

# Viewpoint in Linguistic Discourse: Space and Evaluation in News Reports of Political Protests

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## Abstract

This paper continues to develop a program of research which has recently emerged investigating the ideological functions of spatial construals in social and political discourse from a Cognitive Linguistic perspective (Cap 2013; Chilton 2004; Dunmire 2011; Filardo Llamas 2013; Hart 2013a/b, 2014a; Kaal 2012). Specifically, inspired by principles in Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 2008), the paper attempts to formulate a grammar of 'point of view' and show how this trans-modal cognitive system is manifested in the meanings of individual grammatical constructions which, when selected in discourse, yield mental representations whose spatial properties invite ideological evaluations. The link between spatial organisation and ideological evaluation in these mental models, it is argued, is a function of our embodied understanding of language. These theoretical arguments are illustrated with data taken from online news reports of two political protests.

**Keywords:** critical discourse analysis, cognitive grammar, mental models, space, evaluation, embodiment

## 1. Introduction

In Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) there is an increasing focus on the visual articulation of discourses and thus the parameters involved in the visual expression of ideology (e.g. Abousnougou and Machin 2011; Machin and Mayr 2012). Researchers in multimodal CDA see linguistic and visual modes of communication as manifestations of a single underlying semiotic capacity. For Kress and van Leeuwen, for example, meaning belongs to culture and, although realised quite differently, many of the same meaning potentials may find parallel expression across alternative modalities (2006: 2). In developing a grammar of visual design, multimodal researchers have therefore drawn on categories that make up functional linguistic grammars of the kind developed and applied in Critical Linguistics. Thus, multimodal researchers have studied visual instantiations of grammatical systems like TRANSITIVITY and MODALITY (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006; Machin 2007). Visual instantiations of conceptual metaphors have also been analysed (El Rafeie 2003; Bounegru and Forceville 2011). The relationship between linguistic and multimodal approaches to CDA, however, has tended to be one of unidirectional influence where linguistic approaches can be seen to inform visual approaches but the converse is not observed. For example, an elaborated grammar of visual design takes in a number of additional systems which are assumed to be unique to visual communication and therefore do not typically feature in the analyses of linguistic approaches to CDA. Amongst such systems is spatial POINT OF VIEW.

In ordinary parlance, of course, 'point of view' is taken to mean something akin to ideology or evaluation. Point of view in this sense has been much studied in Critical Linguistics where it is said to be reflected in the 'choices' a text presents in grammatical systems like TRANSITIVITY and MODALITY (Fowler 1991; Hodge and Kress 1993; Lee 1992; Simpson 1993). Space and spatial point of view, however, have not figured in any systematic way in linguistic approaches to CDA (cf. Chilton 2004). This is in spite of: (i) relevant findings from Cognitive Linguistics which highlight the role of spatial cognition and thus the presence of spatial patterning in linguistic meaning (Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Langacker 1987, 1991; Talmy 2000) and (ii), as has been demonstrated in multimodal CDA, the potential for alternative spatial configurations and points of view to communicate ideology and function rhetorically (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006).

According to Cognitive Linguistics, as well as Cognitive Science more generally, language is embodied (Johnson 1987; Lakoff and Johnson 1999; Croft and Cruse 2004). To say that language is embodied is to say that it is grounded in physical, including visuo-spatial, experience and is bound with the body's situatedness at the point of interpretation. This means at least three things:

- that language relies on systems whose primary role is in support of other non-linguistic domains like vision and action. In other words, that the conceptual processes involved in language and discourse are not principally distinct from processes that function in other experiential realms like visual perception and spatial cognition. Consequently, linguistic understanding will in many cases have correlates in our experiences of other kinds of meaningful episode;
- that much of meaning is provided by conceptual structures which develop pre-linguistically based on the kind of bodies we have, our interactions with the physical environment, and co-occurrences of physical and mental experiences. Such conceptual structures include image schemas and conceptual metaphors;
- that language is necessarily interpreted with reference to the Self, including the location and orientation of the Self in space and time. This can be seen most clearly in the phenomenon of deixis.

One upshot of language being embodied is that many linguistic (lexical, grammatical, and textual) constructions include, as part of the meanings they invoke, properties related to visuo-spatial experience. For example, Langacker (2008: 75) argues that many, if not all, grammatical constructions invite the conceptualiser to construe the scene described from a particular point of view. Talmy (2000) similarly shows that grammatical constructions confer a figure/ground relation on elements in the scene described. In a further development of this framework, it has been argued that meaning involves running a mental *simulation* of the event described seen from the perspective of an 'immersed experiencer' (Bergen 2012; Zwaan 2004). That is, we 'see' (imagine) the events described in our mind's eye in a way that is something like a private, internal cinematic experience. These programs both point to the role of mental models in discourse processing and can thus usefully add to the van Dijkian notion of an 'event model' (e.g. van Dijk 1997, 1999, 2008). They view language as a set of prompts which, drawing on prior experiences, serve to guide the hearer in constructing an intersubjective mental representation of the referential situation. It is this mental model that forms the basis of our understanding of any utterance. For van Dijk, event models are made up of at least two components: a semantic or representational component and an affective component. The semantic component is assumed, "lacking alternative formats of representation"

(1997: 191), to be propositional in nature. Drawing on insights from Cognitive Linguistics and Simulation Semantics, however, we can begin to think more precisely about the form that these models might take. On the account presented here, the mental models built in discourse are, at one level of representation, schematic consisting of an abstract conceptual structure. At another, they are more fully specified presenting a rich and dynamic simulation of the event unfolding in (imagined) space and time. These representations are then coupled at a third level with epistemic, moral and affective evaluations (which we may begin to think about in the terms laid down in Martin and White's (2007) grammar of Appraisal (see Hart 2014a)).

One particularly fruitful avenue for CDA to pursue, then, might be to investigate the role and effects of embodied spatial construals, and PoV operations in particular, in social and political linguistic discourse. More recently, CDA has witnessed a cognitive turn (see Hart 2014b for an overview) in which researchers, drawing heavily on insights from Cognitive Linguistics, have indeed become more interested in the role of space and spatial concepts in structuring social and political domains of experience. For example, in Critical Metaphor Studies it has been shown that abstract notions like the nation state, economic and social conditions, and political progress get structured metaphorically in terms of more familiar concepts like CONTAINMENT, VERTICALITY, and FORWARD MOTION, which are all closely linked with experiences we have of our body's existence in space (Chilton 1996; Beer and De Landtsheer 2004; Charteris-Black 2004; Hart 2010).

In a distinct but closely related program of research known as Discourse Space Theory (DST), Chilton (2004) suggests that meaning construction involves the metaphorical 'mapping out' of discourse elements within a particular type of *mental space* (Fauconnier 1994, 1997). According to this model, people, places, attributes and events introduced in discourse get located along three axes – space, time and modality – at relative distances from a deictically specified anchorage point in the centre of an abstract three-dimensional discourse space. Actions are represented in the model as abstract metaphorical movements through the space represented by elements which can be formally defined as vectors.<sup>1</sup> One crucial feature of this framework, then, is that it suggests a geometric mode of conceptualisation in which spatial concepts play a fundamental structuring role. Another is that it argues for the ego-centric nature of meaning construction. The deictic centre represents the conceptualiser's 'situatedness' within the abstract space and thus the point of view from which they construe the world presumed by the text. The deictic centre is decoupled from immediate situational context, however, to represent what the conceptualiser takes more broadly as their social, temporal, epistemic and deontic 'ground' (see Hart 2014a). Mentally situated at the centre of the discourse space, the hearer is placed 'onstage' as an object of conceptualisation and thus themselves form an integral part of the meaning of any text. In a further elaboration of this framework, Cap (2006, 2013) identifies as a feature of interventionist discourse a rhetorical strategy of *proximisation*. In its spatial dimension, proximisation involves a construal of discourse participants defined (explicitly or implicitly) as alien or antagonistic, and thus positioned initially as distal along the spatial axis, encroaching on or entering the conceptualiser's territory at deictic centre. Such a conceptualisation serves to construct threat-salience on the back of which interventionist action may be legitimated. Proximisation may be particularly effective in evoking feelings of anxiety. When the conceptualiser or their spatial ground is construed as the target of the

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<sup>1</sup> Vectors are mathematical entities possessing properties DISTANCE (MAGNITUDE) and DIRECTION.

proximisation, the conceptual process would have as a correlate in visuo-spatial experience that of an unfamiliar or unfriendly entity entering one's peripersonal space.

