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Can Critical Discourse Studies Benefit from the Legitimization-via-Proximization Approach?[1]

1. Introduction

Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) counts, without exaggeration, among the most vigorously developing research enterprises located at the intersection of contemporary linguistics and social sciences.[2] Colonizing, day in and day out, new discourse domains, from the top-most level of (mediatized) state politics to the bottom-most level of (individual) discourses of social concern such as health or environment, CDS is committed to a necessarily broad spectrum and a large number of different, often interdisciplinary and converging, methodologies. The goal of this paper is to contribute one such methodological tool, *proximization theory* (Cap 2006, 2008, 2010, 2013), a recent cognitive-pragmatic development designed to account for strategic regularities underlying forced construals in political/public discourse. It is to offer, in Chilton's (2005b, 2011) words, a "missing [*interdisciplinary* as well as *intergeneric*] link", between Critical Discourse Studies and cognitive pragmatics.

Originally meant to deal with legitimization issues in state political discourse (especially interventionist discourse, cf. Cap 2006), proximization seems now well applicable in the vast area of public discourses, including such heterogeneous domains as preventive medicine, cyber-threat or policies to contain climate change. Of course, as will be demonstrated, the implementation of proximization to account for these discourses, entails certain changes to the initial assumptions and design of the theory. In that sense, the secondary goal of the paper is to use the CDS empirical scope and data to upgrade proximization theory.

[1] A substantially extended version of this paper will appear in Hart and Cap (eds., 2014).

[2] See a comprehensive, four-volume overview by Wodak (ed., 2012).

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The paper is structured as follows. In Section 2 I give a necessarily compact overview of proximization as a concept and a theory. In Section 3 I provide a sample illustration of the descriptive and explanatory power of proximization in its "cradle" domain of state political discourse. In Section 4, I extend the original scope of proximization theory to cover several public space discourses which CDS practitioners have recently developed much interest in: health, environment and modern technology. Section 5 is a summary statement on what the analyses of these discourses promise in the way of further implementation of proximization in critical studies and, conversely, what modifications of proximization theory must be put in place to process greater and more varied amounts of CDS data.

2. Proximization: the concept and the theory

In its most general and practical sense, proximization is a discursive strategy of presenting physically and temporally distant events and states of affairs (including "distant" adversarial ideologies) as increasingly and negatively consequential to the speaker and her addressee. Projecting the distant entities as gradually encroaching upon the speaker-addressee territory (both physical and ideological), the speaker may attempt a variety of goals, but the principal goal is usually *legitimization of actions and policies* the speaker proposes to neutralize the growing impact of the negative, "foreign", "alien", "antagonistic", entities.

Proximization is a relatively new concept in linguistics. The verbal forms "proximize", "proximizing" (i.e. bringing [conceptually] closer), are first found in Chilton (2004), while the nominal term "proximization" was originally proposed by Cap (2006), who also first used it to mark an *organized, strategic deployment of cognitive-pragmatic construals in discourse*. Ever since, proximization has developed into a cognitive-linguistic, pragmatic, as well as a critical discourse analytic concept accounting for the symbolic construal of relations between entities within the Discourse Space (DS) (cf. Chilton 2005a) – most notably, the symbolic shifts whereby the peripheral elements of the DS are construed as the central ones, members of the "deictic center" (Chilton 2005a; Cap 2006) of the Space. The explanatory power of proximization has been utilized within a number of different theoretical frameworks and thematic domains. Chilton (2005a, 2010) relates to it in his cognitive-linguistic Discourse Space Theory (DST); Cap (2006, 2008, 2010) makes it a theoretical premise for several case studies of the Iraq war rhetoric; in a similar vein, Hart (2010) incorporates it (as a coercive strategy) in his multidisciplinary approach to metaphoric construals of the speaker-external threat. Proximization has been shown to operate within diverse discourse domains, though most commonly in *state political discourses*: crisis construction and war rhetoric (Chovanec 2010; Okulska and Cap 2010), the (anti-)immigration discourse (Hart 2010), political party representation (Cienki, Kaal and Maks 2010), and construction of national memory (Filardo Llamas 2010). There have also been studies of proximization in works at the intersection of politi-

cal genres. In the most comprehensive one, Dunmire (2011) investigates proximization patterns in a US foreign policy document (the 2002 National Security Strategy articulating the "[G.W.] Bush Doctrine") and how they were followed in speeches enacting the Doctrine.

