

“Eye on the big prize!”: Iconizing the Democratic Alliance in the *Daily Sun*

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Abstract

This article gives a snapshot view of how Mmusi Maimane’s rise to leadership in the Democratic Alliance (DA) in 2015 was reported on in the *Daily Sun*, South Africa’s biggest-selling national daily newspaper (South African Audience Research Foundation, 2016). Through analysis of a *Daily Sun* news article exemplifying trends in the positioning of the DA in the tabloid over the first half of 2015, the present study demonstrates how Maimane tried to align the DA around a new iconography (Tann 2010, 2013), centred on the values of “freedom”, “fairness” and “opportunity”. Moreover, the present study also shows how this purported transformation in the DA was treated with scepticism by the news article’s author, who iconizes the DA as incapable of transformation and effective governance. Fine-grained complementary Legitimation Code Theory (LCT) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) analyses were conducted on this news article. The LCT analysis shows how multiple voices in the news article create conflicting binary constellations, axiologically charged through various linguistic resources, including intertextual references. The analysis, using SFL’s Appraisal system (Martin & White 2005), shows how iconization is accomplished in the news article through evaluative language, coupled with intertextual references, grammatical metaphor and technicality to produce syndromes of meaning in the news article. Such iconization works, in this case, to reproduce an attitude of cynicism toward party politics in post-apartheid South Africa. This cynicism foreshadows Maimane’s ultimate lack of success in transforming the discourses of the DA.

Keywords: Iconization; Democratic Alliance; *Daily Sun*; Legitimation Code Theory; Systemic Functional Linguistics

1. Introduction

Iconization is a discursive process by which the importance of specific people, organizations, or happenings for members of a particular group is emphasized, creating signs that individuals rally around or rail against (Martin 2020). This process, which has only recently been theorized in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), greatly influences the formation of opinions, particularly those concerning identity and politics (Martin, Maton & Matruglio 2010; Tann 2013), and yet the ways in which language is used to iconize particular concepts are not yet well-understood. The purpose of this article is to give a snapshot view of iconization at work in a news article on Mmusi Maimane's efforts to transform the discursive resources of South Africa's Democratic Alliance (DA). In other words, this article shows in fine-grained detail some linguistic mechanisms by which iconization was used to compress conflicting meanings into the names of Maimane and the DA.

Although this article focuses on iconization as it has been theorized in SFL, it is worth pointing out that there are continuities between this theorization and earlier understandings of this concept in linguistics and semiotics. For example, Irvine & Gal (2000:37) refer to iconization as being the process by which "linguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to [become] iconic representations of them, as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a social group's inherent nature or essence". SFL's conception of iconization concentrates on how these linguistic features become charged with social meaning such that the interpretation of the linguistic feature as an iconic representation of the group becomes possible.

The Democratic Alliance (DA), South Africa's second largest political party, has attempted to transform itself from a "watchdog" opposition party into a ruling party in waiting (Southern 2011). To do this, it has had to broaden its support from its traditional white¹ middle-class support base to embrace South Africans from all 'races' and classes who are disgruntled with the ruling African National Congress (ANC). The party achieved strong growth at the polls, increasing from 12% of the vote in 2004 to 22% in 2014, before slipping to 21% in 2019 (Independent Electoral Commission 2020). This slip comes amid struggles over the DA's identity in South Africa's transforming society, which are encapsulated in the development of the party's meaning-making resources over its history. The one figure who arguably embodies these struggles more than any other is Mmusi Maimane, who became the party's first black leader in 2015 and resigned in 2019. Section 2 gives a brief overview of these struggles and Maimane's role in them.

The news article analysed in this investigation appeared in 2015 in the *Daily Sun*, a particularly important newspaper for the observation of the development of the political meaning-making resources of post-apartheid South Africa. It is by far the most popular in a wave of new South African tabloids that were established in the early 2000s, targeting the predominantly black working class and lower middle class, which have "turn[ed] South Africa's traditional

¹ While recognizing that the concept of 'race' is inherently problematic, in this article it is necessary to use racial descriptors in describing realities produced by the legacy of apartheid. We refer to the 'races' commonly distinguished between in present-day South Africa as 'black African' (referring to the Bantu-language speaking people that form the majority of South Africa's population), 'coloured' (referring to people descending from a mixture of different ethnicities, including the Khoi, San, Malay, European and Bantu-language speaking ethnic groups), 'white' (referring to people of European descent) and 'Indian' (referring to people descended from the Indian subcontinent). Following established academic usage, we use 'black' to refer to 'black African', 'coloured' and 'Indian' people as a collective.

newspaper model on its head” (Jones, Vanderhaeghen & Viney 2008:169). In 2015, at the time when the article in question was published, it had a readership of 4,7 million people, or 12,3% of South Africa’s adult population (South African Audience Research Foundation 2016). Its content includes emphases common to tabloid newspapers internationally: scandals, sex, celebrity news and sport. However, the newspaper also runs a small amount of serious political content, much of it syndicated from its parent company, Media24, and repackaged in a distinctive tabloid style. The newspaper’s letters page also facilitates a vibrant imagined community (Anderson 1991:25) in which readers engage in discussions of a number of matters of shared interest, including politics (Smith & Adendorff 2014).

To motivate the approach taken in this study, Section 3 briefly reviews research from a diverse range of theoretical perspectives on political positioning in the South African media. This research has delivered important insights into the language used in political discourses. However, this study seeks to describe particularly the contribution that discourse makes to the structuring of audiences’ knowledge about South African politics. We use corpus linguistics (CL) to reveal some broad trends in the positioning of the Democratic Alliance in the *Daily Sun*, selecting one article as an example of these trends. Thereafter we use SFL and Legitimation Code Theory (LCT), a combination of theories which has increasingly been used to reveal insights into the ways in which knowledge is built through discourse in a wide range of contexts (Maton, Martin & Matruglio 2016). Citizens engage in dialogue in the public sphere and make voting choices based on their political knowledge. Despite this, the role of the news media in building and structuring citizens’ political knowledge is vastly under-researched, and our study contributes to addressing this research gap.

In a project analysing the positioning of political parties in the *Daily Sun*, we collected a corpus of six months’ worth of political news articles from the newspaper, dated from January to June 2015. Section 4 presents a description of what this corpus reveals about the positioning of the DA in this coverage. In section 5 we outline the key theoretical concepts from LCT and SFL used in this article. LCT enables us to show how political knowledge is built in the *Daily Sun*, and specifically, how particular constellations of ideas are built around the names of different political parties. On the other hand, SFL demonstrates how evaluative language is used to iconize Maimane and his vision for the DA. The results of these analyses are reported in Section 6. In section 7 we draw out implications from this analysis for our understanding of iconization and the development of political discourses in the transforming context of South Africa.

Thus, the research questions addressed in this article are the following:

1. How is language used to iconize the Democratic Alliance?
2. What organizing principles lie behind this iconization of the Democratic Alliance in the light of South Africa's socio-political context?
3. What are the implications of the responses to the above questions for:
 - (a) The ways in which the use of language in political positioning can be conceptualized using Legitimation Code Theory and Systemic Functional Linguistics; and
 - (b) The transformation of political discourses in South African public spheres?

2. The Democratic Alliance in a transforming South Africa

In the earliest years of the post-apartheid era, the DA's predecessor, the Democratic Party (DP), implicitly courted the votes of the country's racial minorities, particularly white and coloured people. Its 1999 campaign slogan was "Fight back!", and this encapsulated the aggressive approach the party took towards opposition politics at the time, playing on minorities' insecurities about the ANC's African nationalist agenda (Southern 2011). In more recent years, especially since the election of Helen Zille as the party's federal leader in 2007, the DA repositioned itself to attract more black African voters, in the hopes of becoming a party in government (Southern 2011). At more or less the same time, the Independent Democrats (ID), a small party led by Patricia de Lille, a coloured woman, joined the DA in a coalition government in the Western Cape. The ID officially merged with the DA in 2011 (Seethal 2012), which arguably somewhat improved the diversity of the party.

The DA's new positioning brought with it challenges in its approach to 'race'. It was committed to a universalistic 'colour-blind' approach to liberalism that treated all South Africans as individuals rather than representatives of any particular racial group, as Anciano (2016) describes. Thus, it opposed affirmative action and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) policies, which were based on 'race'. However, to target black Africans as potential voters, the party needed to increase the number of black Africans in its leadership and was therefore forced to backpedal on its 'colour-blind' approach. This had repercussions for its economic policy. Historically, the DA supported free-market policies as the best way to grow the economy and to ensure economic upliftment for previously disadvantaged groups (Anciano 2016).

From 2009 onwards, there was a gradual move towards support of some form of economic empowerment for those previously excluded from the South African economy, implying an acknowledgement that some policies which discriminate by 'race' are necessary in the context of post-apartheid South Africa (Anciano 2016). In May 2015, Mmusi Maimane was elected as the party's first black leader, replacing Helen Zille (Areff & Khoza 2015). Maimane defeated Wilmot James at the DA's electoral congress, one of the points of debate between Maimane and James being their respective stances towards affirmative action based on 'race', with Maimane broadly in favour of it and James against (Anciano 2016). In 2018, the party released an official statement rejecting "the ANC's model of Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment" (Selfe & Ngwenya 2018), briefly listing some possible alternative empowerment initiatives. However, hot debate continued among the party's leadership regarding the extent to which economic empowerment initiatives should be based on 'race' (Sicetsha 2018).

Under Maimane, the DA met with much success in the 2016 local government elections. In addition to the established DA stronghold of Cape Town, it gained control of three further metropolitan municipalities from the ANC: Johannesburg, Tshwane (Pretoria) and Nelson Mandela Bay (Gqeberha / Port Elizabeth) in coalition with smaller opposition parties (Sello 2016). This was viewed as a heavy defeat for the ANC and evidence of the success of the DA's efforts to position itself as a potential party in government.

However, from 2017 onwards, the DA faced challenges that severely damaged this impression. The party lost control of Nelson Mandela Bay after its coalition in the city disintegrated (Manona 2018). The DA in the City of Cape Town was divided by severe infighting in 2017

and 2018, resulting in De Lille resigning as mayor (Ensor 2018). She subsequently established a new party, named ‘Good’ (Dlulane 2018). The controversy surrounding De Lille’s acrimonious exit from the party dented the DA’s record of clean, efficient governance in Cape Town and the Western Cape (Africa 2019), and probably contributed to the DA’s slump at the polls in 2019.

Some DA members blamed the slump on Maimane, and the party’s review report on the elections recommended that he step down (Kiewit 2019). A few days later, Zille was elected as the party’s Federal Council chairperson, and Maimane resigned and left the party (Haffajee 2019). John Steenhuisen was later elected to replace Maimane as the DA’s leader (Mailovich 2020). This tempestuous change of leadership was widely seen as a defeat for the pro-Black Economic Empowerment faction of the party, and a victory for the party’s older, predominantly white, classical liberal base (McKaiser 2020).

This article focuses on Maimane’s attempts to transform the DA’s meaning-making resources in 2015, and the scepticism with which this was received in the *Daily Sun*. We reveal how Maimane’s discourse showed some breaks from previous DA messaging, and also preserved some continuities with it. This analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of what the DA’s ‘Maimane moment’ meant for South African political discourses and gives suggestions as to why his efforts to transform the party’s discourses ultimately proved unsuccessful. Although we concentrate only on one news article reporting on Maimane’s vision for the DA, this news article was selected for its representivity of key trends in the *Daily Sun*’s coverage of the DA in the first six months of 2015, as demonstrated in the following section. Moreover, the purpose in this analysis is not to give an exhaustive interpretation of the role of the DA in South Africa’s political discourses, but rather to reveal *how* the discursive process of iconization functions. This process, we argue, is used to position political parties and individual politicians negatively in the news media so as to breed cynicism about political projects like that of Maimane in his leadership of the DA.