DST postulates a cognitive-pragmatic model in the form of a discourse space that serves as a coherence-establishing frame in which the 'worlds' presented in texts are conceptually represented and organised. The relevant spatial parameter in this model is distance. Although PoV features centrally in this model, the point of view involved is deictically determined, bound to the broad socio-political context of the text and presupposed systems of belief, identity and value. The organisation of elements in a discourse space realises a more general discursive strategy of *positioning* identified in the Cognitive Linguistic Approach to CDA (Hart 2014a/b). Positioning concerns where we situate ourselves in terms of space, time and evaluation and where we locate other actors and actions relative to ourselves. It relies on a domain-general ability for perspective-taking. In language, positioning can be semantic, encoded in the meaning of certain grammatical constructions, or it can be pragmatic, determined by the context of utterance and background assumptions. Positioning in DST is largely pragmatic. In this paper, however, I am interested in the way that spatial point of view features in the meaning of particular grammatical constructions. Point of view at this level of meaning is not deictically determined but is specified in the semantics of individual grammatical forms. Neither is it, in principle, restricted to the parameter of distance. Rather, if, as is suggested in Cognitive Linguistics, language is embodied, grounded in part in visuo-spatial experience, then it may exploit the range of point of view variables which that experience provides.

Although it does not constitute direct experience, it is intuitively obvious that visual communication is more closely related to unmediated visuo-spatial experience and more directly dependent on visuo-spatial cognition than language. In order to investigate the role of PoV in linguistic discourse, therefore, it makes sense to turn first and foremost to multimodal approaches to CDA where grammars of PoV have already been developed. Multimodal researchers have also pointed to the role of vectors in visual communication (e.g. Kress and van Leeuwen 1996).

In section 2, I therefore introduce a grammar of PoV as developed from analyses of visual discourse in multimodal CDA. In section 3, I show how this same grammar may similarly be exploited in linguistic discourse. I adopt a cognitive linguistic perspective (Hart 2010, 2011a/b 2013a/b, 2014a/b) and suggest that understanding discourse involves the construction of a mental model consisting of at least three components: a schematic representation, a dynamic simulation in which the hearer is an immersed experiencer, and an ideological evaluation. I also suggest an embodied account of the ideological significance of contrasting spatial points of view.

Illustrative data is taken from a small corpus of online press reports of the 2009 G20 and 2010 Student Fees protests in the UK. This corpus includes reports from across the quality and mid-market British press. If spatial PoV in language connotes ideological point of view, then we should expect news institutions of different political persuasions to use alternate grammatical constructions to construe the same or comparable events from contrasting spatial PoVs which are reflective/constitutive of the competing discourses in which they operate. At the same time, of course, contrasting language usages may be diagnostic of ideological positions. Although no statistical analysis is presented in this paper, some general quantitative findings from two previous studies (Hart 2013a/b) of the same data will be referred to in support of arguments advanced. Here,

Hart found that the majority of the British press orient to a right-wing discourse in which protesters are seen as deviant, violent and criminal whilst the authorities are seen as moral upholders of civil order. Only *The Guardian* seem to adhere to an alternative discourse in which protests are seen as legitimate forms of political action and the role of the authorities is called into question. Amongst other linguistic means, these contrasting ideological points of view will be manifested and effected through the spatial PoVs which the newspapers ask their readers to assume.

## 2. Point of View in Visual Discourse

Lim (2004) advances a systemic model of visuo-grammar which incorporates systems for SHAPE and COLOUR but also, more relevant for present purposes, systems responsible for the manipulation of space including DEEP SPACE (DS) and POINT OF VIEW (PoV). DS “portrays an illusion of a three-dimensional world through a two-dimensional image ... thereby generating a sense of illusory depth” (p. 234). The system of DS, then, is responsible for creating perceptual experiences of foreground/background relations. It is achieved through contrasting size, converging lines and chiaroscuro (contrasting light and dark). PoV is defined as “the viewpoint through which the reader is presented with a scene” (ibid.). PoV, in other words, is the vantage point that a reader is manoeuvred into seeing the scene depicted from. For Lim, PoV is determined by the ANGLE and DISTANCE of the shot (p.238). ANGLE operates on the vertical plane. Potentials in this system are analogous to *tilting* in cinematography, allowing the image to present a view looking up or down at the scene depicted. They can be measured at positive or negative values relative to the default horizontal sightline as modelled in Figure 1.

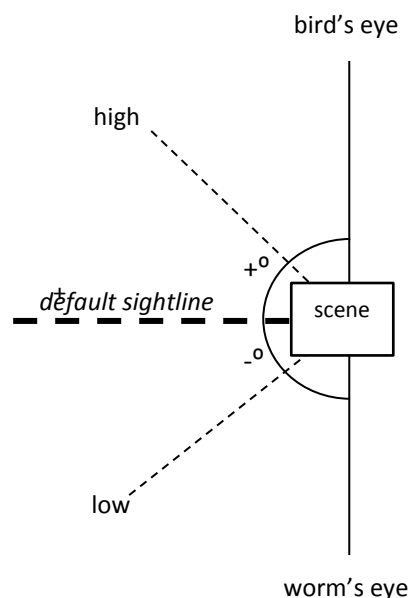


Figure 1. ANGLE

DISTANCE relates to the proximity of the viewer relative to the scene depicted. It is analogous to *zoom* in cinematography. We can discern three approximate values as modelled in Figure 2: long shot, medium shot, close-up and extreme close-up. These alternative PoVs give the impression of entities in the scene depicted being located within psychological concepts of public, social, and personal space. In addition, we can identify the ‘point of view’ shot presenting a perspective from within the scene (as in first-person video games).

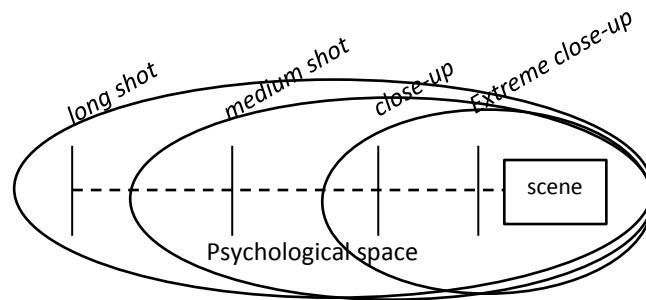


Figure 2. DISTANCE

In addition to ANGLE and DISTANCE, we may identify a further, fundamental variable in the grammar of PoV, namely ANCHOR (see Hart 2014a). In contrast to ANGLE, the system of ANCHOR operates on the horizontal plane. Potentials in this system are analogous to the alternative frames that make up a *panning* shot in cinematography. We can identify four principle values as modelled in Figure 3.<sup>2</sup> These alternative PoVs bring actors in the image into different kinds of physical alignment with the viewer. For example, a front shot brings the actor face-to-face with viewer whilst a side shot presents an actor in profile.

