CDA

remains an artful or humanistic endeavour. Political discourse is not produced or consumed in a contextual vacuum and meanings cannot be extrapolated simply by applying some mechanical procedure. Analyses that lead to hypotheses remain exercises in interpretation which rely on the researcher's own engagement with the material in question and the knowledge and understanding they have, as themselves socially situated actors, of the wider social, historical and intertextual contexts in which texts are necessarily embedded. It is also the case that not all textual effects are quantifiable or measurable in practice (Stockwell 2015: 441). Some may be more subtle, subjective or transient and therefore discernible only through introspection. This is not to dismiss introspection as unscientific. Defined as 'conscious attention directed by a language user to particular aspects of language manifest in her own cognition' (Talmy 2007: xii), introspection has been central in the development of cognitive linguistics and remains its dominant methodology. It is particularly apposite in discourse analysis where, as Stockwell (2015: 442) points out, the articulated recount of a reading experience is to all purposes the reading in hand. On this basis, analyses arrived at by introspection can be counted as a form of empirical evidence (442). Notwithstanding the merits of introspection, however, there is always the risk that the analyst is not replicating the reading experience of the text's target audience (O'Halloran 2005: 342) and may be over-interpreting any ideological effects of the discourse in question. Where they are possible, experimental methods provide one means of 'triangulating' interpretive findings.[4] However, experimental studies can also show that the dynamics of textual influence are more nuanced than is sometimes assumed and that readers may engage with texts in unexpected ways. Resistance to political metaphors is one case in point (Hart 2021).

The above passages should not be taken to suggest that Cognitive CDA is of value only as an explanatory or validatory framework. It is also diagnostic and, as is shown across the now extant literature, able to disclose ideological properties of texts which are not revealed by other approaches. As such, it expands the inventory of semiotic features that are of interest in CDA.

It is nevertheless clear that Cognitive CDA has some crossovers with other approaches to CDA and certain aspects of the analyses presented in this book might equally well be handled by other frameworks. In particular, crossovers can be seen between cognitive linguistics and SFL. For example, the notion of archetypal conceptions and associated archetypal roles in cognitive grammar is

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[4] Another is using corpus linguistic methods, which allow analysts to check the *likely* interpretation of a lexical item in the target text based on its usage in a more general reference corpus, which acts as a control (Coffin and O'Halloran 2006; O'Halloran 2007). Corpus linguistic methods, however, cannot confirm the *actual* interpretations that audiences have of texts. Nevertheless, the use of corpus and experimental methods in CDA both represent a broader commitment to triangulation based on empirical data (Baker and Levon 2015; Hart 2018b).

similar to the Hallidayan notion of transitivity and the specific process types and participant roles that it defines (Stockwell 2009: 168). Langacker (2008: 492) himself also recognises that the 'functional description of subject is quite consistent with its conceptual characterisation in CG as primary focal participant (trajector)'. Rather than being seen as competitors vying for their position in CDA, such correlations and crossovers, as Stockwell (2009: 169) points out, can be seen as a form of mutual validation where both models have arrived independently at similar understandings of how language relates to the world. SFL has also been very accommodating of multimodality in CDA where, for example, the notion of transitivity has been successfully extended to visual forms of representation (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006; Machin 2007). However, there are aspects of analysis that are uniquely enabled by a cognitive linguistic perspective – for example, relating to metaphor – and while SFL has formed the basis of much multimodal research relating to images, it is cognitive linguistics rather than SFL that has done the most to ingratiate itself with gesture studies. At the same time, no doubt, there are analyses afforded by other approaches that cannot be accommodated within Cognitive CDA. Researchers in CDA are therefore often eclectic in the analytical frameworks they exploit (e.g. Fowler 1991). Of course, this may be seen as a strength, especially in data-led research where, to fully account for all communicative aspects of the material at hand, the analyst is required to move between different frameworks for the alternative insights and perspectives they provide (Weiss and Wodak 2003). However, this position is not without its critics (see Breeze 2011) and there are obvious advantages to be gained by confining oneself to a single approach. Doing so ensures overall coherence and consistency, compatibility between methods and assumptions, and the systematic application of analytical concepts. Such conceptual unification is generally considered an essential property of what counts as 'good' science. There is also the simple fact that the analyst need not have to be an expert in multiple fields. This book is therefore an exercise exclusively in Cognitive CDA. This is not because I am antipathetic to other approaches. Nor does it amount to a claim that other methods are supplanted by cognitive linguistic approaches. It is simply because I believe that cognitive linguistics has something useful to offer and, as I have just stated, there are clear benefits to adopting a singular approach. It is nevertheless a particular strength of Cognitive CDA that it is able to account for a wide array of ideological phenomena in discourse, which may appear to be diverse, against a common theoretical backdrop (Dirven, Polzenhagen and Wolf 2007: 1236).

