# Proposing a Radial Tree Network for the Diachronic Analysis of Blending

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Contemporary cognitive linguistic studies are challenged to consider the social dimension of language (Croft 2009; Geeraerts 2010; Harder 2010) as a driving force for the study of linguistic structure and cognitive processes. Research in the discipline is claimed to apply methods of empirical kind (Fauconnier & Lakoff 2009; Geeraerts 2006; Sampson 2002), through the scrutiny of large corpora, and to affirm itself as a use-based model of language (Geeraerts 2006; Grondelaers, Geeraerts & Speelman 2007; Kristiasen, Achard, Dirven & Ibáñez 2006) at the level of actual discourse events. This piece of exploratory research follows foundational work on mental spaces (Fauconnier 1994, 1996, 1998) and conceptual blending (Fauconnier & Turner 1994, 2002, 2006), as well as research on image-schemas (Lakoff &Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987; Oakley 2007), to understand how conceptual blending can be organized as a large diachronic network, in which the chronological order of discourse defines both the structure and the way meaning is blended. Likewise, it is relevant to uncover the way the social and cultural aspects of language, guided by an empirical corpus-driven methodology (Biber 2015), may operate in the aforementioned network, while also bearing in mind the many challenges imposed by computer-mediated communication. Previous studies have demonstrated that at the intersection of cognitive linguistics, pragmatics and discourse analysis, the relevant concepts of situatedness and embodiment (Cap 2013; Chilton 2004, 2005, 2010), as well as the technological affordances of the media (Kopytowska 2022) play a central role. Thus, this piece of research adds to the literature by proposing a radial tree network that adapts the multiple blend approach by Fauconnier and Turner (2002) by having the megablend at its core and individual blended spaces branching from it. The network will take a corpus-driven approach to the retrieval, selection and organization of data. While not losing focus of the imaginative and creative process of blending, the network makes it possible to identify elements for completion in previous discourse. Indeed, completion takes the main stage on the blended space and through it is possible to identify how several message spread in time have a clear cognitive connection. Through completion it becomes possible to identify patterns through which writers can force readers to blend, i.e., prompt them to copy their blends, which get, unknowingly, entrenched (Bybee 2006; Croft & Cruse 2004; Divjak & Caldwell-Harris 2015; Fauconnier & Turner 1998; Langacker 1987; Schmid 2010) in their mental spaces, causing simulated cooperation and proximity. Through the analysis of a corpus of 56572 tweets posted by Donald Trump, it became clear that the network can operate in both longer and shorter segments of time, depending on the amount of discourse produced around the mental space under analysis. When observing the mental space surrounding the context word country, limited to the tweets produced in 2013, it become clear that blends created in latter tweets pulled elements for completion from previous tweets, maintaining an intentional pattern of meaning, which followed a need by the writer to entrench his views in readers.

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