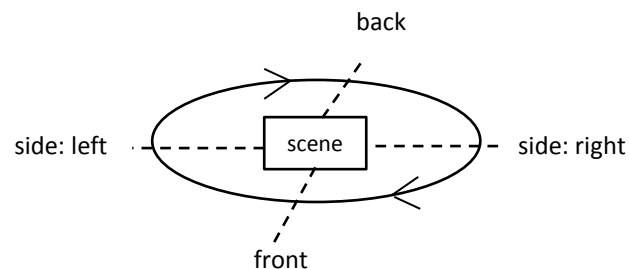


Figure 3. ANCHOR

These three systems together make up a grammar of PoV which can be modelled as in Figure 4. Although analogous to cinematic techniques, the human mind is unlikely to code visuo-spatial experience in these terms. I therefore avoid the use of cinematic labels and assign instead arbitrary numerical values on each plane. In Figure 4, then, the arcs from  $X_1$  to  $X_4$  represent potential points

<sup>2</sup> This assumes that the scene has some asymmetry which allows one to conceive of it as having a ‘front’ and a ‘back’. This would be the case for certain scenes such as buildings or people all facing the same way but would not apply to landscapes or people facing in different directions.

of view on the ANCHOR plane. The arc  $Y_1$  to  $Y_4$  represents potential points of view on the ANGLE plane. These two planes interact to give different potential combinations of ANCHOR and ANGLE values. The ANGLE plane can thus be thought of as rotating around the Y axis to give different options in ANGLE at different ANCHOR points. Operating across these two dimensions is the dimension of DISTANCE. The Z axis represents potential distances from which an event can be captured at any given combination of ANCHOR and ANGLE. It should be noted, of course, that the alternative values given are cardinal points of view and that there is an indefinite number of possible PoVs in between. However, these PoVs seem to reflect idealisations discerned from the basic visuo-spatial experiences we have as human beings with the distinctions made between them having some basis in the neurological system. It should also be noted that these PoVs are not absolute positions in space but potential points of view relative to the internal structure of the scene.

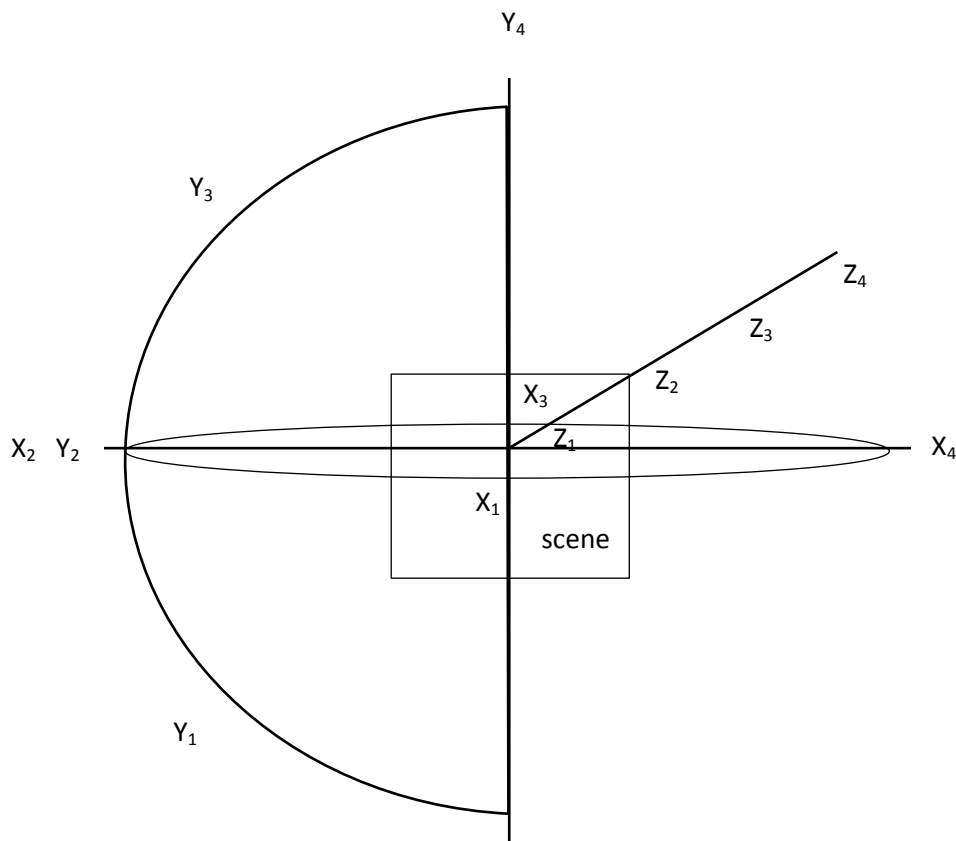


Figure 4. Grammar of POINT OF VIEW

In visual discourse, this system enables image producers to present alternative, contrasting PoVs which can be expressed as a set of three-value coordinates within the grammar. From a critical standpoint, alternative values on each of the three planes invoke alternative connotative evaluations (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006; Machin 2007). In other words, where an image necessarily presents only one particular PoV from the set of potential alternatives that make up the grammar, the

'choice' of one PoV over another may serve some ideological function. The precise function of choices on any one plane will depend on context, including the background assumptions that the image invokes as well as other semiotic features contained within it such as body-language, facial expressions and PoV factors across the other two planes. However, it is possible to identify some general, potential functions for the different values on each of the three planes. On the ANCHOR plane, for example, a view constituting a side shot casts the viewer in the role of an uninvolved witness to the scene (Kress and van Leeuwen 2006). By contrast, a front or back shot invites the viewer to enter into a personal relationship of some kind with the actor(s) in the image. On the ANGLE plane, Machin (2007) suggests that a high angle ( $Y_3$ ) conventionally invites feelings of power and control whilst a low angle ( $Y_1$ ), particularly in conjunction with a front shot ( $X_1$ ), can connote disempowerment and subjugation.<sup>3</sup> A horizontal sightline ( $Y_2$ ), by contrast, suggests a more equal relationship (ibid.). Variables in distance typically connote degrees of 'detachment'. For example, from PoV  $Y_4$  on the ANGLE plane, maximal distance ( $Z_4$ ), as in an aerial shot, removes the audience from the reality on the ground. In the context of news footage of airstrikes on Baghdad, Chouliaraki (2006) argues that this PoV serves to anaesthetise the viewer to the suffering inflicted by the raids. From PoV  $X_1$  on the horizontal plane, maximal distance can suggest unfamiliarity or social 'distance'. Proximity ( $Z_1$ ), by contrast, can suggest intimacy or intimidation depending on the context. For example, in far-right exclusionary discourse, Richardson and Wodak (2009) show that close-up shots of actors referentially constructed as 'the Other' function to create a sense of looming threat.

The ideological functions of alternative PoVs, I wish to suggest, has some embodied basis rooted in associations formed outside of our linguistic experience. Such associations are formed during a conflation stage in which different domains of experience are regularly co-activated so that they become neurally bound and give rise, in some cases, to systems of conceptual metaphors (Lakoff and Johnson 1999). To give one example, our physical experience of being able to manipulate objects may regularly co-occur with being physically taller than them giving rise to the conceptual metaphor POWER/CONTROL IS UP and its inverse in DISEMPOWERMENT/LACK OF CONTROL IS DOWN. These conceptual metaphors account for conventional linguistic expressions like 'control *over* the situation' and '*under* control'. Extended to social interaction, concepts of authority are similarly structured in metaphorical terms by the VERTICALITY schema: 'authority *over* her' and '*under* her authority'. Ultimately, such symbolic associations may reflect neurological bindings (Narayanan 1997).

From a cognitive-embodied perspective, certain grammatical constructions may also encode, within a mental model in which space plays a fundamental structuring role, a PoV from which they invite the hearer to 'see' the scene described. Such constructions may then function ideologically as a consequence of spatial configurations within the model as well as prior, universal embodied experience coded in conceptual metaphors. We turn to linguistic discourse in the next section. Illustrative data is taken from a small corpus of online media reports of the 2009 G20 and the 2010 Student Fees protests in the UK.

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<sup>3</sup> As Aboushrouga and Machin (2011) point out, a low angle may also be associated in other contexts with feelings of admiration as in the case of war memorials where soldiers are positioned aloft. Similarly, a high angle can also suggest vulnerability of the subject. This is often the case in images of children (Machin 2007).



