

## Frames, cognition, ideology. And Chomsky.

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**ABSTRACT** Within the field of cognitive linguistics, *Frame Semantics* and *Conceptual Metaphor Theory* are two major and influential players. While Charles Fillmore created his approach to provide a model for how knowledge is stored interdependently in our minds via *frames*, George Lakoff further developed this model to the level of metaphors and gave it a political dimension. He linked metaphors and frames to ideology and the struggle for power, epitomized by his engagement in shaping the discourse used by US Democrats in their struggle for interpretative dominance against their Republican counterparts. In showing how the use of images and frames is connected to both experience and worldview, Lakoff managed to further deconstruct the idea of language as a neutral way of representing reality and showed its contested role in the struggle for political power. Due to Lakoff's own political investment, however, he is highly critical of conservative discourse, but less so regarding the problematic aspects of liberal discourse. It took another prominent linguistic figure and political activist, Noam Chomsky, to redirect the discussion not to right vs. left or conservative vs. liberal, but to just vs. unjust and to contextualize and challenge it in terms of vested interests of people in positions of power. In this chapter, I propose that the three approaches by Fillmore, Lakoff and Chomsky are compatible, even complementary, despite, or rather, because of their differences, with regard to the light they shine on the understanding of the public impact of political discourse from different angles. In order to illustrate this, the chapter aims to highlight one part of the development of research areas

attempting to connect cognitive linguistics to politics and ideology, and argues for a combination of the Chomskyan knowledge-based approach to criticism of political discourse and Fillmore's and Lakoff's theories on the cognitive implications of language use and ideology.

**KEYWORDS** conceptual metaphors, Frame Semantics, ideology, metaphorical framing, political discourse

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The naturalistic view that language's main purpose is to reflect and describe reality (Hall, 1997) has long been discarded. This has, however, not necessarily resulted in a comprehensive theory about the nature of language and of why and how words have meaning. The axiomatic, Saussurian view (de Saussure, 2006) that language is a system and that words, as part of the system, gain their meaning through complex relations to other words has greatly inspired linguistic research. An aspect, however, that was long ignored was that of language as a cognitive phenomenon, an expression of our subjective perception of the world, and therefore of an entity informed, and limited, by what George Lakoff calls our *embodiment* – and the boundaries this sets on our cognition (1999) – as well as by our everyday experience.

When Charles Fillmore created *Frame Semantics* (Fillmore, 1976), he did this in consideration of language as a mental phenomenon, and with a focus on the experience-based nature of language and our interpretation of it. With his groundbreaking approach, he managed to show how the comprehension and interpretation of language draw on previous experiences coherently organized in our minds, and are thus closely tied to our cognitive capabilities and processes. One of his earliest followers and colleagues, George Lakoff, used Fillmore's cognitive approach as a basis for his theory of conceptual metaphors and metaphorical frames, which Lakoff claimed were not merely linguistic phenomena, but fundamentally cognition-based: the mind's way of making sense of the abstract nature of many concepts by relating them to concrete life experiences.

Lakoff was also one of the most prominent linguists to give linguistic research a political dimension by pointing out the importance of metaphors and frames used in political discourse because of their relation to the workings of the mind as they activate certain schemas in our minds which influence the way we perceive and reason about an issue. Even though his cognitive approach to political discourse proved very enlightening in explaining the success of dominant frames over alternative frames, his clear political affiliation with the US Democrats arguably made it difficult to apply his theory to question political discourse in itself as a means to establish, reinforce, and monopolize power. While many scholars from the field of *Critical Discourse Studies* and beyond have made an effort to deconstruct political discourse, a unique and frequently quoted approach is that of the political activist Noam Chomsky. Chomsky critically analyzes and dissects political discourse irrespective of its leaning by not only discussing the language used, which may vary, but also by involving sociopolitical factors such as power and elite interests to show how framing on all sides is a mere tool obscuring often similar political and economic interests.

The objectives of this chapter, therefore, are twofold. The first is to outline an important stage in the development of cognitive linguistics by presenting selected aspects of Fillmore's and Lakoff's theories. The second is to present how cognitive linguistics can be applied to explain relationships of power as well as the maintenance of power, while contemplating ways to combine this approach with Chomsky's ideas of elite interests – the vested interests by people who wield social, political, or economic power – that unite political discourse throughout the ideological spectrum.