3. Political positioning and South African media discourses

As mentioned in Section 1, a wide variety of research approaches have been used to investigate South African political discourses, but there is a paucity of research which connects these discourses with the political knowledge that is built through them, even though it is this knowledge that informs citizens’ democratic participation and voting choices. To demonstrate this, we describe a selection of illustrative examples from different frameworks, with the aim of motivating the approach taken in this article, which draws on corpus linguistics, Systemic Functional Linguistics and Legitimation Code Theory.

Some research on the positioning of South African political leaders in the media, particularly in the discipline of media studies, draws on content analysis. One example is Hyde-Clarke (2011), who describes the positioning of Julius Malema, then the president of the African National Congress Youth League, in South African English-language print media articles between January 2009 and June 2010. While content analyses such as this have the potential to reveal dominant trends in large volumes of media coverage, they are not equipped to give insights into the language used in this coverage and how this shapes political discourses.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is arguably the most frequently used approach among researchers examining political discourses in the South African media. Kariithi & Kareithi (2007), for example, use CDA to expose neoliberal discourses in coverage in eight newspapers of an anti-privatization strike organized by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) in 2002. Els (2015) analyses the *Daily Sun*'s representations of immigrants to South Africa to show how the tabloid was complicit in fuelling xenophobic attitudes in the circumstances surrounding a wave of xenophobic violence in 2008. Mabela, Mann & Ditsele (2020) analyse speeches of former South African president Jacob Zuma, Mmusi Maimane and Julius Malema using CDA and Speech Act Theory to uncover the persuasive strategies used by each of these leaders.

The aims of CDA are “to help correct a widespread underestimation of the significance of language in the production, maintenance and change of social relations of power” and “to help increase consciousness of how language contributes to the domination of some people by others, because consciousness is the first step towards emancipation” (Fairclough 2001:1). The aims in this study are quite different. CDA presupposes that linguistic features described by various competing frameworks, including both SFL and generative grammar, have a relationship to the exercise of power through discourse (Fowler 1996; Widdowson 1998). By contrast, this study seeks to identify, inductively, what sets of linguistic resources contribute to the discursive positioning of Maimane and the DA.

Additionally, CDA aims to find ideologies (that is, systems of beliefs, ideas and values) that are often revealed in what is assumed to be true in a text (Fairclough 2001). In the present analysis we also identify structures of thought and value which underlie the positioning of the DA in the *Daily Sun*, but we do not find the concept of ‘ideology’ helpful for describing these structures for three reasons. Firstly, the word ‘ideology’ is overlaid with the neo-Marxist presuppositions inherited by CDA and other critical frameworks in which this concept is used, and we do not believe it is necessary to adopt these presuppositions to identify the kinds of reasoning at work in the positioning of the DA observed in this article. Secondly, ideologies are all-embracing, coherent systems of thought, while the structures of value we identify are more modest and specific to the particular situation of the positioning of the DA in South Africa in 2015. Lastly, the concept of ‘ideology’ does not easily enable one to conceptualize and map relations between different political positions. By contrast, the approach taken here, using LCT, allows for such mapping through the use of its concepts of constellations and cosmologies, as explained in Section 5.

Some researchers have used corpus linguistics (CL) together with CDA to enrich their analyses of media discourses. Hunt (2015:169) uses CL and CDA to analyse gendered media representations of Winnie Madikizela-Mandela and Albertina Sisulu, two South African women frequently hailed as “mother of the nation”. Crymble (2015) uses these two frameworks to investigate the ways in which immigrants to South Africa were represented in *City Press*, the *Mail & Guardian*, and *Sunday Times* between 2006 and 2010, complementing Els’ (2015) study.

CL is a useful complement to qualitative frameworks of analysis as it provides a way of avoiding researcher bias; it can help discourse analysts respond to allegations of ‘cherry-picking’ their data to suit their preconceived ideas (Baker 2006). The present study uses CL as a means of characterizing the general representation of the DA in the *Daily Sun* over a six-

month period, and as a means of directing us to a single article for analysis that is an exemplar of the major trends found in this representation.

SFL provides a means of describing the linguistic resources used in political positioning from within a coherent, functional theory of language. Ortu (2015) uses the system of Transitivity, from the Ideational Metafunction of language according to SFL, along with CL and Argumentation Theory to analyse media coverage of public sector strikes in South Africa between 1999 and 2010. Other researchers have found SFL’s system of Appraisal useful in describing the evaluative choices made and the ways in which senders open and close space for dialogue in the media. Hubbard (2008) uses Appraisal to reveal a bias in favour of the government in South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) TV news relative to its competitor, e.tv. Similarly, Smith & Adendorff (2014b, d) use Appraisal to analyse the ways in which letters to the editor in the *Daily Sun* construe an imagined community of readers. Specifically, Smith & Adendorff (2014a, d) compare letters to the *Daily Sun* with those from *The Times*, a newspaper that was targeted more at a middle-class readership.

Despite the significance of the media’s role as a (re)producer of knowledge in public spheres, studies that focus specifically on how it fulfils this role are rare. One notable exception is Schwoch, White & Reilly (1992), who theorize how the media are engaged in a “perpetual pedagogy” (Giroux & McLaren 1992:xxiv) that often privileges dominant meanings. Recently, research using SFL and LCT as complementary frameworks has revealed much about the relationship between language and knowledge in formal education and beyond, demonstrating the potential of this combination to shed new light on the ways in which political knowledge is structured.

Researchers in SFL have engaged in vigorous dialogue with Bernstein and his approach to the sociology of education since the 1960s. Since the 2000s, LCT, which builds on Bernstein’s (1971, 1973, 1977, 1990, 1995, 2000) work, has become a key partner in this dialogue (Maton & Doran 2017). Both LCT and SFL are underpinned by a realist ontology; both view data relationally, seeing social practices as multi-layered confluences of different features which combine in unique ways while revealing underlying organizing principles; and both put their concepts at risk in addressing real-world problems using real-world data (Maton & Doran 2017). LCT and SFL have been used together to address diverse research problems within formal education. For example, they have been used to differentiate and show the relationships between the discourses of various disciplines in the humanities and sciences (Hood 2011). They have also been used to design an intervention that enables teachers in Australia to scaffold secondary school learners’ writing of high-stakes assessments (Macnaught, Maton, Martin & Matruglio 2013), and to shed light on debates around the decolonization of knowledge in higher education (Lockett 2010). Beyond formal education, LCT and SFL have also shown their usefulness in such diverse settings as the military (Thomson 2014a, b) and a diversionary restorative justice programme for young offenders (Martin, Zappavigna, Dwyer & Cléirigh 2013).

The two frameworks are particularly powerful in analysing political discourses, as shown in an earlier project in which we analysed communication difficulties in the South African parliament (Siebörger & Adendorff 2015a, b, 2017). While SFL provides an extremely comprehensive toolkit for analysing the language of political discourses, LCT allows analysts to schematize the knowledge built using this language so that it is possible to see why some political voices

are heard and others are not, or how misunderstandings can be traced to competing conceptions of what it means to uphold democracy. The use of LCT and SFL in complementary analysis allows a fine-grained analysis of the intricacies of discourse, making possible the identification of concurrences of features that slant the knowledge produced in different directions. The way in which LCT maps knowledge-building using visualizations, such as Cartesian planes and metaphors like that of constellations, means that this is done without losing perspective of the big picture to which these intricacies contribute. This enables insights that would not be possible using each of the theories on their own.

The use of LCT to analyse political knowledge-building, particularly in the media, is still in its infancy, with very few published examples to date. Doran (2020) uses constellation analysis, a tool from LCT, as well as Appraisal from SFL to analyse two Australian news articles on the use of the word “invasion” to refer to that country’s settlement by European colonists. Toll (2017) uses LCT to analyse climate sceptics’ blogs as an alternative site of knowledge production challenging the understandings propagated in mainstream science. Szenes (2021) uses constellation analysis and Appraisal to analyse propaganda created by far-right eco-fascist groups in Hungary and the Nordic countries. What is common to these studies is an interest in observing how knowledge is structured in texts intended for popular consumption; in other words, they are interested in investigating the ways in which these texts organize and build readers’ knowledge of the controversial socio-political debates they describe by showing how different political stances are arranged in relation to each other. The present article contributes to this nascent body of research by using constellation analysis from LCT and various tools of analysis from SFL, including Appraisal, to explore the ways in which discourse is used to build political knowledge about the DA in one *Daily Sun* article.

4. Corpus analysis

To identify broad patterns in the positioning of the DA in the *Daily Sun* between January and June 2015, we analysed a corpus of all the *Daily Sun*’s political news articles over this period, a total of 516 articles. Although this analysis is not the main focus of this study it was completed to contextualize it and inform the selection of an article exemplifying these patterns for analysis using LCT and SFL. In particular, to give initial insights into the people and ideas most frequently associated with the DA in the *Daily Sun* during the period of analysis, we examined the collocations of “DA”, that is, the words that are statistically more probable to appear close to the name “DA” than elsewhere in the corpus (Brezina, McEnery & Wattam 2015). These collocations were discovered using AntConc 3.4.4w (Anthony 2014) using the Mutual Information (MI) measure of collocation strength. A span of 5L to 5R was used, with a minimum frequency of seven collocates. To give a visual impression of the collocates and their relations with each other, a second-order collocation network for “DA” was drawn using the GraphColl tool in #LancsBox (Brezina, McEnery, Timperley & Wattam 2016). Second-order collocates are collocates of the collocates of a particular search term, in this case, “DA”. A collocation network is “a complex network of semantic relationships” (Brezina et al. 2015:141), which shows how different words join in relations of collocation. Figure 1 shows a second-order collocation network for “DA” in the data.

The strongest collocations of “DA” include, firstly, the names of various party members. These include Jacques Smalle (the DA’s provincial leader in Limpopo), Solly Msimanga (then the party’s Gauteng provincial leader, who later served as the mayor of the City of Tshwane), and

Michael Mkhari (a ward councillor in the City of Tshwane municipality). However, the main people who were a topic of discussion during the period of the study were Zille, as the party’s outgoing leader, with 13 collocations with “DA” in the corpus; and Maimane, who succeeded her, with 40 collocations.

