Christopher Hart, *Language, Image, Gesture: The Cognitive Semiotics of Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2025.

Anna Wyrwa
University of the National Education Commission, Kraków, Poland
anna.wyrwa@uken.krakow.pl

Christopher Hart begins his book with the claim that "politics is inherently, if not solely, a symbolic structure", which he consistently substantiates in the ensuing discussion. As a reader with limited knowledge of politics and its mechanisms, I have found the analyses presented in the volume thoroughly convincing and in many respects enlightening. The book, states the author, is an exploration in critical discourse analysis using cognitive linguistics, and indeed it is a robust and gripping exploration despite the considerable complexity of both the discursive phenomena and theoretical apparatus with which they are analysed. The author has taken great care not only in addressing the subject matter but also in guiding the reader, who, thanks to the clear structure of the content and lucid presentation, can follow the argument attentively and with genuine intellectual engagement.

The book is organised into nine chapters, with each analytical chapter progressing from theoretical foundations to practical application. The theoretical underpinnings are broadly outlined in Chapters 1 and 2, but the relevant frameworks are subsequently re-examined in later chapters before being applied in specific analyses. This pattern ensures a smooth and accessible reading experience even for less advanced readers.

Chapter 1, an introductory chapter, establishes the theoretical and methodological foundations of what the author terms Cognitive Critical Discourse Analysis (Cognitive CDA), a hybrid framework integrating insights from cognitive linguistics with the socio-critical orientation of critical discourse analysis (CDA). While CDA has often relied on Halliday's systemic functional linguistics, the author contends that it must remain methodologically pluralistic and responsive to contemporary linguistic paradigms. By adopting cognitive linguistics, CDA can better explain how linguistic choices structure ideological representations. Central to Cognitive CDA is the concept of construal, a cognitive process of representing reality

from particular perspectives, which allows analysts to explore how political discourse organises reality via operations such as schematisation, distribution of attention, viewpoint and metaphor.

Early work on conceptual metaphor theory, which examines how abstract political and ideological concepts are structured metaphorically, provided an initial point of convergence between cognitive linguistics and CDA. However, the author stresses that cognitive linguistics offers a wider repertoire of tools beyond metaphor, including image schemas, attentional patterns, deictic structures, and 'world building' as described in the text world (Werth 1999) and discourse space (Chilton 2004) theories.

The author also argues that Cognitive CDA not only enriches CDA but also contributes to the empirical development of cognitive linguistics. Despite being described as usage-based, much cognitive linguistic theory has relied on non-attestable examples rather than naturally occurring data. Applying cognitive linguistics frameworks to authentic political texts allows for empirical validation and theoretical refinement. To put it in Hart's terms, "Cognitive CDA enables theories developed in cognitive linguistics to be tested 'in the wild'" (p. 13), especially in areas such as multimodality, where real-world data reveal how meaning operates across verbal, visual and bodily modes.

In the second part of the chapter the author turns to politics and its performance in the media, foregrounding the media's symbolic power in shaping public reality. Media discourse operates as a mechanism of ideological control, determining inclusion/exclusion, framing and representation. The author distinguishes between the power of the media and power through the media, emphasising that symbolic power undergirds political, economic and coercive forms of dominance.

The author does not fail to remind the reader that the internet and digital revolution have profoundly transformed political communication, which now unfolds as multimodal and participatory, encompassing news websites, social media, video platforms, etc. This environment has intensified visuality and performativity in political discourse. Political figures, particularly in populist contexts, increasingly preform their identities through dress, gaze, gesture and bodily comportment, blending entertainment with political rhetoric.

Next, the author makes the point that Cognitive CDA is particularly well suited to address multimodal conceptualisations, given that cognitive linguistics inherently views language as embodied and multimodal. Conceptual structures underpin not only linguistic but also visual and gestural expressions. For example, metaphors can be instantiated in editorial cartoons, political imagery or bodily gestures. Cognitive CDA thus provides a unified theoretical lens for examining the interplay of language, image and gesture in political communication.