### 3. Point of View in Linguistic Representations of Political Protests

According to Fauconnier (1994, 1997), when we engage in discourse we build networks of mental spaces in which we conceptualise the situations and events described.<sup>4</sup> Mental spaces are conceptual pockets which continually open up and close down as discourse unfolds enabling hearers to keep track of referents in different locations, times and in different realities (ibid.). These spaces are populated, in part, by schematic representations of the kind described in Cognitive Grammar (Langacker 1987, 1991, 2002, 2008). According to Cognitive Grammar, grammar and lexis do not form two distinct linguistic systems but, rather, represent opposite ends of a continuum on which all linguistic units are paired with a conceptual structure in a system of form-meaning pairings or ‘symbolic assemblies’. On this account, grammatical constructions are in and of themselves meaningful by virtue of the conceptual structures they invoke. These conceptual structures take the form of abstract image schemas – distillations from repeated patterns of physical interaction. Actions in these schemas are represented by means of vectors.<sup>5</sup> Vectors seem to form a significant part of our primary spatial cognition. For example, it has been suggested that they are involved in spatial location and navigation (e.g. O’Keefe 1996; Zwarts 1997). In multimodal discourse analysis, Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) suggest that vectors form part of the grammar of visual design where their ‘presence’ within an image serves to signify different kinds of (inter)action. For example, non-transactional processes like motion are represented in transformation vectors emanating from an actor but not connected to another participant. Transactional processes, which can be unidirectional or bidirectional, are indexed in force vectors connecting two or more participants. Since language is grounded in visuo-spatial experience, it seems likely that vectors will also feature in the conceptual representations associated with certain grammatical constructions (Chilton 2007, 2010, 2014). For example, the transactive constructions presented in (1) may be said to invoke an ‘action chain’ schema (Langacker 2002: 215) as modelled in Figure 5 (a). It encodes a unidirectional transfer of energy, represented by a single force vector, from the AGENT to the PATIENT. The AGENT is the *source* of energy located at the tail of the vector. The PATIENT is the energy *sink* or target located ‘downstream’ in the energy flow at the head of the vector. By contrast, the reciprocal transactive constructions in (2) invokes a schema as modelled in Figure 5 (b).<sup>6</sup> It encodes a bidirectional transfer of energy represented by twin vectors. One participant cannot therefore be assigned the status of AGENT and the other PATIENT but, rather, both participants are ‘activated’ (van Leeuwen 1996) as AGENTS in the event-structure. In other words, in (1) responsibility for the violence that occurred is

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<sup>4</sup> For a similar approach see Werth (1999).

<sup>5</sup> Although Langacker does not present an explicitly geometric characterisation, the arrows in Langackerian diagrams can be thought of as standing for vectors within the conceptualisation. At this point, a note is needed on the diagrams that will follow. It is not suggested that hearers of grammatical constructions have in their minds images of precisely the form presented in the diagrams. Rather, the diagrams are intended to *model* on paper the conceptual structures that language usages invoke. The use of diagrams, however, is not simply as an heuristic device but is motivated by the claim that linguistic meaning incorporates visuo-spatial properties. They are thus intended to at least suggest the nature of the conceptual structures they model, representing properties like topology, sequence, distance, direction and distribution of attention in iconic but systematic rather than ad hoc ways.

<sup>6</sup> The transfer of energy in (2) is via a THEME which acts as a *transmitter* between the AGENT and the PATIENT. For purposes of simplicity, however, we gloss over this in Figure 5(b) but note that it would be present in the mental representation.

attributed solely to the protesters with the police cast as innocent victims whilst in (2) responsibility is shared with both participants being assigned blame.<sup>7</sup>

- (1) A number of police officers were injured after [they <sub>PATIENT</sub>] [came under attack from <sub>ACTION<sup>A</sup>]  
[youths <sub>AGENT</sub>], some wearing scarves to hide their faces. (*Telegraph*, 10th November 2010)</sub>
- (2) [Police wielding batons <sub>AGENT</sub>] [clashed with <sub>ACTION<sup>R</sup>]  
[a crowd hurling placard sticks, eggs and  
bottles <sub>AGENT</sub>]. (*Guardian*, 10th November 2010)</sub>

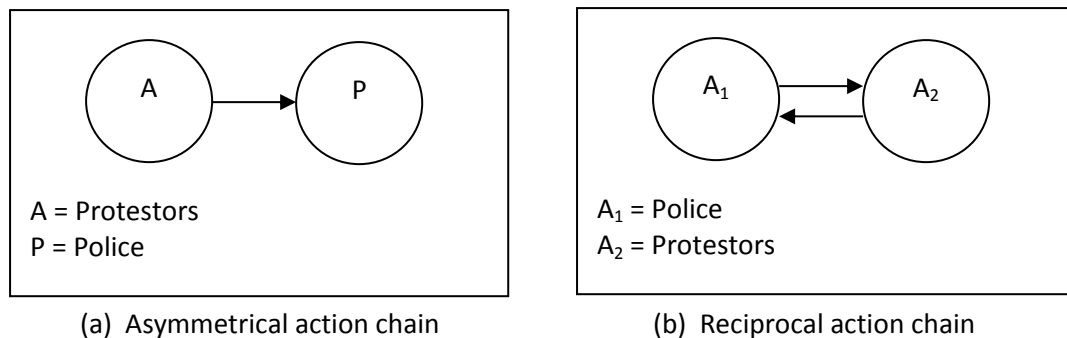


Figure 5. Transactional schemas

The conceptualisations modelled in Figures 5 take place inside an ‘event space’ – a mental space set up for the event currently being described at that moment in the unfolding discourse. The event space, however, is constructed subordinate and relative to a ‘base space’ (Fauconnier 1997: 49). The base space is a grounding space from where subordinate spaces are construed (see Dancygier and Sweetser 2012). The base space is thus the space in which the conceptualiser’s PoV or ‘situatedness’ is determined (Radden and Dirven 2007). This situatedness, of course, is decoupled from the conceptualiser’s actual reality coordinates and defined instead within an abstract mental space. Just as in visuo-spatial experience one cannot help but perceive a given scene from a particular perspective, defined by one’s current location and orientation in space, so in discourse the hearer conceptualises the event described in the text from a given ‘position’ within a mental space. The question then is what determines the PoV adopted in the base space. According to Langacker (2008), many if not all grammatical constructions include within their semantic values a PoV specification from which they invite the conceptualiser to construe the scene described. Together, the base space and the event space make up the schematic component of an event model. At a richer, more vivid level of representation, a simulation is run in which, drawing on previous visual experiences, we imagine the event unfolding from the perspective of an ‘immersed experiencer’ (Zwaan 2004). That is, we envision the event as if we were present somewhere within the wider situation.<sup>8</sup> The PoV from which we run this simulation, i.e. our location as an immersed experiencer,

<sup>7</sup> Hart (2013a/b) found that *The Guardian* generally preferred to construe interactions between police and protesters in terms of a reciprocal action chain whilst the rest of the press favoured one-sided action chains.

<sup>8</sup> There is now a significant body of psycholinguistic and neuroscientific evidence to suggest that understanding an utterance involves activating the same brain structures that are activated in perceiving, performing or being on the receiving end of the action designated in the utterance (see Bergen 2012 for an overview). It is the

corresponds with the one determined in the base space, specified in the semantics of the grammatical form. Seeing the event from alternative PoVs means that the viewer<sup>9</sup> enters into different kinds spatial and thus, I will argue, interpersonal relations with participants in the event which are likely to lead to alternative evaluations.

The PoV values that language has available for exploitation in alternative grammatical forms are the set of idealised PoVs abstracted from visuo-spatial experience and reflected in a grammar of visual design. In the sections below, I will therefore try to show that the conceptual import of contrasting grammatical constructions can be characterised in terms of a PoV shift along the ANCHOR, ANGLE or DISTANCE planes which make up the grammar of PoV outlined in the previous section and modelled in Figure 4.