While a cognitive paradigm in CDA provides a useful, additional perspective for CDA, Cognitive CDA can also benefit cognitive linguistics. Despite its claim to being usage-based, prominent cognitive linguistic theories like cognitive grammar and conceptual metaphor theory have been developed on the

basis of non-attested linguistic examples. Somewhat ironically, this puts cognitive linguistics in the same precarious position as generative linguistics, where the models of language it espouses may only account for highly idealised instances which have been invented for the purpose of illustrating a particular theoretical point, and may not provide any analytical handle on the way people actually speak or write in real communicative contexts. Cognitive CDA enables theories developed in cognitive linguistics to be tested 'in the wild'. If a linguistic model or framework works in accounting for natural language usages then that is in itself a mark of its validity. Of course, much political discourse is not 'natural' in the same sense as spontaneous face-to-face interaction. Political discourse is often highly scripted, institutionally regulated, carefully rehearsed or edited, multi-authored and these days digitally-mediated. Nevertheless, political discourse does provide linguistic data that represents real language usages produced and interpreted as part of a communicative activity that is a natural part of being human. As Chilton and Schäffner (2002: vii) state, human beings are political animals and articulate mammals. Studying political discourse can therefore shed light on language as it functions in one of its most natural contexts of use. Moreover, since there are no grounds on which to postulate a specialised cognitive capacity for political language, which relies on the same underlying mechanisms as 'ordinary' language, studying political discourse can tell us something about principles of language in general. Of course, while theories in cognitive linguistics should be applied faithfully in Cognitive CDA, they must also be open to modification and refinement in light of findings and experiences arising from their application to authentic data. One area where this has worked especially well is in relation to multimodality, where studying attested examples of political discourse has allowed deductions about the multimodal nature of communication to be made and for multimodality to be incorporated within existing cognitive linguistic theories (Hart and Marmol Queralto 2021; Steen and Turner 2013).

1.4   Politics and the Media

The relationship between politics and the media is one that has been much theorised in political science, sociology and media and mass communication studies (e.g. Castells 2009; Couldry 2000; Curran 2002; Freedman 2014; Hardy 2014; McCullagh 2002; Thompson 1995). One view is that in democratic societies, a pluralist media contributes to the proper functioning of democracy. From such a liberal functionalist perspective, the role of the media is 'to assist the collective self-realization, co-ordination, democratic management, social integration and adaptation of society' (Curran 2002: 136). Based on professional values of independence and objectivity, the media provides transparency and ensures government accountability. An alternative view,

however, is that, owing to the political economy of the media, a partisan media functions to advance the neo-liberal agenda and maintain the interests of a dominant group of elite social actors. Freedman (2014) calls these contrasting views the *consensus* paradigm and the *control* paradigm respectively. The view presented in CDA and thus Cognitive CDA aligns with the control paradigm where the media are seen to operate 'as a means for the expression and reproduction of the power of the dominant class or bloc' (Fairclough 1989: 43).

Following Bourdieu (1991), Couldry (2000: 4) argues that media institutions are uniquely invested with the symbolic power to construct realities. The media enjoy near exclusive rights of narration over social and political events. As McCombs (2014: 1) states, in nearly all matters of public concern, 'citizens deal with a second-hand reality, a reality that is structured by journalists' reports about these events and situations'. Media power therefore resides in its ability to 'determine what is included and excluded, how events are represented' (Fairclough 1989: 42). This, of course, is a textual matter which is made socially problematic when the media 'uses its control over symbolic resources to naturalise hegemonic ideas and to confine public discussion to a narrow and artificially maintained consensus' (Freedman 2014: 22). According to Fairclough (1989: 43), for example, 'in the British media, the balance of sources and perspectives and ideology is overwhelmingly in favour of existing power holders'.

A distinction can be made here between the power *of* the media and the possibility of cementing power *through* the media (Freedman 2014: 8). Thompson (1995) distinguishes four forms of power (political, economic, coercive and symbolic) and argues that the ability to wield power in one dimension is dependent on the ability to exert influence in another. In particular, it is the symbolic power of the media that is exploited to naturalise other forms of power. As Freedman (2014: 9) states: 'confidence in the political system, the ability to go to war and to trust current economic arrangements all require legitimacy and consent ... that can be partially secured through ideological institutions like the media'.

That the media should reflect a restricted viewpoint, consistent with the interests of established power, is not surprising given concentrated ownership structures, which place much of the media in the hands of a small number of 'moguls' who explicitly share the neo-liberalist values of the modern political agenda (Freedman 2014). As Hardy (2014: 7) puts it, 'ways of organising and financing communications have implications for the range and nature of media contents'. Political and media elites, moreover, share the same educational backgrounds, move in the same social circles and inhabit the same physical spaces as one another (Castells 2009). This is not to suggest any conspiracy but rather points to structural circumstances that mean politicians and journalists

are not only personally associated with one another but operate within mutual or overlapping spheres of interest and influence (Castells 2009). Further evidence that politics and the media form an 'interlocking' system comes from the apparent 'revolving door' which allows individuals to transition seamlessly from one sector to the other (Freedman 2014: 49). In the UK, Boris Johnson was a journalist before he was the prime minister and returned to journalism after his premiership. The result of such structures and relations is an 'acutely uneven capacity of the right to speak (as well as the ability to listen) in contemporary market-driven societies' (Freedman 2014: 4).