Finally, the author explains that his data is mainly illustrative as the main objective of the book is to delineate the theoretical framework of Cognitive CDA and extend it to other semiotic modes, including co-text image and co-speech gesture. He points out that the examples, taken from news outlets, political party websites, social media posts and the like, centre on the British and American contexts and are discussed as understood from the perspective of audiences from these contexts. Particular attention is given to discourses surrounding Brexit, immigration, Covid-19 and contemporary social movements such as Black Lives Matter. The author acknowledges this contextual limitation but hopes that the models and methods presented in the volume can be transferred and/or adapted to other sociopolitical settings.

Chapter 2 elaborates on the main tenets and analytical principles of Cognitive CDA as a hybrid approach integrating cognitive linguistics and CDA. From the latter, Cognitive CDA inherits a social orientation, particularly the dialectical relationship between discourse and society, the dialogic nature of discourse and a view of critique as the process of demystification aimed at exposing and challenging ideologies conveyed and maintained via language. From the former, it adopts an experiential, usage-based view of language as interconnected with other cognitive systems. This integration positions Cognitive CDA as a form of applied cognitive linguistics whose aim is to explore how linguistic and semiotic forms generate meaning in discourse, exposing their role in sustaining inequality and domination.

The author then proceeds to discuss in more detail the key notions grounded in CDA: dialectics of discourse, dialogism and intertextuality, power and hegemony, legitimation and naturalisation of ideologies, discourse critique, normativity and resistance, after which he explains key cognitive linguistics concepts, including conceptualisation, construal and construal operations, embodied cognition, conceptual metaphor, frames and multimodality. A central notion discussed is construal (Langacker 2008), denoting the human capacity to conceptualise the same situation in alternative ways. Hart links construal operations of schematisation, profiling, trajectory/landmark alignment, viewpoint, categorisation and metaphor to discursive strategies aimed at a specific socio-political outcome. He distinguishes four key strategies: structural configuration, identification, positioning and framing. They interact with one another to produce meanings that naturalise power asymmetries and legitimise social hierarchies. The author sets the correlations between construal operations and discursive strategies into a coherent and adaptable framework in which construal operations on the one hand realise discursive strategies and on the other rely on cognitive processes such as perception, attention distribution, perspective-taking and comparison. The author clarifies that to trace ideologies encoded in discourse within Cognitive CDA he draws mainly on the following cognitive

models: (i) cognitive grammar to analyse structural configuration and identification strategies; (ii) the theories of frame, metaphorical frame projections and conceptual metaphor to analyse framing strategies; (iii) mental spaces theory and discourse space theory to explore positioning strategies.

The author also explains that Cognitive CDA uses qualitative and introspective methods of investigation, grounded in theoretically informed reflection on meaning as conscious experience. Nevertheless, the author underscores methodological rigour and triangulation, advocating for the corroboration of interpretations through corpus analysis, multiple reader responses, intersemiotic comparison and experimental research. While all these methods enhance the validity of introspective findings, the author relies mostly on intersemiotic comparison and experimental investigation.

Having outlined the major tenets and principles of Cognitive CDA in Chapters 1 and 2, the author proceeds to apply the model in the subsequent six chapters to examine the ideological qualities of conceptualisations evoked in political discourse.

So, Chapter 3, entitled "Schematisation", examines how cognitive underpinnings of event structuring (event schematisation and image schemas) illuminate ideological implications in media discourse. The first few sections revisit relevant cognitive linguistics concepts (image schemas, domains, configurational schemas and archetypal conceptions), which in later sections serve the author as analytical tools. The author argues that events are not objectively bounded but are conceptual products of the process whereby human experience becomes segmented (construal). The claim that "selection of domains is itself an aspect of construal" (Langacker 2008: 44) constitutes the author's theoretical pivot for the subsequent analysis of how event schematisation encodes ideological perspectives.