## 2 FRAME SEMANTICS AND COGNITION

Every memorable experience occurs in a meaningful context and it is memorable precisely because the experiencer has some cognitive schema or frame for interpreting it (Fillmore, 1976, p. 26).

Charles Fillmore devised his Frame Semantics approach in the early 1970s, while working on his theory of case grammar, with which he attempted to classify verbs according to the roles (or cases) they occur with, such as agent, theme, or instrument (Andor, 2010). It was a response to what he saw as an unsatisfactory explanation for the meaning of linguistic forms “being represented in terms of a checklist of conditions that have to be satisfied in order for the form to be appropriately or truthfully used” (Fillmore, 1975, p. 123). He proposed instead a merger between two new and upcoming theories at the time: *prototype theory* and *frame theory*. Neither restrict a word’s meaning in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions, but rather attempt to describe it in relation to ideal examples or prototypes – for entities, states, actions, situations – that are or become mentally ingrained based on acquired knowledge, and which “impose structure or coherence on some aspect of human experience” (Fillmore, 1975). For Fillmore, frames can be defined as “any of the many organized packages of knowledge, beliefs, and patterns of practice that shape and allow humans to make sense of their experiences” (Fillmore & Baker, 2009, p. 314). By encountering a particular linguistic form in the right context, a specific frame gets activated in the speaker’s mind (Fillmore, 1976), to the effect that a complete understanding of a form depends on the speaker’s ability to invoke all aspects of the frame it comprises. For example, it would be difficult to think of a university without at the same time thinking of what the purpose of a university is, who the actors are, what their roles are, and what properties and provisions we would expect to encounter at such an institution.

For Fillmore, frames are intrinsically cognitive because they draw on existing knowledge for the interpretation of meaning. Some “may be physiologically built in [...], others may owe their existence to perceived constant cause-effect relationships in the world, while still others may depend for their existence on symbolization” (Fillmore, 1976, p. 25).

A Frame Semantics description of language focuses on how the interpreter of a particular discourse creates a complete image of what is being said during the process of text interpretation despite the fundamental underdetermination (Sperber & Wilson, 1986) of semantic content. According to Fillmore, this missing information is filled in through the activation of frames. In one of his famous examples, Fillmore (1982) juxtaposed the two sentences *I spent two hours on land this afternoon*

and *I spent two hours on the ground this afternoon*. From a formal semantic point of view, these sentences are synonymous as they both have the same truth conditions. From a frame semantic vantage point, however, they mean different things because they evoke different frames that complement missing information differently. *On land* is interpreted horizontally, in opposition to *the sea*. We would assume that the person uttering this sentence must be on a ship. *On the ground*, conversely, is interpreted on a vertical scale, and in opposition to *in the air*. We would hence interpret this sentence as being uttered by somebody who usually spends his or her time on a plane. *Land* and *ground* thus belong to different frames, and their usage evokes these frames, which accounts for the difference in meaning between the aforementioned sentences.

This exemplifies another important feature of frames, namely that they frequently can refer to the same situation, but from different perspectives. They are therefore partisan in that invoking a particular frame necessarily enforces a certain vantage point, such as the word pairs *go* and *come* or *bring* and *take*, or the phrases *from shore to shore* versus *from coast to coast*, the former of which locates the speaker on the water, while the latter locates the speaker on the land. We can also speak of either a *terrorist* or a *rebel* or a *freedom fighter*, which may each be synonymous in a given context except for the perspective that is taken. This feature is highly useful in public and political discourse as it allows a speaker to frame an issue by rendering their reasoning as the natural way of perceiving a state of affair, without running the risk of lying (Kahnemann & Tversky, 1984). As soon as the frame is adopted, the perspective entailed is also adopted, mostly without being conscious of it, which makes the intentional use of frames a powerful tool.