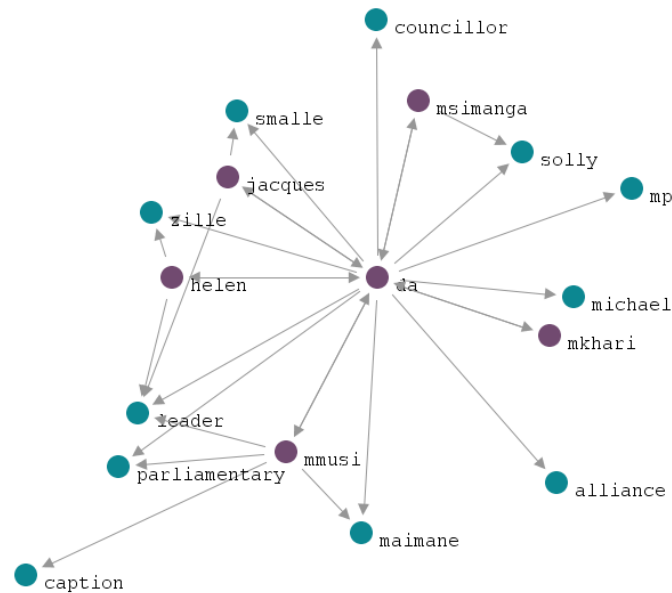


Figure 1. Second-order collocation network for ‘DA’ in the *Daily Sun* political news corpus data, January – June 2015

In addition, Figure 1 shows that the word “leader” is strongly collocated with “DA”, and that there are also strong collocations between “leader” and both Zille and Maimane’s names. This is because both Zille and Maimane are identified as DA leaders at different points during the period of analysis; however, this also foregrounds the fact that the DA underwent a leadership transition during this period. Not only was there much coverage of the DA’s leadership race in these news articles, but the strong collocation between “DA” and “led” in most instances refers to the DA’s ambition to lead South Africa in the future, or to municipalities which were led by the DA.

In the remainder of this article, we report on a fine-grained analysis of one sample news article, namely, “Eye on the big prize! – DA wants to lead Mzansi by 2029”, dated 15 June 2015. This news article is reprinted in Appendix A. “Mzansi” is a popular nickname for South Africa, derived from the word for “south” in isiXhosa. This news article includes four significant collocations with the name “DA”, namely “leader”, “led”, and the names Zille and Maimane. The article in question was selected because it contains the highest number of the ten strongest significant lexical collocations of “DA” in the corpus, and so can be argued to exemplify most strongly the trends in the positioning of the DA revealed in this corpus analysis. Thus, this news article was not selected for analysis randomly nor on the basis of the analysts’ judgement alone, but rather as a result of a careful process to identify an exemplar of the positioning of the DA in the *Daily Sun*.

5. Tools for analysis: Legitimation Code Theory and Systemic Functional Linguistics

This section describes the key concepts used in this article from both frameworks, namely LCT and SFL, and explains how they are brought together as complementary frameworks for analysis.

5.1 Legitimation Code Theory

LCT is a theory drawing from the sociology of education, particularly the work of Bernstein (1971, 1973, 1977, 1990, 1995, 2000) and Bourdieu (1977, 1988, 1991, 1993, 2004), for describing knowledge practices, situations in which knowledge is (re)produced and recontextualized (Maton 2014). Such knowledge practices range from the traditional practices of the academy, such as research, curriculum design, teaching and learning, to diverse practices outside the formal education system, including journalistic reporting and the consumption of news. LCT currently consists of four dimensions: Specialization, Semantics, Autonomy and Temporality (Martin, Maton & Doran 2020). Semantics, the dimension used in the present analysis, concerns how knowledge is packaged in knowledge practices. We draw even more extensively on constellation analysis, which describes how ideas are related in such knowledge practices. The following explanation of the LCT concepts used in this research draws largely on Maton's (2014) authoritative introduction to the theory.

Two concepts form the core of Semantics: semantic gravity (SG) and semantic density (SD). Semantic gravity refers to the degree of context-dependence of knowledge, while semantic density, the focus of this study, refers to “the degree of condensation of meaning within socio-cultural practices (symbols, terms, concepts, phrases, expressions, gestures, actions, clothing, etc.)” (Maton 2014:129). Strengths of semantic gravity and semantic density can be plotted on a Cartesian plane known as the semantic plane, shown in Figure 2. The two variants of semantic density are epistemic-semantic density (ESD), referring to the density of meanings relating to empirical knowledge, and axiological-semantic density (ASD), referring to the density of meanings relating to “affective, aesthetic, ethical, political and moral stances” (Maton 2014:130). For example, the formula $e=mc^2$ has extremely strong epistemic-semantic density (abbreviated to ESD+), as it condenses empirical knowledge gathered through years of scientific experimentation and theorizing. The word “apartheid” has extremely strong axiological-semantic density (ASD+), as it refers to a political dispensation about which many people hold extremely strong feelings and make strong moral judgments.

The process of strengthening the semantic density of a particular symbol or word (known as a signifier in LCT) is named ‘condensation’, and the process of weakening the semantic density of such a signifier is called ‘rarefaction’. These two processes are shown through arrows on Figure 2. Axiological-semantic density may be strengthened through axiological condensation or weakened through axiological rarefaction.

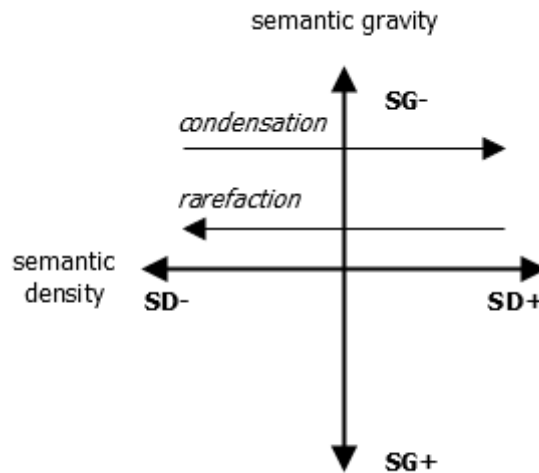


Figure 2. The semantic plane

Constellation analysis shows how the linking of different signifiers creates a constellation of ideas. These are so named because, like constellations in the night sky, they consist of items which appear to belong together from the observer’s viewpoint, but which may not necessarily be closely associated in reality. The signifier which holds the constellation together is named its ‘central signifier’, while those linked to it are ‘associative signifiers’. Such constellations can be positively, negatively or neutrally charged, that is, positioned as good, popular or morally virtuous; or, alternatively, bad, unpopular or evil. This charging typically spreads from one signifier in a constellation to others by association. The basis for grouping signifiers in different constellations and charging them positively, negatively or neutrally is referred to as a ‘cosmology’. In other words, cosmologies determine why some groupings of ideas are popular and powerful and others are not. Figure 3 depicts these concepts diagrammatically.

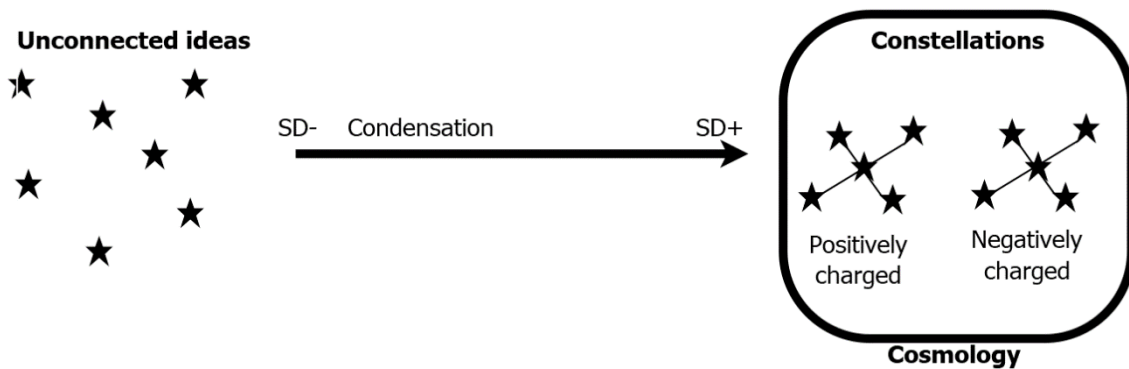


Figure 3. Relations between condensation, constellations and cosmologies. ‘SD-’ refers to weaker semantic density, and ‘SD+’ to stronger semantic density.

LCT’s concepts of axiological-semantic density, constellations and cosmologies are powerful means of describing how different political actors are positioned positively or negatively in the news, and ultimately how the news media build their readers’ knowledge of political developments by grouping together ideas in specific ways, as demonstrated in Section 6.1. They

are not a means of repackaging ideas and concepts from linguistics in different terms, but rather allow a unique gaze on data that reveals new insights about the ways knowledge is built in discourse.

5.2 Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics views language as a set of resources for meaning-making. It groups these resources into three overarching functions of language, or metafunctions (Halliday & Matthiessen 2014): the Ideational Metafunction (the use of language to convey ideas), the Interpersonal Metafunction (the use of language to build relationships) and the Textual Metafunction (the use of language to organize meanings into coherent texts). Martin (2020) shows how resources from each of these metafunctions contribute to ‘mass’, a concept he has devised as a linguistic counterpart to semantic density in LCT. ‘Mass’ describes linguistic resources that have the effect of condensing meanings and strengthening semantic density. These resources are shown in Table 1. This section briefly describes each of these in turn, focusing on iconization, as it is the resource found to be most active in condensing axiological meanings in this news article. The analysis in section 6 provides examples of the use of each of the linguistic resources mentioned below.

Table 1. Types of mass. Adapted from Martin (2020:141)

Metafunction	Type of mass	Associated linguistic resources
Interpersonal	Iconization	Appraisal
Ideational	Technicality	Grammatical metaphor
Textual	Aggregation	Periodicity, text reference

‘Iconization’ refers to the process by which values are associated with a word or symbol, or in other words, the process by which they are imbued with axiological meanings (Martin 2020). Iconization is also described as “a process whereby the conceptual meaning of an event or entity is backgrounded and its value to the members of a group is foregrounded – a process whereby ideational meaning is discharged and axiological meaning charged” (Martin 2020:130). However, in the present analysis, there is evidence that challenges this description by showing that the condensing and charging of ideational meaning can support and strengthen the charging with axiological meaning that occurs in iconization, as shown in Section 6.

We use SFL’s Appraisal system to show how iconization is realized in the language of the news article. Appraisal is a framework for analysing the use of evaluative language and intersubjective positioning in texts, and so assists in showing how different people and entities in the text are charged with positive or negative axiological value (Martin & White 2005). It consists of three main sub-systems (Attitude, Engagement and Graduation), each offering various choices for the expression of evaluation. This evaluation is expressed not only through adjectives and adverbs but can be evident in lexical choices in any grammatical category. Numerous examples of such lexical choices are given in Section 6.

The following explanation briefly introduces these Appraisal sub-systems, drawing on Martin & White’s (2005) description of the framework. The first Appraisal sub-system, Attitude, describes linguistic resources which express emotions (Affect), or which give evaluations of people (Judgement) or non-human objects (Appreciation). Attitude instantiations are classified as being either positive (+) or negative (-), and so are important in showing how particular

actions and objects attract positive or negative axiological meaning. The full range of resources for expressing Attitude is depicted in Figure 4.

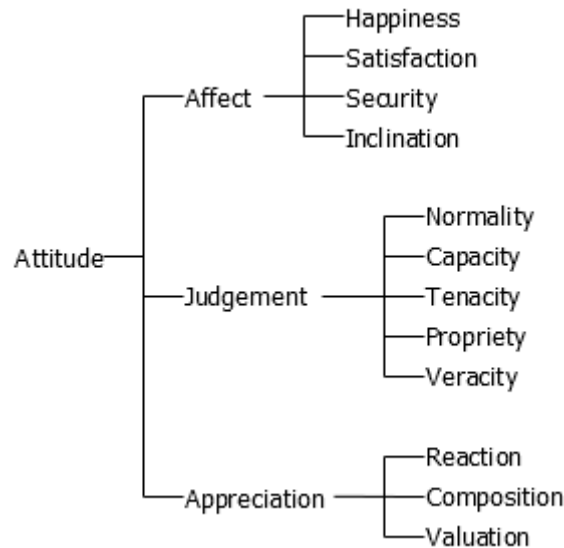


Figure 4. Attitude resources. Adapted from White (n.d.)