### 3.1 ANCHOR

Shifts in ANCHOR have lexico-grammatical instantiations in asymmetrical transactive versus reciprocal transactive clauses as well as distinctions within them in voice and information structure. The asymmetrical transactive clause, which invokes a schema in the event space such as modelled in Figure 5 (a), is in some sense 'sided'. By contrast, the reciprocal transactive clause, which invokes a schema as modelled in Figure 5 (b), seems more neutral. This connotative evaluative dimension, I suggest, is, at least in part, a function of the contrasting PoVs encoded in the alternate grammatical constructions and the associations, enshrined in a conceptual metaphor STANCE IS POSITION IN SPACE, which these spatial PoVs have with ideological 'points of view'. In this conceptual metaphor, which is reflected in linguistic expressions like *taking sides* and *sitting on the fence*, stance is metaphorically structured in terms of location and orientation in space. However, through positive feedback within the metaphor, positions in space may suggest ideological, metaphorical 'positions'. The contrasting viewing arrangements encoded by asymmetrical and reciprocal transactive constructions are captured in Figure 6 where PoV is shown moving clockwise from  $X_1 - X_4$  in (a) – (d).

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activation of these structures that produces a simulation effect. There is also evidence (e.g. Isenberg et al. 1999) that such simulations trigger the same (albeit weaker) affective responses as direct experiences.

<sup>9</sup> Given the visuo-linguistic account I am presenting, it is more than mere analogy and is in fact perfectly fitting to refer to the hearer as 'the viewer'.

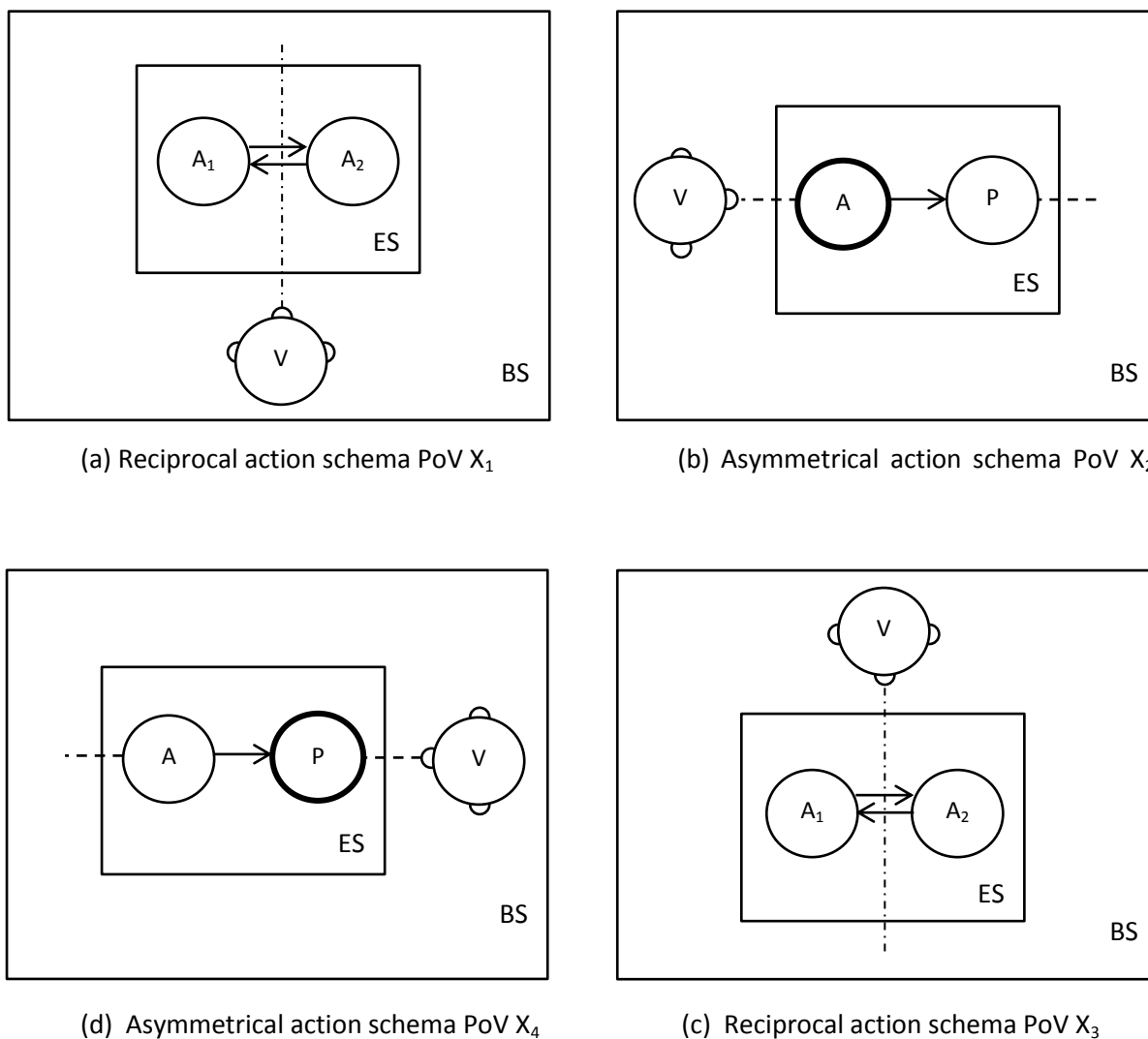


Figure 6. Points of View: ANCHOR

Asymmetrical transactive clauses invite the viewer to construe the event from cardinal PoVs  $X_2$  or  $X_4$  within the base space as in 6 (b) and (d). From these PoVs, the viewer sees the event from the same perspective as one or other of the participants in the event. The viewer is literally and metaphorically ‘taking sides’. Orientationally, the viewer is behind one participant standing in opposition to the other. These alternative orientations, ego-aligned and ego-opposed, are associated through the STANCE IS POSITION IN SPACE metaphor with ideological ‘positions’ of affiliation and confrontation respectively. Which perspective the viewer is asked to assume is determined by voice. In the passive voice, as in example (1) above, the PoV encoded is from cardinal point  $X_3$  as in Figure 6 (d). That is, from the same perspective as the PATIENT.<sup>10</sup> This means that the viewer is not

<sup>10</sup> Notice that a sense of DEEP SPACE is also created in these models as one participant, the Subject, is construed as closer and the other more distal. The two systems of PERSPECTIVE – DEEP SPACE and POINT OF VIEW – can thus be seen to operate in concordance with one another where, as Croft and Cruse state, “a particular vantage point

only positioned on the same side as the PATIENT at the head of the vector but that, as a result, in the simulation of the event the violent action is imagined as being directed toward the viewer too. In other words, the viewer imagines themselves as a second PATIENT in the process. The simulation is thus likely to evoke an affective evaluation of fear or anxiety similar to that experienced when an aggressive actor enters our personal space. This is in contrast with the active voice, as in example (3), which encodes a PoV from the perspective (X<sub>2</sub>) of the AGENT.