The author examines schematisation in immigration and political protest discourses. The sections on both convincingly demonstrate how cognitive schemas, such as motion event schema, force-dynamics, action-chain schemas and speech-event schemas, can serve as vehicles for ideological meaning in media texts.

The discussion of immigration as a motion event is indeed instructive. The author shows that deviations from the "default motion event" (figure-motion-path-ground, as in the non-attested *Immigrants have entered Europe*) correspond to ideological effects. For instance, the inclusion of manner through the use of verbs such as *march*, *sneak*, or *smash (their way)*, evoking excess, threat or rapidity, reinforces the view that migrants may pose danger and there should be restrictions to their free movement. Or construing a group of individuals as a mass

unit ("flock of migrants" or "column of refugees") deindividualises the participants diverting the reader's attention away from their unique identities.

The section focusing on media representation of the Black Lives Matters protests also provides an insightful and detailed analysis comparing the protest representations between the *Mail Online* and *The Guardian* newspapers. The discussion of action-chain schemas and how their one-sided or two-sided configurations reflect ideological asymmetries is both illuminating and interesting. The analysis offers a fine-grained cognitive explanation for how grammatical constructions contribute to the protest paradigm, a reporting pattern in which media tend to delegitimate political protests while at the same time support authorities' actions aimed at curtailing social upheaval and restoring order (Chan and Lee 1984). Construing the interactions between police and protesters as one-sided (e.g., by means of the transitive verb *attack*) invites the reader to view the protesters as aggressive and to assign to them full blame for the actions. Conversely, a two-sided schema (as indexed e.g., by the reciprocal construction *protesters clashed with the police*) acknowledges mutual responsibility and mitigates perceptions of protesters as only aggressors.

In Chapter 4, drawing on Langacker (2008) and Talmy (2000), the author applies the cognitive notion of attention as a key dimension of meaning construction to explore how linguistic expressions profile certain elements of conceptual structures while backgrounding others. The primary objective is to show that attentional processes reflected in language, far from being neutral cognitive operations, have profound ideological effects.

The chapter begins by re-examining some key notions in cognitive linguistics, such as construal, profiling, scope of attention, trajector and landmark. As the author points out, attention operates as a limited cognitive resource allowing for selection of a particular portion of experience which becomes encoded in language. Thus, language distributes attention over certain facets of conceptual structure, determining which elements of a scene are brought to the fore (trajector) and which remain backgrounded (landmark). The author carefully distinguishes these forms from the figure vs ground pair of gestalt psychology, emphasising that the trajector/landmark alignment reflects relative focus rather than fixed participant roles. The conceptual pair trajector-landmark serves as an analytical tool for exploring the attentional asymmetry. As the author contends, the distribution of attention can be manipulated in political discourse to obscure agency or responsibility – a process referred to as mystification.

Mystification, i.e. the reduction or occlusion of agency, results from linguistic constructions that defocus social actors' roles in representing events. They include e.g.: nominalisation, passivisation, intransitivity or referential vagueness. The author distinguishes agent-based from

patient-based mystification. In agent-based mystification, the responsible actor is backgrounded; in patient-based mystification, the impact of the event upon affected participants is diminished. These theoretical claims are verified in the analyses of media coverage surrounding two politically charged events: the murder of George Floyd and the 2018-2019 Gaza border protests. In the coverage of Floyd's killing, the choice between "was killed", "died", and "death" exemplifies a graded suppression of agency through the transition from transitive passivised to intransitive to nominalised constructions. Similarly, in reports of Palestinian casualties backgrounding Israeli forces through agentless passives or nominalisations reshapes the reader's perception of causality. Such patterns, as the author argues, constitute departures from the default action-chain schema, which would normally include an agent action upon a patient. These linguistic departures are therefore interpretable as ideological construals rather than stylistic choices.

