

Research Article

Violent inclusion of oxymora: An argument for a cultural-cognitive linguistics

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On the analytical side, this article deals with expressions *inclusive border* and *violent inclusion*, arguing that they are best viewed as an oxymoronic complex. Several more local claims are made in order to justify this view: the two expressions are categorized as indirect oxymora; they involve a series of metaphorical and metonymic steps; the oxymoron (by analogy to the cognitive linguistic view on metaphor and metonymy) is cognitive mechanism; the expressions *inclusive border* and *violent inclusion* involve amelioration of BORDER and pejoration of INCLUSION; the function as an oxymoronic complex against the background of a specific socio-political, culturally non-neutral redefined notion of BORDER.

On this basis, on the theoretical side, the article argues for a cultural-cognitive linguistics that would be, not merely a connection of cognitive linguistics and cultural linguistics, but a multifarious but coherent theoretical, full-fledged enterprise. The present study is hopefully a step towards an elaboration of such a model, where the ground has been laid by such scholars as Gary Palmer, Farzad Sharifian, Bert Peeters, Zoltán Kövecses, Chris Sinha, or Jerzy Bartmiński.

1. Introduction

In the third decade of the 21st century, contradictions have become the new normal: globalization goes hand-in-hand with localisms; English continues to enjoy its status of a global lingua franca although three quarters of the world's population do not speak it; English has also dominated the internet but has not prevented radical fragmentation in social media; humans are launching ever bolder space exploration projects but have caused dramatic destruction of their own planet, etc. On the one hand,

contradictory realities of this kind find reflection in antitheses, oxymora, or paradoxes; on the other hand, they exert extra pressure on speakers to exploit the potential of language in novel ways.

This study will explore two expressions that illustrate precisely this tendency: *inclusive border* and *violent inclusion*. They will be analyzed here as oxymora, even if their oxymoronic status need not appear as obvious to all speakers. It will be argued that their semantic imports can best be appreciated if they are considered jointly as an *oxymoronic complex*, grounded in a broader sociopolitical context.

This analytical exercise will also serve a more general, theoretical purpose: it is intended as a voice in support of integrating cultural linguistics with cognitive linguistics, in a joint inquiry into human cognition, culture, and language – out of hundreds of publications, a few prime examples include work on cultural metaphor (Kövecses 2005, 2014, 2020), cultural conceptualizations (Sharifian 2017a, b), cultural scenarios and cultural grammar (Palmer 1996, 2018), or biocultural, evolutionary, and psychological dimensions of language (Sinha 2000, 2015). Those efforts need to be intensified, to the point where we can propose a coherent approach that I would like to call *cognitive-cultural linguistics* (cf. Gład 2017).

2. *Inclusive border and violent inclusion*

Consider these instances of the use of *inclusive border* (emphasis added in all cases):

(1) The **Inclusive Border** project will support the generation and strengthening of business units for the vulnerable populations linked to the informal sale and distribution of liquid fuel in border areas in the north of Santander. (Inclusive Border/Frontera Inclusiva project website, <https://www.swisscontact.org/en/projects/inclusive-border-frontera-inclusiva>; accessed 13 Nov 2023)

(2) Safe and **Inclusive Border** between Slovakia and Ukraine (SIBSU)

Sharing just 97 km of border, the two countries are good neighbors and trustful friends. To continue good relations between Slovakia and Ukraine, the contact points for mutual learning and cooperation is needed. (<https://www.sfpa.sk/en/project/safe-and-inclusive-border-between-slovakia-and-ukraine-sibsu/>, accessed 29 Dec 2022)

(3) The implication of ISER in scientific, research and development projects at the Hungarian-Romanian border comes to actually prove how a long term **exclusive border** has been turning into an

inclusive border. A discontinuous border has become a true borderland, a strong development core in a region located on the outskirts of Hungary and Romania. (Horga & Brie 2013: 47)

(4) Demonstrators from Solidarity Across Borders gathered near Roxham Road in Hemmingford to promote an open and **inclusive border**.

(caption under the image “One arrested during heated demonstration at Lacolle border”, CTV Montreal, published and updated 19 May 2018; <https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/one-arrested-during-heated-demonstration-at-lacolle-border-1.3937547>, accessed 29 Dec 2022)

In all these examples, the border is viewed not as a dividing line that excludes but as a passage designed to connect and include. This seems antithetical or oxymoronic and begs the question in what sense is inclusive border still a border? However, the oxymoronic effect of *inclusive border* is not obvious to all speakers. In a personal exchange, David Ritchie has suggested that the notion of INCLUSION is part and parcel of the semantics of *border*, as evidenced in Merriam-Webster’s (n.d.) definition of the word as “an outer part or edge” (e.g. *at the borders of the forest*). Thus, in example (2), *inclusive* is synonymous with *permeable* and *inclusive border* is tautological more than oxymoronic.