(3) [Riot police wielding batons<sub>AGENT</sub>] [managed to force [the crowds<sub>PATIENT</sub>] back<sub>ACTION</sub>]. (*Telegraph*, 1 April 2009)

In the mental model invoked by (3), the viewer is positioned on the side of the AGENT at the tail of the vector as in Figure 6 (b). When the simulation is run from this perspective, the viewer imagines themselves as an active participant in the event. And since we don't like to think of our own actions as being beyond reproach, this PoV may invite a positive moral, legitimating, evaluation of the actions depicted. Notice also that the action is not construed as one of physical attack as in (1) but in less violent, more acceptable terms relating to 'crowd control'.<sup>11</sup>

This analysis suggests a reassessment of the ideological and (de)legitimizing functions of voice choice in social and political discourse. In orthodox interpretations, the active voice is said to highlight the role of the AGENT in the process whilst the passive voice is analysed as distancing the AGENT and thereby detracting attention from relations of causality (Trew 1979; Fowler 1991; Kress and Hodge 1993). Ideologically, the active voice is thus said to be used to draw attention to negative behaviours of the out-group whilst the passive voice is used to direct attention away from negative behaviours of the in-group. Observations of voice function, however, have largely been made on the back of isolated examples (Widdowson 2004). In the analyses presented here, whilst the active voice does indeed place the AGENT in the conceptual foreground, its primary function is in positioning the viewer 'on their side'. We should therefore expect to find the active voice used most frequently to highlight positively construed behaviours of the in-group in a strategy of Self-legitimation. Similarly, whilst the passive voice does initially distance the AGENT placing them in the conceptual background, in the dynamic simulation invoked, the AGENT is imagined as 'coming at' the viewer. There is thus a deictic element to the meaning of voice alternates with the strategic function of the passive voice, at least in this context, being something more akin to *spatial proximation* as described by Cap (2006, 2013, this volume). We should therefore expect to find the passive voice used most frequently in relation to negatively construed behaviours of the out-group in order to heighten affect and legitimate counter-action.<sup>12</sup> And indeed, this distribution seems to be confirmed in more quantitative analyses of discourse on political protests, albeit based on a very small corpus (Hart 2013a/b). Here, for example, the right-wing press, for whom protesters would constitute the out-group, could be seen to favour the active voice in reporting positively construed actions of the

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imposes a foreground-background alignment on a scene" (2004: 59). These proximity values may similarly serve an ideological function based on a conceptual metaphor MORALITY IS DISTANCE in which concepts of NEAR and FAR are associated with right and wrong respectively (Chilton 2004).

<sup>11</sup> See Hart (2013b) for a more fine-grained semantic analysis of process-types and participant role categories.

<sup>12</sup> In line with the general macro-strategy of positive-Self and negative-Other representation (van Dijk 1998), ostensibly negative behaviours of the in-group will tend either to be absent or else reconstructed in more legitimating terms whilst ostensibly positive behaviours of the out-group will tend either to be absent or reconstructed in more delegitimizing terms.

police but the passive voice in reporting negatively construed actions of protesters directed at the police (Hart 2013a/b).

Views from cardinal PoVs  $X_1$  and  $X_3$  have reflexes in reciprocal transactive clauses. From cardinal PoVs  $X_1$  and  $X_3$ , the viewer sees the event from the perspective of a witness to the event. They are not positioned on a particular side but, rather, their sightline intersects with the mid-point of the vectors in the event space. The PoV is thus from the spatial region in between the participants. The viewer is literally and metaphorically 'occupying the middle ground'. Thus, broadly, we can say that within the mental simulation of the event invoked asymmetrical transactive clauses invite a more 'involved' experience, from the perspective of one participant or the other, whilst reciprocal transactive clauses encode an 'observer's' experience.

Whilst the PoV in reciprocal transactive clauses may be relatively neutral, however, it is not entirely value-free. The contrasting PoVs  $X_1$  and  $X_3$  carry some evaluative connotations as a function of the left-right asymmetry they impose. In reciprocal transactive clauses, of course, no voice choice is available. Which particular PoV the viewer is asked to adopt is determined by information structure. In example (2) above, notice that it is 'the police' who are introduced earliest in the clause. By contrast, consider (4) below in which it is 'the protesters' who are introduced first and 'the police' second.

(4) Twenty-three people were arrested as [protestors <sub>AGENT</sub>] [clashed with <sub>ACTION<sup>R</sup>] [police <sub>AGENT</sub>] around the Bank of England. (*Telegraph*, 1 April 2009)</sub>

Now, if we assume that the necessarily linear organisation of the clause reflects iconically the spatial organisation encoded in the meanings of the alternative grammatical forms (Perniss, Thompson and Vigliocco 2010), then we may say that the construction in (2) invokes a mental model such as represented in Figure 6 (a) with the police occupying the left-hand region of the viewing frame and protesters occupying the right-hand region. Conversely, the construction in (4) invokes a mental model as represented in Figure 6 (c) with the protesters positioned in the left 'field of vision' and the police in the right. Ideologically, this contrast is significant since, as McManus (2003) states, "right and left have their symbolic associations and always it is right that is good and left that is bad". Whilst we might stop short of such a strong claim there is certainly linguistic evidence that spatial left is generally associated with positive valence whilst spatial right is associated with negative valence. This is reflected, for example, in the polysemy of the word 'right' as well as in idiomatic expressions like 'right-hand man' versus 'two left feet'. For McManus, these associations arise from fundamental asymmetries in our body and world. Experimentally, Casasanto (2009) has shown that people tend to associate rightward space with positive ideas and leftward space with negative ideas.<sup>13</sup> He showed that entities located in the right field of vision were more likely to receive a positive evaluation than entities located in the left field of vision. For Casasanto, this association between positive and negative valence and right and left respectively emerges due to the dominance (for most) of the right hand which enables us to more fluently manipulate objects located to the right of the body. Within the mental models invoked by reciprocal transactive clauses, then, a PoV from  $X_3$  as in Figure 6 (c) may confer a positive evaluation on the police but a negative evaluation on the protesters. This would be reversed from PoV  $X_1$  as in Figure 6 (a) where a

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<sup>13</sup> This holds for right-handers but is reversed for left-handers (ibid.).

positive evaluation of the protester and a negative evaluation of the police is invited.<sup>14</sup> In line with other ideologically significant distributions, Hart (2013a/b) found that when a reciprocal transactive clause was used to report violent interactions between police and protesters in the right-wing press the information sequence in (4) was favoured whilst *The Guardian* preferred the sequence in (2).

### 3.2 ANGLE

Shifts in ANGLE can be shown to underpin certain nominalisations and WHOLE FOR PART metonymies. Crucially, shifts in ANGLE affect the trajectory of the sightline and the ‘granularity’ of the image in the event space. For example, nominalisations such as (5) can be characterised as invoking a PoV from cardinal point  $Y_3$  on the ANGLE plane. From PoV  $Y_3$  in base space, the viewer is positioned at a high angle above the event space but rather than looking diagonally down at the scene their sightline ‘skims’ the top of it in a summary fashion as in Figure 7. This mode of viewing results in a loss in detail as when we ‘look over’ something rather than ‘look into’ it.

(5) But around an hour after the protest started, [violence <sub>THING</sub>] flared at Millbank Tower.  
(*Independent*, 10th November)

Linguistically, nominalisations involve the reduction of a clause to a single noun. The grammatical alternate of the nominalisation ‘violence’ in (5) would thus be a full clause along one or other of the lines presented by examples (1) –(4). Conceptually, nominalisations involve a process of *reification* such that the series of contiguous relations that make up an event (represented in Figure 7 by the broken circles and lines) come to cohere as a Gestalt (represented by the heavy box inside the event space). That is, an event involving participants, processes and circumstances gets construed as a THING having or coming into some kind of ontological existence. In examples like (5), for example, violence is seen as a THING spontaneously coming into being rather than as a quality or outcome of a complex series of interactions between participants. And since THINGS in contrast to events do not unfold in space and time, properties of the event such as spatial and sequential organisation get lost. Ideologically, protests are construed as naturally or inevitably leading to violence without cause or agency. This ideological effect, I suggest, are a function of a PoV shift in ANGLE and an accompanying horizontal mode of viewing (see also Langacker 2002: 78-79).

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<sup>14</sup> For a slightly different account of how reciprocal transactive constructions invoke ideological evaluations see Hart (2014a).

