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Event-Construal in Press Reports of Violence in Political Protests: A Cognitive Linguistic Approach to CDA

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Abstract

In this paper I extend the scope of the Cognitive Linguistic Approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by incorporating Langacker's model of Cognitive Grammar in a critical analysis of press reports of violence in two political protests. In doing so, I address issues recently raised against CDA concerning cognitive equivalence. The paper presents an analysis of the alternative conceptualisations of violence invoked in online reports from *The Telegraph* vs. *The Guardian* of two recent political protests. Systematic differences in construal are found across several parameters of conceptualisation, including schematization and various 'focal adjustments', which, it is suggested, represent potential sites of ideological reproduction.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis, cognitive grammar, action schemas, focal adjustments, political protests

1. Introduction

In this paper I develop further the Cognitive Linguistic approach to CDA which is currently most recognisable in the wealth of critical metaphor studies, informed by Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which have recently appeared (e.g. Charteris-Black 2004; Goatly 2007; Koller 2004; Musolff 2004; Santa Ana 2002 and many more). The Cognitive Linguistic approach is an important development in CDA in so far as it offers a framework for analysing representation at both the level of text and conceptualisation. It thus addresses problems of cognitive equivalence (cf. Stubbs 1997; O'Halloran 2003; Widdowson 2004; Billig 2008). More recently still, researchers in CDA have adopted a Cognitive Linguistic perspective in analysing linguistic phenomena besides metaphor (e.g. Chilton 2004; Hart 2011a/b; Marin Arrese 2011). Continuing in this tradition, in this paper I apply Langacker's model of Cognitive Grammar in an analysis of the alternative event-construals invoked in press reports of violence in two recent political protests. The incorporation of Cognitive Grammar in CDA is especially significant because

Cognitive Grammar suggests the conceptual import of grammatical structures which have been both a staple of analysis in CDA and analyses of which have been the focus of outside criticism. In the next section, then, I briefly discuss those structures and analyses given of them in Critical Linguistics. In section 3, I highlight some the problems raised against these forms of analysis and outline the Cognitive Linguistic approach to CDA which I suggest can address the criticisms discussed in this section. In section 4 I introduce my data and in Section 5, I present a Cognitive Grammar-based analysis of alternative event-construals invoked in press reports of violence in recent UK political protests. Finally, in Section 6, I draw some theoretical and empirical conclusions.

2. Background: Critical Linguistics and Civil Disorder

Media representation of civil disorder, especially where cases of violence have occurred, has received considerable attention from the perspective of Critical Linguistics (Fowler et al. 1979; Fowler 1991; Kress and Hodge 1993). This research has revealed systematic asymmetries in the distribution of particular grammatical patterns across newspapers which, upon analysis, seem to support the overarching ideological frameworks in which those news institutions operate (Trew 197; Montgomery 1986; Toolan 1991; van Dijk 1991; Macleod and Hertog 1992; Hacket and Zhao 1994). In the right-wing press especially, it has been found that these distributions serve to construct a discourse according to which protestors are seen as perpetrators of violence whilst state authorities are seen as peaceful defenders of civil order (Montgomery 1986; van Dijk 1991). Moreover, it has been shown that the press from both the left and the right side of the political spectrum adhere to, and thus sustain, a 'master narrative' along the lines of which any form of civil action is seen as a deviation from normative behaviour and therefore associated with moral wrong-doing (Hall 1973). Thus, when the police are reported as engaged in acts of violence their role is mitigated on moral grounds. In an international context, Fang (1994) found that representations of foreign protests in the Chinese state newspaper *Renmin Ribao* differ according to whether the country in question is considered sympathetic or hostile to the People's Republic of China. When protests occur in countries deemed friendly the discourse steers towards social deviance but in reporting protests in countries whose Governments are deemed hostile to China the discourse steers instead towards one of state oppression. Also in an international context, Lee and Craig (1992) similarly found differences in US newspaper coverage of Labor strikes in Poland compared to South Korea. In the case of Poland, as a Communist country at the time, blame for the disputes was apportioned to Communism itself. By contrast, in the case of South Korea, whose political system is more closely aligned with that of the US, blame for the disputes was attributed to 'deviant and violent' protestors. What is important to emerge from these studies is not which of the alternative representations is correct but rather that language affords options in describing events and that it is therefore "the essence of representation that it is always

representation from some ideological point of view" (Fowler 1991: 85). The objective of Critical Linguistics is then to identify the specific sites of linguistic difference which reflect ideological stance.

The focus we find on violence in the first place, of course, is problematic for a number of reasons. For example, reporting almost exclusively on violence as the end result of a protest ignores the cause behind the movement, reduces the protest to a spectacle rather than a legitimate form of political action, and prevents serious discussion of the issues at stake (Murdock 1973). These two dimensions pertain to what Fowler (1991) called 'selection' and 'transformation', i.e. what gets reported and how. It is predominantly the latter that is addressed in Critical Linguistics.

Critical Linguistics is an approach to language study which, through close linguistic analysis, aims to disclose the wider ideological values which imbue the lexico-grammatical choices presented in texts and which are not necessarily immediately obvious to ordinary readers (Fowler 1991: 67).[1] The prevailing methodology in Critical Linguistics is sourced from Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (Fowler 1991, 1996) and a number of grammatical categories which constitute this grammar have been suggested as significant in the textual manifestation of ideology. Rather than rehearse this theory and the way it has been applied in Critical Linguistics, which will be well-known to any reader even remotely familiar with CDA, let us just highlight in Table 1 those components of grammar recurrent in Critical Linguistic analyses and give their suggested (ideological) functions.