Richie’s critique is valuable but needs to be qualified. On the one hand, the idea of border as permeable and inclusive space will in fact play a major role in the analysis below. On the other hand, I will assume that the word *border* has a rich semantic potential, embracing border as both an exclusive line and an inclusive space, but their status is unequal: in the sociopolitical context that will be outlined here, the “default setting” for border is a divisive barrier. When it is reconceptualized as inclusive, the less obvious aspects of its semantic potential are activated. Such is the case in example (2), but also in example (3), where *exclusive* vs. *inclusive border* are used contrastively. (We return to the notion of semantic potential in Section 3.2 below.)

The other expression analyzed here, *violent inclusion*, can be exemplified with the following excerpts:

(5) Crackdown economics: Policing of hawkers in Nairobi as **violent inclusion** (title of article, Dragsted 2019)

(6) Muslim women’s experiences of exclusion are often at the forefront of academic literature on ethnicity and race in Myanmar. Yet Muslim women’s varying experiences of exclusion involve more than discursive Othering and state violence. [...] We argue that capital articulates with social difference to create conditions of **violent inclusion** in precarious labor markets and the emergence of new labor subjectivities. (Frydenlund & Lei 2021, Abstract)

(7) Sometimes rehabilitation refers to a medical surgery and most often ends with the achievement of able-bodiedness. I call this unrelenting pressure to overcome disability “**violent inclusion**”—one is only included into a socialist society [of post-WWII Poland] by participating in the regime of rehabilitation. (Pamula 2020: 2)

(8) Where neoliberalism creates conditions for dispossession in the present as financialization and debt, the bordertown is the space of exclusion, elimination, and **violent inclusion**. (Matthew J. Irwin, *What is a Bordertown?*, <https://www.matthewjirwin.com/stng/bordertowns>, accessed 29 Dec 2022)

Examples (5)–(8) come from academic English but illustrate rather diverse contexts: policing, labour markets, efforts to forcefully overcome disability, and the specificity of bordertowns. In all, *violent inclusion* produces a clear aura of negativity or even covert aggression, in contrast to the predominantly positive associations of inclusion (as in *inclusive language* or *inclusive social policy*). Here, its positivity is challenged, or undermined, under the pressure of the semantics of *violent*.

In the remainder of this study, we will probe deeper into the nature of oxymora in general, into the context for the emergence of the two oxymora we are exploring, as well as into their cognitive architecture.

3. Towards a description of oxymora

3.1. Oxymora we live by?

The oxymoron has been defined as a mechanism that combines “contradictory and divergent concepts” that help explain a certain kind experience (Shurma & Lu 2018: 143, with reference to Gibbs 1994). Specifically, it helps capture experiences that involve incongruities, inconsistencies, or apparent anomalies. That challenge is met by the surprising propensity of the human mind, which is predisposed to “think in oppositions” or “categorise experience in terms of binary contrasts” (Lyons 1977: 271). For Albert Rothenberg, the oxymoron represents “Janusian thinking”: by analogy to the two-faced Roman god Janus, looking in two opposite directions so as to keep vigil of the interior and exterior of the house, the oxymoron realizes our “capacity to conceive and utilize two or more opposite or contradictory ideas, concepts, or images *simultaneously*” (Rothenberg 1971: 197, original emphasis).¹ Moreover, it has been claimed that this capacity underlies the construction of human conceptual systems on a par with metaphorization (Marina 2017), or even guides our thinking and actions in specific situations. For example, Gibbs (2021) points out that the slogan *Alone together* was

used during the COVID-19 pandemic to both frame our thinking and promote a particular social behaviour of “Keeping together by staying apart”.² Also the two expressions analyzed in this article, *inclusive border* and *violent inclusion*, being deeply embedded in a sociopolitical context (see Section 4 below), are more than mere reflections of that context: they guide people’s behaviour and actions within it.

An important dimension of those expressions is valuation: they involve axiologically opposite processes of amelioration and pejoration: in *inclusive border*, the notion of BORDER is ameliorated under the impact of INCLUSION, while in *violent inclusion*, INCLUSION undergoes pejoration under the pressure of the notion of VIOLENCE. This double-edged axiology, however, is just an aspect of a more complex “narrative” of borders in which those two expressions play a major role. It is in order to capture the coherence of this narrative that I argue for viewing *inclusive border* and *violent inclusion* jointly as an oxymoronic complex. On a more general level, by postulating the existence of this sociopolitically grounded complex, I argue for a contextual cultural-cognitive linguistics as that would seriously deal with the cultural grounding, contextual modulations, and cognitive architecture of linguistic expressions.