Graduation, the second Appraisal sub-system, is used to fine-tune the strength and scope of Attitude instantiations. For the purposes of this research, only the two main sub-systems of Graduation, namely Force and Focus, as shown in Figure 5, are discussed. ‘Force’ refers to modifications to the strength or scale of impact of an expression, while ‘Focus’ refers to resources that make the boundaries of what is referred to more or less clearly defined, either by sharpening or softening them.

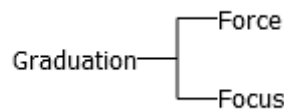


Figure 5. Graduation resources referred to in this study. Adapted from White (n.d.)

Engagement, the last Appraisal sub-system, describes how text senders position their opinions, including their Attitude and Graduation instantiations, in relation to others’ opinions. It distinguishes between ‘monoglossic’ locutions in which there is no perceptible dialogue with others’ opinions and ‘heteroglossic’ locutions in which others’ opinions are addressed in the text in some way. Heteroglossic locutions, in turn, are divided into ‘expansive’ resources, which open up room for other voices to be expressed, and ‘contractive’ resources, which close down room for other voices and privilege the sender’s own voice above them by expressing the sender’s opinion as the correct one. The full range of Engagement resources is depicted in Figure 6.

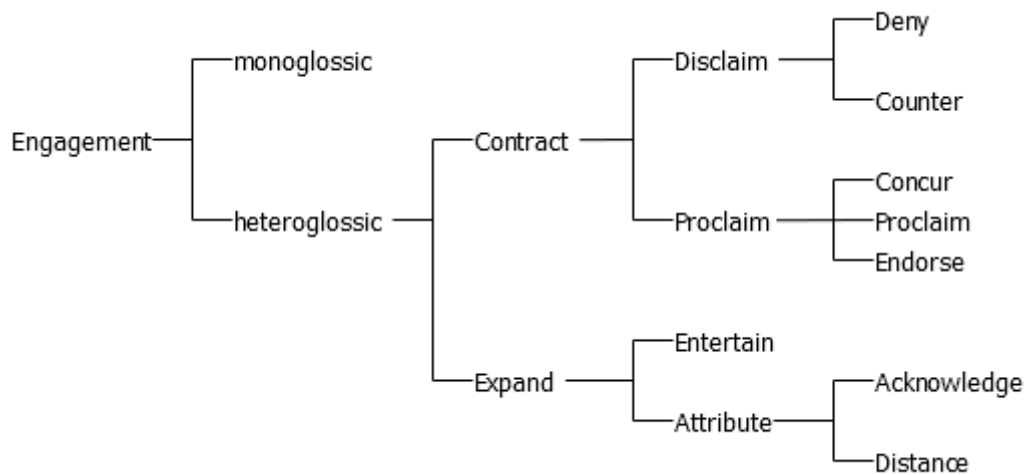


Figure 6. Engagement resources. Adapted from White (n.d.)

In the Ideational Metafunction, ‘technicality’ is a resource used in the condensation of meaning. It refers simply to the use of the specific technical terminology of a particular field of knowledge or discipline (Martin 2020). News articles in the *Daily Sun* are not targeted at a highly-educated audience, so they tend not to include too many technical terms; however, one or two technical terms relating to politics and governance do appear in the news article in Appendix A, such as “the opposition” and “policies”.

However, ‘grammatical metaphor’, another ideational resource that condenses meanings, is more prevalent. Lexical metaphors realize a figurative meaning of a word in place of a literal one. By contrast, ‘grammatical metaphor’ refers to instances where “a semantic category such as a process is realized by an atypical grammatical class such as a noun, instead of a verb” (Martin & Rose 2007:106). Grammatical metaphor plays a pervasive and powerful role in condensing meanings because it allows what is normally expressed as a whole clause to be expressed instead in a single word or group (Martin 1993).

Lastly, in the Textual Metafunction, ‘aggregation’ functions to draw together information from other parts of a text into condensed expressions. The use of aggregation is explored in the present article using text reference and Periodicity. ‘Text reference’ occurs when a word or group of words refers to a preceding or subsequent stretch of text (Martin & Rose 2007). An example occurs at the end of the news article examined in the present study, where “this” (paragraph 10) is used to refer to an indefinite stretch of previous text, but could be interpreted broadly as referring to all the statements Maimane has made about the DA’s new vision in paragraphs 5 to 10. This particular use of the word “this” condenses all the meanings from these paragraphs into one word and allows other meanings to be added to them, namely that Maimane has no policies in place to achieve them yet.

At the core of ‘Periodicity’ is the idea that every unit of text, beginning with the clause, starts with a point of departure, or ‘Theme’, which introduces the unit and may end with a summary, conclusion or ‘take-home point’ from that unit of text, known as the ‘New’. These Themes and News are points at which information is often packed more densely than in the text in between, forming peaks in waves of information flow. White (1997) describes news articles as following a structure in which there is a ‘nucleus’ and several ‘satellites’. The ‘nucleus’ is the headline

and first paragraph, or lead, and functions as the macroTheme of the article, laying out its subject matter and the most salient information in the news article. ‘Satellites’ are interchangeable units that give more information about the nucleus, often more than one paragraph long. Each satellite begins with a hyperTheme, and many of them end with a hyperNew (Martin & Rose 2007). Texts may end with a macroNew, distilling information from the text as a whole, though this is not common in news articles. These high-level Themes and News structure texts into waves in which information is conveyed most densely at the beginning and end of an information unit, with a trough in the middle where information is unpacked in a less dense manner (Martin & Rose 2007). This is illustrated in Figure 7.

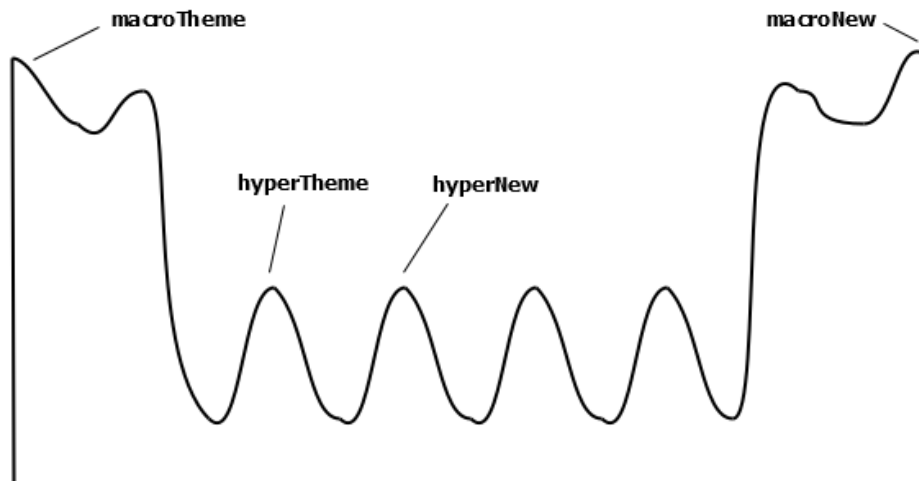


Figure 7. Waves of information flow indicating fluctuations in condensation of meanings in a hypothetical text

This article examines how the three sets of linguistic resources described in this subsection, namely iconization (from the Interpersonal Metafunction), technicality (from the Ideational Metafunction) and aggregation (from the Textual Metafunction), couple together to produce complex meanings in the process of political positioning. ‘Couplings’ are combinations of meanings from different systems, metafunctions or modes of communication (Martin 2010). In other words, they are places where linguistic resources from different systems, metafunctions or modes co-occur. For example, one common type of coupling is an ideational-interpersonal coupling (Knight 2010), where an Appraisal resource, such as positive Capacity, co-occurs with the mention of a particular person or entity, such as, in this case, Mmusi Maimane. These couplings, in turn, form recurrent patterns known as ‘syndromes’ (Zappavigna, Dwyer & Martin 2008). Section 6.2 shows how these syndromes are the engine behind the iconization of Maimane and the DA in the news article.

Figure 8 gives a diagrammatic representation of how these sets of linguistic resources work together to achieve political positioning. This diagram depicts how ideational resources, including grammatical metaphor and technicality, and textual resources, including text reference and Periodicity, couple together with interpersonal resources such as Appraisal to heighten the effect of iconization in the news article. While all these resources are involved in condensing meanings, iconization is the process which is responsible for political positioning. The diagram shows, most significantly, that resources that condense textual or ideational meaning can strengthen iconization through coupling.

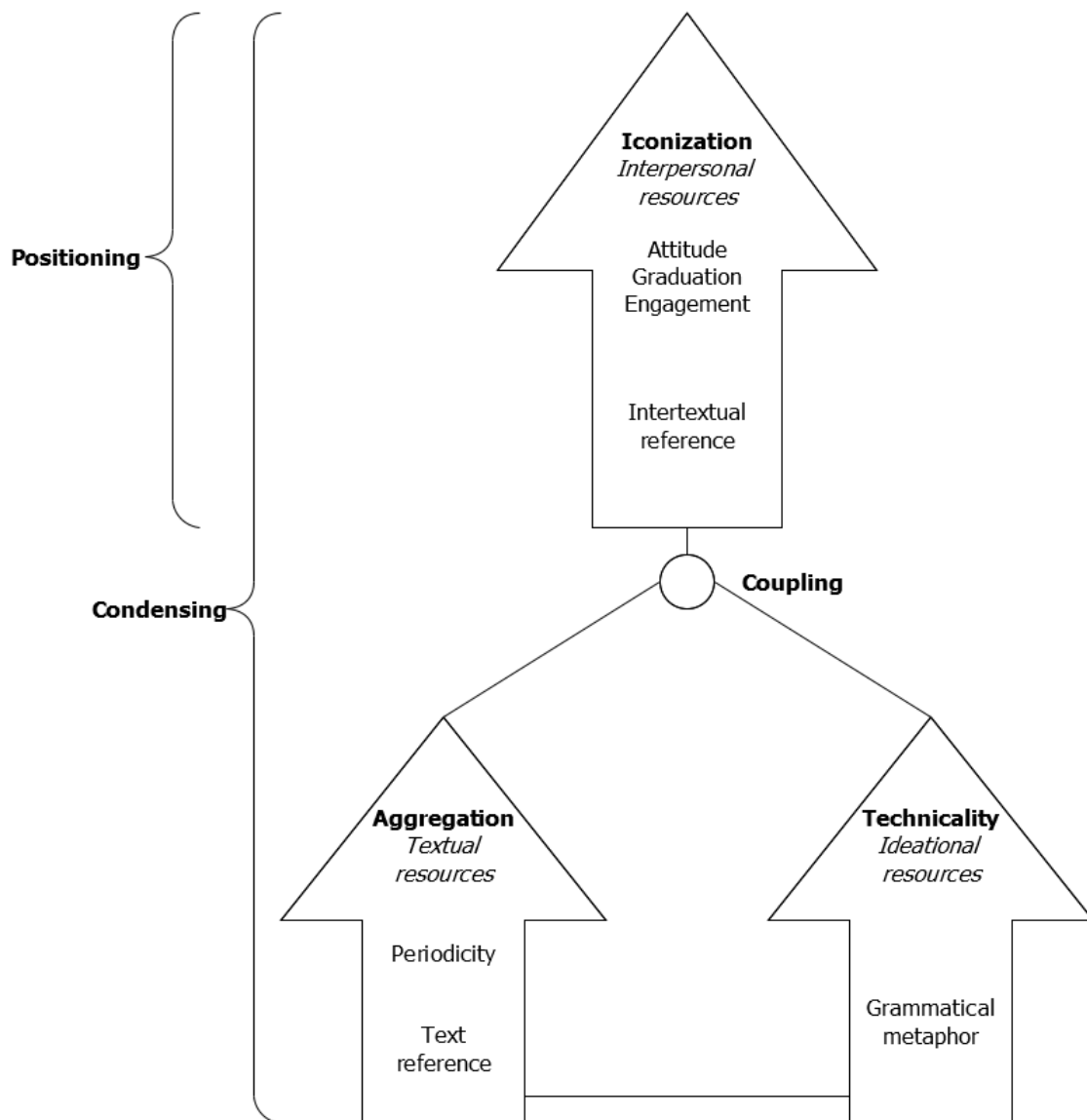


Figure 8. Linguistic and discursive resources used in political positioning in “Eye on the big prize! – DA wants to lead Mzansi by 2029”

5.3 Complementary analysis

As illustrated above, LCT and SFL are two distinct frameworks with different objects of study, structures and arrays of analytic concepts. LCT is useful for describing processes of knowledge-building, while SFL is useful for describing the linguistic resources which are used in such processes. The explanatory power of each framework is diluted when attempts are made to conflate concepts in SFL with those in LCT or vice versa, as Maton et al. (2016) show. To gain maximum benefit from both frameworks, it is best to analyse data using each framework separately before bringing together insights drawn from both frameworks.