More 'liberal' voices are found in outlets like the *Guardian* in the UK, which nudge the discourse a little to the left. However, such exceptions serve only to maintain the illusion of plurality and thus 'provide effective cover for what is, overwhelmingly, a partisan and conservative set of interests' (Freedman 2014: 23). Similarly, the BBC is widely celebrated for the impartiality that is written into its Royal Charter.[5] Yet, as McNair (2009) notes, there is a distinct lack of diversity in the backgrounds of BBC journalists (many of whom are Oxbridge educated) which inevitably leads to a lack of diversity in its output. Indeed, content analysis (Wahl-Jorgensen et al. 2013) confirms that the BBC tends to produce a conservative, Euro-sceptic, pro-business version of the world. The BBC in particular has considerable symbolic power as the public broadcaster providing ceremonial coverage of state occasions such as the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II and the subsequent coronation of King Charles III. Such 'media events' captivate large audiences and thereby 'integrate societies in a collective heartbeat and evoke a renewal of loyalty to the society and its legitimate authority' (Dayan and Katz 1992: 9).

The mainstream media, then, rather than holding power to account, 'constitutes a major source of ideological support for existing frameworks of power and privilege' (Freedman 2014: 12). The strongest form of the control paradigm is to be found in Herman and Chomsky's (1988: 2) *propaganda model*, according to which five 'filters' work to 'fix the premises of discourse and interpretation' in such a way as to marginalise dissent and maintain government and private interests. One of the filters they identify is the construction of an enemy who can be scapegoated as the source of social problems and around whose fear and contempt the general populace can coalesce. Such an enemy (currently immigrants in the UK) serves not only to detract attention from government policy as the genuine source of social problems but to actively rally support in favour of governments whose actions are designed to ward off the enemy. We thus find ourselves in perpetual crises, dealing with one enemy

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[5] The BBC is mandated by its Royal Charter to 'act in the public interest' by providing 'impartial news and information to help people understand and engage with the world around them' (2016: 5).

after another, a state of affairs that suits political leaders and other interest groups (Altheide 2002). The construction of enemies and the stoking of fear and hate around them is clearly not new in politics and continues to be an essential ingredient in current forms of right-wing populism (Wodak 2015a).

1.5   Performance Politics and Changing Media Landscapes

The advent of the internet and the digital revolution it brought about has had a profound and radical transformational effect on all aspects of the production, dissemination and consumption of political discourse. Central to the shifts observed are changes in the media landscape with politics now conducted across a vast array of digital platforms, giving rise to new emergent genres of political communication as well as reconfiguring old ones (Herring 2013). For example, nearly all major news organisations now incorporate digital dimensions in the production, distribution and promotion of the news (Langer and Gruber 2021). News organisations deliver their content via websites and use digital social media (DSM) platforms like Twitter and Facebook to direct traffic to those websites. Indeed, while print newspapers are haemorrhaging readers and their circulation is in decline, newspaper websites are flourishing, alongside the use of social media as a means of news retrieval (frequently involving following links to the websites of well-established media corporations) (KhosraviNik and Unger 2016: 206).

Politicians and political parties also produce large amounts of digital content. Political parties all have official websites. Individual politicians often also have their own semi-official blog-sites. For example, 'webcameron' was an online video blog produced by David Cameron as leader of the opposition (2006–2010) in effort to rebrand the Conservative Party and engage with a younger generation of digitally minded voters. Politicians and political parties, especially populist ones, also make use of DSM platforms like Facebook and Twitter, as well as YouTube. In the United States, Donald Trump's electoral success was intimately connected to his extensive use of Twitter, which hailed a shift to a new form of presidential discourse (Stolee and Caton 2018). In the UK, Nigel Farage has his own YouTube channel that features, among other content, a documentary series called *Nigel Investigates*, which borrows interdiscursively from the genre of investigative journalism. Also in the UK, in the run-up to the 2016 Brexit referendum, the official Vote Leave campaign used so-called dark ads to target specific groups of people via Facebook. This *digitisation* of politics has had a number of consequences for both the dynamics of political discourse and the semiotic means by which it is performed.

In some respects, the digitisation of politics has created a more open and democratic form of politics. For example, digital TV channels like partliamentlive.tv grant access to aspects of the political process, such as

parliamentary debates and Prime Minister's Questions, which previously took place behind closed doors and were accessible only through the selective filters of mainstream news organisations. Though, as Wodak (2009) observes, the 'front-stage' performances delivered in the House of Commons give only a glimpse of a politician's life, with much of politics still conducted through interactions that take place 'back-stage' away from the cameras.