Lexico-Grammatical Device	Ideological Functions
Transitivity	Has the facility to analyse the same event in different ways with different kinds of processes depicted and actors able to be cast in different roles (Fowler 1991)
Voice	Allows agents versus patients to be 'topicalized' as subject in active versus passive voice respectively (van Dijk 1991).
Passivization	Allows agents to be (syntactically) distanced from actions thereby weakening relationships of causality (Trew 1979; Kress and Hodge 1993)
Agentless passivization	Allows reference to agents of actions to be omitted from the clause thereby mystifying responsibility for the action (Trew 1979; Kress and Hodge 1993; van Dijk 1991; Fowler 1991)
Nominalization	Allows 'reification' of processes as things thus allowing omission of agents as well as reference to background, circumstance and modality (Kress and Hodge 1993; Fowler 1991)

Table 1. Grammar and Ideology in Critical Linguistics

Critical Linguistics, of course, became subsumed by CDA, such that it now constitutes a particular 'sub-branch' of the discipline (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). However, as a

number of scholars have observed, CDA has, to a significantly large extent, inherited the theory and methodology of Critical Linguistics (O'Halloran 2003; Chilton 2005; Billig 2008) so that firstly, there is in most studies some reference to Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (Wodak 2001: 8), and so that secondly, as a result, CDA has had a high mileage out of analysing transitivity and transformations (Fowler 1996: 5). This in itself, of course, is not a major issue, especially since CDA has far from stagnated but has instead developed rapidly in different directions by combining models of analysis in novel, interdisciplinary approaches (e.g. Reisigl and Wodak 2001). The fact remains, however, that the grammatical devices listed in Table 1 are still frequent objects of analysis in mainstream CDA (e.g. Reisigl and Wodak 2001; van Leeuwen and Wodak 1999; Fairclough 1992, 2003) and this becomes problematised when the standard forms of analysis offered of these devices are the subject of criticism.

3. Theory: The Cognitive Linguistic Approach

A number of outside criticisms of CDA as well as issues raised within it have recently been registered (see, e.g., Stubbs 1997; O'Halloran 2003; Widdowson 1995, 2004; Chilton 2005; Billig 2008). There is not space to deal with all of these in this paper and I have tried to answer some of these, including the problem posed by a possible 'critical instinct', elsewhere (e.g. Hart 2011c). Our focus here is on the problem of cognitive equivalence.

The issue concerns the extent to which representations at the level of text are mirrored at the level of cognition for both writers and readers. That is, are the linguistic representations encoded in text reflected in the mental representations of writers and, in turn, reified in the mental representations of readers? And if so, how do we know? In other words, are transformational processes like nominalization etc. just linguistic processes or do speakers/writers, and so by the same token hearers/readers, engage in nominalization as a psychologically real process when they use and encounter nominalised forms? (Billig 2008: 790). This is an important issue in CDA and addressing it properly can help to answer questions such as whether, for example, absences at the text level really lead to absences at the discourse level (O'Halloran 2003: 234).[2]

Most critical discourse analysts now generally recognise that cognitive processes play an important mediatory role in ideological reproduction and thus the discursive construction of social identities and relations (Wodak 2006: 180). In doing so, they assume correspondences between representations in text and cognition (O'Halloran 2003). However, as Stubbs suggests, "if language and thought are to be related, then one needs data and theory pertinent to both" (Stubbs 1997: 106). It is therefore surprising that developments in the field of Cognitive Linguistics have, to a very large extent, been ignored by "mainstream" CDA (Chilton 2005: 21; Wodak 2006: 179).

Cognitive Linguistics is a particular school of linguistics which comprises a number of theories, all related by a common set of assumptions. These theories include Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff and Johnson 1980), Frame Semantics (Fillmore 1982), Force-Dynamics (Talmy 1988) and Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 1987, 1991). And the principles that unite them include that linguistic processes are grounded in more general cognitive systems, that linguistic knowledge is conceptual in nature, that grammatical forms are themselves meaningful, that meaning is grounded in experience, and that alternative lexical and grammatical constructions constitute experience.

Cognitive Linguistics is also pattern-focussed and hearer-oriented in contrast to Systemic Functional Linguistics, which is generally process-focussed and speaker-oriented (Nuyts 2007). Cognitive Linguistics is therefore well placed to address the problem of cognitive equivalence at the interpretation stage in particular, where according to O'Halloran, "anything to do with cognition at the interpretation stage has not received comprehensive scrutiny" (2003: 3). The Cognitive Linguistic Approach to CDA, then, can show not only how linguistic constructions *reflect* ideology but how they *reproduce* ideology, a necessary move for any complete account of the dialectic between discourse and society.

Cognitive Linguistics is further congruent with CDA in so far as it adopts a functional, usage-based perspective on grammar (ibid.). Indeed, for Langacker (1991: 295), "it is precisely because of their conceptual import – the contrasting images they impose – that alternate grammatical devices are commonly available to code the same situation". In Cognitive Grammar, then, alternative grammatical constructions are said to be paired at the conceptual level with variants of different "image schemas" (see below) and their selection in discourse imposes upon the scene a specific structural configuration and distribution of attention. That is, they encode in text alternative "construals" which are recognised by readers and, provided that the linguistic representation is accepted as accurate (see Hart 2011c), constitute their experience of the events described. The objective of the Cognitive Linguistic Approach to CDA, then, is to demonstrate the conceptual import of ideological language choices and to identify the particular parameters along which ideological differences in text and conceptualisation can occur.

