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Mugging de Queen's English? Mapping Mental Spaces of English

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This paper proposes that a cognitive linguistic approach to the discourse of current debates over the English language and English literature(s) may contribute to an understanding of how it is that conflicting perceptions of key issues persist and are apparently impervious to rational argument. The discussion begins by outlining the type of debate under consideration. It then goes on to introduce the cognitive theory of metaphor and the notion of *cognitive mappings* in general, along with recent developments concerning *conceptual integration* or *blending*. The final section considers some typical standpoints in one current controversy surrounding the English language and examines what insights a cognitive linguistic approach can bring to an understanding of why such issues are so intractable.

1. Introduction: conceptualising "English"

> Others may speak and read English – more or less – but it is our language not theirs. It was made in England by the English and it remains our distinctive property, however widely it is learnt or used. (Powell 1988, cited in Greenbaum 1990: 15)

The worldwide spread of the English language is accompanied by a complex set of fundamental questions concerning its use and even its nature and description. Native varieties are now being shouldered by an increasing number of non-native strains – including the rise of some sort(s) of English as Lingua Franca (ELF). With this trend, the issue of which English(es) may be used, and where, as models for foreign learners becomes ever more complex. As far as native varieties are concerned, there are running battles, with self-styled defenders of "standards" seeking to promote standard varieties over regional and class

dialects, as well as vehemently opposing language change. In literary studies, parallel questions are growing along with the English-reading and -writing community. These issues involve, for example, the inclusiveness of any literary canon, as well as the legitimacy of new readings as they are confronted by the authority of established interpretations of canonical texts.

In recent years, monographs (e.g. Crowley 1989, 1991), collections of essays (e.g. Bex and Watts 1999), journal articles (e.g. Seidlhofer 2001), and colloquia (e.g. Ciglar-Zanic *et al.* 1998) have been devoted to such existential questions concerning the English language and its uses. And, of course, the media in the UK frequently latches on to the sensationalist aspects of the debate over standard English and "standards" of education (e.g. "It's official: grammar's gone downhill" from Alison Utley in *The Times Higher Educational Supplement*, 13/02/98, and so on). Such concerns might appear to be relatively new, perhaps arising with the spectacular success of English as a world language. In fact, they are mostly only a globalisation of basic worries that have long been debated within the "inner circle" of English-speaking countries (Kachru 1991). In the UK, for instance, conflicting perceptions of what is meant by "grammar" and "standard English" have generated bitter controversy, and it is this particular context that this paper will be investigating.

There has been extensive discussion of the background to the discourse arising from such controversies. Presumably the hope is (or once was) that when the "objective facts" have been established, all reasonable people will come around to the truth. Unfortunately – as countless protracted conflicts around the globe should prove – this is not the whole story about how our minds construct reality. So, despite the undeniable necessity of documenting the "facts", it is unlikely to get to the source of incomprehension and conflict in such comparatively minor debates as those surrounding English. It is not only a question of ignorance of the facts. As Crystal has pointed out, "[l]inguistic likes and dislikes are not easily affected by reason." Responding to the question "Is our language sick?" in Aitchison's opening Reith Lecture entitled "A Web of Worries: Anxiety About Language", he replied by po-sing a question of his own: "Maybe the really interesting question is not 'Is our language sick?' but 'Why do we want to think that our language is sick?' [. . .] We don't need the linguistic equivalent of a doctor: we need a psychiatrist." (Crystal 1996).

Or perhaps at least a cognitive linguist – not that a better understanding of the mental representations behind such conflicts guarantees any success in resolving them, but it is surely a prerequisite to trying. Cognitive linguistics aims at just this sort of project: it uses language as raw data to gain insights into how our minds make sense of the world. That is, it asks what connections are established within our mental representations of experience to construct the world in such a way as to regularly allow people to form and honestly hold opinions that seem irrational, untenable, and even perverse to others? This is an approach to human language and cognition that seems increasingly necessary as globalisation continues to bring so many apparently incompatible cultures into ever closer contact.

Graddol and Swann (1988: 111) had already noted "the problem that variability in discourse meaning poses for those professionally concerned with language and education". This paper proposes a cognitive linguistic investigation into such variability, one that goes behind the scenes to seek out the mental constructions for which linguistic forms provide evidence.

2. Mappings in thought and language[1]

> Linguistic forms are (partial and underdetermined) instructions for constructing *interconnected domains* with internal structure. (Fauconnier 1997: 35)

2.1 Conceptual projection mappings

Cognitive linguistics claims that it is through *mappings*[2] between conceptual *domains* (coherent organisations of knowledge and experience), that we produce, process and transfer meaning (Fauconnier 1997). Often, in making sense of the world around us, this involves metaphorical *projection mappings* (ibid: 9) of aspects of relatively concrete areas of our experience onto other more abstract areas. The best-known demonstration of such projection mappings is Lakoff and Johnson's early popularisation of the cognitive theory of metaphor *Metaphors We Live By.*

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[1] For the heading of this section, I have borrowed the title of Fauconnier's (1997) book.