DSM sites and other parts of the participatory web, such as 'below the line' comment sections on newspaper websites, have also changed the flow of political discourse to allow new forms of public participation in processes of political deliberation. As KhosraviNik and Unger state:

> social media communication has given rise to a new dynamic of communication that breaks away from the traditional linear flow of content from certain (privileged) producers to (ordinary, powerless) consumers, as well as changing the distribution processes that were at the core of assumptions about power in the mass media. (2016: 206)

The advent of Web 2.0 has meant that access to channels for disseminating political discourse is no longer restricted to symbolic elites like politicians and professional journalists. In this new media ecology, politics is no longer a passing parade of symbols of which the public are mere spectators. Web 2.0 means the public have the opportunity to actively take part in the parade.

This has led to an optimistic view in which the affordances of the participatory web are seen as enabling a more participatory form of politics. DSM sites like Twitter and Facebook, for example, can help to foster political engagement and facilitate debate between individual citizens, as well as between citizens and politicians (KhorsraviNik and Unger 2016: 212). More than this, the participatory web provides new communicative spaces in which hegemonic discourses can be challenged and resistant discourses can emerge and flourish (Fozdar and Pedersen 2013; Kelsey and Bennett 2014). For example, digital media has enabled 'alternative' news sources to operate on a larger scale, no longer dependent on hand-to-hand means of distribution (Castells 2015; Hands 2011). The participatory web thus constitutes a fresh site where discursive struggles over power can take place.

However, as Fuchs (2014) comprehensively argues, in its ownership structures, dependency on advertising in pursuit of profit, and connections with large (multimedia) corporations, DSM is subject to issues of political economy similar to those that compromise traditional media. And while digital media and the connectivity that it affords can and has been effective in facilitating successful resistance movements with practical outcomes (Castells 2015; Gerbaudo 2012), this may be more a matter of preceding political conditions within specific contexts, including a highly dissatisfied and politicised society, than it is the beginnings of a universal social media led revolution (KhosraviNik and Unger 2016: 212). Indeed, far from such utopian visions,

at the opposite end of the spectrum, Morozov (2011) argues that digital communication networks are exploited by authoritarian regimes to extend their power and control over citizens. In other contexts, it is pointed out that digital media has failed to deliver on its potential for creating dialogue and democratising politics. Myers (2010: 264) states of blogging that it 'does not have the focus on a shared social project that would be needed for deliberative discussion. It is not the same as participatory citizenship'. Similarly, Richardson and Stanyer (2011: 1000) found commenting on newspaper websites to be 'the preserve of the blindly opinionated' who showed little or no inclination toward any kind of genuine deliberation that might lead to the adoption of an alternative standpoint. Instead, digital spaces function as 'echo-chambers' – environments populated by like-minded people so that users' attitudes, ideologies and opinions get reinforced through repeated interactions with other users of similar dispositions (Cinelli et al. 2021; Garrett 2009). Musolff (2015) found the 'blogosphere' to provide a space where the most extreme and polemical versions of an already hostile discourse can circulate.

Rather than providing a space for resistance, then, digital platforms provide a medium through which hegemonic discourses are amplified and further promulgated as a dominant minority of users recapitulate the topics and agendas advanced by traditional media (Poell and Borra 2012; Vicari 2013). This, as well as other factors, points to the continued role of so-called legacy media in setting political agendas (Langer and Gruber 2021; Nielson and Schrøder 2014).

Digital media blurs the distinction between 'fact' and 'opinion', between 'official' and 'unofficial' texts, and makes it difficult to tell 'fake news' from 'real news'. In this context, legacy media, including broadcasters like the BBC and national newspapers, remain trusted sources and preferred places for obtaining 'quality' news (Ofcom 2021). Nielson and Schrøder (2014: 473) show that, across the eight countries they sampled, which included the UK, DSM platforms play only a limited role as sources of news, though they are one of the most important gateways for finding news. Conversely, legacy media platforms, including television as well as the online editions of established newspapers, continue to be of central significance in the news information cycle (2014: 473–474). As Langer and Gruber (2021: 316) observe, those news organisations that existed before the internet radically transformed the media environment, but which have successfully adapted to new media logics, still possess 'the symbolic capital, user reach and loyalty, and the necessary resources (financial, expertise, and access) to produce quality content, and hence can command a central place in the media system'.

Thus, while the media landscape has undoubtedly changed dramatically, and legacy media must be understood within this new context, the legacy media continue to wield considerable symbolic power such that they remain at

the core of the 'national conversation' (Langer and Gruber 2020c) and continue to exert significant influence on society.

With digital media has come changes to the semiotic landscape of political, including media, discourse. Digital media are 'inherently and substantially multimodal' (KhosraviNik and Unger 2016: 211). While political discourse has always been multimodal, and this is obviously the case for broadcast news, digitisation has arguably led to an increase in its uptake of multimodal resources or at least an increase in the salience of its multimodal features. The affordances of digital media, for example, mean that online news texts can include multimedia in the forms of images, infographics, and audio and video clips, which rely on other semiotic modes besides language. Caple and Knox (2015) found that almost half of English-language newspaper websites around the world included dedicated multimedia sections with the most common form being photo galleries. In an arena characterised by fierce battles for attention, as well as shortening attention spans (Langer and Gruber 2021: 313), such visual resources help news organisations secure a profitable share of eyes and ears (Caple and Knox 2015: 293).