All these theoretical and empirical threads have been recently reviewed and revisited in Cap (2013), a monograph proposing an integrated *proximization theory*. 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 the 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, that is the speaker and her addressee. The threat possesses a spatio-temporal as well as ideological nature, which sanctions the division of proximization in three aspects. "Spatial proximization" is a forced construal of the DS peripheral entities encroaching *physically* upon the DS central entities (speaker, addressee). "Temporal proximization" is a forced construal of the envisaged conflict as not only imminent, but also momentous, historic and thus needing immediate response and unique preventive measures. Spatial and temporal proximization involve strong fear appeals and typically use analogies to conflate the growing threat with an actual disastrous occurrence in the past, to endorse the current scenario. Finally, "axiological proximization" is a 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 and its Spatial-Temporal-Axiological (STA) analytic model assume 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 on the speaker and her addressee. As such, goes proximization theory, the strategies of proximization constitute prime legitimization devices in political interventionist discourse; the discourse addressees will only legitimize preemptive actions against the "gathering threat" if they perceive the threat as personally consequential. The last tenet of proximization theory in Cap (2013) is that although any application of proximization principally subsumes all of its strategies, spatial, temporal and axiological, the degree of their representation in discourse 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.

3. A study of proximization in (state) political discourse

As has been mentioned, the main application of proximization theory has been so far to (state) political discourse soliciting legitimization of interventionist preven-

tive measures against the external threat. In this section I provide a necessarily brief example of such an application, discussing instances of the US discourse of the war-on-terror. Specifically, I outline how and what proximization strategies were used to legitimize going to war in Iraq (March 2003), and what adjustments in the use of the strategies were made later (from approximately November 2003), as a result of contextual changes.

3.1. Initiating legitimization through proximization

Below I look at parts of G.W. Bush's speech at the American Enterprise Institute, which was delivered on February 26, 2003.[3] The speech took place only three weeks before the first US and coalition troops entered Iraq on March 19; as such, it has been considered (e.g. 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 Bush on the night of the 9/11 attacks. The realization of this goal involved a strategic deployment of various lexico-grammatical choices reflecting different proximization strategies.

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

(1) 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.

[3] The parts are quoted according to the chronology of the speech.

In a nutshell, the AEI speech states that there are WMD[4] in Iraq and that, given historical context and experience, ideological characteristics of the adversary as opposed to American values and national legacy, and Bush's obligations as ruling 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 in (1), "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[5]), 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).[6] The assertions there reveal different degrees of acceptability, from being indisputably acceptable ("My job is (…)"; "The liberation of millions (…)"), to being acceptable due to credibility developed progressively within a "fact-belief series" ("We've tried diplomacy for 12 years [FACT] (…) he's armed [BELIEF]"), but none of them is inconsistent with the key predispositions of the addressee.

At the "synchronic" level, much denser with the relevant lexical and pragmatic material, 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 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" apparently, but could indeed

4 Weapons of mass destruction.

5 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.

6 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.

materialize within the US borders 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 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"). As can be noticed, this fear appeal is much strengthened by the FIRE metaphor, which contributes the imminence and the speed of the external impact (Hart 2010). The IDC "shift" (towards the ODCs) is much less symbolic; it involves an explicit declaration of a pre-emptive move to neutralize the threat ("must be confronted actively and forcefully before…", "we will not allow the flames…", "When it comes to our security and freedom, we really don't need anybody's permission").

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 world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder", which counts as an instance of axiological proximization. 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. Since any result of these speculations can be effectively cancelled in a prospective discourse, the example quoted ("The world…") shows how proximization can interface, at the pragmalinguistic level, with the mechanism of implicature (Grice 1975, etc.).

3.2. Maintaining legitimization through adjustments in proximization strategies

Political legitimization pursued in temporally extensive contexts – such as the timeframe of the Iraq war – often involves redefinition of the initial legitimization premises and coercion patterns and proximization is well suited to enact these redefinitions in discourse – which in turn promises a vast applicability of proximization as

a theory. The legitimization obtained in the AEI speech and how the unfolding geopolitical context has put it to test is a case in point, providing a lucid illustration for these claims. 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 (to all political players worldwide) 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 (enacted, before, by spatial proximization of the "direct/emerging 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:

(2) 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 center (viz. "…a cycle of dictatorship and radicalism that brings millions of people to mis-

ery 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. (Though the very switch to the ideological stance and axiological proximization seem to betray Bush's belief that much of the credibility did get damaged and there is a pressing need to restore it.) Add to these general factors the power of legitimization ploys in specific pragmalinguistic constructs ("programs for weapons of mass destruction"[7], 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 fall 2003 change to essentially axiological discourse (subsuming axiological proximization) has helped a lot towards saving credibility and thus maintaining legitimization of not only the Iraq war, but the later anti-terrorist campaigns as well. The flexible interplay and the discursive switches between spatial and axiological proximization (both aided by temporal projections) in the early stages of the US anti-terrorist policy rhetoric have indeed made a major contribution.