[2] "A mapping, in the most general mathematical sense, is a correspondence between two sets that assigns to each element in the first a counterpart in the second." (Fauconnier 1997: 1)

Lakoff and Johnson showed that highly abstract concepts, such as TIME, UNDERSTANDING, and ARGUMENT, are understood respectively in terms of less abstract notions such as MONEY, SEEING, and WAR, yielding mappings in the form TIME IS MONEY, SEEING IS UNDERSTANDING and so on[3] We save, spend, and waste time, just as we do money; we glimpse the truth, see the light, get the picture; we defend, attack, and even shoot down arguments. Partial structure from one domain is projected onto another domain. As Lakoff and Johnson point out, it is partial structure that is projected, because if it were the entire structure the *target* domain would actually be the same as the *source* domain. We can see this in that although we can say "I gave you my time" just as we can say "I gave you my money," we cannot get our time back quite as easily as we can our money. So the metaphor TIME IS MONEY is a mapping of partial structure from the domain of MONEY onto the domain of TIME.

On further inspection, as Goatly (1997: 45) has pointed out, it is clear that "the vast majority of abstract vocabulary in the lexicon of English derives from conceptual metaphors". An extensive literature on the cognitive theory of metaphor has built up since 1980, and the interested reader who wishes to look at more examples than space here allows, or who wishes to delve deeper into the technicalities of the theory, is referred to Goatly (1997) and Kövecses (2002), both of which have useful bibliographies.

One interesting finding of this approach (thoroughly explored in Goatly 1997) has been that this use of metaphor is far from random: there is a hugely complex and systematic network of conceptual metaphor underlying all our everyday talk. Not only that, but it is this same network that has been called into play in the creation of the world's most revered literature. Our understanding of Shakespeare's Sonnet 73, ("That time of year thou mayst in me behold / When yellow leaves, or few, or none, do hang ...") depends on our recognition of two conceptual metaphors basic to our everyday understanding of our lives: A LIFETIME IS A YEAR (*no spring chicken*, *the autumn of one's life*, etc.), and PEOPLE ARE PLANTS (*put down roots*, *go to seed*, *the Grim Reaper*, etc.).

There is nothing necessarily "poetic" about this use of metaphor. Such conventionalised metaphorical mappings typically characterise our ordinary everyday view of the world: mappings such as THEORIES ARE

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[3] It is a convention within the cognitive approach to metaphor to refer to the domain mappings in capitals.

BUILDINGS (*the foundations of a theory, buttress a theory*) and ORGANISATIONS ARE PLANTS (*branch, prune workforce, reap benefits*). In all such mappings, certain aspects of the source domain are mapped onto the target domain as a coherent set, in which the logic of the source is mapped onto the target. This systematicity of parts mapping onto parts and wholes mapping onto wholes can be illustrated with the last-mentioned mapping, ORGANISATIONS ARE PLANTS:

ORGANISATIONS ARE PLANTS

Source: PLANT	Target: ORGANISATION
whole / part of plant	entire / part of organisation
growth of plant	development of organisation
removing a part of the plant	reducing the organisation
fruit / crops	beneficial results

Figure 1 shows the standard type of diagram used to represent mapping between two conceptual domains.

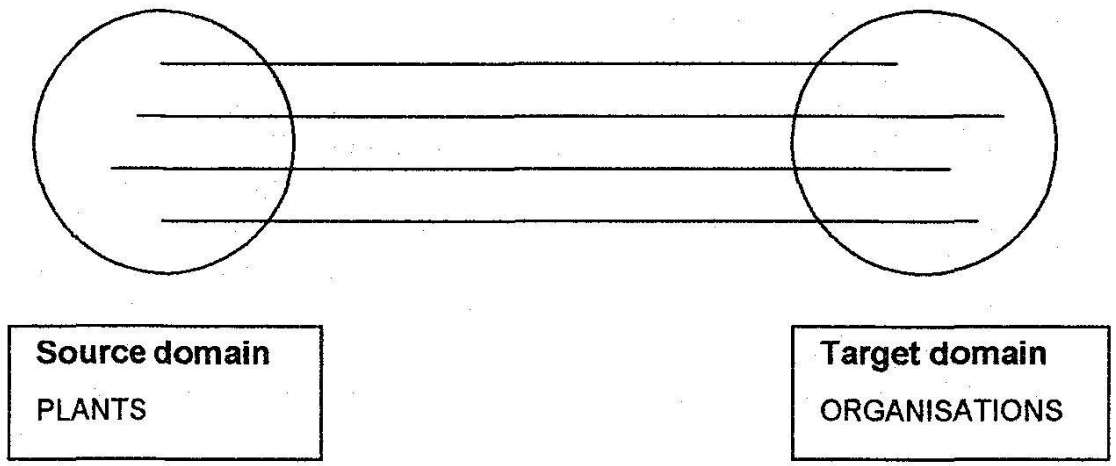

Fig. 1: Mapping between two conceptual domains

2.1.1 The conduit metaphor

The first conceptual metaphor to be identified and described in detail was what Reddy (1979) called the conduit metaphor. This is a metaphor of language itself, in which thoughts are seen as though packed into words by speakers/writers and then transferred to hearers/readers who unpack the original thoughts intact. "What do speakers of English say when communication fails or goes astray?" asks Reddy (286). He gives the following examples of typical talk about unsuccessful communication:

> Try to *get* your *thoughts across* better.
> You still haven't *given me* any *idea* of what you mean.
> Try to *pack* more *thoughts into* fewer *words*.
> *Insert* those *ideas* elsewhere *in* the *paragraph*.