Despite the increasing importance of photojournalism in narrating the news, however, fewer and fewer organisations employ in-house photographers. Instead, images are sourced either from image banks, such as Getty Images, or from consumers themselves, who thus become co-creators of the very content they read. Relating to the former, Machin (2004) addresses the increasing role of image banks in defining the visual language of various media, including digital news media. He argues that image banks like Getty Images organise the world into a pre-defined set of ideologically constrianed categories that are consistent with values of consumerism and globalisation at the expense of social security and mobility. In relation to user-contributed content, Fuchs (2014) takes a Marxist perspective and argues that such practices of 'prosumption' represent an exploitation of users' unpaid labour.

The increased multimodality of political discourse is not limited to digital news texts. Other forms of political texts like the websites of political parties and the manifestos published on them now similarly contain large amounts of visual and audio-visual content. Spoken political discourse has similarly become increasingly *performative* (Clark et al. 2009; Rai 2014). The institution that is Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) in the UK parliament, for example, has, since the introduction of live television broadcasting, become more and more theatrical with the conduct of MPs becoming more rowdy and rambunctious as members play to audiences at home (Bates et al. 2014). This is in line with a general shift toward a more personality-driven style of politics (275). The 'Punch and Judy' style of confrontation in the chamber is also in line with the eroding boundary between politics and entertainment

(Lovenduski 2012).[6] Lovenduski (2012: 320) points out that newspapers and the new media tend to cover the spectacle of PMQs using the language of sporting events and that the major media tend to live-blog it on their websites, making the occasion even more like a sporting or entertainment event.

A key aspect of this heightened performativity is the body. As Rai (2014: 5) states, 'performance is embodied' and, while the situated performance of political discourse has always necessarily been embodied, the intrusion of modern media places the body more on view, brings it more into focus (2014: 5). Thus, from a semiotic perspective, 'reading bodies through their dress, voice, words and gestures alerts us to how are they marked by signs of power' (2014: 5).

Digitisation has also coincided with the rise of right-wing populism and its attendant new style of political communication (Bucy et al. 2020; Ekström, Patrona and Thornborrow 2018; Moffitt and Tormey 2014; Montgomery 2017; Stoley and Caton 2018; de Vreese et al. 2018). Indeed, part of the success of right-wing populism has hinged directly on the affordances of digital media (Schroeder 2018), which right-wing populist politicians seem to be particularly adept at using compared to traditional political elites (Wodak 2015a: 136). Digital media has allowed populist politicians and parties, as well as far-right movements, to circumvent mainstream news outlets, which they maintain are biased against them (Schroeder 2018: 60), as a means of disseminating their message. At the same time, digital media has allowed populists to drive mainstream news agendas as the positions espoused by populist leaders via DSM platforms like Twitter feature prominently in television newscasts and newspaper headlines (2018: 63). And although coverage is often critical, such headlines nevertheless serve to ensure that right-wing populist views receive a disproportionate amount of attention (2018: 63), while their critique plays into and further feeds the populist narrative regarding 'media bias'. In one way or another, then, digital media has allowed right-wing populist and far-right voices to obtain greater influence.

Right-wing populist discourses are characterised by both ideological and stylistic features (de Vreese et al. 2018). As a political ideology, right-wing populism rejects existing political consensus to combine laissez-faire liberalism with anti-elitism (Wodak 2015a: 7). It relies on a claim to speak on behalf of 'the people' whose interests are not represented by the established political order. Right-wing populist leaders thus present themselves as 'saviours' on a mission to defend the common man/woman (2015a: 2). This normally

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[6] This blurring of the boundaries between politics and entertainment is seen elsewhere. For example, in the appearance of politicians on entertainment shows like *Strictly Come Dancing* or *I'm a Celebrity . . . Get Me Out of Here!* as well as in the fictionalisation of politics in programmes like *The West Wing* and *The Thick of It* (Wodak 2009).

involves an imagined enemy, such as immigrants, which the political elite are said not to be doing enough to protect 'ordinary' people from the dangers of.