4. Proximization in public space discourses

This section elaborates on the postulate salient in the title of the paper, that the descriptive power of proximization theory goes beyond state political discourse (such as the US anti-terrorist rhetoric) and can be successfully used to account for a broader range of legitimization discourses in the space of public communication explored by critical scholars. There seem to be good prospects as many of these discourses demonstrate analogies with regard to function (soliciting approval for preventive measures) as well as the conceptual/cognitive arrangement (involving dichotomous representations of "home/good" [IDC] vs. "foreign/alien/bad" [ODC] entities). At the same time, there are disanalogies, including, as will be shown, some different characterizations of the IDC and ODC camps in different discourses. In what follows I discuss both the analogies and the disanalogies, on the example of three legitimization discourses which appear to attract an increasingly greater attention within the CDS community: health, environment and modern technology.

[7] 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.

4.1. Health:
Proximization in cancer prevention discourse

The main reason why it seems worthwhile to apply proximization to the analysis of cancer discourse is that much of this discourse involves metaphoric construals of an *enemy* entity (cancer) posing an *imminent threat of impact* on the *home* entity (patient). In response, the patient and her healthcare team wage a "war on cancer", which is often a *preventive* kind of war. Although, as will be argued, the construals underlying the war on cancer metaphor are not entirely synonymous with the proximization construals in state interventionist discourse, there is apparently enough similarity to consider the discourse of cancer prevention a possible empirical field for the application of proximization theory.

The war metaphor has been the prevailing metaphor used to describe and "combat" cancer since at least 1971, when US President Richard M. Nixon declared a federal "war on cancer" with the National Cancer Act. Following this legislation, as well as Sontag's (1978) seminal book *Illness as Metaphor*, medical discourse, both in and outside the US, has quickly implemented the concept, adding the war on cancer metaphor to an already rich inventory of metaphors involving "wars" on other negative social phenomena, such as drugs, poverty or illiteracy.

Van Rijn-van Tongeren (1997) claims the concepts of war and cancer reveal a perfect metaphoric correspondence: there is an enemy (the cancer), a commander (the physician), a combatant (the patient), allies (the medical team), as well as formidable weaponry (chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, at the disposal of the medical team). Another analogy, she argues, is that both concepts connote "an unmistakable seriousness of purpose" (1997: 46). Based on these observations, she describes the "war on cancer" in terms of the following conceptual scenario:

> (3) Cancer is an *aggressive enemy* that *invades* the body. In response, the body *launches an offensive* and *defends* itself, *fighting* back with its *army of killer T-cells*. However, this is not enough and doctors are needed to *target*, *attack* and try to *defeat, destroy*, *kill* or *wipe out* the cancer cells with their *arsenal* of *lethal weapons*. However, cancer cells may become *resistant* and more specialised treatments are required, such as *magic bullets* or *stealth viruses*. (Van Rijn-van Tongeren [1997], emphasis original)

The consecutive stages of the scenario are widely represented in discourse. Van Rijn-van Tongeren (1997) gives, among many others, the following examples (emphasis original). Van Rijn-van Tongeren's data come, in general, from various publications, including scholarly monographs, textbooks and articles (viz. examples [5-7]), but also bulletins and newspaper articles aimed at broad public (example [4]).

> (4) The next trial involves several hundred patients, helping microwaves become another *cancer-fighting tool*.
>
> (5) This molecule called Sumo, is then *attacked* by an enzyme called RNF4, a process that also *destroys* the cancer-causing proteins.

(6) A second gene, called LMTK2 is a promising *target* for new drugs to treat the disease.

(7) This activates only those antibodies surrounding cancer, which then attract the immune system's *army of killer T cells*, to *destroy* the tumor.

Van Rijn-van Tongeren's scenario, as well as the examples, ring some familiar notes. Like in the proximization arrangement of political interventionist discourse, there is an "alien" entity ready to invade (or actually invading) the "home" entity, i.e., here, the body of the patient. The "alien" entity is construed as evil and actively operating ("aggressive enemy"), thus the impact probability is high. The "home" entity has the capacity to deliver a counter-strike, which is defensive/neutralizing, as much as offensive/preventive in character ("the body *launches an offensive* and *defends* itself, *fighting* back with its *army of killer T-cells*"). This is, however, where the analogies seem to end. The "alien" entity cannot be described as a truly "external" entity (ODC), since cancer cells develop inside of the patient's body. Furthermore, the body is not, technically, the only "home" entity (IDC) that counters the alien entity, since its "*army of T-cells*" gets support (medical treatment) from another party (the physician), which the latter has not been "invaded". These and other differences call for a more extensive, textual look at the cancer prevention discourse, to distinguish the areas which can be described in terms of the STA model, from those which might not be describable quite as easily, unless the model is revised to deal with a broader spectrum of data. The following is a text that appeared in the spring 2011 edition of the Newsletter of the British Association of Cancer Research (BACR). Its argument, structure, and lexis seem all quite representative of the contemporary discourse of cancer prevention and treatment, both specialized and popular (cf. Semino 2008):

(8) Some say we can contain melanoma with standard chemotherapy measures. The evidence we have says we must strike it with a full force in its earliest stages. We will continue to conduct screening programmes to spot the deadly disease before it has spread throughout the body. We must be able to wipe out all the infected cells in one strike, otherwise it takes a moment before they continue to replicate and migrate around the body. We now aim to develop a new treatment that targets the infected cells with precision, effectively destroying the engine at the heart of the disease, and doing minimal harm to healthy cells. We will inject specially-designed antibodies coated in a light-sensitive shell. The coating prevents the antibodies from causing a massive immune reaction throughout the body. Once the "cloaked" antibodies have been injected, we will shine the new strong ultraviolet light on the engine and the infected cells.