3.2. How oxymora are (perhaps) made: parameters of word semantics

Inclusive border and *violent inclusion* are linked by the notion of INCLUSION; yet, the idea that they are best analyzed as a complex requires more refined justification. This kind of analysis responds to the view that meanings are made, constructed, or activated in usage, rather than as “semantic content” that “sits” in words or language units. Meanings do not reside in linguistic forms, nor do they dwell in individual minds, but emerge and function in intersubjective socio-cultural spaces that require participation of conceptualizers in joint actions with shared goals and intentions (Tomasello et al. 2005). It is within those spaces that they acquire their value beyond individual conceptualization, i.e. through *cultural cognition* (cf. Frank 2015, Sharifian 2017b).

Following the model proposed in Głaz (2002), I will assume that the emergence of lexical meaning in intersubjective space involves three parameters:

- i. the *semantic potential* of a given linguistic unit (for simplicity’s sake, a word), which embraces the entire conceptual universe that it can potentially activate;
- ii. its *relationship to other items* within its lexical field (i.e., to other, relevant regions in conceptual space), and

iii. *contextual modulations* of its use.

This model can be applied to an explication of the semantics of *border*, which underlies the *inclusive border–violent inclusion* complex.

Re (i). The meaning of *border* embraces the both exclusion and inclusion: this is the word's semantic potential. However, their status within it is asymmetrical: by default borders are exclusive (or exclusionary), while inclusion may or may not be contextually exploited and activated in usage.

Re (ii). *Border* also stands in a complex relationship to *boundary*, *barrier*, or *frontier* – the semantics of those words partially overlap but also have unique characteristics. For example, Głaz (2021) finds that, in the context of refugee movements, boundaries are usually natural and therefore neutral, whereas (political) borders and (social) barriers tend to be human-imposed and divisive. In another study, Underhill (2017) views boundaries as frequently welcome and useful for protection and security. In relation to those, a frontier is a space of exploration and contact; it is often romanticized and calls for adventurous action but also involves brutality and cruelty. An alternative view can be found in the key publication for the present study, discussed in more detail below, namely Mezzadra & Neilson's (2013) *Border as Method*: geopolitical borders are said to generate overlapping, connecting, and disconnecting "symbolic, linguistic, cultural, and urban boundaries" as "new forms of domination and exploitation" (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013: vii). This stands in contrast to Głaz (2021) in two respects: first, borders are viewed as more basic constructs that lead to the emergence of boundaries; second, both borders and boundaries are human-made and used purposefully for domination and control.³

As can be seen, the relationship between *border* and other lexical items is complex and subject to alternative analyses. This point, important as it is, lies beyond the focus of this study and will not be further pursued here.

Re (iii). Contextual modulation of *border* is finely illustrated in example (3), where *inclusive border* acquires its meaning through contrast with *exclusive border*. Example (4), in turn, shows that the presence of inclusive borders cannot be taken for granted or there would be no need for demonstrators to advocate for it through street action for it. Therefore, although David Ritchie (recall Section 2 above) rightly points out that the border of the forest is inclusive (in the sense of 'permeable'), political borders are basically instituted to separate and divide and can only *become* inclusive through purposeful action. Because inclusion so effected is heavily controlled, it may become an instrument of violence (hence *violent inclusion*).

We have outlined here a possible development of the semantics of *border* in its three dimensions: semantic potential, relationship to other relevant lexical items, and contextual modulations in actual instances of its use. Below we look at a specific sociopolitical understanding of the border, against which the cognitions involved in the oxymoronic complex *inclusive border–violent inclusion* will be discussed.

4. Border as space, instrument, and method

As has been hinted above, the joint conceptualization of *inclusive border* and *violent inclusion* will be considered here in the context of the border (in the broad sense of heterogeneous political, social, cultural, economic, temporal, conceptual, linguistic, and other borders) redefined by Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson in the book *Border as Method* (2013). The authors see borders as much more than dividing lines.

1. Borders are spaces that encompass the joint dynamics of politics, power, and violence (pp. 3–4), activated “in the formation, patrolling, reinforcement, and [border] crossing” (p. 195). Those, in turn, are effected through the use of “power devices and technologies” (p. 196).
2. The border is also a tool, a method, or even an institution; it is a way of performing actions: borders do not only block flows of people, money, labour, or goods but can be used as instruments to articulate them (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013: 3).
3. Borders can be quasi-agents (my term, A.G.) that act on people. They “cross the lives of millions of men and women who are on the move, or [...] have borders cross them” (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013: 6). The authors invoke a Latinx slogan common in the United States: “We did not cross the border, the border crossed us” (p. 264). As a consequence, people are subjected to “segmented assimilation” (p. 156, with reference to Portes & Zhou 1993).
4. Borders are actively proliferated so that political, social, cultural, conceptual, linguistic, and temporal borders are produced. There are also internal borders, which Mezzadra & Neilson exemplify with the French banlieues. Those are especially divisive in the social sense and revive “the colonial distinction between citizen and subject” (p. 155).
5. Borders are also actively transformed, which leads to what Mezzadra & Neilson (2013: 6) capture by means of another oxymoron: *creative destruction* of spaces and times. Borders have a “world-configuring function” (p. 4, after Balibar 2002: 79): they divide but also structure, channel, and enforce decisions, moves, movements, and actions, creating realities. For example, borders