One important parameter already identified in the Cognitive Linguistic Approach is conceptual metaphor and its reflex in lexical metaphorical expressions (e.g. Charteris-Black 2004; Koller 2004; Musolf 2004; Goatly 2007). Conceptual metaphors provide structure to our understanding of new or abstract domains of experience through mappings from other more concrete or basic domains of experience (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). However, one of the major advantages of the Cognitive Linguistic Approach, besides being able to address the interpretation stage – a missing link in mainstream CDA (Chilton 2005) – is that Cognitive Linguistics is not a distinct theory, as we have seen, but rather a perspective which unites a number of theories. The Cognitive Linguistic Approach thus offers the opportunity to address a range of semantic and grammatical phenomena, including both lexical and

grammatical metaphor (Koller and Davidson 2008), within a broad but coherent theoretical framework, thereby aligning several disparate strands of enquiry. Within this wider framework, metaphor is just one of several conceptual processes involved in event-construal, all of which can be analysed from a common perspective. These conceptual processes or "construal operations" can be related to four types of discursive strategy as in Table 2 and are grounded in four general cognitive systems: gestalt, comparison, attention and perspective (Croft and Cruse 2004).[3] Construal operations must necessarily be invoked at the interpretation stage in order that discursive strategies are brought into effect. The four strategy-types I propose are structural configuration, framing, identification, and positioning, which can be deictic, epistemic or deontic.[4]

System / Strategy	Construal operations	Gestalt	Comparison	Attention	Perspective
Structural Configuration		Schematization			
Framing			Categorization		
			Metaphor		
Identification				Focus	
				Profiling	
				Scanning	
Positioning					Deixis
					Modality

Table 2. Construal operations and discursive strategies

Structural configuration is the strategy by means of which speakers impose upon the scene a particular image-schematic representation which constitutes our basic understanding of the whole event-structure. Images schemas are abstract, holistic knowledge structures distilled from repeated patterns of experience during cognitive development (Johnson 1987; Mandler 2004). They arise in basic domains like SPACE, GEOMETRY, ACTION and FORCE. They form the foundations of the conceptual system and are later called upon in conceptualisation to constitute our understanding of the very essence of events. The strategy of structural configuration, then, is realised through schematisation and grounded in an ability to analyse complex events in terms of gestalt structures. Framing strategies concern how the actors, actions, relations and process that make up events are attributed

more affective qualities as alternative categories or conceptual metaphors, which carry different evaluative connotations or entailments, are apprehended in their conceptualisation. Framing strategies are therefore grounded in a general ability to compare domains of experience.[5] Identification strategies concern which social actors are selected for conceptual representation and to what degree of salience they are represented relative to one and other. Identification strategies are based in attentional abilities, then, and are realised in various construal operations which Langacker (2002) groups together as "focal adjustments". These include, inter alia, selection, focus, profiling and scanning. Lastly, positioning strategies are based in our ability to adopt a particular perspective in how we conceive of a given scene. Specifically, positioning strategies concern where we situate other actors and events relative to ourselves (deictic) and where we situate propositions relative to our own conceptions of reality (epistemic) and morality (deontic).[6]

Conceptual metaphors have been found to be "particularly important for establishing construals of 'newsworthy' events in news stories" (Bednarek 2005: 24). For example, Charteris-Black (2006) showed that the process of immigration is construed metaphorically by right-wing politicians and press as a natural disaster, thus likely evoking emotional responses in some readers. However, Bednarek iterates that "tapping into the linguistic devices related to basic conceptual metaphors is only one way of strategically building up event-construals, which are important cognitive devices that help the reader to create coherence" (2005: 24). Hart (2011b) has therefore investigated force-dynamic construals in media discourse on immigration. He found that force-dynamic schemas structure our conceptualisation of the physical process of immigration but also of political and legal interactions, with several ideological consequences. Marín Arrese (2011) has studied the way politicians, through various "stance-taking acts", construe the realisation of events through both epistemic and effective evaluation. She found that such "stance resources are indexical of the speaker/writer's subjective and intersubjective positioning with respect to the communicated proposition, including the degree to which they assume personal responsibility for the evaluation of the information or whether the assessment is potentially shared by others" (p. 193). However, event-construal has not been analysed anywhere in CDA in terms of structural configuration involving action-chain schemas or in terms of focal adjustments realising identification strategies. In section 5, we show how these potential sites of ideological difference are operationalised in opposing press reports of violence in political protests. In the following section, we briefly introduce our data.

4. Data

The data are collated from four articles published in the online editions of *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* immediately following the G20 protests on 1 April 2009 and the Student Fee protests of 10 November 2010.[7] The number of words per article is given in Table 3. Around 35,000 people attended the initial G20 protests in London on 28 March 2009 with

5,000 protestors involved in the "G20 Meltdown" protest outside the Bank of England on 1 April. The Student Fee protests, also centred in London, were attended by between 30,000 and 52,000 people.[8] Both protests saw outbreaks of violence and at both protests the controversial technique for crowd control known as "kettling" was used, resulting in injuries to both police and protestors.[9] This data set by no means constitutes a representative corpus of contemporary discourse on political protests. There have been a large number of significant protests since, both in the UK and in the rest of the world. The study presented in the next section, then, is not intended to be a comprehensive investigation of the discourse on political protests, although some quantitative findings will be presented. Rather, the purpose of the study is to illustrate some of the potential linguistic and conceptual sites of difference in such discourse, from which further comparisons – ideological, inter-cultural, diachronic – and generalisations can be drawn in a future programme of research based on a much larger corpus.[10]

	The Guardian	*The Telegraph*
G20	1062	1109
Fees	957	544
Total	2019	1653

Table 3. Words per article in corpus

5. Analysis: Event-Construal in Press Reports of Political Protests

5.1 Action Chain Schemas

Action-chain schemas represent the transfer of energy between participants in an event, often resulting in a change in state to a participant "downstream" in the energy flow. Action-chain schemas emerge from our early experiences of different event-types and are later called upon in conceptualisation to provide structure to the way we conceive subsequent events.[11] There are various action-chain schemas available to construe the same event and in electing one over the other we necessarily close down alternative conceptualisations. There are options, for example, in how many participants are covered within the "scope of attention" and which are in turn focussed on or "profiled" (see below). However, one fundamental distinction concerns whether we conceive of an event in terms of an "asymmetrical" or a "reciprocal" action chain.