The chapter concludes by extending the framework of attention distribution to the study of immigration discourse, in which the author analyses path profiling and metonymy as further dimensions of attentional construal. Verbs such as *flee*, *cross*, and *arrive* are shown to profile different segments of a motion schema: initial, medial, or final, thereby foregrounding or occluding various aspects of migration. Such construals can promote ideologically charged perspectives, such as a view of migration as a discrete act of arrival divorced from its causes. The analysis of metonymy, particularly in the "Stop the Boats" slogan, is also politically astute. By substituting *boats* for *migrants*, the slogan exemplifies a MEANS FOR PERSONS metonymy that redirects attention from human beings to inanimate conveyances, thereby dehumanising migrants and legitimising exclusionary policies.

Chapter 5, entitled "Viewpoint", explores how perspective-taking operates as a central feature of human cognition and communication. All human experience is "viewpointed", asserts the author, hence, construals encoded in linguistic expressions invite readers to adopt particular perspectives. Drawing on Langacker (2008), Chilton (2014), and Hart (2015), among others, the author understands viewpoint as a multidimensional construct that operates across spatial, temporal, epistemic and axiological domains. The breadth of the chapter, which covers deixis, transitivity vs reciprocality, subjective vs objective construals, tense, aspect, conditionals and proximisation (grounded in discourse space theory), makes it indeed an ambitious synthesis of a variety of linguistic phenomena through which viewpoint is manifested in political discourse. The author discusses each of them demonstrating their ideological effects.

The section in which he makes use of his three-dimensional model of viewpoint (comprising horizontal, vertical and distance coordinates) stands out as particularly interesting.

Illustrating how linguistic constructions (transitive vs reciprocal verbs) encode differing vantage points, the author indicates that subtle grammatical choices can shape the interpretation of events. For example, describing protesters as attacking the police (the event is construed as unfolding along the sagittal axis) invites the reader to align with one side of the conflict, while using the verb *clash with* (the event is construed as unfolding along the transversal axis) invites a more neutral, observer-like stance. These linguistic choices, in media or political discourse, can carry ideological weight. Likewise, subjective vs objective construals can nuance political positioning. The author links objective construals, which allow for the grammatical visibility of the speaker (in first-person predicates such as *I believe* or *I know*) to rhetorical strategies of authority and legitimacy, shedding light on how political actors construct credibility.

The author then proceeds to the discussion of viewpoint as manifested in tense, aspect, and modality. Demonstrating how temporal and modal choices contribute to the construction of urgency, inevitability and threat, especially in anti-immigration rhetoric, the author again provides a powerful account of how grammatical forms can serve ideological ends. For instance, the observation that media texts employ present and progressive aspects to depict migration as an imminent threat offers a concrete example of how linguistic temporality maps onto political affect. Similarly, the treatment of modality as a reflection of epistemic or deontic stance reveals the rhetorical effect of political communication. In political contexts, the choice of modal verbs (e.g., *will*, *must, could*) functions rhetorically, framing events as either inevitable or preventable outcomes of an evolving reality (Langacker 2008). Conditional constructions further reinforce ideological positioning by presenting hypothetical or counterfactual reasoning as arguments for making political decisions. The analysis shows that modality serves not only as an expression of norm or belief but also as an invitation for audiences to align with the speaker's evaluative stance.

The final section of the chapter engages with Chilton's (2004) discourse space theory and Cap's (2013) model of proximisation. This section is particularly effective in illustrating how abstract theoretical constructs can be operationalised in the analysis of political texts. The author's application of these models to far-right discourse vividly demonstrates how event construal encoding a particular viewpoint builds a discourse world "the reader is invited to entertain as real" (p. 140), which serves the far-right politicians to legitimise xenophobia and fear. Tracing spatial, temporal and axiological proximisation combined to construe external groups (e.g. immigrants) as immediate and morally dangerous threats, the author once again shows that cognitive linguistics framework can expose the mechanics of ideological persuasion.