“produce” subjects from mere flows of people (Panagiotidis & Tsianos 2007: 82, in Mezzadra & Neilson 2013: 183).

6. Thus, borders destroy and create, exclude and include at the same time: exclusion and inclusion are not opposites but form a continuum: “Borders establish multiple points of control along key lines and geographies of wealth and power, ... inclusion exist[s] in a continuum with exclusion, rather than in opposition to it” (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013: 6). Borders exclude and include people or exclude by including them.⁴

Mezzadra & Neilson also distinguish between the concepts of the border and the wall, in that the function of the former is not so much to exclude and separate (the primary function of walls) but to regulate migrant labor (2013: 8, with reference to Brown 2010).⁵ The regulating process, however, can bring very different consequences to those subjected to it, as pointed out by Thomas Nail, for whom the border is “a yoke or filter that allows some migrants to pass through with only minor inconvenience, others to obtain work under illegal and exploitive conditions, and others still to be caught and held for years in detention centers without charges” (Nail 2015: 28–29). Mezzadra & Neilson (2013: 157–166), following Castles (1995) call it *differential inclusion*, which often proceeds violently:

...the image of the border as a wall, or as a device that serves first and foremost to **exclude** ... is misleading in the end. Isolating a single function of the border does not allow us to grasp the flexibility of this institution. Nor does it facilitate an understanding of the diffusion of practices and techniques of border control within territorially bound spaces of citizenship and their associated labor markets. We claim that borders are equally **devices of inclusion** that select and filter people and different forms of circulation in ways no **less violent** than those deployed in **exclusionary** measures. (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013: 6; emphasis added)

Violent inclusion embraces all kinds of practices where individuals (typically, although not necessarily, minorities) are forced – through legislation, administrative requirements, or simply by circumstances – to be included into another society or community, not so much against their will, but in ways that they cannot control or that deprive them of agency. In other words, inclusion may situate individuals “within borders”, and yet exclude them at the same time by placing them in precarious situations of vulnerability. Thus, inclusion and exclusion may not only be viewed as co-occurring but

linked functionally, so that borders (as methods) exclude *through* inclusion. This is why they tend to be proliferated in number and kind – as Betty Rouland points out, “citizens of the global village experience violent realities linked with the constant production of multidimensional mobile borders” (Rouland 2016: 4). Axiology here is rampant and overwhelming but ambiguous: humans want to be included but not violently included.

5. Probing into *inclusive border* and *violent inclusion*

As already indicated, *inclusive border* and *violent inclusion* will be analyzed here as an oxymoronic complex. In *inclusive border*, the predominantly portentous notion of BORDER is ameliorated through the positive notion of INCLUSION, and then that positivity is scaled down in *violent inclusion* through the notion of VIOLENCE. A more detailed account is developed in subsequent sections below.

5.1. *Inclusive border and violent inclusion as indirect oxymora*

Both *inclusive border* and *violent inclusion* are legitimate candidates for a what Shen (1987) classifies as *indirect oxymora*, slightly modified below (for a discussion of the notion see also Gibbs & Kearney 1994; Shurma & Lu 2018). Naturally, indirect oxymora stand in a relationship to *direct* ones: a direct oxymoron is a “structure which consists of two terms which are antonyms, namely, whose only difference consists of a change in the ‘+/-’ sign of their lowest, distinctive, feature, all others being identical” (Shen 1987: 109) – examples include *a feminine man*, *living death*, etc. An indirect oxymoron is more complex in that it involves, in Shen’s original formulation, “a structure in which one of [the oxymoron’s] two terms is not the direct antonym of the other, but rather the *hyponym of its antonym*” (Shen 1987: 109, emphasis original). Its lexical architecture can only be appreciated in relation to another expression as a reference frame. Shen’s example is *sweet sorrow*, which the author relates to *bitter entities* (better: *bitter entity*): *sorrow* is a hyponym of *bitter entity*, while *sweet* and *bitter* are antonymous (Shen 1987: 110). At this point, Shen’s definition needs to be slightly modified: we will take an indirect oxymoron to be a structure whose two terms (*sweet* and *sorrow*) stand in a relationship to a certain reference-frame expression, such that one of those terms is a hyponym of that expression as a whole (*sorrow* is a hyponym of *bitter entity*), while the other term is an antonym of one element of that expression (*sweet* is an antonym of *bitter*) (Figure 1).