This view of how language works (or does not work) is endemic in our everyday talk about communication – indeed, there is very little alternative to it. As mentioned above, we tend to comprehend abstract (target) concepts through metaphorical projection mappings from more concrete (source) concepts, so it not surprising that we understand communication in terms of the transfer of objects containing messages. When communication has failed, we tend to say that the thoughts were not correctly inserted into the words, or else that someone failed to extract the thoughts that we are convinced we had inserted. However, this is clearly not an adequate representation of what goes on in the complex process of communication, as Reddy points out:

> Actually, no one *receives* anyone else's thoughts directly in their minds when they are using language. [. . .] Nor can anyone literally "give you an idea" – since these are locked within the skull and life process of each of us. Language seems rather to help one person to construct out of his [sic] own stock of mental stuff something like a replica, or copy, of someone else's thoughts – a replica which can be more or less accurate, depending on many factors. If we could indeed send thoughts to one another, we would have little need for a communications system. Naturally, if language transfers thought to others, then the logical container, or conveyor, for this thought is words. (286–7)

Nonetheless, this convenient metaphor persists, and, not surprisingly, we are more likely to ask "Did you get anything out of that article?"

than "Did you construct anything meaningful while reading that article?"

To take another example, a Canadian consumer protection website offers the following advice to dissatisfied consumers:

> Don't sit and steam – COMPLAIN [. . .] your temper's a mild simmer not a full rolling boil [. . .] There's nothing like a good complaint letter to let the steam out of your ears and *put your murderous thoughts onto pristine paper* [. . .] the steam lets up, your blood pressure lowers. (McManus 2003: 1-2, my emphasis)

Clearly, although this is how we commonly talk about writing, we do not "put our thoughts onto paper." The conduit metaphor may seem a harmless, even a useful and indispensable, myth. But Reddy (1979) has pointed to the pernicious consequences of our dependence upon it, the main one being that it encourages a view of linguistic communication as a success-without-effort system, rather than a system requiring considerable negotiation. This leads in practice to unrealistic expectations and zero tolerance (even incomprehension) of miscommunication. A more realistic view is that language "provide[s] us with (imperfect) clues as to what discourse configurations to set up" (Fauconnier 1997: 5). In which case, imperfect communication is likely to be the norm, as of course it is. We will see later that the conduit metaphor is frequently involved in building up mental representations of English.

Fauconnier has also pointed to a further negative consequence of seeing language forms as containers for meaning. This time, it is a consequence for linguistic theory, and explains why I have chosen to explore the current topic from within the framework of cognitive linguistics.

> Modern linguistics, structuralist or generative, has treated language as an autonomous object of study. It has not been concerned with using language data [for] gaining access to the *rich meaning constructions* upon which language operates. [. . .] A related shortcoming of modern work [. . .] is the sharp emphasis on separating components (e.g., syntactic, semantic, pragmatic) and attempting to study the grammatical or meaning structure of expressions independently of their function in building up discourse, and independently of their use in reasoning and communication. (ibid: 4-5, my emphasis)

It is just these underlying "rich meaning constructions" which need to be made explicit in complex debates such as those surrounding English language and literature.

2.2 Two other types of mappings

In addition to the projection mappings of conceptual metaphor discussed in section 2.1 above, two other types of mapping, *pragmatic function mappings* and *schema mappings*, also play a role in building and linking *mental spaces* (ibid: 11). (The term *mental spaces* is discussed in section 2.3 below.)

2.2.1 Pragmatic function mappings

Pragmatic function mappings account for metonymy, in which counterparts in two corresponding domains are mapped onto each other. One example given by Fauconnier (ibid) is that of authors matched with the books they write. It is through this metonymy that we say "Shakespeare" when we are referring to a collection of writings rather than a historical person. It is not difficult to see that such a mapping may be involved, along with the conduit metaphor projection mapping, in encouraging us to see a person's meanings as being "contained" within a set of texts.

2.2.2 Schema mappings

Through schema mappings, we place a particular situation within a general, idealised context – a schema, frame, or model. Fauconnier cites Fillmore's example of a "buying and selling" frame, "with a buyer, seller, merchandise, currency, price, and a rich set of inferences pertaining to ownership, commitments, exchange, and so on" (ibid). Any discussion of a particular instance of buying or selling will involve a schema mapping of these knowledge structures from the general frame of buying and selling. Fauconnier also notes that "[i]n Langacker's cognitive grammar framework (Langacker 1987, 1991), grammatical constructions and vocabulary items 'call up' meaning schemas" (ibid). We will see later how, through certain vocabulary items, schema mappings are called up and participate in constructing beliefs about English.

2.3 Mapping networks and *conceptual integration* or *blending*

> Blending is in principle a simple operation. It operates on two Input mental spaces to yield a third space, the *Blend*. The Blend *inherits partial structure* from the Input spaces and *has emergent structure* of its own. (Turner and Fauconnier 1998: 269)

The mappings we have looked at so far have involved two domains, where one domain is understood in terms of another (such as TIME being understood by projecting partial structure from the domain of MONEY). Now we will look at more complex networks of mappings, where instead of a source domain simply providing structure for understanding a target domain, two input spaces project structure into a third *blended space*. It is important to point out that *input spaces* may be of two types.[4] They may be on-line local constructions of meaning that are more restricted and more provisional than a *domain* (a term which is reserved for an entire area of structured knowledge and experience, such as time, money, love, journey), or, in the case of metaphor, they may be whole domains.