The analysis of this text in terms of proximization theory and the STA model must involve, same as the analysis of the US anti-terrorist discourse in Section 3, at least three, interrelated levels: the conceptual level of organization of the Discourse Space (DS), the level of lexis responsible for the enactment of strategic changes to the DS principal organization, and the coercion level, where the text is considered an example of legitimization discourse which aims to win support for specific actions performed by the speaker. At the DS conceptual level, we must be able to determine the

presence of the IDC ("home", "central") entity and the ODC ("alien", "external", "peripheral") entity, the existence of a conceptual shift whereby the ODC entity impacts the IDC entity, and a preventive or reactive posture of the IDC entity. Looking at (8), this arrangement indeed holds in general, though there are some deviations. The IDC status can be assigned, most directly, to the patient's body, which is invaded by cancer cells, which thus emerge as the ODC entity. This basic proximization construal follows the standard metaphoric conceptualization of the body as a container (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; etc.). But the container metaphor is only partly of relevance here since the patient's body is not a typical IDC, in the sense of where the impact it undergoes comes from. In that sense, the cancer cells, responsible for the impact, are not a typical ODC, either. As has been pointed out, cancer cells develop, technically, *inside* of the patient's body. At the same time, *causes* of cancer are put down to internal (e.g. genetic), as well as external (e.g. civilizational), factors. The picture gets even more complex if we consider the aspect of agency. While the body has an internal defense mechanism, fighting the cancer cells involves mostly external resources, i.e. measures applied by the physician. Thus, in terms of neutralization of the ODC impact, the physician becomes an IDC entity as well, and even more so considering he remains under the cancer *threat* himself. What we arrive at, then, is a rather broad concept of the IDC entity, involving the patient and, by the attribution of agency and the recognition of common threat, the physician, as well as a vaguely construed concept of the ODC party, involving the infected cells in the patient, but also a whole array of cancer provoking factors, "located" externally. Looking at (8), it appears that the only (though crucial!) part of the default proximization arrangement that cancer discourse does not alter in any way is the construal of the very impact. Indeed, it seems that all of its characteristics, like speed, imminence, and deadliness, are there in the text, which in that sense resembles the two texts of state political discourse in Section 3.

This last observation explains why there are fewer analytic problems at the level of lexis. In proximization discourse, lexical markers of the ODC *impact* generally count among the most plentiful, within all the linguistic material categorized (Cap 2013). As a result, the abundance of such markers in (8) makes its phrases resemble many of the discourse items and sequences we have seen above in the war on terror rhetoric.[8] The ODC impact speed is coded explicitly in phrases such as "*spread throughout* the body", "it takes *a moment*", "replicate and migrate around", and can also be inferred from "we must strike it with a full force *in its earliest stages*", "we must be able to wipe out all the infected cells *in one strike*" and "*the engine* at the heart of the disease". The imminence is construed in, for instance, "before it has spread throughout" and "in its earliest stages", presuppositions of the ODC's inevitably fast growth. The effects of the impact are explicitly marked by the "deadly disease" phrase.

[8] Let alone intriguing metaphoric correspondences. Apart from the analogies listed by Van Rijn-van Tongeren (1997), note that (8) may force construal of the screening programs as intelligence, the infected *cells* as terrorist *cells*, the new treatment as air strikes *on* the terrorist cells, and the healthy cells as civilian population ("We now aim to […], doing minimal harm to healthy cells").

At the coercion-legitimization level, the STA model recognizes in (8) an attempt to solicit legitimization of a non-standard course of treatment, sanctioned by the momentousness of the decision-making context ("We *now* aim"), as well as by the clear evidence the speaker possesses ("The evidence we have says") which speaks in favor of the treatment. Since the legitimization is sought by the physician acting, in a way, "on behalf of" the patient, and not by the patient herself, we again face the problem of who, under the current design of the STA model, belongs to the deictic center and who, thus, is acting (or is supposed to act) in response to the ODC threat. The recurrence of this issue at the coercion-legitimization level of analysis of cancer discourse delineates a possible avenue for the modification of selected structural elements of proximization theory (as in Cap 2013), to make it able to process data beyond the state-political interventionist discourse. Apparently, what we need first is revision of the size and range of the Discourse Space and its deictic center in proximization operations.