In an asymmetrical action chain the event is construed in terms of a unidirectional flow of energy from an agent to a patient (sometimes via an instrument or theme which for present

purposes we will gloss over). By contrast, a reciprocal action chain construes the event in terms of a bidirectional flow of energy so that one participant cannot be ascribed the status of agent and the other patient but rather both entities are active participants in the event. By way of example, consider the difference between (1a) and (1b):

(1a)   A number of police officers were injured after they **came under attack from** youths, some wearing scarves to hide their faces. (T, Fees)

(1b)   Activists who had masked their faces with scarves **traded punches with** police. (G, Fees)

The construction in (1a) construes the event in terms of the action chain schema modelled in Figure 1 whereas the construction in (1b) construes the event through the schematization modelled in Figure 2.[12]
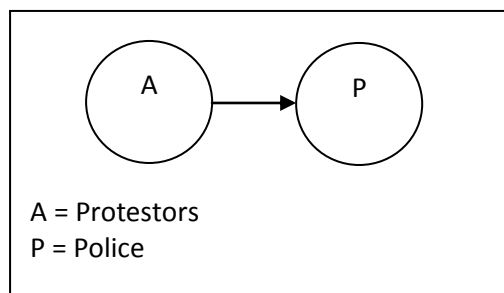

A = Protestors
P = Police

Figure 1. Asymmetrical action chain
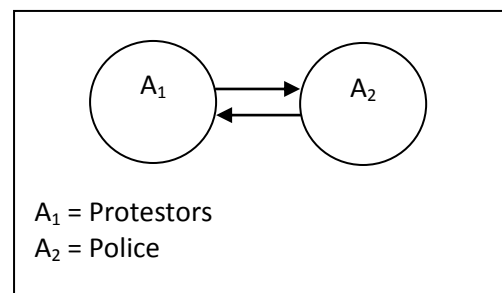
A_1 = Protestors
A_2 = Police

Figure 2. Reciprocal action chain

The alternative construals invoked by (1a) and (1b) carry significant ideological consequences. In schematizing the event in terms of an asymmetrical action-chain, as in (1a), responsibility for the violent action is attributed to only one participant, the sole source of energy flow in the event, in this case the protestors. In schematizing it in terms of a reciprocal action chain as in (1b), by contrast, responsibility for the violence is shared.

Conceptualisations of an event, of course, are not based on single sentences within the text. Rather, we gain an 'impression' of the events described based on the common threads that permeate the text as a whole. It is therefore important to try and provide a 'picture' of the overall conceptualisation that the text is likely to evoke. One way of doing this is to categorise and tag the types of event-structure that occur in the text and then abstract quantitative data for comparison. In this case, we are able to identify the clauses in the texts which relate directly to acts of violence between police and protestors, discarding any reported clauses, and quantify the alternative event-construals encoded.

Analysis of this kind reveals that the dissociation between examples given as (1a) and (1b) is not an isolated instance. The pattern is repeated, for example, in the contrast between (2a) and (2b):

(2a) Rocks, wooden banners, eggs, rotten fruit and shards of glass **were thrown at** police officers … (T, Fees)

(2b) Police wielding batons **clashed with** a crowd hurling placard sticks, eggs and bottles. (G, Fees)

In reporting the violence at the student fees protest, *The Telegraph* only ever uses transitive verbs. It reports violent encounters between the police and protestors a total of 3 times, including (1a) and (2a) in which protestors are the sole agent of violent actions. In the third instance the police are agentive in "trying to beat back the crowd with metal batons and riot shields". *The Guardian* similarly reports violent encounters between the police and protestors a total of 3 times, including (1b) and (2b) where both police and protestors are encoded as agentive actors. In the third instance, the police are reported as agents in "attempting to restore order". Notice, then, that whilst there is systematic divergence in how both papers construe the violence when protestors are agentive, there is convergence in clauses where the police are the sole agent with both papers presenting police action as an effort to reinstate equilibrium.

In reporting the G20 protests, both papers primarily invoke asymmetrical schemas in conceptualising actions of police and protestors. However, this data reveals several further parameters of ideological conceptualisation: (i) the ascription of agency to police and protestors; (ii) whether the event is schematized as a transactive event (Kress and Hodge 1993) or a motion event; and (iii) the scope of attention or 'coverage' the clause.