As a communicative style, reflective of its ideology, right-wing populism similarly involves a departure from the normal conventions of political discourse. Right-wing populist politicians present themselves as men/women of the people who 'speak the same language' as the rest of 'us' and are therefore more relatable. That is, right-wing populist politicians present themselves as *authentic* (Montgomery 2017). One way this manifests itself is in 'the use of slang, swearing, political incorrectness and being overly demonstrative and "colourful"' in contrast to the more traditional behaviours of 'rigidness, rationality, composure and technocratic language' (Moffitt and Tormey 2014: 392). Donald Trump is a clear example. As Montgomery notes, the appeal of Trump's discourse:

> goes way beyond its content. Trump has managed to fashion a manner of speaking that ventriloquises a directness of speech – replete with pithy resonances and sometimes humorous overstatements – which catches the vernacular rhythms of those who have little left to lose. (2017: 637)

At the same time, somewhat paradoxically, right-wing populist politicians stand out as being *charismatic* (Wodak 2015a). Charisma is defined by Weber (1978) as the quality of having an 'individual personality' (1978: 241) and as 'a specific gift of body and mind' (1978: 1112). Similarly, Eatwell (2006: 147) states that charismatic leaders typically have great 'personal presence, or "magnetism"' and that in some cases this involves 'physical traits'. However, following Wodak (2015a: 133), we must be careful not to consider charisma as naturally bestowed but, rather, as something that is socially constructed. Charismatic leaders are not innately or inherently charismatic. They *become* charismatic through their discursive, including bodily, performances.

Similarly, right-wing populism seems to feed off of a more general *celebritisation* of politics in which, as Street (2004: 441) puts it, 'politicians become stars'. Street (2004: 435) defines 'celebrity politicians' as politicians who 'use elements of "celebrityhood" to establish their claim to represent a group or cause' (435). This can involve drawing on performative repertoires honed from a previous career in entertainment, show business or sport. For example, the campaign rallies of Donald Trump, who previously hosted the TV show *The Apprentice*, have as much in common with stadium pop concerts as they do with traditional fora for political discourse. It may also involve staged photographs of politicians whose presence in regular settings becomes remarkable. Nigel Farage, for example, is frequently depicted drinking pints of beer in pubs, thus simultaneously constructing himself as authentic.

The ubiquity of modern media and the opportunities it presents for promoting a personal 'brand' means that politicians are engaged in more and more

'front-stage' performances as part of their daily routines (Wodak 2009). Political personalities have, thus, come to rely on many of the same advisory resources as celebrities, since both groups need to appeal to large audiences (19). As a result, populist politicians are media-savvy and in particular, when compared to mainstream politicians, seem to show a greater awareness of and adeptness at manipulating multimodal semiotic resources (Wodak 2015a). For example, Wodak (2015a: 133) recounts how Jörg Haider would change his clothes several times during the course of a day campaigning in order to adapt to the multiple audiences he was addressing.

Mainstream political discourse is not impermeable to the rise of right-wing populism and we find 'mainstream appropriations' (Moffitt and Tormey 2014: 392) of right-wing populism amongst elite politicians who draw on various selective aspects of its ideology and performative style. Thus, while Donald Trump, Marine LePen, Viktor Orban, Heinz-Christian Strache and Nigel Farage are all canonical examples of right-wing populist politicians, Boris Johnson represents his own brand of 'mainstream populism' (Snow and Moffitt 2012). Senior et al. (2021: 2) note of Boris Johnson's success in the Brexit campaign that, in the context of a wider disdain for politics more generally, he was able to 'develop a unique persona that was replete with symbols that clearly positioned certain politicians (including himself) as unconventional and radical leaders e.g., using the media to generate an "us vs. them" narrative'. Senior et al. (2021) argue that the effective performance of this identity extends beyond linguistic channels to include 'Johnson's adroit use of non-verbal channels' that would take in embodied behaviours such as facial displays, eye gaze, gestures and body postures.

It is not just forms of language (as traditionally understood) that characterise the performative style of right-wing populist discourse. In other *embodied modes* (Norris 2004) like gesture, right-wing populist politicians similarly break with established norms of political communication to construct themselves as both authentic and charismatic. For example, Streeck (2008) found that mainstream politicians tend to rely on a common restricted gestural code consisting of only a small number of gestural forms and with little in the way of individual variation. This is perhaps attributable to the 'body-language' training that politicians receive which, based on non-scientific understandings of communication, may advise against using gestures in public performances that might distract audiences from the main message, that could appear aggressive or defensive, or which risk conveying information that the politician would rather not give away. Instead, it seems politicians are advised to make use of a small number of gestures thought to signal such virtues as firmness, confidence, commitment and determination. One example is the *thist* – a double-handed gesture in which the fists, extended forward, are clenched with the thumb tightly pressing down on them. The result is a

tempered gestural performance that can feel stiff, overly rehearsed and artificial. By contrast, however, the gestural repertoires of right-wing populist politicians appear less constrained, more idiosyncratic and feel more authentic. For example, Cienki and Giansante (2014) showed empirically that right-wing populist politicians Sarah Palin and Silvio Berlusconi made greater use of 'conversational framing devices' in the form of hand gestures and facial expressions than did their opponents in the same televised debates. Witness also the particularly animated hand movements of Donald Trump or the facial contortions of Nigel Farage. Hall, Goldstein and Ingram (2016: 74) argue that the exaggerated and comedic style of Donald Trump's gestures 'accrues entertainment value as it opposes the usual habitus associated with US presidential candidates'.[7] In analysing identity construction in the discourse of populist politicians, Wodak (2015a: 136) proposes seven levels of analysis that includes content but also aspects of bodily performance in dress, gaze and gestures.