Section 6 presents the analysis by drawing on LCT to describe the constellations produced in the news article (6.1), before moving into a detailed analysis of the way the text unfolds, or its logogenesis, combining insights from the separate LCT and SFL analyses for ease of drawing

links between them (6.2). Finally, Section 6.3 summarises the syndromes of meaning found in the news article to show how the positioning of Maimane and the DA is realized in its language.

6. Analysis of “Eye on the big prize! DA wants to lead Mzansi by 2029”

This news article, published on 15 June 2015, describes the launch of the Democratic Alliance (DA)’s “Vision 2029”, a campaign in which the party revealed its vision of what a South Africa ruled by the DA would be like by the year 2029.² The text of the news article can be found in Appendix A.

6.1 Constellations

Two sets of binary constellations can be observed in this news article. In both these sets, there is one well-developed constellation and one poorly developed constellation. The author of the news article uses his voice to express a strong degree of scepticism about Maimane’s vision. His constellations are portrayed in Table 2. He constellates “ANC” together with “stronghold” in “the ANC stronghold of Soweto” (par. 1). This can be seen as a very small neutrally charged constellation produced by the author, as the fact of calling Soweto an “ANC stronghold” entails neither a positive nor negative evaluation of the ANC. This constellation is not developed elsewhere in the news article. However, the author produces a well-developed negatively charged constellation centred on the DA, as is evident from the right-hand column of Table 2, which shows expressions associated with “DA” in the news article, including negatively charged items such as “huffed and puffed but failed to connect”, and “could not spell out policies to achieve this”. The author’s negative positioning of the DA is described in much further detail in Section 6.3.

² The article’s sub-heading misrepresents the DA’s vision somewhat. In the vision as outlined on the party’s website, the DA would become the leading party in a coalition government in 2019, and win an outright majority in 2024; thus 2029 would be the tenth anniversary of a DA-led government (Democratic Alliance 2017).

Table 2. The author's constellations

ANC	DA
	wants to lead Mzansi by 2029
	Mmusi Maimane
	Vision 2029
stronghold of Soweto	low-key event
	hyped
	minor event
	the opposition
	Jabulani Technical High School
	huffed and puffed but failed to connect
	fewer than 1 000... supporters
	a few
	the party's way forward
	DA leadership
	could not spell out policies to achieve this
	would be realised in due course

In the section of the speech reported on in the article, Maimane appears to be principally concerned with outlining his party's new vision, and so produces a large positively charged constellation around the notion of "a new future", and a very small negatively charged constellation around "the past". Maimane's constellations are portrayed in Table 3. In this table, some key associative signifiers are marked in bold. These form central signifiers of smaller constellations within the larger constellations built around "a new future" and "the past". The other signifiers in these smaller sub-constellations are listed under each of the signifiers in bold. The strong positively charged signifiers "a new future", "freedom", "fairness" and "opportunity" spread positive charging to the signifiers constellated with them by association.

Table 3. Maimane’s constellations

A new future	The past
Democratic Alliance	
Freedom	apartheid
Democrats	political straitjacket
Fairness	
Opportunity	denied black South Africans opportunities
a child born in Alexandra will have the same opportunities as a child born in Sandton	
every child will have the opportunity to realise their potential	
Mmusi Maimane	
wasn't born into a privileged or rich family	
his mother	
a cashier	
his father	
worked for a locksmith	
Vision 2029	
a nation led by a DA government	
a new mood... sweeping across this nation	
new future	

6.2 Logogenetic analysis

As stated in Section 5.3, this section gives a joint account of how LCT concepts are enacted and SFL resources are realized in the news article as the text unfolds logogenetically, from beginning to end. This account is organized according to the news article’s information structure, considering first the nucleus and then each of the satellites in the news article in a separate subsection. Figure 9 gives a schematic representation of the structure of the news article, showing its nucleus and five satellites and giving one key phrase from each of these units. It also shows which paragraphs each of the units is composed of, and gives the number of the subsection where each unit is discussed in this news article.

In the logogenetic unfolding of the text, the author’s voice dominates at the beginning and the end, giving him the opportunity to frame Maimane’s comments in a way that deflates their significance. This means that the DA and Maimane are negatively charged by the author in the lead paragraph and satellite 1, then recharged positively in satellites 2 to 4, and finally recharged negatively in satellite 5. We depict this discordant logogenetic development in Figure 9 using a zigzag line going back and forth between positive and negative charging of the DA.

At the beginning of each subsection the relevant part of the news article is quoted for the reader's convenience, followed by an explanation of how axiological charging occurs in this part of the article and an indication of what linguistic resources are drawn on in it to iconize the DA and Maimane. These explanations are designed to show, in detail, how various discursive and linguistic resources, including those described in Section 5.2, combine to strengthen iconization of the DA in two directions: one supplied in Maimane's reported words and another supplied by the author. They are, of necessity, extremely fine-grained and follow the logogenetic unfolding of the text from one paragraph to another. As mentioned in Section 5.3, they combine insights from both LCT and SFL analyses, and so terminology from both frameworks is used intensively.

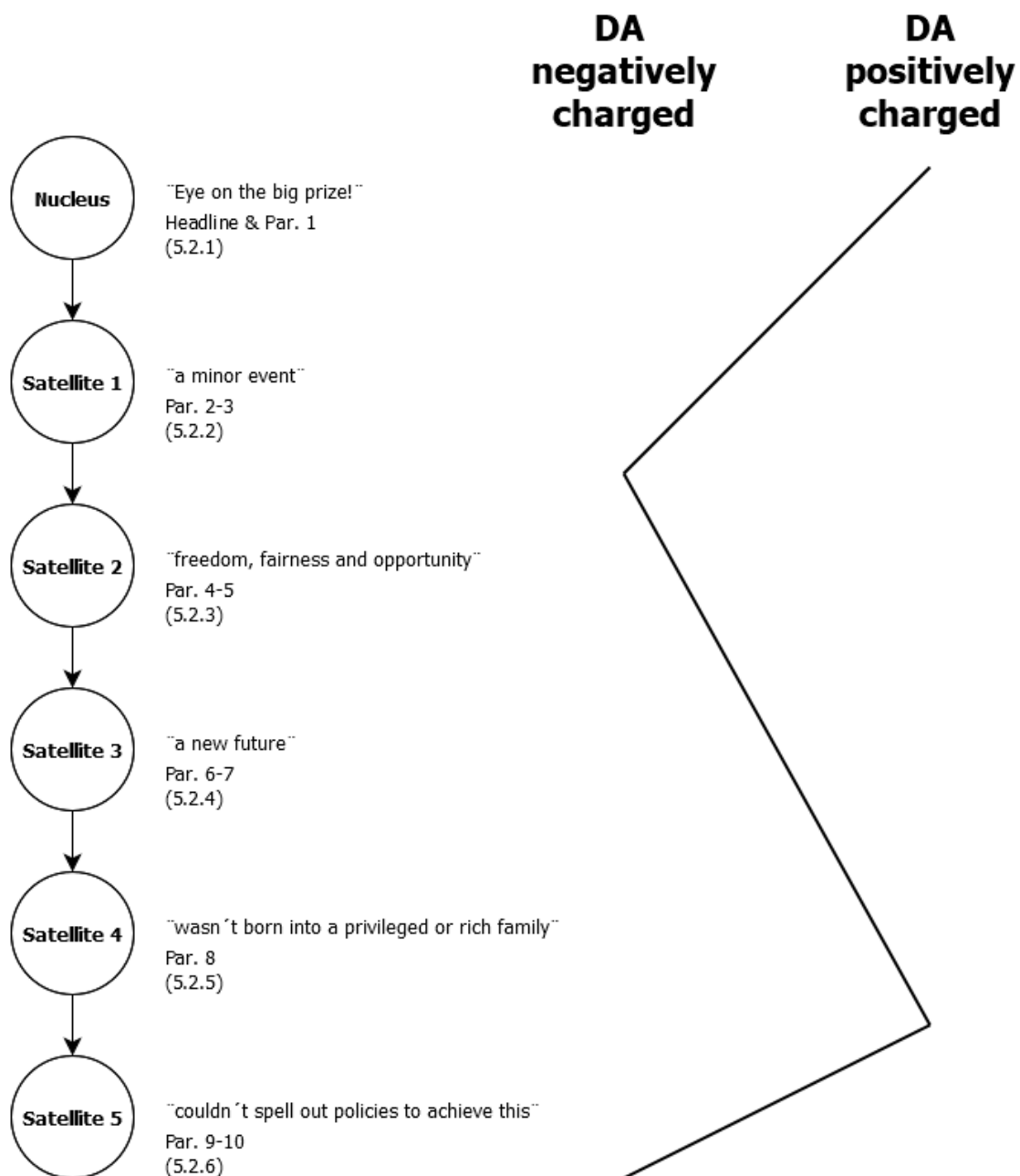


Figure 9. The structure of "Eye on the big prize! – DA wants to lead Mzansi by 2029"

6.2.1 Nucleus: “Eye on the big prize!”

EYE ON THE BIG PRIZE! - DA wants to lead Mzansi by 2029 (*Daily Sun*, 15 June 2015)

- 1 DEMOCRATIC Alliance leader Mmusi Maimane launched his party’s Vision 2029 at a low-key event in the ANC stronghold of Soweto at the weekend.

The headline establishes the background against which both sets of constellations are built and rapidly begins the process of iconizing the DA. The first part of the headline, “Eye on the big prize!”, alludes to a chain of historical references. A prominent television documentary series and companion book on the American civil rights movement is named *Eyes on the Prize* (Williams 2013). The name of the documentary derives, in turn, from a folk song that became popular in the movement, “Keep your eyes on the prize” (Williams 2013). This song alludes to two verses from Paul’s letter to the Philippians: “I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14, Holy Bible, ESV), and “Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us” (Philippians 3:17, ESV).