The Telegraph article contains 10 clauses reporting encounters between police and protestors. In 8 out of the 10 instances an asymmetrical action chain is imposed on the scene. And police are encoded as agents in action events in 3 out of those 8 instances. *The Guardian* article contains 21 clauses reporting actions of police and protestors. 19 of these instances involve an asymmetrical schema. And police are encoded as agents in 14 of those 19 cases. These statistics are summarised in Table 3. In percentage terms, we see that *The Guardian* configures events with police as agents twice as often *The Telegraph* and *The Telegraph* configures events with protestors as agents twice as often as *The Guardian.*

	The Guardian	*The Telegraph*
Police as agent	14 (73.7%)	3 (37.5%)
Protestors as agent	5 (26.3%)	5 (62.5%)
Total	19	8

Table 3. Agent ascription in G20 asymmetrical schemas

Examples of the contrast can be seen in (3a) in which police are the agent and (3b) in which a protestor is the agent:

(3a)   At least ten protestors sitting down in the street close to the Bank of England were left with bloody head wounds after being **charged by officers with batons** at around 4.30pm. (G, G20)

(3b)   At one point, **a black-clad man in the crowd struck** an officer with a long pole. (T, G20)

However, a further ideological parameter consists in whether an event is conceived as a transactive event at all or whether it is instead construed as a motion event. Of the asymmetrical schemas with police configured as agents in *The Guardian,* the event is schematized as a motion event rather than a transactive event in 3 out of 14 cases. In a motion event there is no transmission of energy between entities but rather a motion path of one entity (the 'trajector') is delineated relative to another entity (the 'landmark'). Consider (4) by way of example:

(4)   Then, at around 7pm, the police **moved in** on the climate camp.

The image schema imposed on the scene in (4) can be modelled as follows where the arrow represents the trajectory of the agent rather than a transfer of energy and the terminus of the vector where the TR ends up is not an object or entity but a location. The construal invoked of the event as a motion event rather than a transactive event is the kind of conceptual process involved in realising framings strategies of euphemisation.
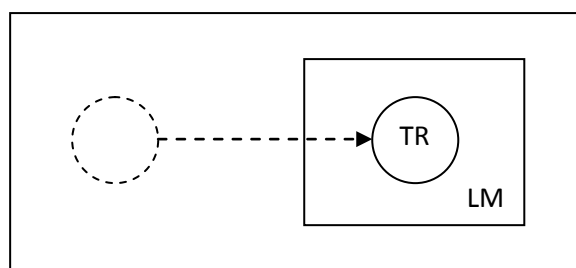

Figure 3. Motion schema

Finally, we are necessarily selective in the potentially infinite number of causal interactions we include within the "scope of attention".[13] For example, the canonical transitive clause covers a transactive event involving two participants: an agent and a patient with the agent as subject and source of energy flow. This coverage ignores the possible precursors in a chain of causal interactions which could have lead to the event designated by the clause as well as potential effects of the designated event. The image schema imposed by a canonical finite transitive clause, then, can be modelled as in Figure 4. The array inside the oval represents the scope of attention whilst the array outside the oval includes elements that lie beyond it.
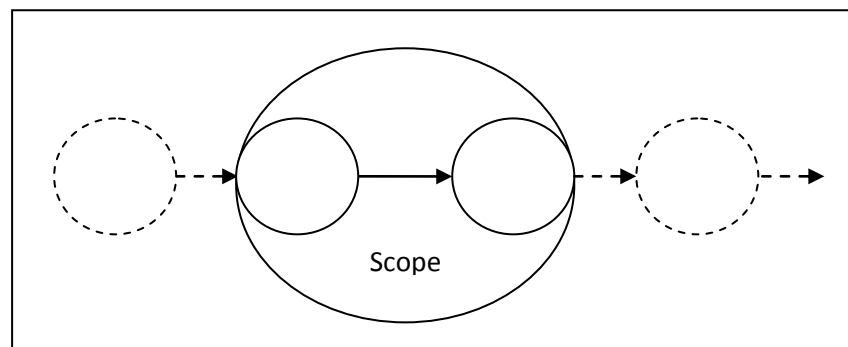

Figure 4. Scope of attention

However, the scope of attention can be extended in complex sentences to include those elements that would normally lie outside it. There is therefore an ideological dimension in selecting the coverage of a clause. One effect of extending the scope of attention is to legitimise the actions of certain actors by presenting them as a *reaction* to some previous event. Consider (5) by way of example:

(5)   Clashes later erupted at Mansion House Street and Queen Victoria Street near the Bank, with police **forced to** deploy ten van and hundreds of police officers <u>to rescue a van that had been surrounded by protestors who shook it from side to side</u>. (T, G20)

The event in (5) is schematized as in Figure 5. Extending the scope of attention invokes a construal of the event and thus of the agent's actions as the effect of a previous event. That is, the source of the energy flow is not the subject of the clause but is instead some mitigating cause or circumstance. Conversely, of course, not extending the scope of attention can serve to delegitimise actions by invoking a construal in which they are seen as gratuitous or unprovoked.

We find instances of police actions construed as reactions in both *The Telegraph* and *The Guardian* articles on the G20 protests, but no similar instances vis a vis protestors' actions. Indeed, the scope of attention is extended in this way in all 3 event-construals encoding police as agents in *The Telegraph* G20 article and in 4 of the 11 transactive event-construals with police as agents in *The Guardian* G20 article*.
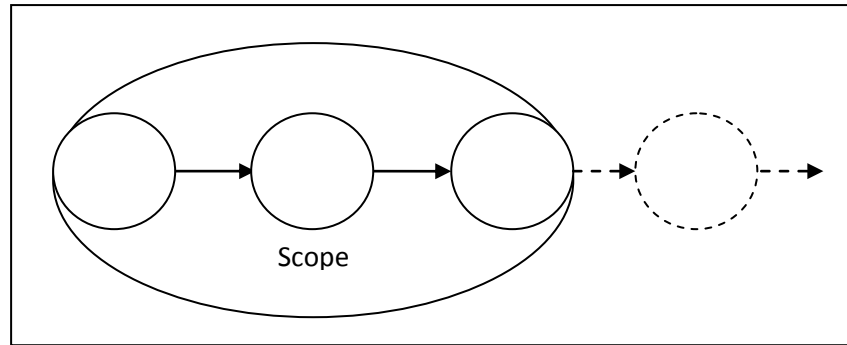
Figure 5. Extended scope of attention

Selecting the scope of attention is one of several construal operations grounded in the system of attention. These are grouped together by Langacker (2002) under the rubric of 'focal adjustments' and they further include focus, profiling, and scanning, which we discuss in the following section in relation to identification strategies.