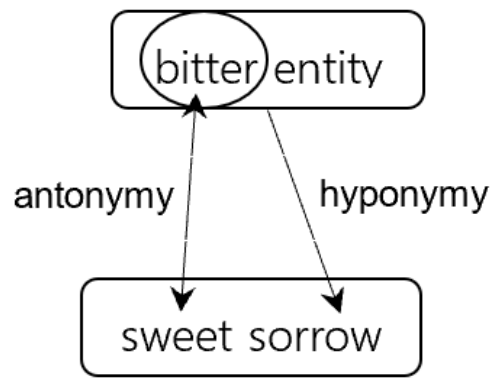


Figure 1. *Sweet sorrow* as an indirect oxymoron
(in the sense of Shen 1987, modified)

How could that model be applied to *inclusive border* and *violent inclusion*? For *inclusive border* I propose the reference-frame expression to be *exclusive* (or *exclusionary*) *margin*, so that *border* is a hyponym of *exclusive margin* (this rests on the premise that by default borders are exclusionary devices), whereas *inclusive* and *exclusive* are antonymous to each other (Figure 2).

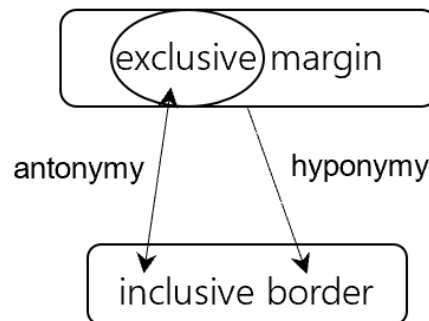


Figure 2. *Inclusive border* as an indirect oxymoron (in the sense of Shen 1987, modified)

For *violent inclusion*, the reference-frame expression to be *benevolent action*: *inclusion* is a hyponym of *benevolent action*, while *violent* is antonymous *benevolent* (Figure 3).

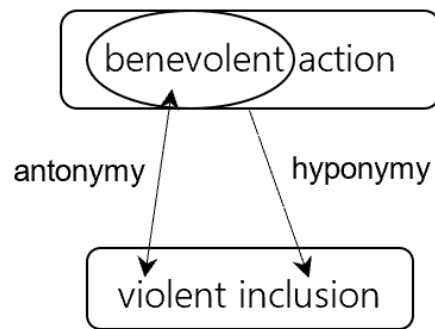


Figure 3. *Violent inclusion* as an indirect oxymoron (in the sense of Shen 1987, modified)

Such is the proposed lexical-semantic architecture of these two expressions as indirect oxymora. Given that similarly to metaphor and metonymy, the oxymoron has been shown to be a cognitive mechanism (Gibbs 1994; Gibbs and Kearney 1994; Shen 1997; Belekova 2006; Herrero Ruiz 2011), will now proceed to discuss their conceptual structures.

5.2. Conceptual oxymoron

5.2.1. Perspectivization

By inquiring into the conceptual structure of the two expressions, *inclusive border* and *violent inclusion*, I hope to show why I consider them to be oxymoronic, even if their oxymoronic status has been questioned as dubious. The argument will involve the idea that a full appreciation of their oxymoronic status requires the notion of an oxymoronic complex.

In both expressions the oxymoronic effect arises through the mechanism of *projection* as a way of *perspectivizing*, whereby one structure imposes (or *projects*) its properties onto another, so that “the target is construed from the perspective of a reference point [of] the source” (Barcelona 2011: 14). The complexity but also coherence of the mechanism can be grounded in Mezzadra & Neilson’s (2013) redefined notion of borders as heterogeneous spaces and instruments of control. First, in *inclusive border*, the notion of BORDER undergoes modulation under the influence of INCLUSION, or is construed from the perspective of inclusive space. Next, *violent inclusion* comes on stage, whereby

INCLUSION shifts its role from a factor that causes a semantic (and axiological) change to one that undergoes change: it is reperspectived from an action that is benevolent to one that is violent.

The power to (re) perspectivize is the essence of what Gerard Steen calls *deliberate metaphor*, ones that is used “to change the addressee’s perspective on the referent or topic [...] by making the addressee look at it from a different conceptual domain or space” (Steen 2008: 222). It is a “conscious invitation to adopt a different perspective” (p. 236). In Steen’s model, the conceptual potential of metaphor is exploited as a strategy for achieving a communicative effect: metaphor offers “an alien perspective on some target referent and topic, in order to do a comparison between two unlike things” (Steen 2023: 8). When that strategy is applied, it produces an effect that the human mind copes with thanks to its ability to handle contradictions, so that the impression of alienness and “things” being “unlike” yields to a coherent, if complex, conceptualization. In other words, the deliberate metaphor strategy may be used for oxymoronic “Janusian thinking” effects.