## 3

### GEORGE LAKOFF, METAPHORS AND EMBODIMENT

In the late 1970s, George Lakoff, inspired by Fillmore's ideas, went on to discover the anchoring of another phenomenon within cognition. He found that metaphors – contrary to common understanding – are not merely fancy, flowery expressions we use in (mainly literary) language for a particular effect, but that our minds are largely governed by meta-

phorical thinking, most of which happens on an unconscious level (Lakoff, 2014). In his breakthrough work with Mark Johnson, *Metaphors we live by* (1980), he proposed that metaphors inform every aspect of our lives and that – borrowing Paul Watzlawick's famous axiom (Watzlawick, 1967) – we cannot *not* think metaphorically.

Lakoff determined that many of our basic expressions in language are fundamentally metaphorical, such as being *in love* (love as a bounded space) or *getting ideas across* (ideas as objects) or *defending an argument* (argument as war), where the source domain (e.g., *journey*) is usually more concrete while the target domain is more abstract (e.g., *life*). Arguably his most important finding was that metaphors are by no means random but systematic, and largely influenced, determined, as well as limited by the details of what he called *embodiment*.

One of the powerful, though unconscious, characteristics of metaphors is that they govern reasoning: the decisions and actions we perceive to be appropriate to take with regards to an issue or event. Once a metaphorical framework is established, the issue becomes meaningfully debatable only within this framework and following its logic. This is a consequence of the systematic mapping between the domains and of the coherent structure (source domain concepts and their entailments) that is thusly imposed on the target domain (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). For example, by adopting a disease or cancer metaphor (e.g., *to contain*, *to spread*, *to metastasize*, *to infect*) when talking about particular social or political groups or movements, the reasoning regarding the course of action is predetermined. Cancer needs to be *cut out*, a disease needs to be *eradicated*. It would be odd, within this metaphor, to suddenly suggest negotiations or compromise, as this is not a meaningful course of action within said metaphorical framework. Something similar can be argued with regards to the so-called *War on Terror*, in which the war metaphor was applied to a psychological state (*terror*), and within which frame negotiations are reserved for the losing party, thus laying the groundwork for a war without end (Steuter & Wills, 2008).

The impact of metaphors on reasoning was also well illustrated in a series of studies conducted by Thibodeau and Boroditsky (2011), in which they confronted participants with two texts about crime which were identical except for the metaphors they used, one being *Crime is a virus*, the other being *Crime is a beast*. While in the first study the met-

aphor was explicitly mentioned in the texts, the degree of explicitness decreased with each iteration until eventually only one trigger word (such as, e.g., *devour*) was left to suggest the metaphor. Participants were then asked to propose a solution to the crime problem. Those presented with the virus metaphor were consistently more likely to propose tackling the root causes and implementing social reforms, while participants faced with the beast metaphor had a greater tendency to suggest harsher law-enforcement measures. This, the authors argued, was in line with the metaphorical framework in which a virus can only be tackled by locating its source, while a beast needs to be hunted down and locked away or eliminated.

The notions of frames and metaphors are closely related, because similarly to using frames, in using a metaphor, a particular image or situation is invoked, including location, props, actors, actions and purposes. Following Fillmore, Lakoff suggested that many frames that shape our daily experiences are also metaphorical, and that these frames confer, impose and reinforce certain world views, as they take a certain perspective (Lakoff, 2004, 2009), while at the same time prescribing certain courses of action that are meaningful within the metaphor and its frame. An example would be the phrase *tax relief* (Lakoff, 2004). The word *relief*, as Lakoff suggests, evokes a certain frame with certain roles, such as an afflicted person, an affliction and somebody who relieves the afflicted from the affliction. Additionally, the person who relieves is normally seen as a good person, even a hero. When this term is combined with tax, it presents taxes as an affliction, and thus makes the expression metaphorical. It also implies that taxes are something inherently negative and therefore a government that reduces taxes is a good government. Such is the nature of the frame, which makes it very difficult to adopt this frame and argue against the reduction of taxes, as being against *relief* would be either conceived as nonsensical within its logic or as associated with the antagonist's role. In some cases, such metaphorical frames can also be misleading. In the case of Brexit, Britain's exit from the European Union, Lakoff argues, the discussion rests on the metaphor that states are locations, which is that the political entity of the EU is a location one can enter and exit, and that by exiting, one would return to the same place one came from. For Britons, this may have led to the assumption that by leaving the EU, their country would return to its original state before they

joined, an assumption that may turn out to be very wrong, as “[t]hings changed radically while they were in the EU” (Lakoff, 2016, para. 12).