5.2 Focal Adjustments

Focal adjustments play an important part in how we further conceptualise the event-type schematized within the scope of attention. In particular, these construal operations realise identifications strategies of mystification. Langacker (2008: 55) characterises the various facets of focal adjustment as follows: "in viewing a scene, what we actually see depends on how closely we examine it, what we choose to look at, which elements we pay most attention to, and where we view it from". These alternative ways of seeing an event have reflexes in ways of describing it. Thus, alternative grammatical constructions index in text and invite in text-consumers alternative conceptions of reality.

In the G20 articles, for example, the two newspapers do each on two occasions use a reciprocal action chain to construe encounters between police and protestors. However, there is systematic difference in focus between the two papers. Focus here pertains to the degree of attention afforded to entities explicitly selected within the scope of attention, relative to one and other. It is a fundamental feature of cognition that in perceiving any scene one entity, the 'figure', stands out relative to another, the 'ground'. The figure is perceptually more prominent than the ground, which serves as a point of reference for the figure. Figure/ground alignment features in several aspects of discourse, including descriptions of spatial relations, metaphor and presupposition (Talmy 2000; Langacker 2008). However, one further dimension of discourse which can be said manifest a figure/ground construal is thematic structure where entities introduced earlier in the clause are conceptually more salient, and thus function as figure, relative to entities subsequently introduced, which function as ground. According to Talmy (2000: 12), for example, "the entity that functions as the figure of situations attracts focal attention and is the entity whose characteristics and fate are of concern". Focus therefore seems to be an important conceptual process involved in topicalisation. Compare now the examples in (6a) and (6b):

(6a)   Twenty-three people were arrested as **protestors** clashed with **police** around the Bank of England. (T, G20)

(6b)   **Riot police** clash with **demonstrators** (G, G20)

Although both *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* construe the encounter in terms of a reciprocal action chain, it is the protestors' role in the event that is more prominent in (6a) and the police's role which is more prominent in (6b). The alternative construals can be modelled as in Figures 5 and 6 where the bolder lines represent the foregrounded entity within the event-schema.[14]
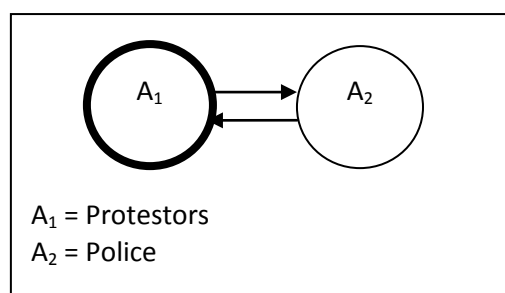

A₁ = Protestors
A₂ = Police

Figure 5. Focus (a)
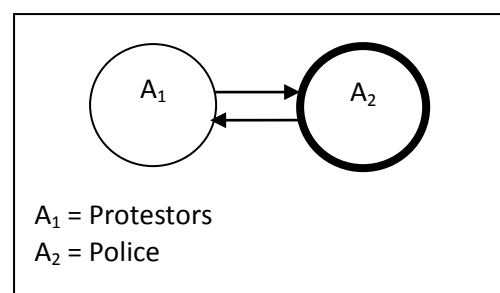
A₁ = Protestors
A₂ = Police

Figure 6. Focus (b)

As before, these are not isolated instances. The pattern is repeated in the second examples of reciprocal action schemas in each paper, given below as (7a) and (7b).

(7a)   Earlier, violence erupted during a tense stand-off between **demonstrators** – many with covered faces – and **police** outside the Bank of England. (T, G20)

(7b)   By about 8pm, running battles between **riot police** and **demonstrators** were taking place across London Bridge.

It seems, then, that when events are conceptualised in terms of reciprocal actions there are further linguistic means of invoking a conceptualisation in which responsibility for the violence is asymmetrically assigned.

Another construal operation grounded in the system of attention, which can be seen as an extension of focus, is profiling. The distinction between focus and profiling is that in the case of focus both entities in the scope of attention receive linguistic representation. In profiling, one entity is left implicit. Profiling, I suggest, is the construal operation involved in mystification, which concerns the absence of actors within the clause. Agent absences can be seen in various linguistic phenomena, including metonymy, nominalisation and agentless passives. In CDA, absences are said to function ideologically by glossing over agency in actions that might not fit comfortably with overarching political positions (Toolan 1991: 228). However, there have been a number of problems raised against mystification analysis

in CDA (e.g. Widdowson 2004). These centre on the extent to which an absence of linguistic representation in the text equates to an absence in the cognitive representations of readers. On many occasions it is reasonable to argue that agency is recoverable through normal pragmatic principles such as relevance. Van Leeuwen (1996) therefore distinguishes between "suppression" and "backgrounding" where, in the case of agentless passives, for example, agents may not so much be excluded as "de-emphasised, pushed into the background" (p. 39). Reisigl and Wodak (2001: 58) similarly claim that absences in text "enable speakers to conjure away responsible, involved or affected actors (whether victims or perpetrators), or to keep them in the semantic background". This notion of semantic background, however, has not been theorised in CDA, let alone demonstrated as cognitively plausible. However, that these kind of constructions can background agency in cognitive terms finds support in Cognitive Grammar in which construal operations are based on general cognitive abilities such as salience and attention.   As Langacker (2008: 384) puts it, "when one participant is left unspecified, the other becomes more salient just through the absence of competition. On the other hand, augmenting the salience of one participant diminishes that of others (in relative terms)".