In this context, reconsider example (3) above, which projects an image of an exclusive border gradually changing into an inclusive one, with border being reperspectivized from borderline into a “borderland”, a “development core”, a space. And when Natalia Pamula in example (4) talks about the “regime of rehabilitation” in communist Poland as violent inclusion, she proposes to reperspectivize rehabilitation from a procedure driven by the desire to overcome disability to an act of violence, whereby those who do not “fit” are forcefully included into the environment inhabited by those considered “normal” or “healthy”. By analogy to deliberate metaphors, *inclusive border* and *violent inclusion* may be termed *deliberate oxymora*, involving a certain communicative intention: to effect a change in the hearer’s perspective.

In the next section, we explore deeper the possibility that *inclusive border* and *violent inclusion* have properties of conceptual metaphors and metonymies.

5.2.2. Highlighting: metaphor, metonymy, metaphonymy

In oxymora, an important role is played by polysemy, as in *plastic glasses* (Littlemore 2015: 74), in which the function of glasses is highlighted, whereas the material is downplayed. By analogy, in *inclusive border* the word *border* is polysemous between the sense ‘borderline’ and ‘an outer part’ (recall Merriam-Webster’s *at the borders of the forest*). Within its semantic potential, *border* harbours the meanings of ‘borderline’, ‘borderland’, ‘borderscape’, with possible connotations of permeability,⁶ as well as both inclusion and exclusion. However, the default sense of *border* activates the sense of

separation and division and it can only be reperspectivized as inclusive *in context*. That is, in contextualized *inclusive border*, border is reperspectivized from ‘divisive line’ to ‘inclusive space’. Once it is reconceptualized as space, metaphorical mappings are possible from physical space onto non-physical (economic, social, cultural, conceptual, linguistic, temporal) spaces. Those spaces teem with (inclusive) activity, which can be referred to through the metonymy SPACE FOR INCLUSIVE ACTIVITY IN THAT SPACE.⁷

This interplay of metaphorical and metonymic mappings can be captured in terms of metaphonymy (cf. Goossens 1990):⁸

Metaphor: BORDER IS PHYSICAL AND NON-PHYSICAL SPACE
 Metonymy: BORDER AS PHYSICAL AND NON-PHYSICAL SPACE STANDS FOR INCLUSIVE ACTIVITY WITHIN THAT SPACE

The resultant complex conceptualization may be classified as metaphor within metonymy (Figure 4).

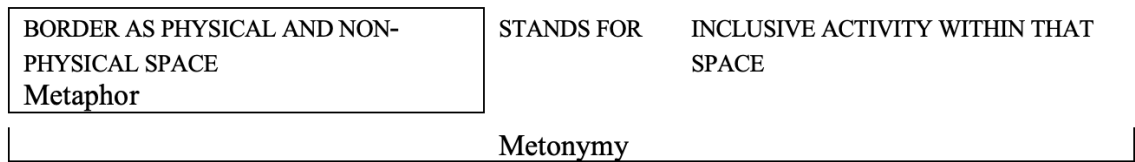


Figure 4. The metaphonymy of *inclusive border*: metaphor within metonymy

Finally, the complexity of the conceptualization is augmented through two more steps: the metaphor SPACE AS THE LOCUS OF ACTIVITY BECOMES AN INSTRUMENT OF THAT ACTIVITY, followed by the metonymy INSTRUMENT STANDS FOR ACTIVITY PERFORMED WITH IT (so that effectively, *inclusive border* is understood as an instrument for inclusive activity that takes place within its space). We are dealing here with a “metonymy from metaphor” kind of metaphonymy.⁹

The other expression, *violent inclusion*, allows for two alternative analyses: the mappings that it involves can be viewed as *either* metaphorical or metonymic. On the metaphorical interpretation, the mappings proceed from the domain of physical violence to violence inflicted on people in other contexts (sociopolitical, ethnic, cultural, commercial, linguistic, or otherwise). Some specific examples would include:

- physical force maps into social or political pressure;

- the threat of being abused physically maps into the threat of being denied one's rights;
- physically forcing someone to behave in a certain way maps into coercion into social or linguistic behaviour; etc.

Analogous mappings can be identified depending on what domain is activated along with the physical domain.

On the alternative, metonymic interpretation, the mappings between physical and non-physical violence are viewed as obtaining between subdomains of a broader, more general domain of violence.