1.6   Multimodality

What the above paragraphs suggest is that if we want to attain a full and proper understanding of the semiotic means by which politics and the legitimation of social actions and relations are performed discursively, then we need to attend to the various multimodal features of political texts and talk including verbal, visual and manual forms of expression. As van Leeuwen (2018: 18) states: 'in studying legitimation, attention must . . . be paid, not only to language, but also to the other forms of expression that combine with language in many forms of contemporary political discourse, in short, to multimodality'. Fairclough (1995: 131) similarly notes that while he uses the term discourse in the traditional sense to refer to spoken and written language, he would 'also wish to extend it to include semiotic practice in other semiotic modalities such as photography and non-verbal (e.g. gestural) communication'.

 CDA has undergone a 'multimodal turn' precisely in recognition of both the inherently multimodal nature of communication and the shifting media landscape which has given greater space and salience to the multimodal features of communication (Machin 2013; van Leeuwen 2014). Inspired by the social semiotics of Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), much of multimodal CDA to date has been based on extensions of systemic functional linguistics (e.g. Machin and Mayr 2012; Mayr 2016). However, as Jewitt (2009: 2) points out, multimodality is not restricted to a particular theory or method but, rather, identifies a *field of application*. It represents a general commitment to studying the multiplicity of semiotic

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[7] Bourdieu (1989) used the term *habitus* to refer to the set of habitualised practices, including bodily skills, styles, tastes and perceptions, that characterise a specific group or professional field.

modes that contribute meaning in any communicative context from a variety of perspectives. As such, multimodality does not represent a specific 'approach' within CDA. Instead, any approach to CDA can in principle be applied to investigate the multimodal properties of texts and talk and their potential role in discursive legitimations of power and inequality. For example, Richardson and Wodak (2009) extend the discourse-historical approach to analyse visual forms of argumentation in campaign posters and leaflets produced by far-right political parties in the UK and Austria. They show that many of the argumentation strategies that characterise the language of extreme-right groups are also realised visually, often reliant on or making intertextual references to Nazi discourse.

Cognitive CDA is especially well appointed for analysing multimodality in political discourse. This is because cognitive linguistics presents an intrinsically multimodal theory of language. This is so in at least two respects. Firstly, the meanings attached to linguistic forms are said to be multimodal in nature, grounded in action and perception and governed by general cognitive principles (Langacker 2008; Talmy 2000). Meanings attached to linguistic forms are therefore not unique to language but, rather, the same underlying conceptualisations may constitute the meaningful basis of expressive forms in other modes. As an example, conceptual metaphors are shown to receive visual as well as verbal expression, including in political genres of communication like editorial cartoons (Bounegru and Forceville 2011; El Refaie 2003). At the same time, semiotic features like spatial point of view, which are predominantly thought of as functioning in visually apprehended modes, are shown to figure in the meanings of linguistic expressions also (Hart 2015a). This provides a cognitive basis on which to identify and analyse relationships between modes in multimodal political texts and discourses (Hart 2016). Secondly, cognitive linguistics sees language as an inherently multimodal system into which the body is fully assimilated. Following McNeill (1992), cognitive linguistics highlights the unification of speech and gesture inside an integrated language system. It shows how speech and gesture interact with respect to various dimensions of meaning, including metaphor, point of view and schematisation (Cienki 2013). Accordingly, cognitive linguistics has developed systematic frameworks for analysing the forms and functions of different gestures and gesture-speech combinations, including in political talk (Cienki 2004; Cienki and Giansante 2014). Cognitive CDA is therefore particularly amenable to multimodal analysis and uniquely positioned in providing a common theoretical perspective from which to analyse the multimodal performance of political discourse across language, image and gesture.

1.7   Context, Data and Structure

The book is organised first and foremost by semiotic mode. Representing the development of CDA and its extension into other modes, the book moves from

language, to image and language-image relations, to co-speech gestures. Since the aim of the book is to outline the paradigm of Cognitive CDA, data is mainly illustrative. It is taken largely from digital sources like the websites of major newspapers, political parties or other political organisations, as well as posts from politicians, the major media and the public on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Some examples come from broadcast television news, interviews, debates or briefings, for many of which an online record exists.

The data spans a range of political topics that have defined the last decade and which are likely to remain pertinent for some time yet. These are issues that in one way or another involve conflict and inequality and include immigration, war and international state violence, public health, poverty, political protests and Brexit.

The last decade represents a particularly tumultuous period in British as well as international politics. Compounding issues already in place, the 2008 global financial crisis had long-lasting consequences for economic growth, income inequality and individual prosperity. In the UK, the financial crisis gave way to a decade of Conservative-led austerity and hostility which, at the time of writing, continues to endure. According to the United Nations (2019), the UK government's austerity programme, which disproportionately affects minority groups, and its 'hostile environment' policy have together served to entrench structural inequalities and strengthen xenophobic sentiment. In relation to Brexit, the report notes that the referendum was 'marked by divisive, anti-immigrant and xenophobic rhetoric', identifying a 'steady mainstreaming of racist, xenophobic, anti-refugee and anti-migrant discourses in official and unofficial "leave" campaigns'. The report also points to the role of the print and online media in 'spreading racist and xenophobic views and in stoking a climate of intolerance and prejudice'. Reports by the Ethical Journalism Network (2015) and Ethical Consumer (2022) are similarly critical of the UK media with the Ethical Journalism Network highlighting 'the tempestuous relationship the UK press has with migration, fearful on the one hand and fearless on the other'.