Turner and Fauconnier (1998) provide an example of blending, using the word "safe" to demonstrate how "[t]he language [. . .] does not autonomously specify [semantic] meanings that later undergo pragmatic processing. Rather, it guides meaning construction directly in context." (Fauconnier 1997: 17). In this case, the language is providing clues for the construction of a blend:

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[4] The terminology of this field has been evolving over the past few years. For example, what is now known as *conceptual integration* or *blending* was earlier (Fauconnier 1994) referred to as *frame mixing*. There seems to have been a similar shift in the use of the term *mental space*. Initially in the theory, a *mental space* appeared to be distinct from a *domain*; yet it is clear from Fauconnier's discussion of the two idioms presented in this section that *input spaces* may also consists of whole domains. Perhaps this has arisen because Fauconnier's (1994) earlier work on mental spaces predated his notion of conceptual blending. Possibly this terminological shift is still in progress, since Kövecses, in his (2002: 227ff.) summary of Fauconnier's work on blending, apparently contradicts Fauconnier (1997: 149ff.) on which his summary is based. Reading Fauconnier (1997, chapter 6 "Blends"), it is clear that an "Input mental space" (ibid: 149) may be a domain (ibid: 169). In contrast to this, and presumably in an attempt to clarify things, Kövecses (2002: 227) explicitly distinguishes the two: "A mental space is always much smaller than a conceptual domain, and it is also much more specific."

the child is safe; the beach is safe; the shovel is safe

> There is no fixed property that "safe" assigns to *child*, *beach*, and *shovel*. [. . .] "Safe" does not assign a property but rather prompts us to evoke scenarios of danger appropriate for the noun and the context. [. . .] Instead of assigning a simple property, the adjective is prompting us to perform a conceptual integration where the inputs are, on the one hand, a frame of danger, and on the other, the specific situation of the child on the beach with a shovel. The output of the integration (the blend) is the counterfactual scenario in which the child is harmed. The word "safe" implies a disanalogy between the counterfactual blend and the specific input, with respect to the entity designated by the noun. (Turner and Fauconnier 274)

2.3.1 Two examples of conceptual integration in idioms

The discussions of two idioms in the following sections show how in blending, a third space is created into which elements of structure from two input spaces are projected. In this third space, new meaning arises that was not present in the input: this is known as *emergent structure*. This emergent structure often consists of new relationships between elements of structure projected into the blend from the inputs. In this network model, in addition to the blended space, there is also a fourth space, the *generic space* which represents highly abstract elements common to the input spaces. This sort of more abstract shared structure is required to allow mappings to take place at all.

The examples below serve two purposes. Firstly, they exemplify the pervasiveness of blends in everyday language, and secondly they provide clear instances of the workings of the cognitive operation of blending to prepare for the examples from the English language debate introduced in section 3.

2.3.1.1 Steam coming out of one's ears

The metaphorical projection mapping ANGER IS HOT LIQUID IN A CONTAINER is familiar in expressions such as "He was seething (with anger)" or "The anger simmered inside her". In addition to such relatively straightforward formulations, there are also more obviously blended versions. In the consumer text cited in section 2.1.1, the idiom "steam coming out of one's ears" is used to evoke extreme anger. Kövecses (2002: 233) offers an explanation of how the "steam" blend works:

> In the source, there is a container with a hot fluid inside, like a pot, which produces steam when heated. In the target, there is a person who is getting more and more angry, showing signs of losing control over anger as a result of a continued cause. But there is also a blended space of an angry person with steam coming out of his ears. This blend is a result of projection from both the source and the target: The steam comes from the source, while the head of a person with ears comes from the target. There is no steam in the target and there is no head with ears in the source. But they are fused in a distinct conceptual space – the blend.

2.3.1.2 Digging your own grave

The following explanation, from Turner and Fauconnier (1998), of the idiom *digging your own grave* shows that this expression is, strictly speaking, illogical when the two inputs are considered on their own – that is, the domain of graves and dying on the one hand and the domain of unwittingly ensuring one's own downfall on the other. However, projection of structure from each of these two domains results in a blend, the logic of which we not only accept but find useful, despite the strange reversal of the causality and intentionality of the source space.

> The metaphor "digging your own grave" is [. . .] a two-sided network with frame structure provided from both inputs. Death and graves come from the source input of the "dying" scenario, but causality and intentionality are projected from the target. In the blended space, digging is unintentional and brings one closer to death, just as making mistakes is unintentional and brings one closer to failure in the target. In the source input, the causal order has the reverse direction: there, it is someone's dying that causes a grave to be dug, and the digging is intentional. The temporal order of events (digging before dying, making mistakes before failing) is also projected from the target input. (277)

Figure 2 schematically represents the conceptual integration involved in the idiom *digging your own grave*. After the work of Fauconnier and Turner, an input mental space is conventionally shown as a circle, while a blended space is shown as a square within a circle.