Regardless of which interpretation is preferred, metaphorical or metonymic, the essence of the process captured with that conceptualization is deprivation of choice, agency, and control: both through physical and other kinds of violence, people are prevented from making unrestrained decisions. Both through exclusion and violent inclusion, they are denied the right to choose: exclusion deprives them of the right to belong, while violent inclusion deprives them of the right to not belong. Also, on either metaphorical or metonymic interpretation of the mappings between domains (or subdomains) of violence, *violent inclusion* is RESULT FOR ACTION kind of metonymy: (VIOLENT) INCLUSION STANDS FOR (VIOLENT) ACT/ACTIVITY OF INCLUDING (PERFORMED BY SOMEONE).

6. Oxymoronic complex

We are now in a position to propose a full explication of the oxymoronic complex involved, grounded in the context of the border, as it is redefined by Mezzadra and Neilson. To repeat: “borders are equally devices of inclusion that select and filter people [...] in ways no less violent than those deployed in exclusionary measures” (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013: 7). This brief but crucial quotation brings forth three key concepts: BORDERS, INCLUSION, and VIOLENCE, and in doing that it lays the ground for a simultaneous activation of *inclusive borders* and *violent inclusion* into a coherent oxymoronic complex, even if neither expression appears here in this exact form.

The complex is presented below as consisting of two major stages and eight specific steps – this layout is proposed for the sake convenience and clarity. The linear listing of the conceptualizations is a simplification into linearity of a multifarious, multidimensional body of cognitions. Therefore, by presenting it here in this format I am not making a claim that such are precisely the details (or sequence) of the cognitions involved.

Inclusive border – violent inclusion
Oxymoronic complex

STAGE 1: *inclusive border*

1. Metaphor: border-as-line is reconceptualized as a space
2. Metaphor: physical space is reconceptualized as non-physical (economic, social, cultural, linguistic) space/spaces (BORDER IS PHYSICAL AND NON-PHYSICAL SPACE); this space is filled with activity
3. Metonymy: SPACE FOR ACTIVITY IN THAT SPACE
4. Elaboration into oxymoron: BORDER AS (PHYSICAL AND NON-PHYSICAL) SPACE STANDS FOR INCLUSIVE ACTIVITY WITHIN THAT SPACE

[activity on the border as space can be exclusive or inclusive; by default, it is politically, socially, culturally, conceptually, linguistically exclusive – but it is reconceptualized as inclusive inasmuch as it fuels movements and flows, hence: *inclusive border*]
5. Metaphor: BORDER AS SPACE (LOCUS) OF ACTIVITY IS AN INSTRUMENT OF THAT ACTIVITY
6. Metonymy: BORDER AS INSTRUMENT STANDS FOR ACTIVITY PERFORMED WITH IT

STAGE 2: *violent inclusion*

[At this stage, we zoom in onto the nature of the inclusive activity within border-as-space and performed with the use of border-as-instrument. The bottomline of the conceptualization is a deprivation of choice, agency, and control; the denial of the right to not belong or to not be included in ways that violate one's integrity, identity, and well-being.]

7. Metaphor: mappings from (default) physical violence onto non-physical (sociopolitical, ethnic, cultural, commercial, linguistic, or otherwise) violence

or

Metonymy: mappings within the domain of violence from the subdomain of physical violence to subdomains of other (sociopolitical, ethnic, cultural, commercial, linguistic, etc.) violence
8. Metonymy: in either case, *violent inclusion* is a RESULT FOR ACTION metonymy; specifically: VIOLENT INCLUSION STANDS FOR VIOLENT ACT/ACTIVITY OF INCLUDING (PERFORMED BY SOMEONE).

The rationale for postulating an oxymoronic complex that involves a series of metaphors and metonymies is that in the context elaborated by Mezzadra and Neilson (2013), *inclusive border* tends to refer to cases rightly called *violent inclusion*, whereby the individuals being included are deprived of choice and agency. In effect, the process of inclusion, perversely and paradoxically, excludes them from decision-making. Indeed, several parallelisms have been identified between oxymora and paradoxes; for example, Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez (2014) notes that both oxymora and paradoxes exploit resemblance relations. They are “essentially the same” because the paradox, such as *One must be cruel to be kind*, “involves an apparent contradiction between two states of affairs that are presented as being both valid” (Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez 2014: 197). The same may be said of the oxymoron, so that *inclusive border* projects an image of something that is both a border (as a line or space) and is inclusive; similarly, *violent inclusion* involves both violence and inclusion.¹⁰ The complex *inclusive border–violent inclusion* does not only link the notions of VIOLENCE, BORDER, and INCLUSION but additionally activates the concept of EXCLUSION – and this is what makes it paradoxical.