The focus on immigration in the Brexit campaign coincided with the so-called migrant crisis, which, beginning in 2015, involved increased numbers of refugees, many displaced by war in Syria, migrating across the Mediterranean to Europe and the UK in search of asylum. It is hard to attribute the focus on immigration to the migrant crisis, however, when previous Conservative campaigns and policies have been equally focussed on the 'problem' of immigration. In the 2005 General Election, the Conservative Party campaigned on the issue of immigration posing the question 'Are You Thinking What We're Thinking?' which would appear atop lecterns during speeches and on billboard posters accompanying statements like 'It's not racist to impose limits

on immigration'. According to Pitcher (2006: 540), the question 'Are You Thinking What We're Thinking?' 'speaks of racism without naming it, and derives its sinister undertones from its implication that, with a Conservative victory, prohibited beliefs might be re-evaluated and made acceptable once more'. In 2013, the government directly addressed migrants through posters featuring the slogan 'In the UK illegally? Go Home or Face Arrest', which were driven by mobile billboard vans around cities with large migrant populations. The controversial poster produced by the UK Independence Party in 2016 showing a queue of refugees and featuring the slogan 'Breaking Point' thus continued an established tradition of anti-immigration campaign posters.

Besides the UK Independence Party (a right-wing populist party), the period of economic instability that followed the financial crash also witnessed the rise of far-right organisations like Britain First and the English Defence League. This situation is consistent with the rise of far-right groups across Europe (Wodak and Richardson 2013). And while such populist parties and far-right social movements have not achieved any degree of electoral success in the UK, there can be no doubt as to the influence of the UK Independence Party on the outcome of the Brexit Referendum. Similarly, far-right organisations like Britain First and the English Defence League are able to 'reshape national politics by nudging public discourses and public policy to the right' (Hogan and Haltinner 2015: 522) as aspects of their rhetoric, in order to avoid any loss in vote share, are assimilated into the discourses of traditional parties. The result is a mainstreaming of concerns and ideologies that are normally the preserve of the extreme right. Right-wing populism has, of course, been electorally successful in the USA with the 2017–2021 presidency of Donald Trump.

The appropriation of far-right ideas by mainstream and populist political parties does not usually involve the same terms of reference, which, with their links to Nazism, are historically tainted. Rather, as Richardson (2013: 190) argues, fascist ideas are 'euphemized and recoded into more expedient political terminology'. In other words, they are sanitised in order to appear more acceptable and thus appeal to wider audiences. However, Brexit and the rise in anti-immigration attitudes it brought about has emboldened politicians like the Home Secretary, Suella Braverman, to openly adopt the kind of language normally associated with far-right groups. Such a move represents a radical-isation of British immigration discourse which has kept step with or created the space for ever more hostile immigration policies.

Given the salience of immigration as a topic of political and media discourse over the last decade, including in discourses of Brexit, immigration discourse, as it is realised across genres and semiotic modes, is a consistent topic of investigation throughout the book.

The same period has seen conflict in other areas too. As new social movements, such as Black Lives Matter, Anonymous and Extinction

Rebellion, have been spurred in response to discrimination, inequality and environmental damage, ideological tensions have arisen and protests have been met with violence, including state-inflicted violence. Political and media response to dissent is always suppression in one form or another. Currently, in the UK, the government is seeking legislation, in the form of its Public Order Bill, to curb the right to protest and to grant police greater freedoms in exercising power in response to protests. Should it pass, the Bill will have significant adverse effects on civil liberties.

The period has also seen unprecedented use of government powers, for example in the proroguing of parliament and in implementing restrictions relating to Covid-19, with serious constitutional implications. Covid measures, while undoubtedly required for reasons of public health, nevertheless represented a new relationship between State and citizen. Moreover, the sense of national unity and collectivism inspired by Covid-19 provided further fertile conditions in which nationalist and xenophobic ideologies could prosper.

These, as well as other areas of political discourse pertinent to the last decade, provide recurring case studies throughout the book.

The data is all English language data representing political contexts either within the UK or the USA or as understood from the perspective of British or American political discourse. I appreciate that this is less than desirable. It is partly a product of accessibility but also of familiarity and the need to analyse data drawing on one's own contextual knowledge as a socially situated researcher. The discursive performance of politics is, of course, sensitive to structural political and economic, cultural and linguistic differences across different contexts. I nevertheless hope that the models and methods described in this book can be taken up and applied, and where necessary adapted, to investigate political discourse across a broader range of contexts than those covered here.