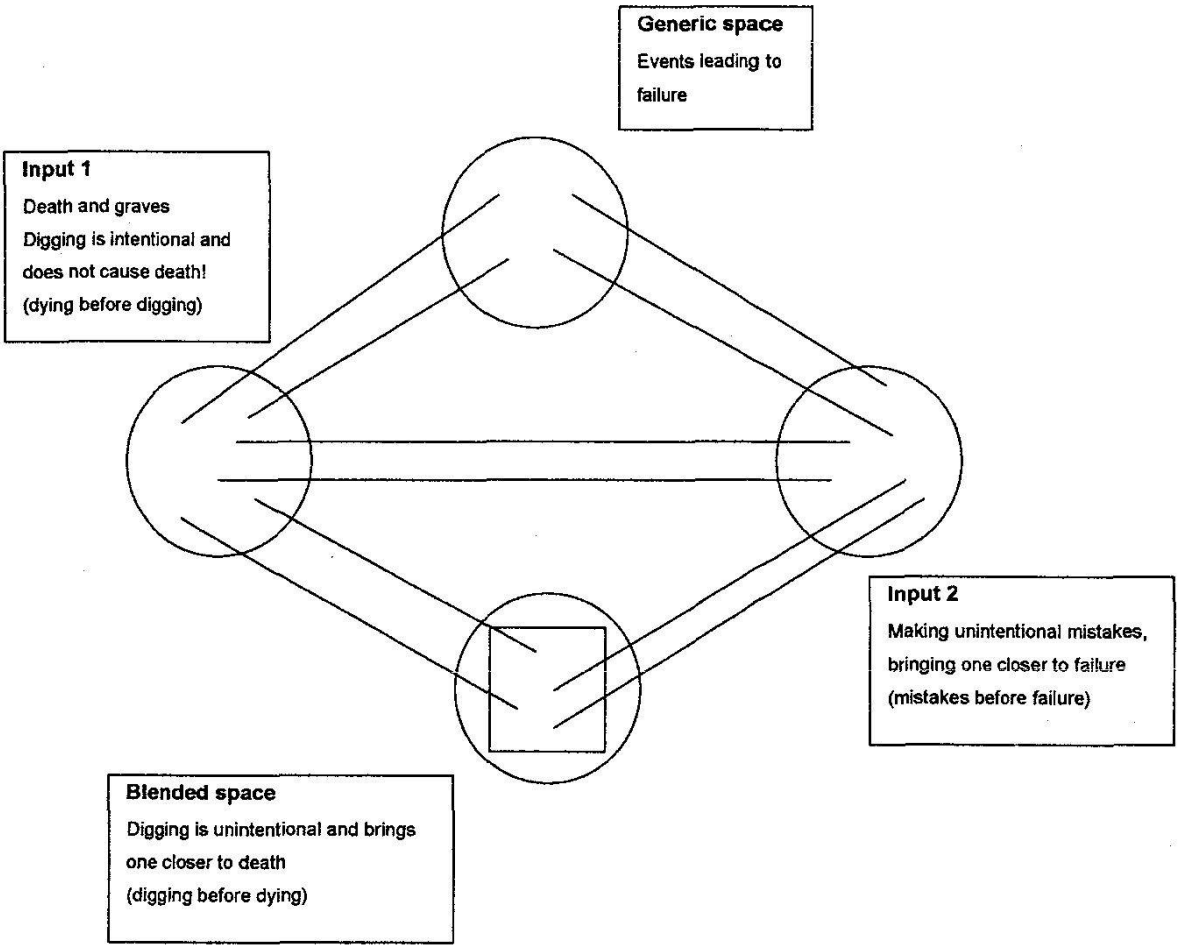

Fig. 2: Digging your own grave

3. Some mental spaces of English

In this section, we will apply the framework of cognitive mappings, as outlined above, to several quotations. Each of these quotations has previously been selected by linguists as typical of reactionary attitudes to the use of the English language in the UK and as an international language. They thus exemplify a lay attitude to language which openly defies widely-held tenets of modern linguistics and which frequently exasperates linguists in its tenacity and immunity to argument. Generally, then, there is incomprehension on both sides of the debate, if it can be called that. What this section seeks to do is to make explicit the sort of cognitive mappings that are regularly made by so-called non-linguists, in order to uncover just why people hold to their linguistic beliefs with such vigour.

The mappings involved in extracts (1) to (6) include all three types discussed in section 2 above: projection, pragmatic function, and

schema mappings. These mappings from various input spaces give rise to blends, in which emergent structure is built that is not present in the input spaces. Once established, this structure in a blend can develop according to its own emergent logic ("running the blend," Fauconnier 1997: 151) – a sort of closed circuit which helps explain how belief systems that seem incredible to some can be so firmly espoused by others.[5]

3.1 Our distinctive property

> (1) Others may speak and read English – more or less – but it is our language not theirs. It was made in England by the English and it remains *our distinctive property*, however widely it is learnt or used. (Powell 1988, cited in Greenbaum 1990: 15, my emphasis)

In extract (1), Powell expresses a commonly encountered proprietorial attitude to language. English is constructed as a valuable object – one which can be hired out, but which remains the inalienable "property" of those who "made" it, and which needs to be jealously guarded from those who would steal it.