Chapter 6 explores metaphor as a fundamental structuring principle of political discourse. Drawing on theoretical models of conceptual metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), frame semantics (Fillmore 1982), and metaphor in discourse (e.g., Hart 2017, 2024; Goatly 2007; Semino 2008; Catalano and Musolff 2019), the author succeeds in synthesising insights from a considerable body of scholarship to offer a cohesive account of how metaphorical framing shapes political thought, action and emotion. A major strength of the chapter lies in its analytical scope. Through the discussion of metaphorical framings in discourses of Covid-19, Brexit and immigration, the author illustrates how recurrent source frames, particularly the multivalent WAR frame, enable the naturalisation of exclusion and nationalism. The author's attention to the interdiscursive circulation of the WAR metaphor that connects pandemic, Brexit and immigration discourses, reveals a sophisticated understanding of how metaphorical patterns can consolidate across discourses to form a "metaphor matrix" (p. 159). The identification of a "metaphor matrix" represents an original and theoretically fertile insight, adding an important discursive dimension to the metaphor theory and offering a way of understanding how metaphors travel across discourse contexts to reinforce or sustain nationalist or exclusionary ideologies.

The treatment of "extreme metaphors" constitutes another significant contribution. By distinguishing between conventional and extreme metaphors and linking the latter to the notion of deliberateness, i.e. their overt figurativity as well as offensiveness, and ideological extremity, the author extends current discussion on deliberate metaphor (cf. Steen 2023) and affective framing. The analysis reveals how dehumanising metaphors, such as those comparing immigrants to pests, animals or diseases, function as rhetorical vehicles for xenophobia and social exclusion.

The section entitled "Metaphors Contested and Defended" is compelling too: it foregrounds the agency of discourse participants in contesting or rejecting metaphorical framings. Metaphor resistance is a relatively underexplored area, hence the author's recognition of dialogic struggle in metaphor use adds valuable nuance to cognitive linguistic studies, which has often been criticised for underplaying socio-political dynamics in discourse, including the public's capacity for contestation and recontextualisation.

Chapter 7 presents a rigorous but engaging account of how cognitive linguistics and multimodal semiotics can be integrated to investigate how language and image intersemiotically produce ideological meaning in political discourse, particularly within the genre of online news. The author again draws on an extensive body of scholarship, including Langacker's (2008) cognitive grammar, Talmy's (2000) cognitive semantics, Kress's (2010) multimodal discourse analysis, and Barthes's (1977) visual semantics, among others. He advances a model for

understanding the interaction between linguistic and visual modes in which he distinguishes three types of intersemiotic relation: complementary, supplementary, and anchorage, extending Barthes's (1977) foundational distinctions. In complementary relations, language and image converge to reinforce the same construal; in supplementary relations, one mode enriches or specifies the other; and in anchorage, one disambiguates meaning in the other. Importantly, Hart argues that these relations are not mutually exclusive but co-operate dynamically, forming what he calls multimodal constructions, recurrent form-meaning pairings across modes that can become conventionalised within a discourse community. This triadic model provides a flexible taxonomy for examining how language and image combine to produce ideologically charged meanings.

The chapter centres on the concept of the co-text image, an image that appears near the written text so that the two modes jointly contribute to the construction of meaning. The author argues that in such a multimodal "ensemble" (Kress 2010), the semantic value of the verbal mode interplays with that of the visual sign producing "the sum that is greater of its parts" (p. 175). Grounding multimodal meaning in the cognitive operations that underlie both modalities, Hart departs from systemic-functional or purely semiotic accounts of multimodality, which typically treat language and image as separate semiotic systems. The author's main argumentation is built on the assumption that the cognitive notion of construal can operate across modes. He posits that both language and image reflect the same underlying cognitive operations: schematisation, viewpoint, attention and metaphorical mapping.

He applies his model of language-image relations to analyse data drawn primarily from news discourse concerning immigration. He demonstrates how linguistic and visual representations cohere to frame immigration events through recurring image schemas, such as impeded motion or force-dynamics, and how these schemas, when realised across modes, form entrenched multimodal constructions. For example, the recurrent schema of impeded motion, expressed linguistically through verbs of movement and visually through fences or barriers, converge to construct immigration as an invasion or threat. Hart also shows how image can supplement text, adding specific details, such as the type of a barrier that the text leaves unspecified.