This chain of intertextual references serves to charge the headline with various meanings. Maimane is a Christian pastor as well as a political leader (Maluleke 2015), and so bears similarities to Martin Luther King Jr., a leader in the American civil rights movement. The Bible verses and allusion to the civil rights movement present in this headline by the *Daily Sun* editorial staff suggest that Maimane is, like King, engaged in a struggle which he sees as being righteous. In his speech, Maimane himself imitates aspects of King’s rhetoric, as is shown in Section 6.3.6. The allusions in “Eye on the big prize!” link Maimane with the notion of a heroic struggle and Christian discipleship, charging him with overwhelmingly positive meanings for a compliant reader.

From an SFL perspective, such allusions iconize actors and objects involved in the chain of allusion by associating them with figures and symbols from previous discourses. This process is described in detail by Caple (2010). She suggests that for allusions to work, readers need to recognize the concept to which the author is alluding. In the case of the headline “Eye on the big prize!”, readers need to be aware that the phrase “eyes on the prize” was used in valued texts in the American Civil Rights movement, or at least should be reminded of the Biblical passages on which the phrase draws. This recognition creates a community of people who understand the *Daily Sun* editorial staff’s implicit references to these texts. However, in the case of allusions like this one, it is probable that most readers will not be able to trace the source of the allusion. Despite this, they might recognize that they have heard the phrase “eye on the big prize” before and may associate it with additional meanings of tenacity or sacrifice in pursuit of a lofty goal. As long as there is some recognition that the phrase “eye on the big prize” is mentioned in previous discourses, the allusion proposes a bond between author and readers: it becomes a bonding icon or bondicon around which readers either rally or from which they disaffiliate. This process charges people or things with interpersonal meaning. In this way, the allusion aids in iconization. Thus, “Eye on the big prize!” iconizes the DA as a movement with a righteous cause that is being tenaciously pursued. If readers can detect the source of the

allusion, they will associate the DA with the American civil rights movement or the early Church, thereby strengthening the iconization of the party.

The headline and paragraph 1 serve as the nucleus of this news article, its macroTheme. They introduce two syndromes, or patterns of couplings, which dominate it: one in which positive Attitude: Judgement: Capacity is coupled with Maimane and the DA, and an opposing syndrome in which negative Capacity is coupled with them. In some of these instances, one type of evaluation is made overtly (inscribed), but negative Judgements of Capacity are implied (invoked) by these evaluations. For example, in the headline, “big prize” inscribes positive Attitude: Appreciation: Reaction, but “Eye on the big prize!” invokes positive Capacity and positive Attitude: Judgement: Tenacity by suggesting that the party is oriented towards the “big prize” of winning power over the country, which would be the first step towards realizing this goal. By contrast, the word “low-key”, which inscribes negative Reaction and downscaled Graduation: Force, also invokes a negative Judgement of Capacity towards the DA for not managing to arrange a larger event. The words “lead” in the sub-heading and “leader” in paragraph 1 also invoke positive Capacity in that leading requires competence and leaders are usually viewed as competent people. The phrase “ANC stronghold” could be seen as invoking positive Capacity Judgements towards the ANC, the party which the DA has to defeat in order to win leadership of the country. Thus, the nucleus makes clear that this news article is about appraising the DA’s capacity to “lead Mzansi [South Africa]” as it aspires to do.

6.2.2 Satellite 1: “a minor event”

- 2 But what was hyped as a milestone moment for the opposition at Jabulani Technical High School turned into a minor event as Maimane huffed and puffed but failed to connect with a crowd of fewer than 1 000 largely black DA supporters.
- 3 Also at the school hall were a few white supporters and provincial leaders.

Here the author’s negative charging of the DA begins to emerge in the logogenesis of the text. The conjunction “but” at the beginning of paragraph 2 introduces an instance of Engagement: Contract: Counter, which indicates that this paragraph enacts axiological condensation by contracting dialogic space and privileging the author’s portrayal of events. This paragraph is relatively sparse in words with relatively strong axiological-semantic density; “opposition”, “Maimane” and “DA” are each mentioned once. Here, “the opposition” is constellated with “DA”, and in fact, the two words are used interchangeably. There are many words that charge the DA’s constellation negatively. The event was “hyped”, an invoked instance of upscaled positive Attitude: Affect: Inclination, as a “milestone moment”, inscribing positive Attitude: Appreciation: Valuation. However, it turned out to be “a minor event”, inscribing negative Valuation. This again invokes a Judgement of negative Capacity on the DA for failing to organize a bigger event, as does “fewer than 1 000” and “a few”, instances of downscaling Force which re-emphasize the smallness of the event.

The phrase “huffed and puffed” alludes to the Big Bad Wolf in the fairy tale of the Three Little Pigs. Whereas in the headline, allusion is used to charge Maimane positively by association with Martin Luther King Jr. and the American civil rights movement, here it charges him negatively by association with the Big Bad Wolf. “Huffed and puffed” is an instance of upscaling Force, as though Maimane was making a great effort but still failing to connect with

his audience. Here Maimane is iconized by associating him with a character which compliant readers would disaffiliate from, thus charging him with stronger negative interpersonal meanings. Following this, the word “but” is used again to instantiate Counter, heightening axiological condensation by privileging the author’s interpretation, and “failed” is another negative Judgement of Capacity against Maimane.

One instance that may run counter to the trend of charging the DA negatively is the constellating of the word “black” with “DA”. This could provide some indication that the DA is doing something right by attracting black supporters; however, this effect is diminished by the small number of supporters at the event: “fewer than 1 000” instantiates downscaling Force and also invokes a negative Judgement of Capacity on the DA.

Paragraph 3 simply mentions two other groups of people who were at the launch: “a few white supporters and provincial leaders”. These two groups are added to the DA’s constellation. Again, the word “a few” is an instance of downscaling Force that charges this constellation negatively by invoking a negative Judgement of Capacity against the DA. The word “leaders” here has relatively strong axiological-semantic density, echoing the use of “lead” in the headline and “leader” in paragraph 1.

6.2.3 Satellite 2: “freedom, fairness and opportunity”

- 4 The launch was to outline the party’s way forward and show what Mzansi would be like under DA leadership.
- 5 The theme, “A future built on freedom, fairness and opportunity”, has been Maimane’s rallying cry since he took over from Helen Zille as DA leader.

The intentions behind the launch event are described in more neutral terms in the second satellite (par. 4–5). At its beginning, the event is condensed into the word “launch”, a grammatical metaphor which condenses meanings drawn logogenetically from the description of the event in the preceding paragraphs, beginning with “Democratic Alliance leader Mmusi Maimane launched his party’s Vision 2029” (par. 1), and continuing to “also at the school hall were a few white supporters and provincial leaders” (par. 3). Paragraph 4 describes these without using any instantiations of Attitude apart from “leadership”, which once again invokes the news article’s emphasis on Judgements of Capacity. The word “leadership” again co-occurs with “DA”, increasing the strength with which the two terms are constellated together.

Maimane’s positively charged DA constellation is built around three ideas with extremely strong axiological-semantic density, introduced in paragraph 5: “freedom”, “fairness” and “opportunity”. These are heavy with Affect, with “freedom” inscribing positive Attitude: Affect: Satisfaction, and “opportunity” invoking positive Attitude: Affect: Happiness, as new opportunities are frequently occasions for excitement. “Freedom” and “fairness” also are positive instances of Attitude: Judgement: Propriety. These positive Propriety Judgements are coupled with descriptions of the DA’s new values to form a new syndrome which recurs throughout the satellites reporting on Maimane’s speech. The meanings ascribed to these terms are unpacked logogenetically, and meanings are added to them, in the satellites that follow.

These are all constellated with “future”, which becomes a central signifier holding together the constellation which Maimane is building. The future is a central concept in much of the DA and Maimane’s rhetoric. In 2008, under Zille’s leadership, the party adopted the slogan “One Nation. One Future” (Valli 2017). Maimane has authored one book, entitled *Believe in Tomorrow* (Maimane 2018). The association between Maimane, the DA and the word “leader” is continued in this paragraph by the author and is constellated together with Maimane’s “rallying cry” through use of the conjunction “since”, which joins together meanings from the first and second halves of the paragraph. The name of Helen Zille, as former party “leader”, is also strong in axiological-semantic density and constellated with the DA, but she does not seem to play a significant role in constellating or charging other signifiers apart from that.

The second satellite describes important changes in the meaning-making resources of the DA, which can be schematized using Tann’s (2010, 2013) framework of discourse iconography. He distinguishes between three types of icons, which he names ‘Gemeinschaft’, ‘Doxa’ and ‘Oracles’. The present study uses the more transparent names for each of these given by Thomson (2014b): ‘Community’, ‘Values’ and ‘Heroes’, respectively. According to this typology, the DA is a Community whose Hero has changed from Helen Zille to Mmusi Maimane. In keeping with this change, Maimane introduced “a future built on freedom, fairness and opportunity” (par. 5) as a new set of Values for the party. This elaborated on the DA’s existing slogan, “One Nation. One Future.” The changes in the DA’s iconography are summarized visually in the iconization triangles (Thomson 2014a) in figures 10 and 11. The following satellites in the news article give an opportunity to observe how the iconization of both Maimane as the DA’s Hero and his new Values is perpetuated logogenetically.

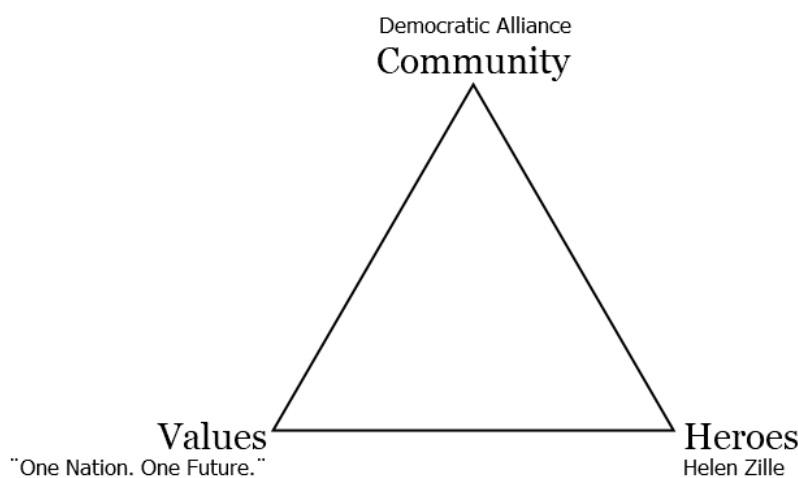


Figure 10. The Democratic Alliance’s old iconography under Helen Zille

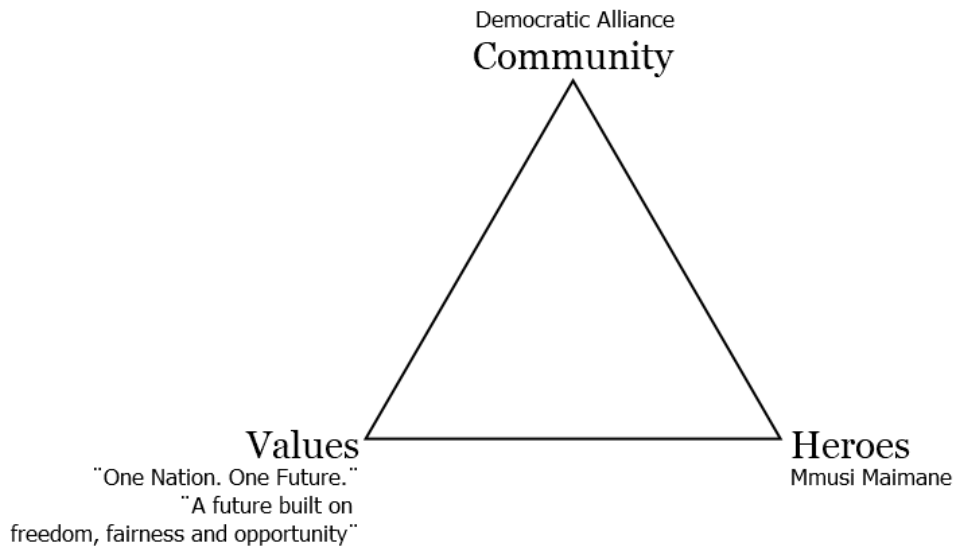


Figure 11. The Democratic Alliance’s new iconography under Mmusi Maimane

6.2.4 Satellite 3: “A new future”

- 6 “Democrats, I don’t know about you, but I feel energised by a new mood I sense sweeping across this nation. People are beginning to reject the political straitjacket of the past. They are starting to see a new future with new possibilities.
- 7 “They want a country where people work hard, play by the rules and respect each other.”

