Connectives and frames: *But* and the frame-inducing power of political discourse
Sarah E. Blackwell, The University of Georgia

Since Grice's (1975, 1989) proposal that the connective *but*, as well as *therefore* and *so*, conveys a conventional implicature, there has been a great shift in pragmatics toward analyzing connectives in terms of their meanings and functions in discourse, which could not be accounted for merely in terms of the propositions they connect. Early on, Blakemore (1987), taking a relevance-theoretical perspective, maintained that discourse connectives "constrain the interpretation of the utterances that contain them by virtue of the inferential connections they express" (1987:105). Later, Fraser (1999), who classified *but* and other conjunctions as *discourse markers*, defines these elements as "a class of lexical expressions that…signal a relationship between the segment they introduce, S2, and the prior segment, S1", adding that they "have a core meaning, which is procedural, not conceptual, and their more specific interpretation is 'negotiated' by the context, both linguistic and conceptual" (1999:931). In the present paper, I question and investigate the applicability of these generalizations to the connective *but*, and specifically, whether or not this connective, when used in spoken discourse, 1) <u>always</u> constrains the interpretation of the utterances (or segments) it connects, and 2) <u>always</u> has a core procedural meaning signaling a contrastive relationship between the segments it connects (see, e.g., Fraser 2006). However, most importantly, I seek a more explanatory and heuristically sound account of the connective *but*, by analyzing its occurrences in the political discourses of two American presidents, Barack Obama and Donald Trump, in terms of frame analysis, following Kitis's (2000) claim that frame analysis can provide a more consistent and coherent framework for analyzing connectives like *but* and *and*.

In an earlier paper, following Bednarek's (2005) analysis, I identified frames as "underlying knowledge structures that have conventionalized, prototypical [i.e. stereotypical] features" (Blackwell 2018:284). Furthermore, I emphasized the role of stereotypes in these knowledge structures, as Tannen (1979) had done earlier, since "we access our knowledge of stereotypical situations, which is stored and organized in our memory, for any act of interpretation, be it the interpretation of a written text, a scene or situation we perceive, or a conversational exchange" (Blackwell 2018:286). With regard to Grice's implicature-based proposal vis-à-vis the utility of frames for accounting for the meaning and functioning of *but*, Kitis points out that, following Grice, when a speaker utters (1)

(1) She is poor but she is honest.

s/he implies "that there is some contrast between poverty and honesty, or between her poverty and her honesty" (Kitis 2000:260). However, Kitis adds that this view is tantamount to suggesting that there is some universal premise such as "*If one is poor then one is not honest* or *Poor people are not honest*" (2000:36). Kitis suggests that instead of assuming the existence of such a universal premise, the contrast should be "isolated and restricted to the two conjoined propositions, *p* (her being poor) and *q* (her being honest) relative to a *certain goal of the discourse at issue* rather than to each other", adding that Grice "glosses over this important issue" (2000:360, my emphasis with italics). Two key ideas proposed by Kitis, on which I base my analysis of *but* for the present paper, are that 1) *but*, when analyzed in tandem with the segments it connects, activates background knowledge, beliefs, and ideologies; and 2) uses of the connective *but* "derive their conceptual import from ideological schemata" (Kitis 2000:363). Kitis cites the examples in (2) to show how *but* can be used "either intentionally or unintentionally, to configure or forge certain ideological attitudes" (2000:363):

(2)   a. He is a communist but he is a nice man.
        b. He is a communist; therefore, he is a nice man.
        c. He is a right-winger but he is a nice man.

In the present study, I shall argue that discourse segments conjoined by but in spoken political discourse, when taken in their entirety, reveal the speaker's underlying ideological frames, as well as his/her expectations of his/her interlocutor's frame-based expectations. Furthermore, I seek to support, via empirical data from transcribed political discourse, Kitis's argument that considering instances of *but* in speech as simply conventionally implicating a contrast, "would be to trivialize ideological issues of paramount importance", since, "[i]n the vast majority of cases, specific ideologies (as well as attempts to subvert them as in [1b and 1c]) can be activated by connectives" (2000:363-364). Examples such as those in (2) reveal that a speaker can both construct and convey different 'realities' via such utterances. Through the analysis of discourse segments conjoined by *but* within the context of political interviews and speeches produced by the current and most recent U.S. presidents (Trump and Obama), I shall demonstrate how the connective *but*, together with the segments it conjoins, both reveal two American politicians' underlying frame-based ideologies and, as Kitis proposed, have "the potential for activating such ideologies or, more generally, stereotypical knowledge, that is either intended to be communicated or to buttress what is communicated" (2000:364).

References
Bednarek, Monika A. 2005. "Frames revisited—the coherence-inducing function of frames." *Journal of Pragmatics*, 37, 685-705.
Blackwell, Sarah E. 2018. "Frames of reference and antecedentless anaphora in Spanish conversation." *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research* 47, 383-305.
Blakemore, Diane. 1987. *Semantic constraints on relevance*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
Blakemore, Diane. 2002. *Relevance and linguistic meaning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Fraser, Bruce. 1999 "What are discourse markers?" *Journal of Pragmatics* 31, 931-952.
Fraser, Bruce. 2006. "On the universality of discourse markers." *Pragmatic markers in contrast*, K. Aijmer and A.-M. Simon-Vandenbergen (eds.), 73-92. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
Grice, H. Paul. 1975. "Logic and conversation." *Syntax and semantics 3: Speech acts*, P. Cole and J. L. Morgan (eds.). 41-58. New York: Academic Press.
Grice, H. Paul. 1989. *Studies in the way of words*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Kitis, Eliza. 2000. "Connectives and frame theory: The case of hypotextual antinomial 'and'." *Pragmatics & Cognition* 8(2), 357-409.
Schourup, Lawrence. 1999. "Discourse markers." *Lingua* 107, 227-265.
Tannen, Deborah. 1979. "What's in a frame: Surface evidence for underlying expectations." *New directions in discourse processing*, R. O. Freedle (ed.), 137-181. Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex. (Reprinted in Tannen, D. (ed.). 1993. *Framing in discourse*, 14-56). Oxford: Oxford University Press.)