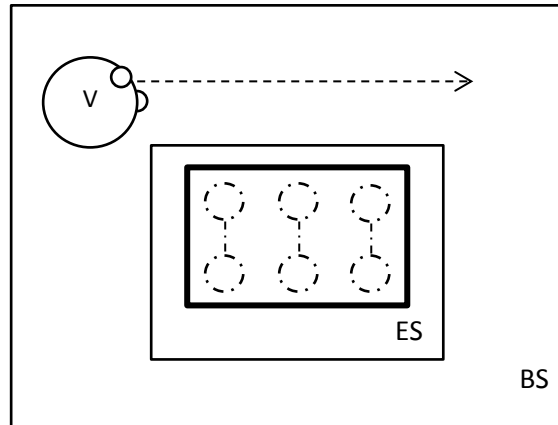


Figure 7. Nominalisation as PoV shift (ANGLE)

Certain types of metonymy work in a similar fashion invoking a PoV from  $Y_4$  on the ANGLE plane at maximal distance. From this vantage point, further and directly above the scene in the event space, there is a resultant loss in granularity or resolution. The notion of granularity here is related to the semantic property of PLEXITY and the grammatical category of NUMBER (Talmy 2000). Consider the contrast between (6) and (7):

- (6) Tuition fee protests: eight injured, five arrested as [students<sub>AGENT</sub>] turn violent (*Telegraph*, 24th November)
- (7) [Student protest over fees<sub>EP METNMY</sub>] turns violent (*Guardian*, 10th November)

PLEXITY refers to whether the scene under conception is conceived as being comprised of a number of individual elements, in which case the conceptualisation is *multiplex* in structure, or whether it is construed as a homogenised mass, in which case the conceptualisation is *uniplex* in structure. In a multiplex construal, as in (6), individual elements can be picked out and can thus be counted. This is reflected grammatically in plurality. In a uniplex construal, such as (7), those elements are collectivised and only global features of the scene are taken in. This is marked grammatically by the singular form. In (6), then, it is individuated students who turn violent. That is, this multiplex construal attributes the property violent to participants in the event and to students in particular. In (7), by contrast, the property violent is attributed to the whole event. (7) thus presents an EVENT FOR PARTICIPANT metonymy, which is a particular instantiation of a WHOLE FOR PART metonymy. This metonymy relies on a multiplex-to-uniplex construal operation and serves a generalisation strategy.<sup>15</sup> This way of seeing the situation, though, is a function of where it is seen from. (6) encodes a view from on the ground at PoV  $Y_2$ . (7) encodes a view from PoV  $Y_4$  at maximal distance from where there is a necessary loss in granularity such that the boundary of the scene can be made out but its internal components are not discernable. The simulation we experience is analogous to seeing an aerial shot in news footage. This PoV creates a sense of safety and detachment by removing the viewer from the ground. It also provides maximal scope allowing the viewer to ‘see the bigger picture’. However, at the same time, it homogenises the scene, construing it as a single

<sup>15</sup> The same construal operation underpins the distinction between count and mass nouns (Talmy 2000)



mass so that properties are attributed to the event as a whole, and thus all participants involved, rather than to individual participants as in (6). The alternative mental models invoked by (6) and (7) are represented in Figure 8 (a) and (b) respectively.

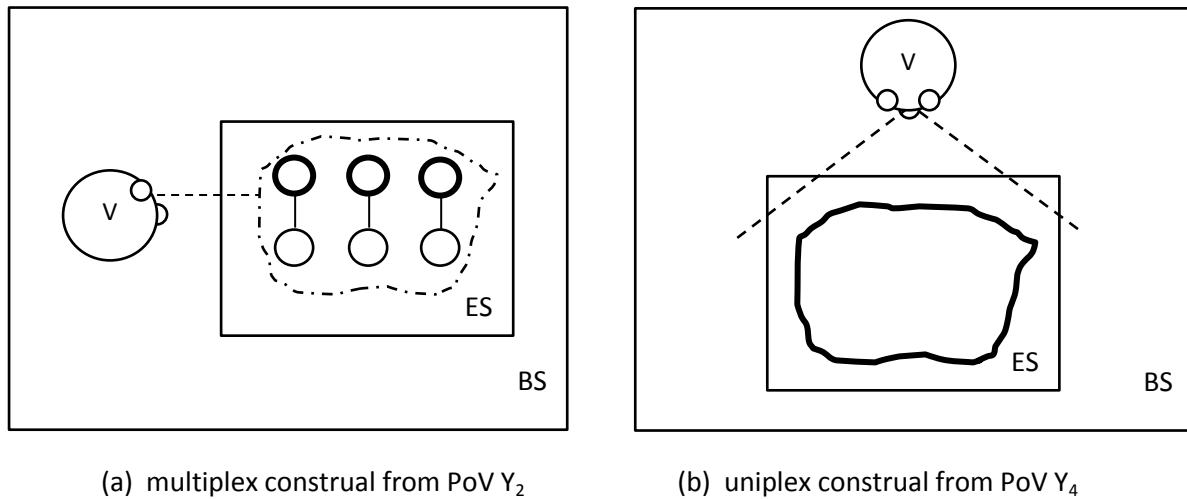


Figure 8. WHOLE FOR PART metonymy as PoV shift (ANGLE)

### 3.3 DISTANCE

The final plane on which a PoV shift can occur is the DISTANCE plane. Shifts in DISTANCE characterise a range of constructions relating to causation. They affect the ‘aspect’ or coverage of the conceptualisation allowing varying portions of a scene to be captured in the *viewing frame*.<sup>16</sup> The viewing frame defines the conceptual content which, at any moment in the proceeding discourse, is currently the subject of the viewer’s attention.

In perceiving any given scene, we necessarily select only a particular facet of that scene to attend to, defined by the direction and limits of our visual field. Relative distance from the scene plays an important part here as the nearer we are to the scene the less of it we can take in. So in language, a construction can encode a PoV at alternative distances from the scene under conception allowing varying portions of it to be covered by the viewing frame. Information outside of the viewing frame remains accessible from the base space but is not currently subject to consideration.

The most obvious means by which language encodes distance and directs the viewing frame on to particular facets of the reference situation is through explicit mention of that portion (Talmy 2000: 258). Linguistic devices that restrict the viewing frame therefore include the agentless passive voice, in the absence of a circumstantial clause expressing causation, and certain nominalisations which focus attention only on the resultant of interactions.<sup>17</sup> Consider (8) – (10):

<sup>16</sup> See also Talmy (2000) on ‘windowing of attention’.

<sup>17</sup> Ergative constructions can similarly be analysed as a shift in point of view on the DISTANCE plane.

- (8) [A number of police officers were injured<sub>RESULT</sub>] [as [they<sub>PATIENT</sub>] [came under attack from<sub>ACTION</sub>] [the protesters<sub>AGENT</sub>] CIRC] (*Telegraph*, 10<sup>th</sup> November)
- (9) The demonstration followed a day of action two weeks ago that saw 60 arrested and [dozens injured<sub>RESULT</sub>] [when [a riot<sub>EP MTNMY</sub>] [broke out<sub>ACTION</sub>] [at the Conservative Party headquarters LOCATION] CIRC] (*Telegraph*, 24<sup>th</sup> November)
- (10) At least 14 people were treated for [their injuries<sub>RESULT</sub>] in hospital and 32 arrested (*Times*, 10<sup>th</sup> November)

The three alternative mental models invoked by (8) – (10) are represented in Figure 9 (a)-(c) respectively. In (8), given earlier as example (1), the viewing frame extends over the whole of the evoked schema.<sup>18</sup> The resultant of the interaction, injuries (represented by the stepped arrow in Figure 9), is mentioned in the main clause and the event which lead to that outcome is fully specified in the second, circumstantial clause. The circumstantial clause thus expresses the cause of the effects expressed in the main clause.<sup>19</sup> The vantage point permitting full coverage of the evoked schema is that from cardinal PoV Z<sub>3</sub> on the DISTANCE plane<sup>20</sup>. In (9), by contrast, the circumstantial clause includes an EVENT FOR PARTICIPANT metonymy. The actual cause, or more pertinently the causer, of the injuries is not explicitly mentioned. They therefore remain beyond the purview of the viewing frame. The result is, nevertheless, expressed in a verbal form and so the process itself remains inside the viewing frame. The vantage point can be analysed as a ‘close-up shot’ at PoV Z<sub>2</sub>. In example (10), however, the resultant of the interaction is rendered as a nominalised form. No circumstantial information is therefore made available to the viewer. The vantage point is instead that of an ‘extreme close-up’ at PoV Z<sub>1</sub> focussed exclusively on the end result of the interaction.