The third satellite (par. 6–7) quotes a short excerpt from Maimane’s speech which is used to add meanings to the words “future”, “freedom” and “fairness” in his rallying cry. He introduces this with the hyperTheme “Democrats, I don’t know about you, but I feel energised by a new mood I sense sweeping across this nation.” The word “democrats” charges members of the DA as possessing positive Propriety. Maimane uses the contractive Engagement resources of Deny (“I don’t know about you”) and Counter (“but I feel energised...”) to bolster the extent to which this “new mood” is viewed as a real phenomenon. Maimane uses the word “new” three times, once in conjunction with “future” in “a new future”. The word “new” inscribes a positive Reaction, but the nominal groups modified by “new” (“a new mood”, “a new future”, “new possibilities”) could also be seen as invoking positive Inclination, willingness for change in the future. This effect is heightened through positive Happiness in the word “energised”, and later negative Satisfaction in the word “reject”, referring to past constraints. The mentions of “new” and the repeated use of positive Inclination all add meaning to the “future” element of Maimane’s rallying cry. “Freedom” is alluded to obliquely in the word “straitjacket”, which as an instantiation of invoked negative Satisfaction and Propriety is associated with the opposite of freedom. “The past” and “political straitjacket” together form a very small negatively charged constellation that contrasts with the constellation Maimane is building around “the future”.

Much constellating and charging work is done by a single, long phrase, “a country where people work hard, play by the rules and respect each other” (par. 7). This phrase adds meaning to the

word “fairness” in Maimane’s rallying cry. Here, “work hard” instantiates positive Tenacity, and “play by the rules” and “respect each other” instantiate positive Propriety. These actions are emphasized by being coupled with the hyperNew of this satellite. Throughout this satellite, Maimane projects these desires onto “people”, making it appear as though his new Values for the DA are responding to the desires of ordinary South Africans rather than simply being a set of values strategically worked out by the DA leadership. Each of them also counters negative stereotypes commonly associated with South Africans, namely that they are lazy, lawless and disrespectful towards each other, especially across societal divides such as ‘race’ and class.

6.2.5 Satellite 4: “wasn’t born into a privileged or rich family”

- 8 He said he wasn’t born into a privileged or rich family. His mother was a cashier and his father worked for a locksmith.

The fourth satellite (par. 8) is dedicated to iconizing Maimane as the DA’s new Hero. It does this by associating him with invoked Judgements of positive Normality. “Wasn’t born into a privileged or rich family” in the hyperTheme emphasizes that Maimane comes from a ‘normal’ working-class background. This is significant for the DA as a party historically known for representing middle-class interests, which is now trying to extend its reach among South Africa’s working-class majority. The fact that the Engagement resource of Deny needs to be used in “wasn’t born into a privileged or rich family” suggests that many people perceive Maimane as being privileged, and that he feels the need to combat this perception so as to position himself as a ‘man of the people’. This enacts axiological rarefaction (see Section 5.1) by denying a possible association with privilege or wealth. The descriptions of his parents’ careers as “a cashier” and “worked for a locksmith” are additional invoked instances of positive Attitude: Judgement: Normality, constellating Maimane with working-class characteristics, and therefore condensing positive charging into his constellation in this context.

6.2.6 Satellite 5: “could not spell out policies to achieve this”

- 9 Maimane said apartheid denied black South Africans opportunities. He envisions a country where a child born in Alexandra will have the same opportunities as a child born in Sandton.
- 10 “In a nation led by a DA government, every child will have the opportunity to realise their potential,” he said. He could not spell out policies to achieve this but said they would be realised in due course.

Maimane picks up the signifier “opportunity” from his “rallying cry” and associates further meanings with it logogenetically in paragraph 9. The word “opportunity” is mentioned once in paragraph 10, and “opportunities” are mentioned twice in paragraph 9. This term is coupled with positive Satisfaction and positive Propriety to form a syndrome in this satellite. Initially, in the hyperTheme, Maimane links a lack of opportunities with “apartheid”, a term loaded with negative Satisfaction, negative Security and negative Propriety. This contributes to the small constellation Maimane has built around “the past”, since apartheid is considered to be something that happened in the past. The negative Satisfaction and negative Propriety are continued in “denied black South Africans opportunities”.

By contrast, the signifier "opportunities" is used to condense further positive charging into "the future" which Maimane envisages through the statement that he "envisions a country where a child born in Alexandra will have the same opportunities as a child born in Sandton". This invokes positive Satisfaction, and Maimane's envisioning of a country where this is the case invokes positive Propriety towards him. This statement is once again reminiscent of Martin Luther King Jr., who, in his famous "I have a dream" speech, said, "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character" (King 1963:5). This allusion once again likens Maimane to King, connecting a Hero of the American civil rights movement with the DA's new Hero. In this way, it charges Maimane with strong positive axiological meaning, just as the DA is charged in the headline.

Instead of referring directly to 'race', Maimane compares children according to the place in which they are born, which in post-apartheid South Africa is linked to both racial and class distinctions; children born in Alexandra are probably poor black Africans, while those born in Sandton may be members of any 'race' but will probably belong to the middle or upper class. Maimane's use of geography as a distinguishing factor rather than 'race' could be an attempt to avoid mentioning the racial classifications of past South Africa. This is consistent with the DA's established policy of equality of opportunity, which follows from a liberalism that is individualistic and arguably 'colour-blind'. Therefore, the point that Maimane is making here may be carefully calculated to de-emphasize 'race' and instead refer to the more complex associations between 'race' and class reflected in post-apartheid South Africa's social divides, while reflecting his party's liberal political philosophy.

The theme of "opportunity" is elaborated and made more explicit in paragraph 10, where "every child will have the opportunity to realise their potential" invokes both positive Satisfaction and positive Propriety, bolstered by the allusion to Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech. This reminds readers that Maimane's plan for "the future" has the notion of DA leadership of the country at its centre. The all-embracing nature of this vision is shown in "every child", which serves to amplify the positive charging associated with the DA, and Maimane's plan as a constellation. Once again, it avoids an exclusivism based on 'race'. Maimane constellates himself and his party strongly with "the future", positioning the DA as forward-looking and representing a strong break with the injustice and oppression of South Africa's past.

Equality of opportunity is presented here as a means of redressing the wrongs of apartheid. This feeds into traditional DA policy which eschews means of positive discrimination such as the ANC's Black Economic Empowerment policy (see Section 2). It is interesting that, on this point, Maimane reverts to this traditional DA policy rather than suggesting a turn towards acceptance of economic empowerment policies for previously disadvantaged people, as he has argued for elsewhere (see Section 2). Thus, in this respect he retains elements of continuity from the DA's older Values in his new set of Values for the party.

After extensive reporting of Maimane's speech, the news article switches back to the author's voice in the final paragraph (par. 10). This brings a return to the negative charging of the DA and Maimane found in the headline and first satellite. This is accomplished in large part by a return to the syndromes of positive and negative Capacity Judgements coupled with the DA that are evident in the first three paragraphs. The word "led" in the last part of Maimane's

quotation in paragraph 10 invokes a positive Capacity Judgement on the DA as a party fit to lead the country, echoing the use of “lead” in the headline. However, the author writes that Maimane “could not spell out policies to achieve this”, invoking a negative Capacity Judgement against him that discharges the previous positive meanings and replaces them with negative charging. Here, as explained in Section 5.2, “this” is an instance of text reference packing up the meanings in Maimane’s vision as outlined in paragraphs 5–10 into a single pronoun. This coupling with text reference extends the reach of this negative Judgement significantly. By comparison, Maimane’s reported countering of this accusation, namely that “they would be realised in due course” appears indefinite and carries very weak semantic density, and so does little to condense further positive charging with Maimane’s “new future”. A syndrome of Capacity Judgements coupled with mentions of the DA frames the news article logogenetically, leaving compliant readers with the impression that the DA is incapable of achieving the high goals that Maimane has set for it.

6.3 Syndromes of meaning

As Table 4 shows, the news article features three main patterns of recurrent couplings, or syndromes, in its logogenesis. These are each represented by seven instances in the news article: a DA/Maimane & +Capacity syndrome (found in the headline and par. 1, 3, 4, 5 and 10), a DA/Maimane & -Capacity syndrome (found in par. 1, 2, 3 and 10), and a DA/Maimane & +Propriety syndrome (found in par. 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10). Table 4 reveals various trends relating to these three syndromes. First, it is notable that there are as many couplings of the DA and Maimane with positive Capacity as there are with negative Capacity. However, all but one of these positive Capacity couplings are instantiated by word-forms or derivations of the verb “to lead”, including “leader”, “led” and “leadership”. These are coded as invoking positive Capacity in the context of this news article because of its heavy emphasis on the concept of leadership, but do not necessarily indicate positive assessments from the news article’s author of the DA’s competence to lead. Four out of the seven instances of positive Capacity are coupled with high-level periodicity, three of which are in the macroTheme of the news article, focusing attention on the DA’s ambitions to lead as a topic or point of departure for the news article. Thus the DA/Maimane & +Capacity syndrome is used mainly to raise the question of whether the DA has the capacity to lead, rather than to state outright that it does have such capacity.

The DA/Maimane & -Capacity syndrome is marked by four instances of downscaling Force and four instances of contractive Engagement. The downscaling Force refers, in all cases, to the small attendance and impact of the “low-key” launch of Vision 2029, according to the author’s assessment. Thus, this downscaling Force does not mitigate the strength of the negative Capacity Judgements, but rather increases it. Likewise, the contractive Engagement refers in each case to the resource of Counter, which is used to make the point that the launch event was small, contrary to the DA’s expectations. Therefore, both of these resources are used to strengthen the negative Capacity Judgements, positioning the DA negatively as a party incapable of holding an impressive event, let alone governing the country.