4.2. Environment: Proximization in climate change discourse

As will become clear, the same conclusion holds for the application of proximization to the discourse of climate change. Climate change is a relatively new domain of discourse studies, investigated amply within the CDS paradigm (e.g. Boykoff 2008; Berglez and Olausson 2010; Krzyżanowski 2009). Thus far, studies in climate change have revealed a unilateral focus: most of them concentrate on climate change as a form of *transnational crisis*. There are, however, two different ways in which this broad conception is approached in actual analysis. These result – probably – from two rather contradictory views that emerge from the media and the related discourses. On the one hand (cf. Krzyżanowski 2009), there exists a tendency to frame climate change as a general issue of interest and critical importance to the entire societies and all social groups. Within that trend, climate change is described mainly as a threat to the entire humanity which thus must be dealt with by entire societies or the global populace as a whole. On the other hand, the somewhat contradictory approach (cf. Boykoff 2008) sees climate change as a problem which cannot be handled by entire societies but by selected individuals who, due to their knowledge and expertise, are able to cope with different facets of climate change.

Where does proximization, as an analytic device, belong, then? It seems, tentatively, that the former, "global" view invites proximization better than the "particularized" view. It would be quite unrealistic to approach data subsuming the latter view hoping to establish any uniform conception of the discourse deictic center and its agents in the first place. We have seen already from the analysis of cancer discourse how difficult that might be. In the current case, assuming climate change is dealt with by a number of different (locationally, politically, rhetorically, perhaps ideologically) *individual expert voices* in the vast and heterogeneous area of the world social space, an attempt to ascribe any stable and homogeneous discursive strategies or practices

to these actors would probably fail. On the contrary, if we take the global *institutionalized* discourse of climate change, a discourse that evens out the individual legitimization-rhetorical and other differences and conceptually consolidates the deictic center (concretizing, at the same time, the deictic periphery), chances emerge that proximization, as a concept that always benefits from clarity of the in-out distinction, may indeed be applicable. To determine that applicability, I will discuss excerpts from the speech "Emerging Security Risks" by the NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen. The speech was given in London, on October 1, 2009:

(9) I want to devote a little more time today discussing the security aspects of climate change, because I think the time has come for a change in our approach.

First, I think we now know enough to start moving from analysis to action. Because the trend lines from climate change are clear enough, and grim enough, that we need to begin taking active steps to deal with this global threat.

We know that there will be more extreme weather events – catastrophic storms and flooding. If anyone doubts the security implications of that, look at what happened in New Orleans in 2006.

We know sea levels will rise. Two thirds of the world's population lives near coastlines. Critical infrastructure like ports, power plants and factories are all there. If people have to move they will do so in large numbers, always into where someone else lives, and sometimes across borders.

We know there will be more droughts. According to evidence, by 2025 about 40% of the world's population will be living in countries experiencing water shortages. Again, populations will have to move. And again, the security aspects could be devastating.

If you think I'm using dramatic language, let me draw your attention to one of the worst conflicts in the world, in Darfur. One of the main causes was a long drought. Both herders and farmers lost land, including to the desert. What happened? The nomads moved South, in search of grazing land – right to where the farmers are. Of course, a lot of other factors have contributed to what has happened – political decisions, religious differences and ethnic tensions. But climate change in Sudan has been a major contributor to this tragedy. And it will put pressure on peace in other areas as well. When it comes to climate change, the threat knows no borders.

There are more examples, but to my mind, the bottom line is clear. We may not yet know the precise effects, the exact costs or the definite dates of how climate change will affect security. But we already know enough to start taking action. This is my first point: either we start to pay now, or we will pay much more later.

You get the point. Climate change is different than any other threat we face today. The science is not yet perfect. The effects are just starting to be visible, and it's difficult to pin down what will actually change because of climate change. The timelines are not clear either. But that only makes the threat bigger. Sailors never thought the mythical North-West Passage would ever open. But it is opening. Anything's possible.

The security challenges being discussed today are big, and they are growing.

> They might also seem overwhelming. But I firmly believe that a lot can be done – to address the root causes, to minimize their impact, and to manage the effects when they hit.

But for the topic, Rasmussen's speech could easily count in the discourse of the early stages of the Iraq war. Rasmussen's construal of climate change is in terms of a global threat whose outlines are "clear enough" and consequences "devastating"; thus, an immediate (re)action is necessary ("either we start to pay [costs of the climate change] now, or we will pay much more later"). Similar to Bush's rhetoric, the threat "knows no borders" and a delay in response "makes the threat bigger". Analogy is used, like in the anti-terrorist discourse, to a past event (the war in Darfur), to endorse credibility of future visions. The visions involve construals of future events as personally consequential, thus strengthening the fear appeals ("Two thirds of the world's population lives near coastlines […] If people have to move they will do so in large numbers, always into where someone else lives […]"). Another familiar strategy is the construal of the moment of impact as virtually unpredictable ("the timelines are not clear"). Construing the climate change threat as continual and extending infinitely into the future, Rasmussen centralizes "the now" and the near future as the most appropriate timeframe in which to act preventively.