Such guided reasoning makes (metaphorical) frames an ideal tool in political discourse, where the purpose is to present an issue in such a way that makes one's own approach appear to be the only meaningful one (e.g., ameliorating the affliction of taxes), while rendering all other approaches nonsensical (e.g., arguing for taxes as a necessary tool to maintain social services). Recognizing the importance of frames in public and political discourse, Lakoff set out to use his research to raise awareness as to how frames impact our thinking, and how to reframe political debates.

## 4

## POLITICAL FRAMING

It has been understood since the early days of public relations in the 1920s, that the main path to reach the public and convince it of the value of one's own policies, is not so much through facts and reason, but by appealing to people's instincts and emotions. Walter Lippmann, pioneer of public opinion research, wrote in his book *The Phantom Public* that the art of creating a common will

consists essentially in the use of symbols which assemble emotions after they have been detached from their ideas [...]. The process, therefore, by which general opinions are brought to cooperation consists of an intensification of feeling and a degradation of significance (Lippmann, 1927/2015, pp. 37-38).

Lakoff seems to partly agree that appealing to people's emotions is more important than arguing facts when he identifies one major issue in the debate on *Obamacare* (a national healthcare plan passed during the Obama administration) in the US: Democrats were discussing “policy details” while Republicans were “arguing their values” (2012, p. 7), which in turn activated certain emotions. The major issue for Lakoff is that the Democrats appear to be arguing in the established conservative frame, thus making their arguments ineffective as they belong to a different frame

to begin with. This, he maintains, is due to *hypocognition*, which means a lack of ideas to express what you wish to convey concisely (Lakoff, 2004). He argues that, while conservatives can rely on an array of fixed frames that have become established in recent decades (due to intensive funding from conservative think tanks), progressives lack such frames, and thus are left with either longish explanations of their viewpoints or with adopting the conservative frame and arguing against it from within the frame. According to Lakoff, both have proven unsuccessful because the frame, once activated, rejects any ideas that are inconsistent with its inner structure, which has become neurally instantiated (Lakoff, 2004). On the other hand, by simply negating or arguing against their frame, the frame is only reinforced because any invocation of the frame, even by negation, activates it (Lakoff, 2004).

With books such as *Don't think of an elephant!* (2004) or *The Little Blue Book* (2012), Lakoff has become one of the main linguistic thinkers of the Democratic Party. Based on his research, he identifies the main difference between Democrats and Republicans in their different frame models regarding family. While Republicans in general subscribe to a strict father model, Democrats' policies are infused by the *nurturant parent model* (2004), and people relate to either one of them through their own metaphorical frames of the family based on their values and experiences. Funneled through a very basic metaphor conceptualizing the nation as a family (e.g., the Founding Fathers, our nation's sons and daughters, the state taking care of its citizens), this explains – in Lakoff's view – why the two parties have such different policies on issues such as the death penalty, welfare or abortion. This is because in the strict father model children need to be punished when they have been bad (death penalty or harsh prison sentences in general) and should not receive rewards if they have not worked hard to earn them (welfare), while in the nurturant parent model, it is the role of the parents (i.e., the state) to teach their children compassion and to help them when they do not manage on their own.

However, the strict father model seems to be the more dominant and wide-spread frame in the US context, as is also exemplified by the most archetypical American narrative – the idea of *rags-to-riches*, also known as the *American Dream*. It states that everyone, even the poorest person, can be successful, can become rich, if they only try hard enough. By ex-

tension, this implies that if someone does not succeed, they did not try hard enough and therefore deserve their fate – and do not deserve to be helped by others. This basic metaphorical mindset is currently epitomized by US President Donald Trump, who, to a much greater extent than his predecessors, is seen to draw his rhetoric from the strict father model, in which he represents “the ultimate authority. Father knows best. He gets his authority from the claim to know right from wrong, and what he says is by definition always right. His word is law and needs to be strictly enforced through strength – swift painful punishment” (Lakoff, 2017, para. 15). Proponents of the nurturant parent model, therefore, would seem to be at a serious disadvantage, as the dominant Republican frame appears to reverberate more with what could be called *the American spirit*. In arguing against this very fundamental strict father frame, hence, Lakoff maintains that progressives are bound to fail as their arguments run counter to the dominant frame and thus to those cognitive structures through which many Americans make sense of the world around them (Lakoff, 2004, 2009; Lakoff & Wehling, 2012). A side effect of this dominance, as Lakoff perceives it, is that the Republicans get to determine the narrative, as it is their own framings that are firmly in place in public discourse.