Let us now consider, by way of example, how the two articles on the student fee protests report injuries sustained during the course of the events. *The Telegraph* reports injuries to the police as follows in (8a). By contrast, they report injuries to the police and protesters as in (8b).

(8a)   A number of officers were injured after they came under attack from youths. (T, Fees)

(8b)   Eight people were taken to hospital with injuries after the violence flared at Millbank Tower. (T, Fees)

Notice, then, that in (8a) the manner by which the injuries were sustained is made explicit in the adverbial clause. However, in (8b) the manner by which injuries were sustained is left implicit by the fact that (i) *injure* is not the matrix verb in the main clause but is instead nominalised as "injuries" and (ii) in the adverbial clause the nominal form *violence* summarily scans a complex process thus occluding attention to the internal event-structure (see below). *The Guardian* does not report on injuries sustained solely by the police but interestingly reports injuries to both police and protestors with the agentless passive and no adverbial clause as in (8c):

(8c)   Police said at least eight people – "a mixture of police and protestors" – had been injured. (G, Fees)

The contrast in the conceptualisations arrived at in (8a) on the one hand and (8b) and (8c) on the other can be modelled as in Figures 7 and 8. The profiled portion of the action chain, i.e. the selection explicitly designated, is represented in bold. The stepped arrow indicates the change in state to the patient. In Figure 7, then, the whole action chain is profiled but in

Figure 8 only the resultant of the interaction is profiled, leaving the cause in the scope of attention and so accessible but cognitively, and experientially, backgrounded.
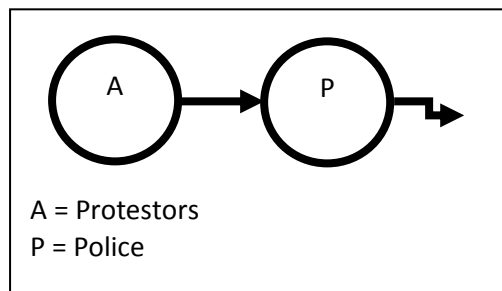

A = Protestors
P = Police

Figure 7. Profiling (a)

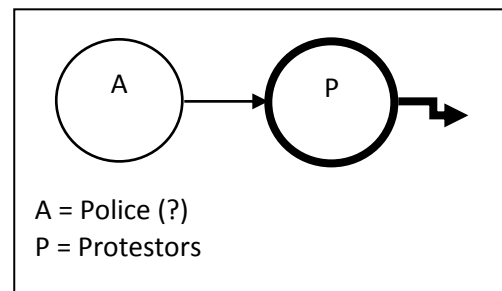A = Police (?)
P = Protestors

Figure 8. Profiling (b), (c)

One further, final construal operation to mention here is scanning. According to Cognitive Grammar we conceptualise events by mentally scanning the series of relations obtaining between participants at different (continuous) stages in the process that constitutes an event. There are two modes of scanning: sequential scanning and summary scanning. In sequential scanning, "the various phases of an evolving situation are examined serially, in noncumulative fashion" (Langacker 2002: 78-79). Thus, sequential scanning lends itself to the conceptualisation of complex events and is the mode of scanning indexed in and invoked by a transactive clause. However, as Langacker put is, "we nevertheless have the conceptual agility to construe an event by means of summary scanning" (2002: 79). In summary scanning, the various facets of an event are examined cumulatively so that the whole complex comes to cohere as a single gestalt (ibid.). That is, we see an event as an OBJECT or THING rather than as a series of INTERACTIONS and PROCESSES. And since "things do not pertain to time, we do not scan their internal component states sequentially but see all of them accumulated" (Radden and Dirven 2007: 80). Summary scanning, then, is the conceptual reflex of nominalisation and the conceptual process involved in realising the structural configuration strategy of reification. The two alternative conceptualisations can be modelled as in Figure 9 and 10. In sequential scanning it is the relationships held between entities at different moments in the evolving event that is profiled. In summary scanning, it is the event as a whole, atemporal thing that is profiled and its internal structure thus backgrounded.
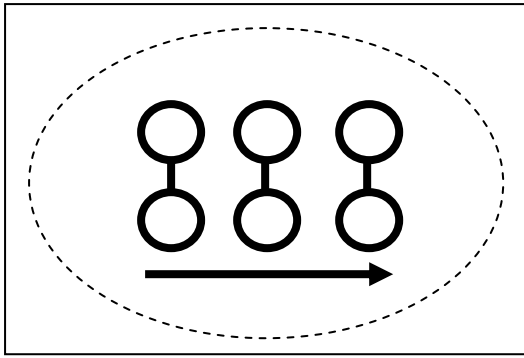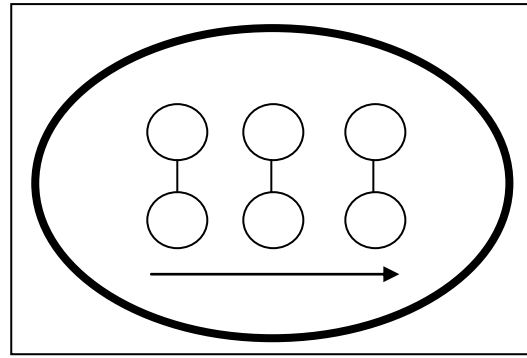
Figure 9. Sequential scanning