Again, a number of Rasmussen's phrases subsume items belonging to the standard arsenal of lexico-grammatical choices recognized by proximization theory (cf. Section 3 as well as the formal categories of proximization items proposed in Cap 2013). Note, first and foremost, the frequent use of "threat" (a spatial proximization item), the use of "catastrophic", "tragedy" (spatial proximization), the ample presence of verbs in the progressive ("growing") indicating the closeness of the threat (spatial and temporal proximization), the use of a modal auxiliary ("could") construing conditions raising impact probability (temporal proximization), or the application of the present perfect ("the time has come") construing change from the "safe past" to the "threatening future" (temporal proximization). The frequent repetitions of the "will" phrases in the speech ("We know that there will be more extreme weather events") deserve a separate comment. Resembling the war on terror items enacting foresight and, in general, political competence of the speaker (Dunmire 2011; Cap 2013) they have an even stronger appeal in Rasmussen's speech – by adding to its evidential groundwork (Bednarek 2006). At places, then, Rasmussen's climate change discourse forces construals of threat in a yet more direct and appealing fashion than – cf. Section 3 – the Iraq war discourse of the Bush government.

Rasmussen's success in proximizing the climate change threat is not hindered by its global character. The globality of the threat does not result in vagueness or weakening of the ODC's (i.e. the climate change) agentive capacity. Conversely, listing specific consequences such as storms, floodings, droughts, and linking them to specific places, regions, or countries (New Orleans, Darfur, Sudan), concretizes the ODC in terms of its proven capacity to strike whichever part of the IDC's (i.e. the world) territory. This is obviously, as in any kind of state interventionist discourse (Keyes 2005; Kaplan and

Kristol 2003), the most effective pre-requisite to solicit prompt legitimization of preventive measures. The latter are, somewhat surprisingly, missing from the speech but we can assume (which later developments seem to prove) that the goal of Rasmussen's address is, first and foremost, to alert public attention to the gravity of the issue so the follow-up goals, involving specific actions, could be enacted as a matter of course. The spatial and temporal proximization strategies used in the speech make a significant contribution and, given the recurrence of some of the forms (for instance all the lexical as well as grammatical forms construing the threat as growing with time), one can say their application has been a strategic choice.

4.3. Modern technology: Proximization of cyber-threat

According to Sandwell (2006), the discourse of cyber-terror is a direct consequence of 9/11; cyber-threats are construed within the "general context of uncertainty and common anxiety" following the WTC and the Pentagon terrorist attacks. The most extreme manifestations of cyber-fear, says Sandwell, are articulated around the "[post-9/11] boundary dissolving threats, intrusive alterities, and existential ambivalences created by the erosion of binary distinctions and hierarchies that are assumed to be constitutive principles of everyday life" (2006: 40). As such, the discourse of cyber-terror is not merely a US discourse, it is a world discourse. Its principal practitioners are the world media, and the press in particular, which, on Sandwell's view, perpetuate the threat by creating mixed representations of "the offline and the online world, the real or physical and the virtual or imagined" (2006: 40).

Neither Sandwell (2006) nor other scholars (e.g. Graham 2004) go on to speculate on the motives that might underlie such fear-inducing representations. This is unfortunate since establishing the motives is of clear relevance to the analysis of the discourse of cyber-terror as, potentially, a legitimization discourse. There are two hypotheses that emerge. On the first, the media discourse of cyber-terror has a strong political purpose: it aims to alert the people, the government and the state's security structures to the seriousness of the issue, thus exerting pressure on the state to implement or strengthen defense measures. Such a discourse can be considered a legitimization discourse since the measures become pre-legitimized by discourse construals reflecting a true intent to influence the state's policies. On the other hypothesis, the press representations of cyber-terror have no real political purpose and only pretend to have it; the motives are purely commercial and the central aim is to increase readership.

There are clearly not enough data to determine which of the two hypotheses (if any) is correct. Thus, the proximization analysis that follows cannot possibly address the coercion-legitimization level. In other words it cannot tell, from the macro functional perspective, *why* the proximization strategies, *as a whole*, have been used. Notwithstanding that, it is definitely thought-provoking to identify so many of the

particular forms operating over relatively small text instants. The two examples below are excerpts from a book by Dan Verton, a respected IT journalist working with the influential *Computerworld* magazine.[9] In the book (2003), he recaps the thoughts presented in the 2002 issues of the *Computerworld*:

(10) This is the emerging face of the new terrorism. It is a thinking man's game that applies the violent tactics of the old world to the realities and vulnerabilities of the new high-tech world. Gone are the days when the only victims are those who are unfortunate enough to be standing within striking distance of the blast. Terrorism is now about smart, well-planned indirect targeting of the electronic sinews of the whole nations. Terrorists are growing in their evil capacity to turn our greatest technologies against us. Imagine, one day, overloaded digital networks, resulting in the collapse of finance and e-commerce networks, collapsed power grids and non-functioning telephone networks. Imagine, another day, the collapse, within seconds, of air traffic control systems, resulting in multiple airplane crashes; or of any other control systems, resulting in widespread car and train crashes, and nuclear meltdowns. Meanwhile, the perpetrators of the war remain undetected behind their distant, encrypted terminals, free to bring the world's mightiest nations to their knees with a few keystrokes in total impunity. (Verton 2003: 55)

(11) Armed with nothing but a laptop and a high speed Internet connection, a computer geek could release a fast spreading computer virus that in a matter of minutes gives him control of thousands, perhaps millions, of personal computers and servers throughout the world. This drone army launches a silent and sustained attack on computers that are crucial for sending around the billions of packets of data that keep e-mail, the Web and other, more basic necessities of modern life humming. At first the attack seems to be an inconvenience – e-mail traffic grinds to a halt, Web browsing is impossible. But then the problems spread to services only tangentially related to the Internet: your automated-teller machine freezes up, your emergency call fails to get routed to police stations and ambulance services, airport- and train-reservation systems come down. After a few hours, the slowdown starts to affect critical systems: the computers that help run power grids, air-traffic control and telephone networks. (Verton 2003: 87)

Similar to the discourse of climate change, (10) and (11) construe a broad spectrum of the IDC entities: there is seemingly no entity in the world, whether a nation or an individual that is *not* under threat. Forcing the construal involves a number of lexicogrammatical ploys, such as, in text (10), abundant pluralization of the affected entities (e.g. "victims", "nations", "networks", "systems", etc.) or, in (11), depicting the cyber-threat in personally consequential terms ("*your* automated-teller machine freezes up, *your* emergency call fails to get routed to police stations and ambulance services"). Unlike in the discourse of climate change – but similar to cancer discourse – we face a problem with demarcating the ODC entities. Unless we take Verton's "cyber-terrorists" to count among "terrorists" in the ideological, geopolitical and locational sense

9 www.computerworld.com

of alterity we have recognized so far, we have to admit the cyber-terrorists make, as if, isolated "ODC cells" among the IDC entities. Because of the short history of the cyber-threat discourse and, as has been mentioned, the shortage of data, especially reference data, the dilemma is apparently unresolvable. Thus, again, the part of the current conceptual scenario that remains most in line with the "default" proximization scenario is the act of proximization as such, the symbolic shift of the threat entity in the direction of the IDC entities. Though neither (10) nor (11) construes a clear picture of the *source* of the threat, they include a large number of lexico-grammatical forms construing its speed, imminence, as well as devastating effects.

Most of these forms echo the language choices and strategies from the war on terror discourse exemplified in Section 3, and, to the clear benefit of proximization as a theory, from the two discourses that we have approached earlier in the current section. The cyber-threat is construed as having redefined, once and for all, the "old world" security arrangement ([10]: "Gone are the days when […]"). The "new world" arrangement is far more "vulnerable": not only do the "old" ideologies of "evil" and "violence" continue to exist, but the ones exercising them have now acquired new formidable ("high-tech") tools. As a result, the current threat is "growing", its "blast" can reach entire "nations", and the impact is unpredictable, it can come "one day" or "another". Both (10) and (11) construe the impact as ultra-fast ([10]: "within seconds"; [11]: "fast spreading", "in a matter of minutes") and massively destructive ([10]: "airplane crashes", "nuclear meltdowns"; [11]: "affect critical systems"). Virtually all of these forms seem readily categorizable in terms of "spatial", "temporal" and "axiological" items as proposed in Cap (2013; recall also a necessarily compact overview in Section 2). For instance, the "fast spreading" phrase works towards spatio-temporal proximization, the "blast" towards spatial proximization, and "one day" enacts indefiniteness and thus uncertainty about the future, in line with the strategy of temporal proximization. In contrast to the discourse of climate change, as well as cancer discourse, we find also a few phrases forcing axiological construals ("evil capacity", "violent tactics"). Intriguingly, (11) features a discourse sequence similar to Bush's argument establishing a threatening connection in "a cycle of dictatorship and radicalism" that eventually "brings danger to our own people" (recall Section 3.2). The sequence in (11), spanned by "At first the attack seems to be an inconvenience" and "After a few hours, the slowdown starts to affect critical systems", proximizes the threat along quite similar, "apparently minor/abstract -toward- genuinely major/physical" progress line, except that in the current construal the starting point ("At first […]") involves no ideological element such as "dictatorship" or "radicalism".