Then, in discussing plexity (the conceptualisation of singular vs plural participants), the author argues that aerial photographs of large, dense groups of migrants induce a uniplex construal that deindividualises the depicted subjects. He supports this argument with empirical evidence from experimental psychology (Azevedo et al. 2021), which demonstrates measurable ideological effects of visual framing.

Finally, the author shows that metaphors are equally operative in visual and cross-modal forms. For instance, he examines IMMIGRATION IS WAR and IMMIGRANTS ARE ANIMALS metaphors, showing how they recur across language, image, and even body-pose. Through examples ranging from Brexit campaign advertisements to political cartoons, Hart illustrates how metaphorical framing contributes to ideological polarisation and moral evaluation. Of particular note is his discussion of body poses as a source of visual metaphor. The analysis of Boris Johnson's and Angela Merkel's depictions in the British media demonstrates how visual allusion and intertextual reference (e.g. to Churchill, Hitler or Delacroix) serve to recontextualise political figures within familiar cultural narratives of heroism or villainy. This section highlights the multivocality of images, how a single visual sign can evoke different, sometimes conflicting, historical and emotional associations depending on the viewer's interpretative framework.

Demonstrating how multimodal constructions operate, the author extends usage-based models of grammar to encompass recurrent language-image pairings typical of journalistic genres, redefining linguistic meaning as inherently multimodal and cognitively grounded. The analysis of image schemas, attention, viewpoint and metaphor in news photography further reveals how apparently objective images participate in ideological construals of social actors and events.

Undoubtedly, the chapter is theoretically dense, yet it succeeds in synthesising diverse traditions: cognitive linguistics, functional linguistics and semiotics into a coherent framework allowing the researcher to gain insight into the nature of intersemiotic relations. The discussion thus marks a significant step towards a cognitively informed critical multimodal discourse analysis, demonstrating that meaning in political communication arises not from individual signs, but from the dynamic interplay of modes within culturally and ideologically structured contexts.

Chapter 8 presents an analysis of gesture as a semiotic resource in political discourse, with a particular focus on its role in the multimodal performance of right-wing populist politicians. Extending the remit of critical discourse analysis to the embodied and gestural dimensions, it argues that co-speech gesture constitutes a significant and hitherto underexamined part of political communication aimed at performance and legitimation of ideological meaning.

In the opening section, the author distinguishes between emblems, with stable conventional meanings, independent of speech, and co-speech gestures, which synchronise with speech and co-construct meaning indicating his focus on the latter type. Referring to Kendon's (2004) and McNeill's (1992) gesture frameworks and cognitive concepts of multimodal constructions and

conceptualisation (after Cienki 2013), he argues that gesture and speech instantiate a single conceptual process. This claim is particularly compelling, as it challenges the traditional text-centred approaches to CDA and supports a cognitive-semiotic understanding of ideology as embodied practice. Aligning Cognitive CDA with the analysis of gesture, the author advances a methodological innovation in intersemiotic approach to discourse. The multimodal performance of politicians must thus be examined through coordinated patterns of speech and gesture, and this postulate represents a timely expansion of the analytical scope of CDA.

The author presents a clear taxonomy of gestures, which structures the analysis. He distinguishes referential gestures (deictic, iconic, metaphoric, enactment), pragmatic gestures (discourse organisation, stance), and interactive gestures (turn-taking, engagement). He pays attention to gesture phases (preparation, stroke, retraction), indicating that co-speech gestures are deliberate, structured and semantically consequential. Next, he uses this taxonomy in the case studies of Donald Trump and Nigel Farage, whose speeches he analyses as exemplars of right-wing populist performance.