In this mapping, the English language is seen as an inert, bounded object, rather than a variable, dynamic, interactive process unfolding and changing through time. Furthermore, it is claimed as the property of one particular people.

It cannot, of course, be said to be "*our* distinctive property," for the "English" who "made" this language are not only for the most part long since dead, but many of them were, among others, Celtic, Germanic, and even (God forbid) French. Even synchronically, the concept of a "people" is a mental construction. The concept of a people's ownership of a language through time is even more so. This is all the more absurd

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[5] Furthermore, from some of the latest work in blending theory (see, for example, Turner (2004) http://markturner.org/blending.html), it appears that blends may in turn become base spaces for further mappings. Thus, given that blends may develop their own internal logic, it is not at all surprising that participants in all kinds of debates frequently find it impossible even to comprehend each other's positions – let alone reach consensus. As Fauconnier (1997: 13) has warned, "the domains that we need in order to understand language functioning are not in the combinatorial structure of language itself; they are in the cognitive constructions that language acts upon. As long as language is studied as an autonomous self-contained structure, such domains will be invisible." It is noteworthy that Fauconnier (ibid) points to support for the theory of conceptual blending from many fields, including recent work in neurobiology in the form of evidence for "physically instantiated mappings and connections between areas of the brain."

given the descriptive difficulty of specifying just exactly what "English" includes, and whether the "English" also own the various innovations that have grown up in L1 and L2 varieties around the world – or perhaps these are simply not part of "real" English.

The following elements of structure are projected from the inputs: language as a bounded object (conduit metaphor projection mapping) and the English language as specific to the English people (metonymic pragmatic function mapping). In the blend, the emergent logic dictates that this object must be possessed by those to whom it is specific.

A diagrammatic representation of the blend is given in Figure 3.

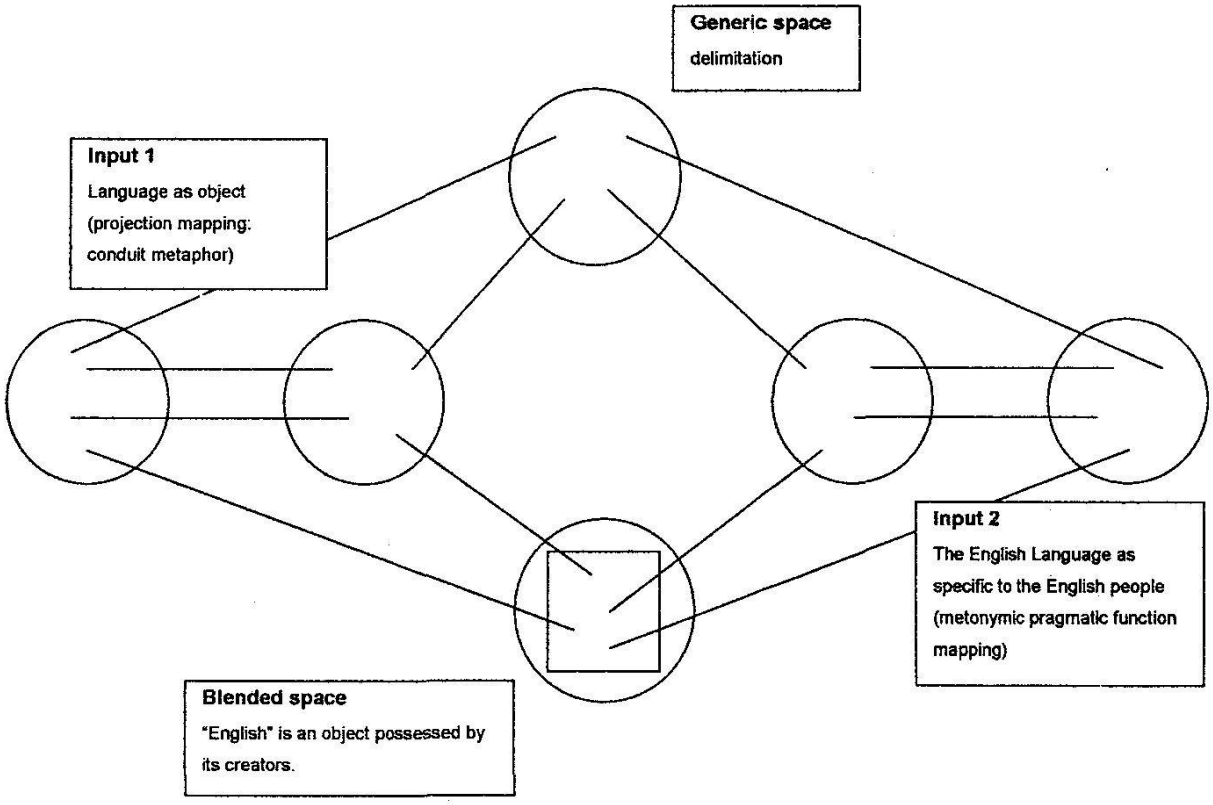

Fig. 3: Our distinctive property

3.2 An excellent vehicle

> (2) Unanimity in usage makes standard English *an excellent vehicle* for clear communication, for *conveying information and ideas without misunderstanding.* It is no accident that standard English, rather than a dialect, has become an international language. (Marenbon 1987: 25, my emphasis)

The lines quoted as (2) are taken from *English our English*, a pamphlet produced by John Marenbon for the right-wing think-tank The Centre for Policy Studies.