5. Outlook: proximization in CDS

The landscape of discourses where proximization and proximization theory can help CDS in its descriptive commitments and practices seems enormous, far more extensive than the three discourses analyzed (pre-analyzed, in fact) above. The domains addressed in CDS in the last 25 years have been at least the following: racism,

xenophobia and national identity (Reisigl and Wodak 2001; van Dijk 1987; Wodak 1996, 1999), gender identity and inequality (Koller 2008; Litosseliti and Sunderland 2002; Morrish 2007), media discourse (Bell 1991; Bell and Garrett 1998; Fairclough 1995; Fowler 1991; Montgomery 2007; Richardson 2007) and discourses of national vs. international politics (Chilton 2004; Wilson 1990).[10] This list, by no means exhaustive, gives a sense of the spectrum of discourses where proximization seems applicable. Why does it? Since the central commitments of CDS include exploring the many ways in which ideologies and identities are reflected, enacted, re-enacted, negotiated, modified, reproduced, etc., in discourse, any "doing" of CDS must involve, first of all, studying the original positioning of the different ideologies and identities, and, in most cases, studying also the "target positioning", that is the *change* the analyst claims is taking place through the speaker's *use* of discourse. Thus, doing CDS means, eventually, handling issues of the conceptual arrangement of the Discourse Space (DS), and most notably, the crucial issue of the DS *symbolic re-arrangement*. As such, any CDS practice may need the apparatus of proximization to account for both the original and the target setup of the DS. The most relevant seem those of the CDS domains whose discourses force the distinction between the different ideologies and/or identities in a particularly clear-cut and appealing manner, to construe opposition 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 in-group vs. out-group distinction, arguing for the "growing" threat from the out-group. It is 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 Eurozone is a case in point.

What CDS landscape can offer in the way of domains, it cannot yet offer in the way of its own analytic tools (see the critique in e.g. Chilton 2010), which makes proximization even more applicable. The STA model is hoped to offer one such tool. Reversely, the STA model should itself benefit from inclusion in the CDS focus, as more extensive applications of the model should productively influence its cognitive-pragmatic framework, "data-driving" the possible new or modified components. This paper has indicated that one of the most direct challenges to proximization theory resulting from further applications of the STA model is *proposing a DS conception universal enough* to handle different ranges of the deictic center and the deictic periphery, in particular discourses. The three discourses in Section 4 have made it evident enough, and the challenge will only continue to grow as more discourses are investigated. To respond to it, proximization theory will need further input from Cognitive Linguistics, but, apparently, there are issues CL itself needs to answer first, to offer such an input. As Dirven et al. (2007) point out, in the past 30 years CL's treatment of discourse has hardly moved from the description to the interpretation stage, i.e. the *practice* of discourse has not been critically analyzed. Fauconnier and Turner (2002) stress the focus of CL on the formal issues of conceptual representation, grammatical organiza-

[10] Plus of course the domains addressed in Section 4.

tion and general meaning construction, but at the same time admit to CL's lack of focus on discourse social functions associated with particular instances of that general construction and organization. How do these limitations affect representation of the Discourse Space and its rearrangement following proximization? It seems that, as of today, proximization theory (and its interface with CDS) must remain happy with the CL's mere *recognition* of the core ability of discourse to force structured conceptualizations, with various levels of organization reflecting alternate ways in which the same situation, event or phenomenon can be construed (Verhagen 2007). Such a capacity has been endorsed in this paper: we have been able to define the "prototypically-central" and "prototypically-peripheral" entities of the DS in a state-political interventionist discourse, as well as indicate the existence of entities (in the three public space discourses) revealing different kinds/degrees of deviation from such a prototypical characterization. But we may be unable to prescribe, as yet, a stable DS composition for many other discourses where proximization, as a discourse symbolic operation, could be identified. The reason lies within CL as the "cognitive part" of the theoretical groundwork of proximization theory. Apparently, CL is not yet geared to describe "the structured conceptualizations with various levels of organization" in terms of the levels, direct/indirect, subordinate/superordinate, of *social functions*. The sooner it develops this capacity, the more quickly will proximization theory be able to assist CDS in its analytic agenda.

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Abstract

The goal of this paper is to show how proximization theory, a recent cognitive-pragmatic model of crisis and threat construction, can be applied in Critical Discourse Studies (CDS). It is argued that the rapidly growing, intergeneric field of CDS is in need of new, interdisciplinary methodologies that will allow it to account for an increasingly broader spectrum of discourses, genres and thematic domains. Thus, proximization theory is used as a candidate methodological tool to handle three sample discourses – health, environment, modern technology – with a view to further applications. The results seem promising: the theory elucidates well the key features of public discourses within the CDS scope, for instance legitimization patterns in policy communication. Equally promising seem the prospects for proximization theory itself to continue to draw empirically from the expanding CDS territory.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), cognitive pragmatics, proximization theory, public space discourses, policy legitimization.