Lakoff persuasively argues for a different language to counter the power of such frames. His claim is that it is no use to debate Republicans on their own terms by adopting their language, such as *tax relief*, *tax cuts*, *tax havens*, all of which imply that taxes are bad. Thus he suggests re-framing taxes to *revenues*, that is, to frame the same entity not in terms of where the money comes from but what it is used for (Lakoff & Wehling, 2012). In doing so, he maintains, Democrats can reframe debates and argue against Republicans on their own terms.

Lakoff’s insights into metaphors and framing have certainly proven invaluable, especially because he argues from a cognitive point of view, tracing the impact of certain frames to their neural instantiations – or lack thereof. Additionally, it is clear that his concise analysis of the fundamental differences in metaphorical frames to conceptualize the nation state and the role of the government in it are crucial to understanding the variety of seemingly incoherent standpoints from both sides of the political spectrum in the US and beyond. However, while it is clear that no one can analyze discourse from a truly neutral perspective (e.g., van

Dijk, 1993), it is also clear that Lakoff's personal stake in the issue as an active supporter and linguistic expert for the Democratic Party has made it difficult for him to see that in certain other cases, the differences between Republicans and Democrats are actually not so great. Rather than being connected to different conceptualizations of values and different ideologies, they are at times merely in the language, because their fundamental interests – to gain power and to hold on to it; to support and be supported by lobbyists and other interest groups; to give priority to domestic economy over climate protection, human rights or democracy – essentially coalesce, in particular in view of foreign policies, a playing field which allows for the export of costs and conflicts and the import of cheap benefits at the expense of faraway countries. To put it bluntly: for all his merits identifying the effects of language on our thoughts and actions, and for all his efforts to infuse political language with more social and progressive values and frames, Lakoff seems to neglect what all in power have in common: vested interests.

## 5

## **BEYOND PARTY INTEREST – NOAM CHOMSKY AND ELITE INTERESTS**

The casinos moved back into the country. Free health and free education were over. Big business returned with a vengeance. Democracy had prevailed (Pinter, 2005, para. 44)

Noam Chomsky was originally Lakoff's mentor and teacher, until in the early 1970s they got into an extended public debate about what linguists should concern themselves with: discovering the universal rules of syntax or understanding language concepts through discovering the workings of the mind (Bai, 2005). And while Lakoff was starting to build his reputation as a leading cognitive linguist, Chomsky increasingly moved away from linguistics proper towards a second career as a political activist, essentially attempting to find, as it were, the universal syntax to describe political agendas, by debunking the frames and narratives put forth by consecutive US administrations, both Republican and Democratic. Chomsky has repeatedly argued that both parties are heavily en-

tangled with private interests and therefore fundamentally pursuing the same goal, even if the methods and the intensity of investment may vary. In a 2010 interview with *The New Statesman*, he maintained that “in the US, there is basically one party – the business party. It has two factions, called Democrats and Republicans, which are somewhat different but carry out variations on the same policies” (McDonald, 2010, online, para. 13). Both parties, for example, reiterate America’s dedication to spreading *democracy* and *freedom*, when in fact their real geopolitical interest lies in gaining economic footholds around the globe, and *bringing democracy* has, for many nations striving for more economic independence, come to embody a threat.