The analysis of Donald Trump's speeches identifies a repertoire of iconic and pragmatic gestures that visualise populist themes. The discussion of Trump's "wall" gestures illustrates how iconic and enactment gestures represent upward and downward motion which encodes both the nationalist aspiration to protect people and implicit fatal consequences to those breaching the imagined boundary. This interpreting reveals how gesture may communicate meanings that remain tacit or unsayable in speech, thus playing a role as a vehicle of affect and ideological suggestion. The discussion of Trump's pointing gestures is equally illuminating. By differentiating between outward, inward, floor and looping gestures, the author demonstrates how gestural deixis becomes a means of populist identification and inclusion. The looping point gesture, encompassing the speaker and audience within a shared referential field, embodies the populist rhetoric of unity and solidarity through physical gesture. Similarly, the treatment of shrugs as multimodal enactment of indifference or even disdain elucidates how informal, conversational gestural styles contribute to Trump's projection of authenticity and "ordinary" identity. The author convincingly argues that these bodily forms of stance-taking are central to the populist ethos.

The second case study, focusing on Nigel Farage, demonstrates how gestures function as co-expressions of key discursive strategies including denial, epistemic authorisation, othering, proximisation, quantification, and aspectising. Each gesture described, whether the grappolo, precision-grip, or sweeping hand movements accompanying references to "volume" and "pace", is shown to participate in the rhetorical production of authority, threat, and urgency. Particularly

striking is the account of othering and proximisation as realised gesturally through spatial displacement: the movement of Farage's hand away from and then towards his body enacts, in physical space, the imagined encroachment of the Other on the national self. This analysis vividly demonstrates how the BODY-POLITIC and CONTAINER metaphors are realised not only in language but through gesture that transfers those metaphors onto the speaker's own body. Finally, the author's attention to the category of aspect, manifest in cyclic or repetitive gestures corresponding to imperfective aspect in speech, is another methodological contribution. It shows how co-speech gestures can enact temporal framing strategies that intensify the perception of immigration as an ongoing issue ("it keeps happening") posing a threat and thereby serve legitimating functions for exclusionary policies and interventionist actions.

Overall, the chapter's theoretical synthesis of cognitive linguistics, gesture studies and CDA is both conceptually coherent and methodologically rich. Demonstrating how gestures participate in the real-time construction of ideologically charged meaning, it opens new possibilities for understanding how power and prejudice are enacted also through other than language semiotic resources, such as bodily movement. One of its principal strengths lies in its close semiotic analysis: every gestural description is anchored in verbal co-text and functional interpretation. This lends the analysis an empirical precision. Also, the argument that populist authenticity is performed through bodily (gestural) informality provides a nuanced insight into political persuasion. If there is a minor limitation, it lies in the scope of the data: while the case studies are indeed detailed, they are based primarily on English-speaking, Western contexts, leaving open the question of how gestural semiotics may vary cross-culturally in populist performance. Nonetheless, the theoretical apparatus developed by the author is adaptable and does invite comparative application.

In Chapter 9, the concluding chapter, the author consolidates his statement on Cognitive CDA as a form of applied cognitive linguistics that examines how discourses activate conceptualisations with ideological and legitimating potential. He summarises the tenets and aims of the book, pointing out its major contribution in advancing multimodal approaches within Cognitive CDA. The author also highlights directions for the future development of the field: (1) further exploration of multimodality and (2) the development of experimental methods which can empirically show how language and other semiotic modes can shape opinions and legitimate political actions.

In sum, the author convincingly demonstrates the usefulness of cognitive linguistics for the critical analysis of political discourse. Theoretical foundations are clearly articulated, systematically elaborated, and tested through conclusive analyses of authentic data. The

chapters may be read independently or selectively, according to the reader's interest or needs. Each analytical section is preceded by careful restatement of relevant theoretical models enabling the reader to engage fully and confidently with the analyses. Overall, the study yields valuable insights into the construction of meaning in political discourse, especially into how cognitive processes of selecting, profiling, perspective-taking and metaphorical mapping encode ideologies in language, image and gesture, thereby shaping and manipulating socio-political discourse realities.