Firstly, as seen in (1), the conduit metaphor projection mapping is important in constructing Marenbon's blended space of English in (2). We can immediately see a version of this mapping, whereby standard English is seen as a reliable container and conveyor for ideas. As discussed earlier in relation to the conduit metaphor, no language has the power of "conveying ideas." Furthermore, no language or dialect is any more immune from problems of "misunderstanding" than any other. So, in this projection mapping, features that pertain to speakers and contexts are mapped onto the language itself. It is clearly speakers, their joint ability to converse in a certain dialect, and their willingness to work at negotiating linguistic meaning in contexts that will ensure successful communication (or not), no matter whether the dialect is Cockney, Scouse, or standard English.

Secondly, there is a schema mapping, where the word "standard" calls up (in Langacker's terms, see 2.2.2) certain associated meaning schemas (see, for example, Williams 1982). In this context, the schemas most likely to be called up in relation to "standard" are those of "assured quality," "authority," and so on, rather than ones of "ordinariness" (as in the derogatory "bog-standard"!). Schemas of "standardisation" and "norms" may also be less salient in this type of context than they arguably should be in conceptualising "standard English." Abstract structure in the generic space shared by the inputs would probably include transfer/interaction, delimitation, and authority.

The title of the pamphlet from which (2) above is taken, *English our English*, is clearly a play on *England our England*, mapping land onto language. So here we have a metonymic pragmatic function mapping similar to that seen in (1). In the blend for (2), "standard English" is constructed as a kind of high-quality device for containing and efficiently conveying unambiguous ideas. Such blends often lie tacitly behind important political and social processes, as in the UK English language education debate.

3.3 Mugging de Queen's English

(3)
I ent have no gun
I ent have no knife
but mugging de Queen's English
is the story of my life

I dont need no axe
to split up yu syntax
I dont need no hammer
to mash up yu grammar

John Agard (cited in Kalogjera 1998: 124)

(4) *Grammar was a predictable victim* of the self-indulgent sixties. It was *associated with* authority, tradition and elitism. Grammatical rules, *like* so many other rules at the time, were regarded as an intolerable infringement of personal freedom [. . .]. The *overthrow of grammar coincided with* the acceptance of *the equivalent of* creative writing in social behaviour. *As* nice points of grammar were mockingly dismissed as pedantic and irrelevant, *so* was punctiliousness in such matters as honesty, responsibility, property, gratitude, apology and so on. (Rae 1982, cited in Cameron and Bourne 1988: 150, my emphasis)

(5) If you allow *standards* to slip to the stage where *good English* is no better than bad English, where people turn up filthy at school [...] all these things tend to *cause* people to have no standards at all, once you *lose standards* then there's no imperative to stay out of crime. (Norman Tebbit,[6] cited in Doherty 2000: 7, my emphasis)

(6) It may be in vain, but let's have a go at trying to eliminate foul and abusive language from our schools and our homes. Obscenity and foulness are a prerequisite of thuggishness and brutality. *If we reduce one, we can reduce the other.* (David Blunkett,[7] cited in Doherty ibid, my emphasis)

"There is a clear *connection made in such thinking* between grammatical order and the social order *where it is one small step from splitting infinitives to splitting heads open on football terraces . . .*" (Carter 1991, cited in Doherty ibid, my emphasis). That Carter points to a "connection made in such

[6] Norman Tebbit was a Cabinet Minister in Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in the UK in the 1980s.
[7] David Blunkett is currently a Cabinet Minister in Tony Blair's Labour government.

thinking" is an indication that there are cognitive mappings at work in this sort of conceptualisation of "English". Extracts (3) to (6) reflect a frequently voiced concern in debates over "standards" and the standard language. This is the posited connection between language variety and types of social behaviour.

The italicised words in extracts (4) to (6) provide evidence for the existence of specific mappings between mental spaces of language variety and social behaviour in the thinking that produced these assertions. A complex multi-space mapping network is set up for this kind of mental construction. Elements of structure from the domain of "social norms" are projected onto the domain of "linguistic norms" (projection mapping): in this mapping, linguistic variety is negatively equated with social dissension. In the blended space, a surprising causal relationship emerges through interaction with the other inputs.

At least three other inputs are involved. Firstly, there is structure from the notion of "grammar/good English" as a bounded entity (conduit metaphor projection mapping), and secondly from a frame of human victims of violent social disorder (schema mapping evoked by the domain of "social order"). Another important schema mapping involves associated meaning schemas of "standard(s)" (see extract (5) and section 3.2): through the word "standard(s)", a link is made available between spaces relating to language (the standard language) and spaces relating to social behaviour (acceptable standards of behaviour).

The generic space is one of abstract notions of order and bounded entities whose integrity needs protection against violation. In the blend, a personified and unitary "grammar/good English" is the victim of violent linguistic disorder. This is clearly seen in extracts (3) to (6), for example in Rae's "Grammar was a predictable victim . . ." (4).