Lakoff, in his works, attempts to focus on the frames that are used by politicians and on how they impact us based on cognitive science, and he does so from the implicit assumption that Democrats have the better policies; they only need to work on how they communicate them. Chomsky, on the other hand, is concerned with what is behind the meaning of certain words with a high symbolic character used equally by both parties, such as *democracy* or *terrorism* or *free market*, and with the difference between these words’ dictionary definitions and what he calls their technical definitions, namely the way a word is interpreted by people in power. For example, *democracy*, according to the technical definition proposed by Chomsky, would be a system that “is run by the business classes” (The Film Archives, 2012). By the same token, he suggests that a *peace process*, rather than having the general meaning of a process with the aim of leading to peace, is actually used to mean “whatever the US happens to be advocating at a particular moment” (The Film Archives, 2012). By employing this Orwellian doublespeak approach, Chomsky means to show how, behind the linguistic facade of political differences between the two US parties, the major interests driving and informing US policies, especially foreign policies, are largely the same.

In Lakoff’s argument, self-interest-centered foreign policies are mainly ascribed to the Republican Party and its strict father frame (Lakoff, 2004). As an example, he mentions the workings of the International Monetary Fund and its policies regarding developing nations, saying that “[i]f you are a strict father, you tell the children how to develop, tell them what rules they should follow, and punish them when they do wrong” (Lakoff, 2004, p. 11). In doing so, he associates neoliberal aus-

terity policies with conservative thinking, while stating that what progressives stand for are “nurturant values” (Lakoff, 2004, p. 13). Chomsky, however, is critical of such distinctions, outlining how both sides of the party spectrum resort to such policies of securing and protecting their economic interests.

Take Bill Clinton. He had a doctrine too, every president has a doctrine. He was less brazen about it than Bush, didn’t get criticized a lot, but his doctrine was more extreme than the Bush doctrine if taken literally. The official Clinton doctrine presented to Congress was that the United States has the unilateral right to use military force to protect markets and resources. The Bush doctrine said we’ve got to have a pretext, like we’ve got to claim they’re a threat. Clinton doctrine didn’t even go that far, we don’t need any pretext. With markets and resources, we have a right to make sure that we control them, which is logical on the principle that we own the world anyway so of course we have that right (cited in Shank, 2008, para. 19).

Thus, Chomsky sees the difference in language use on both sides as merely a smokescreen to obscure that the policies behind the veil are mostly identical, as they cater to the same market interests. The parties may invoke different frames or appeal to different worldviews, but the actions that are implicitly described are the same.

Another example is the discourse of *stabilization* in foreign policy, which Chomsky flatly debunks as “when we invade and destroy another country, that’s stabilizing, and if someone defends themselves that is destabilizing” (Chomsky, 2015, para. 19). In referring to the US-backed coup against Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973, he maintains:

The term “stability” is used here in its standard technical meaning: subordination to Washington’s will. There is no contradiction, for example, when liberal commentator James Chace, former editor of Foreign Affairs, explains that the United States sought to “destabilize a freely elected Marxist government in Chile” because “we were determined to seek stability” [under the Pinochet dictatorship] (Chomsky, 2008, para. 38).

The power of this discourse develops once the primary presupposition, which is that what the US is doing is indeed stabilization, has become accepted and axiomatic through constant repetition by authoritative channels such as the media. Once this has become common sense, the discussion no longer revolves around whether military actions in another country should be called stabilization or not, but around the question of how to perform better in the attempts to stabilize a region within the given and accepted framework.

The same can be applied to the concept of *humanitarian intervention*, which has seen a sharp rise in use since the collapse of the Soviet Union (Chomsky, 2008), and which officially designates the use of military force to protect civilians from violence by their own governments. As Chomsky outlines, however, it is in fact only used when the actor doing the intervention is a Western government (Chomsky, 2008). Its usage also presupposes that the intervention is actually undertaken with the main goal of saving civilian lives, to the effect that, once adopted, it limits the discussion only to whether the intervention was well-executed or blundered (as in the cases of the Iraq invasion of 2003 and Libya 2010), but effectively precludes discussions on whether the intervention was justified or not. After all, an intervention on humanitarian grounds is almost by definition justified. What these examples illustrate is the importance of going beyond a mere analysis of words, by deconstructing the myths that they both construe and represent.