Figure 10. Summary scanning

One striking thing in this small corpus of discourse is the propensity with which both papers invoke reified construals by using the abstract nominal "protest" in the subject of an active clause. Consider the following by way of example:

(9a) **Student tution fee protest** turns violent as Tory headquarters evacuated. (T, Fees)

(9b) **A demonstration against tuition fees by tens of thousands of students and lecturers** descended into violence today ... (T, Fees)

(9c) **Student protest over fees** turns violent (G, Fees)

(9d) **The G20 protests in central London** turned violent today ahead of tomorrow's summit ... (G, G20)

This reification serves to reduce protests to a spectacle rather than a complex process and presents political protests as themselves leading to violence without cause or agency. Whilst there is some divergence between the two papers in terms of event-construal, then, which would seem to fit with their alternative ideological frameworks, the use of reification strategies in both papers serves to sustain a master narrative which ultimately deligitimises political protest.

6. Conclusion

It has not been my intention in this paper to conduct a complete analysis of media discourses of political protests. Rather, we have set about identifying potential linguistic sites of ideological difference and, drawing on the tradition of Cognitive Linguistics, suggested a way of analysing their conceptual import at the interpretation stage. Specifically, in this paper, I have tried to show that Cognitive Grammar provides a useful framework for theorising the impact of various grammatical phenomena, including

transitivity and nominalisaton. In answer to Billig's question, then, i.e. whether writers/readers engage in things like nominalisation as a psychological process when they use and encounter nominalised forms, the answer is no. Such transformational processes do not exist for Cognitive Linguists. However, alternative constructions do encode alternative conceptions of reality and, according to this framework, prompt readers to invoke basic, image-schematic construals of the events described, at least for purposes of local understanding. Of course, with some degree of cognitive effort readers can enrich such mental representations to recover information or choose to reject them entirely based on concordance with existing assumptions. However, readers reading only for gist are unlikely to invest sufficient effort to yield a more complete representation or challenge presuppositions (O'Halloran 2003; Chilton 2004). The construal operations indexed in text are therefore likely to be responsible for reproducing ideologically vested representations of events in the minds of many ordinary readers. In our small corpus, we have found both convergence and divergence in the conceptualisations of violence invoked by online reports of political protests published *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph.* Whilst some significant differences in grammar and construal seem to support their more liberal versus conservative stance respectively, other allied conceptions of protest steer ultimately towards a discourse of deligitimisation.

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Notes

1   There are important issues here concerning whether analysts may look too closely for something that they have already predetermined to find, as well as the extent to which readers are incapable of detecting ideology themselves (cf. Chilton 2005; O'Halloran 2003; Widdowson 2004). A major contribution of critical metaphor studies, incidentally, is that conceptual metaphors are not something that language users are normally aware of (Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

2   Cognitive equivalence can pertain only to the basic, structural understanding of events. At a higher level, readers interpret texts against much richer, more subjective and culture-dependent knowledge structures known as frames so that interpretation is more idiosyncratic and we can therefore only theorise about an idealised reader (O'Halloran 2003).

3   The term 'strategy' is used, following Reisigl and Wodak (2001), to mean a more or less intentional/institutionalised plan of discourse practices.

4   Structural configuration has been added since the typology previously outlined in Hart (2011a).

5   It should be noted that whilst strategies of structural configuration and framing are functionally different and can be isolated for analytical purposes, they are closely connected and not easily separable in the practice of discourse.

6   The conceptual structures involved in realising such positioning strategies have been most concisely theorised, from a Cognitive Linguistic perspective, in terms of 'discourse worlds' (see Chilton 2004 and Cap 2006).

7   Throughout the paper I shall give the sources of individual examples as T, G20 (*The Times* article on the G20 protest); G, G20 (*The Guardian* article on the G20 protest); T, Fees (*The Times* article on the student fee protest); G, Fees (*The Guardian* article on the student fee protest). Urls for the four articles are listed after the references.

8   Statistics sourced from http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2011/mar/28/demonstrations-protests-uk-list.

9   At the G20 protest one bystander was assaulted by a police officer and later died from a suspected abdominal haemorrhage.

10   *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph* are regarded as liberal versus right-wing publications respectively. We would therefore expect to see differences in the distributions of grammatical patterns across them if, as CDA suggests, language is a locus of ideology. Indeed, in order to put this claim to the test, Stubbs argues that CDA must conduct comparative analyses: "since the essential claim concerns differences caused by different language use, it follows that studies of language use and cognition must be comparative. Only very few CDA studies compare individual texts, or compare features of texts with norms in the language, or compare text types diachronically" (Stubbs 1997: 107). One approach to CDA which has more recently emerged and which is able to fill this void is the Corpus Linguistic Approach (e.g., Baker et al. 2008).

11   Van Dijk, of course, has drawn attention to and theorised the cognitive processes that are necessarily involved in text production and interpretation. The action schemas described in this paper can be thought of as contributing to the "event models" that readers construct in interpretation (van Dijk 1998). The Cognitive Linguistic Approach to CDA can thus be aligned with and the Sociocognitive approach (Koller 2004; Hart 2010).

12   Diagrams such as those in Figures 1 and 2 are not image schemas per se. In the same way that Generativists do not believe we have trees growing in our heads, the diagrams are notational and allow us merely to suggest the nature of the theoretical construct. The same schema can be diagrammed in alternative ways.

13   The "scope of attention" refers to the base that a predication can reasonably be said, explicitly or implicitly, to extend over (Langacker 2002).

14   Notice that laterality is irrelevant here. Figure/ground alignment operates on salience, which we tend to experience on the longitudinal axis.