References

Azevedo, Ruben T., Sophie De Beukelaer, Isla L. Jones, Lou Safra, Manos Tsakiris (2021) "When the Lens Is Too Wide: The Political Consequences of the Dehumanisation of Refugees." *Humanities and Social Sciences Communication*, 8 (1); Article 115. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00786-x

Barthes, Roland (1977) *Image, Music, Text*. Translated by S. Heath. London: Fontana Press.

Cap, Piotr (2019) "'Britain is Full to Bursting Point': Immigration Themes in the Brexit Discourse of the UK Independence Party." [In:] Veronika Koller, Susanne Kopf, Marlene Miglbauer (eds.) *Discourses of Brexit*. London/New York: Routledge; 69–85.

Catalano, Theresa and Andreas Musolff (2019) "'Taking the Shackles Off': Metaphor and Metonymy of Migrant Children and Border Officials in the US." *Metaphoric.de*. 29/2019. 11–46. Retrieved from https://www.metaphorik.de/de/journal/29/taking-shackles-metaphor-and-metonymy-migrant-children-and-border-officials-us.html

Chan, Jospeh M., Lee Chin-Chuan (1984) "Journalistic 'Paradigms' of Civil Protests: A Case Study in Hong Kong." [In:] Andrew Arno, Wimal Dissanayake (eds.) *The News Media in National and International Conflict*. Westview Press; 183–202.

Chilton, Paul (2004) *Analysing Political Discourse: Theory and Practice*. London/New York: Routledge.

Chilton, Paul (2014) *Language, Space and Mind: The Conceptual Geometry of Linguistic Meaning.* Cambridge University Press.

Cienki, Alan (2013) "Cognitive Linguistics: Spoken Language and Gesture as Expressions of Conceptualisation." [In:] Cornelia Müller, Alan Cienki, Ellen Fricke, Silva Ladewig, David McNeill, Sedinha Teßendorf (eds.) *Body – Language – Communication. Vol. 1: An International Handbook on Multimodality in Human Interaction*. De Gruyter Mouton; 182–201.

Fillmore, Charles J. (1982) “Frame Semantics.” [In:] Linguistics Society of Korea (ed.) *Linguistics in the Morning Calm*. Seoul: Hanshin Publishing Company; 111–137.

Goatly, Andrew (2007) *Washing the Brain: Metaphor and Hidden*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Hart, Christopher (2015) “Viewpoint in Linguistic Discourse: Space and Evaluation in News Reports of Political Protests.” *Critical Discourse Studies*, 12 (3); 238–260.

Hart, Christopher (2017) “Metaphor and Intertextuality in Media Framings of the (1984-1985) British Miners’ Strike: A Multimodal Analysis.” *Discourse and Communication*, 11 (1); 3–30.

Hart, Christopher (2024) “Fire, War, and Revolution in Media Discourse of Political Protest.” [In:] Manuela Romano (ed.) *Metaphor in Socio-Political Contexts: Critical, Sociocognitive Approaches*. De Gruyter Mouton; 307–332.

Kendon, Adam (2004) *Gesture: Visible Action as Utterance*. Cambridge University Press.

Kress, Gunther (2010) *Multimodality: A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. London/New York: Routledge.

Lakoff, George, Mark Johnson (1980) *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago University Press.

Langacker, Ronald (2008) *Cognitive Grammar: A Basic Introduction*. Oxford University Press.

McNeill, David (1992) *Hand and Mind: What Gestures Reveal About Thought*. University of Chicago Press.

Semino, Elena (2008) *Metaphor in Discourse*. Cambridge University Press.

Steen, Gerard J. (2023) *Slowing Metaphor Down: Elaborating Deliberate Metaphor Theory*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Talmy, Leonard (2000) *Toward a Cognitive Semantics*. MIT Press.

Werth, Paul (1999) *Text Worlds: Representing Conceptual Space in Discourse*. Harlow: Longman.