In asymmetrical transactional schemas of the kind represented in Figure 9 (a) – (c), the AGENT is seen as the initiator of the interaction. That is, they are the first element in a causal chain. In a *retaliatory* construction, however, the AGENT in the event is continuing some previous interaction. Consider (13):

- (13) Rocks, wooden banners, eggs, rotten fruit and shards of glass were thrown at police officers trying to beat back the crowd with metal batons and riot shields. (*Telegraph*, 10<sup>th</sup> November)

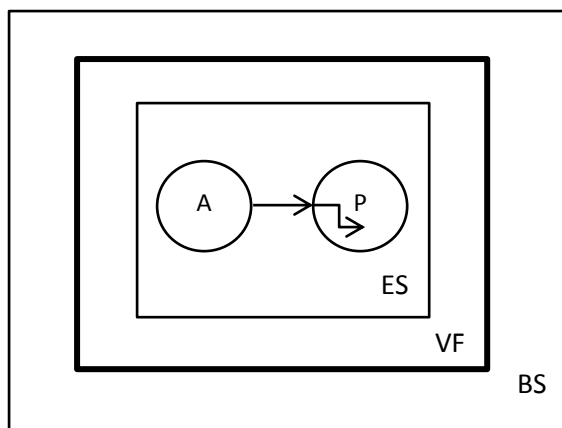
In ‘trying to beat back’, the AGENT is no longer an initiator but a reactor responding to an earlier link in the sequence of interaction. The viewing frame, in this case, is not cropped but extended to cover some mitigating cause or circumstance. This extension of the viewing frame involves a more distal perspective from PoV Z<sub>4</sub> taking in a wider array of conceptual content. The schematic component of the mental model that (13) is likely to invoke is represented in Figure 9 (d) where the circle E represents a preceding event which would, of course, have an internal structure of its own.

<sup>18</sup> Most causal interactions do not in reality, of course, start from nowhere. Rather, for any event there is a potentially infinite chain of causal interactions which precede it. We cannot therefore speak felicitously about the viewing frame covering the complete scene but only about it covering the complete schema which is invoked by the linguistic instantiation.

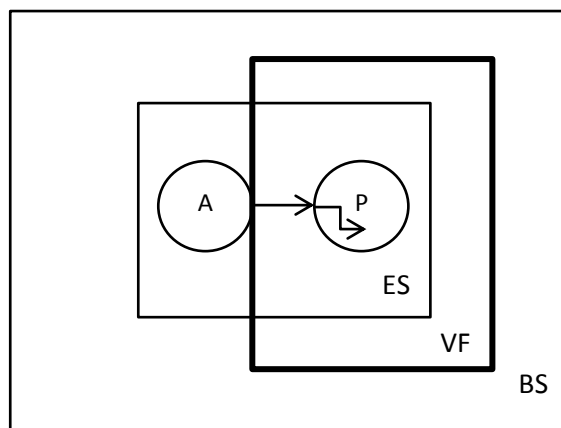
<sup>19</sup> The form of mystification analysis presented here is deployed at a level above the clause encompassing larger text units and inferences made across adjacent clauses (cf. criticisms of mystification analysis from Widdowson 2004).

<sup>20</sup> PoV Z<sub>3</sub> is the ‘default’ PoV on the DISTANCE plane and the one invoked by a canonical transactive clause.

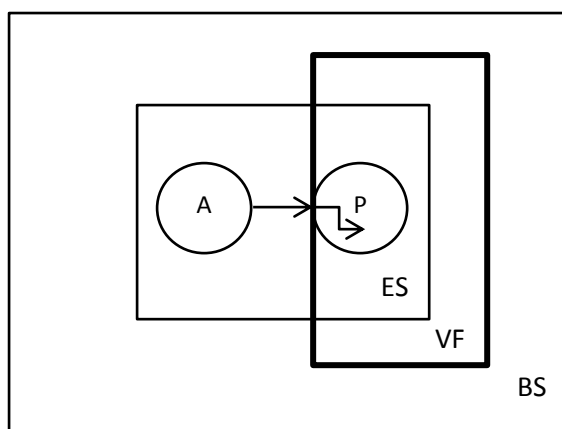
Ideologically, then, alternative values on the DISTANCE plane permit various degrees of causality to be recognised in any chain of interaction thereby inviting or avoiding a negative evaluation of the agentive actor. This analysis supports the claim that exclusion in texts can keep social actors in the ‘semantic background’ (Reisigl and Wodak 2001: 58) in order to obfuscate responsibility for actions of the in-group that might otherwise threaten their perceived legitimacy. The semantic background is theorised here in cognitive terms as the field of conceptualisation that lies outside the current viewing frame and the obfuscatory qualities of certain constructions are seen, ultimately, as a consequence of shifts in PoV which restrict the viewing frame to differing extents. Conversely, however, the viewing frame can be expanded to include actions of the out-group in order to justify reactions of the in-group. Distributional patterns seem to support this interpretation. For example, in Hart (2013a/b), the majority of the mainstream press were found to favour cause-specifying constructions such as (8) when reporting injuries sustained by the police but cause-mystifying constructions such as (9) – (12) were preferred when reporting injuries to protesters. *The Guardian*, by contrast, favoured cause-mystifying constructions regardless of whose injuries were at issue. Similarly, in the right-wing press it is only police actions which get reported with a cause-mitigating construction like (13) and never protester actions whilst in *The Guardian* cause-mitigating constructions were not found at all.



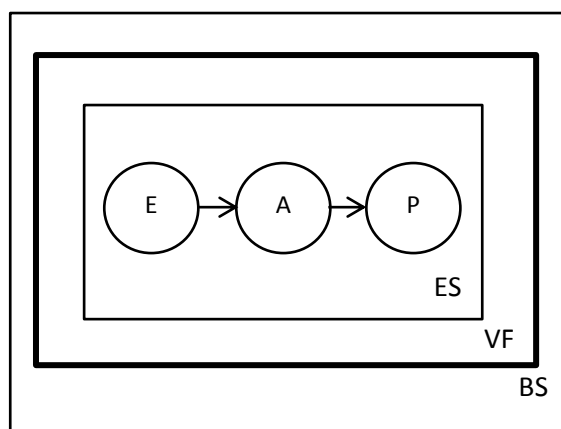
(a) PoV  $Z_3$  (medium shot)



(b) PoV  $Z_2$  (close-up shot)



BS



BS

(c) PoV Z<sub>1</sub> (extreme close-up shot)

(d) PoV Z<sub>4</sub> (long shot)<sup>21</sup>

Figure 9. Viewing frames as function of PoV shift (DISTANCE)

## Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to argue, based on principles in Cognitive Linguistics, and Cognitive Grammar in particular, that values in a grammar of PoV, which have obvious exponents in images, have exponents in certain linguistic grammatical constructions too. The grammar of PoV is thus a trans-modal system exploited in both visual and linguistic semiosis. Language, it has been argued, relies on the same domain-general cognitive processes that function in other experiential realms including visuo-spatial experience. Linguistic discourse prompts for the construction of mental models which, consequently, possess visuo-spatial properties, including PoV, at two levels of representation: an abstract schematisation and a richer simulation. These mental models function ideologically as visuo-spatial aspects of the representation, in turn, invite evaluations based on embodied modes of understanding.

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<sup>21</sup> This model glosses over the INSTRUMENT which, instantiated by 'metal batons and riot shields', would be included in the conceptualisation as a *transmitter*.

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