Agard's poem (3) both makes the blend explicit "mugging de Queen's English" and seems to challenge its logic "I dont need no axe / to split up yu syntax" (that is, "My use of language has nothing to do with physical violence"). This "story of my life" shows that, whatever our personal or professional views, these potent blends need to be understood and taken seriously.

A diagrammatic representation of the blend is given in Figure 4.

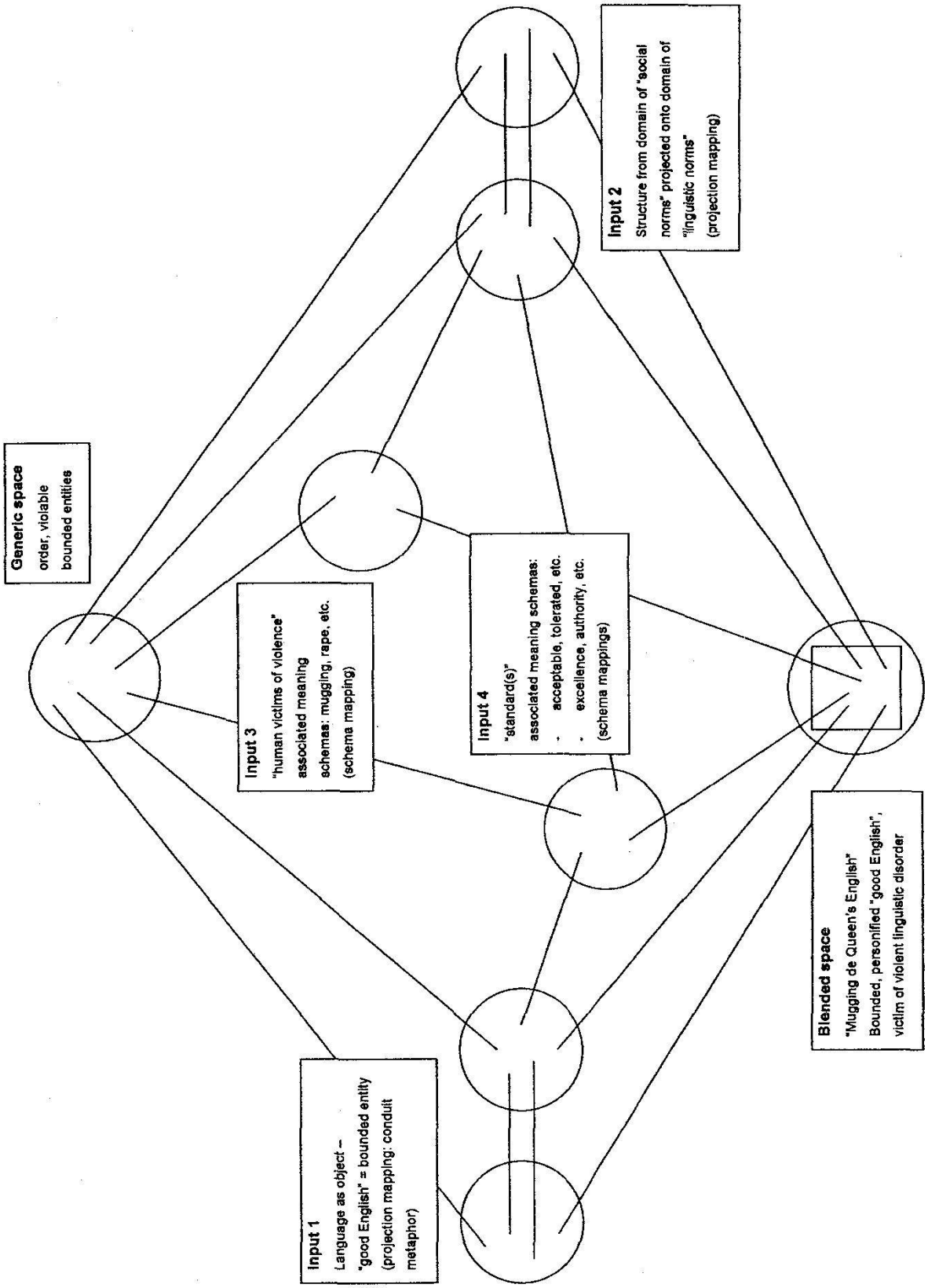

Fig. 4: Mugging de Queen's English

4. Conclusion

> Conceptual blending has a fascinating dynamics and a crucial role in how we think and live. It operates largely behind the scenes. Almost invisibly to consciousness, it choreographs vast networks of conceptual meaning, yielding cognitive products, which, at the conscious level, appear simple. (Turner 2004: 1)

Around the time of the introduction of a National Curriculum for England and Wales in the 1980s, I began a first analysis of the metaphors underlying the discourse of the debates surrounding the place of standard English and grammar teaching in schools (Wilson 1992). I was already convinced that the trench warfare of this dispute required investigation at a deeper cognitive level than was being offered at the time. Since then, work on cognitive mappings has developed considerably, and the current theory of conceptual integration now offers a more sophisticated tool that goes beyond simple two-domain metaphorical mappings. The present paper, then, is a tentative starting point for a more refined cognitive linguistic analysis of debates and controversies surrounding the English language. The theory of conceptual blending, as it has developed over the past decade, holds out the realistic prospect of more explanatory accounts of human cognition in this and many other fields.

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