The persuasive power of Chomsky's approach comes from his comprehensive historical knowledge and his remarkable skills in explaining and contextualizing complex events in world history. His linguistic background certainly does feature largely in his critical approach to US policies, as he attempts to deconstruct the use of certain buzz words – in essence not that different from Fillmore's and Lakoff's concept of frames – such as *democracy*, *stability*, or *humanitarian intervention*; Chomsky's main interest, however, lies in the juxtaposition of what is said with what is actually done (to the extent this can be perceived, e.g., via testimony or declassified documents). This becomes clear from a passage of a lecture given at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, in which he says that “it is wise to attend to deeds, not rhetoric and pleasant demeanor. Deeds commonly tell a different story” (Chomsky, 2009, online, para. 35). Of course, one might argue how deeds can be ascertained objective-

ly – they cannot – but this does not mean a relief from the obligation of holding those in power accountable for their actions, many of which are well documented, which is as close as one can get to accessing the facts on the ground. Chomsky's approach has considerable merit, in that it transcends the merely linguistic analysis of what is said and how this affects the audience, and instead shows that irrespective of political affiliation, the common denominator between people in power is their vested interests in business as it is business that keeps them in power. It need not be stressed that his class-based approach is in itself an ideology, but arguably free from the systemic vested interests that drive the dominant political forces.

## 6 CONCLUSION

It is clear that both Chomsky and Lakoff argue for social justice, but from two different ideological groundings and using radically different methods. However, it could be said that their approaches would be much more persuasive if combined, not just with each other, but also with other approaches. The goal should be to create a theory for political discourse analysis that takes into account the multidimensional aspects of discourse – interpersonal, cognitive, (con)textual, historical, ideological – in order to provide those interested with a toolset for analyzing and comprehending political discourse in its entirety, while shielding them from possible partisan effects by contrasting language with actions and by also studying omission in discourse. There is a great need for an analytical framework that not only relies on exploring the representation of language and ideology in a text, or on mental structures to account for the effect of ideological discourse on audiences, or on production processes to explain discourse constraints, but also questions the relationship between discourse and the deeds that follow. Focusing only on the language threatens to divert attention from the actions that political actors take, as well as detaches language entirely from the world it acts on. By relying solely on said actions, however, we run the risk of failing to explain why political actors get *cartes blanches* for these actions by employing language in a way that masks their ideological background, and why cer-

tain messages effectively shape, change and direct public opinion. Only by adopting a more global approach to analyzing political discourse that incorporates language use, language effects and an analysis of the actions that ensue, can a more complete understanding of the impact of politics on our lives be achieved.

What would be important is to merge some of the major existing approaches into a single universal theory that provides a toolkit for understanding, analyzing and inoculating against manipulative discourse. These approaches include the kind attempted, for example, by the Glasgow University Media Group's Thematic Analysis (Philo & Berry, 2011), which looks at media's production processes, linguistic strategies of representation as well as audience effects, juxtaposing media narratives with official and alternative narratives, but which lacks the cognitive depth of the news framing approaches by Robert M. Entman (e.g., 1993, 2004) or Dietram A. Scheufele (e.g., 2000), or the linguistic rigidity of Critical Discourse Studies (e.g., Fairclough, 1992; Reisigl & Wodak, 2001; van Dijk, 1993). Each approaches the topic from different directions, but none is comprehensive. Together, however, they have a large potential for critical synergy. Lakoff and Chomsky, here, cover important parts that would be vital for such an approach to be effective, but they arguably lose much of their potential effect because of their isolation from one another.

The importance of engaging in such a comprehensive critique, and doing this from a minority perspective, cannot be overestimated. In the status quo, the right is criticizing the left, for the sake of right-leaning audiences; the left is criticizing the right, for the sake of left-leaning audiences. Both are, in essence, preaching to their own choirs. Many of the resources of Critical Discourse Studies are devoted to exposing hypocrisy, sexism or xenophobia in right-wing groups and parties. The effect is merely to reinforce already existing beliefs about the *other* by reverberating with preexisting schemata and categorizations, or stereotypes. What is needed is to break one's own dominant frames, and question one's own stereotypes, hence a criticism of conservative discourse by and for conservatives and a criticism of progressive discourse by and for progressives. This could be achieved by questioning, as Chomsky does, how words conceal vested interest by decision makers revealed through deeds and by inquiring, as Lakoff does, what frames and metaphors do

to people and how to counteract those effects – not, however, in order to promote one part of the political spectrum, but instead to promote social justice for all. Otherwise, justice will remain merely a metaphor with an empty frame.

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