Table 4. Syndromes in “Eye on the big prize – DA wants to lead Mzansi by 2029” and their couplings with various other linguistic resources

Syndrome	DA / Maimane & +Capacity	DA / Maimane & -Capacity	DA / Maimane & +Propriety
<i>Total instances</i>	7	7	7
<i>Upscaling Force</i>	2	1	1
<i>Downscaling Force</i>	0	4	0
<i>Engagement: Expand</i>	1	0	7
<i>Engagement: Contract</i>	0	4	0
<i>Grammatical metaphor / Technicality</i>	2	1	2
<i>High-level Periodicity</i>	4	2	3

By contrast, the DA/Maimane & +Propriety syndrome is used in the satellites describing Maimane’s speech to position the party as taking the moral high ground. All seven of the instances of this syndrome are coupled with Engagement: Expand, and so it would be more accurate to call it the ‘DA/Maimane & +Propriety & Engagement: Expand’ syndrome. The expansive Engagement positions these positive Propriety Judgements as being spoken by Maimane rather than the author (using Expand: Acknowledge). This allows plenty of room for readers to differ with Maimane’s positioning of the party, weakening the eventual impact of the syndrome in positioning the DA positively.

Thus in this news article, there seem to be two main agendas at play: the DA’s efforts to iconize Maimane as its new Hero and the party’s new Values (in the main body of the article), and the author’s efforts to call the DA’s capability to lead into question (at its beginning and end). There is considerable discord between these two competing agendas, which correspond to two different sets of constellations in LCT terms, or sets of bonds with which the reader can choose to affiliate in SFL terms. The first set of bonds is instantiated through Judgements of positive Propriety coupled with Maimane’s new Values of “freedom, fairness and opportunity”, and a few Judgements of positive Normality coupled with Maimane. However, these are framed by the second set of bonds, instantiated through coupling Maimane and the DA with positive and negative Capacity Judgements. These are linked with the DA’s expressed ambition to “lead” the country. The author, through mainly invoked negative Capacity Judgements, suggests that, judging by the launch event and the lack of “policies to achieve” the new Values, the DA is not yet capable of leading. While they are cast as aspiring to emulate the American civil rights movement and the early Church as successful movements with a righteous cause, the author suggests that they are doomed to fall short of these aspirations.

7. Exploring the process of iconization and its implications

In this news article, Maimane is portrayed as using iconization to build a new iconography for the DA, with himself as its Hero and “a future built on freedom, fairness and opportunity” (par. 5) as its Values. Iconization is also the process which allows the author to deflate the impact of the launch, dismissing Maimane’s rhetoric as ineffectual “huff[ing] and puff[ing]” (par. 2).

This section describes systematically the insights into iconization which can be gained from the analysis, and then shows how, in this case, the iconization of the DA has far-reaching implications for South African political discourses. In the process, the way in which these insights and implications respond to the three research questions stated in Section 1 is demonstrated.

We have presented an extremely fine-grained logogenetic analysis of one article using LCT and SFL. Some readers may question whether the payoff of such analysis is worth the effort required. However, both knowledge-building and iconization are extremely complex processes entailing inputs such as are evident in the article analysed, along with countless others every day. Those inputs are not necessarily clear-cut endorsements or denigrations of political figures and parties, but are often multi-faceted and polyphonic, their discourse structure mirroring this complexity and enacting it, as is the case in this news article. Some of the cut and thrust of the everyday accomplishment of knowledge-building and iconization, and the mechanisms by which these processes can be achieved, are showcased in the present study, allowing us to see with enhanced acuity how this enactment is done. In other words, fine-grained analysis allows us to track political knowledge-building and iconization as they happen.

The LCT analysis shows how multiple voices may lead to multiple sets of binary constellations in a news article: Maimane's voice as projected in the article produces an entirely different set of constellations from those produced by the author. In Maimane's set of constellations, he contrasts his plan for South Africa's future with what happened in the past. The author, meanwhile, creates a negatively charged constellation around the DA under Maimane's leadership, and a very small neutrally charged constellation around the ANC.

Consistent syndromes of linguistic resources are used to produce the two larger constellations in the text: Maimane's positive constellation around his vision for the future is held together by positive Propriety expressed through the concepts of "freedom, fairness and opportunity", coupled with expansive Engagement. To a lesser extent, he uses positive Normality to portray himself as a 'man of the people'. Maimane contrasts the party's new, future-oriented value system with "the past", which he couples with sporadic instances of negative Satisfaction, Security and Propriety. The author's negatively charged constellation around the DA is produced mainly through invoked negative Judgements of Capacity. The two sets of constellations and the linguistic resources that are used to enact them are summarized in Table 5. Table 5 serves as a partial response to the first research question, "How is language used to iconize the Democratic Alliance?". It also shows some implications of this research for the ways in which the use of language in political positioning can be conceptualized using LCT and SFL (research question 3a): syndromes as described using SFL are built up logogenetically, and these contribute to arrangements of political stances that can be conceptualized as competing sets of constellations using LCT.

Table 5. Summary of joint LCT and SFL analysis

“Eye on the big prize! – DA wants to lead Mzansi by 2029”	
<i>Constellations</i>	<i>Chief linguistic resources used</i>
Maimane's constellations	
future, DA (positive)	+Propriety & Engagement: Expand
	Maimane & +Normality
past (negative)	-Satisfaction
	-Security
	-Propriety
Author's constellations	
ANC (neutral)	+Capacity
DA (negative)	-Capacity

While Table 5 concentrates on the contribution of Appraisal resources to political positioning, this study also shows clearly how other linguistic and discursive resources can heighten the effects of iconization. These other sets of resources are mentioned in Figure 8 and aid in addressing research questions 1 and 3a. The use of three sets of resources is particularly prominent in this news article: intertextual references (a discursive resource that contributes directly to condensation of interpersonal meaning), and text reference and Periodicity (both textual resources).

Intertextual references are numerous in news articles such as this one and have a striking degree of influence in furthering and accelerating iconization. Allusions such as those present in the phrase “eye on the big prize” (see 5.2.1) are often charged with interpersonal meaning before they enter the current text being analysed, and so can function to associate extremely strong interpersonal meanings with an individual or party very rapidly.

Text reference aids political positioning in this news article by condensing an indefinite amount of information about Maimane’s vision for the DA into the word “this”, in the statement that Maimane “could not spell out policies to achieve this” (par. 10, see 6.2.6). At a maximum, the use of the word “this” could be considered as referring to all the promises that Maimane had made in the parts of his speech reported in the news article. The effect of condensing all these meanings into the word “this” is that it allows the author to make one final negative Judgement of Capacity that extends over the entirety of these promises, thus allowing for very rapid and complete negative positioning. This potential is realized through the coupling of text reference with the negative Capacity Judgement in this instance and is amplified through coupling with the final hyperNew of the news article.

This also illustrates the use of Periodicity in political positioning. In this news article, strong evaluations of Maimane are positioned at the beginning and end of the text, its macroTheme (headline and par. 1, see 6.2.1) and final hyperNew (par. 10; see 6.2.6). Coupling these evaluations with these positions of textual prominence heightens them further, furthering iconization in the text.

Among ideational resources, Technicality and grammatical metaphor are not used very prominently in this news article. However, when grammatical metaphor does appear, for example in the clause, “The launch was to outline the party’s way forward” (par. 4, see 6.2.3), it does function to condense meanings so that further evaluation may be associated with them through use of Appraisal resources. This suggests that the condensation of ideational meaning can function to strengthen iconization, which runs contrary to the traditional understanding of iconization as entailing the discharging of ideational meaning. This conclusion is another important contribution that this research makes towards the conceptualizing of the use of language in political positioning using SFL, responding to research question 3a.

In response to research question 2, “What organizing principles lie behind this iconization of the Democratic Alliance, in the light of South Africa’s socio-political context?”, the author’s use of iconization in this news article reveals some scepticism towards the DA. This scepticism seems to be grounded primarily on the party’s inability to hold a successful campaign launch event, and secondarily on the fact that Maimane has no policies in place to achieve its vision. Thus, the ways in which political parties are evaluated remain rather superficial, rather than addressing matters of policy in a considered manner. This means that this news article provides a slender, and possibly misleading, basis on which the DA’s new Values can be discussed among the *Daily Sun*’s readership: the party’s capacity to govern is evaluated based on its organization of one event.

Section 2 suggested that the analysis of iconization in the present study can reveal insights into what Maimane’s rise to leadership of the DA meant for South African political discourses, and, in response to research question 3b, may give reasons as to why he did not succeed in permanently altering the DA’s meaning-making resources. The scepticism of the author towards the DA’s vision to position itself as a future governing party is telling in relation to both topics. While Maimane was intending to project a sense of hope that he could grow the DA into a governing party that would deliver “freedom, fairness and opportunity”, the author uses iconization in the opposite direction to communicate scepticism about his ability to achieve these goals.

With the benefit of hindsight, we can observe that Maimane was unable to transform even his own party, particularly in the direction of acknowledging that some ‘race’-based redress for apartheid was necessary. While Maimane iconized the party’s Vision 2029 as “new” and positively charged “the future” in contrast with “the past”, the present analysis shows that in the sections of his speech quoted in this news article, he carefully preserved some continuities with the party’s older classical liberal political philosophy, stressing individualistic equality of opportunity and steering away from ‘race’ as a differentiating factor in South African children’s opportunities (see Section 6.2.6). It may be that Maimane was aiming gradually and subtly to alter these discourses, but if so, Zille’s election as Federal Council chairperson in 2019 and Maimane’s subsequent resignation seem to indicate that this attempt at transformation failed, and that the author’s sceptical characterization of both him and his party was proved correct.

Iconization, when complete, produces stable, deeply ingrained icons which become more difficult to challenge the more they are reinforced. The author’s iconization of the DA as a party that is unable to bring transformation or deliver on its aspirations to bring “freedom, fairness and opportunity” would have been entrenched by the events surrounding Maimane’s exit from the party. In all likelihood, this would dissuade the *Daily Sun*’s majority black working-class

readers from considering the party as a credible alternative to the ANC, and perpetuate cynicism about the capacities of political parties in general. As shown in Section 2, some of the reasons for cynicism towards the DA have to do with ‘race’ and the party’s internal conflicts regarding how the economic injustices of the past should be remedied. This leaves South Africa pondering how best to transcend apartheid divisions more than 25 years into its democratic experiment.

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Appendix A: Sample news article

EYE ON THE BIG PRIZE! - DA wants to lead Mzansi by 2029

Simon Nare, *Daily Sun*, 15 June 2015

- 1 DEMOCRATIC Alliance leader Mmusi Maimane launched his party's Vision 2029 at a low-key event in the ANC stronghold of Soweto at the weekend.
- 2 But what was hyped as a milestone moment for the opposition at Jabulani Technical High School turned into a minor event as Maimane huffed and puffed but failed to connect with a crowd of fewer than 1 000 largely black DA supporters.
- 3 Also at the school hall were a few white supporters and provincial leaders.
- 4 The launch was to outline the party's way forward and show what Mzansi would be like under DA leadership.
- 5 The theme, "A future built on freedom, fairness and opportunity", has been Maimane's rallying cry since he took over from Helen Zille as DA leader.
- 6 "Democrats, I don't know about you, but I feel energised by a new mood I sense sweeping across this nation. People are beginning to reject the political straitjacket of the past. They are starting to see a new future with new possibilities.
- 7 "They want a country where people work hard, play by the rules and respect each other."
- 8 He said he wasn't born into a privileged or rich family. His mother was a cashier and his father worked for a locksmith.
- 9 Maimane said apartheid denied black South Africans opportunities. He envisions a country where a child born in Alexandra will have the same opportunities as a child born in Sandton.
- 10 "In a nation led by a DA government, every child will have the opportunity to realise their potential," he said. He could not spell out policies to achieve this but said they would be realised in due course.

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