Thus, by following the development of the oxymoronic complex I have proposed here, we make a full circle and return to border as exclusionary division. However, the complex takes us to a higher level: now we are not dealing with a simple division of individuals into those on this and those on that side of the border but a subtler process of committing violence through inclusion – and so essentially performing exclusion from decision-making (Figure 5).¹¹

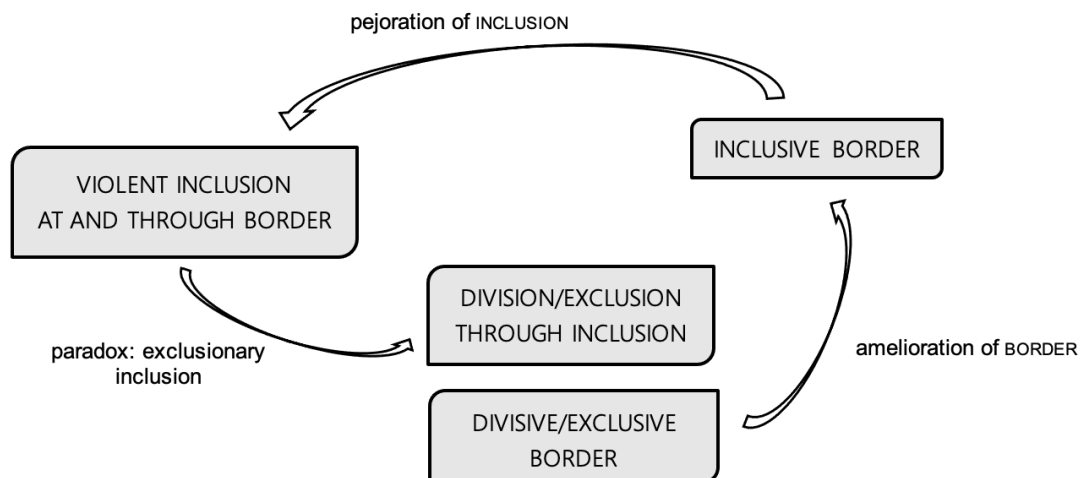


Figure 5. The oxymoronic complex of *inclusive border-plus-violent inclusion*

7. Towards a cognitive-cultural linguistics

We have seen that the *inclusive border-violent inclusion* oxymoronic complex involves a series of procedures through which conceptualizers (re) perspectivize notions, project novel images, and change axiological valuations. In the centre of that complex process is the notion of BORDER, redefined and contextualized within the socio-political and cultural framework proposed by Mezzadra & Neilson (2013): it functions as a pivot around which those novel, surprising, oxymoronic conceptualizations are effected. The framework provides a contextualization, which – to borrow the expression from another author – “allows all elements [...] to be regarded from the speaker’s intended perspective” (Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez 2014: 198). A careful consideration of the socio-political and cultural context allows us to capture, through conceptual oxymora, the dynamism of apparently incongruous or incompatible viewpoints that can nevertheless be brought into a congruent whole in that very context. Within Mezzadra & Neilson’s redefined notion of BORDER, conceptualizations that do not have an obvious oxymoronic quality, such as *inclusive border* and *violent inclusion*, acquire it thanks to the contextualized dynamism involved. By functioning as a complex, they project novel perspectives on the border as a potentially inclusive space, an instrument of inclusive activity, but with the paradoxical, exclusionary effect of violent inclusion.

Within a wider perspective, I would like to make an argument, with this analytical exercise, for what I have already advocated in print (e.g. in Głaz 2017, 2022), namely the need to engage in a contextually-conscious linguistics that would allow us to see how the semantic potential of (a) language is activated and capitalized on in actual linguistic practice. In so doing, I would like to reinvigorate and reinforce the arguments made by Palmer (1996, 2018) in his search for grammatically symbolic cultural scenarios, by Sharifian (2017b) and others (in Sharifian 2017a) in their inquiry into cultural conceptualizations, by Peeters (2015, 2017) in his ethnolinguistics concerned with values and conceptual salience, or by Bartmiński (2009, 2017) in his programme of cognitive ethnolinguistic account of a people’s mentality. This is why I am advocating here for an elaboration of a coherent cognitive, cultural, and linguistic enterprise. Specifically, this is not a call a cultural linguistics that is *also* cognitive, nor a cognitive linguistics that takes culture into account, but a full-fledged *cultural-cognitive linguistics*.

Footnotes

¹ In this sense Janusian thinking is also realized in contradictory tropes other than oxymora, such as antithesis, enantiosis, antiphrasis, or paradox. This issue will not be explored here, although see Section 6 for brief comments about the paradox.

² In fact, Gibbs calls this slogan “somewhat oxymoronic” but closer to irony. The author identifies several features common to irony (or sarcasm) and oxymora (cf. also Herrero Ruiz 2011; Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez 2014; Partington 2016).

³ One of the consequences of this view is a dissolution, in some contemporary contexts, of the distinction between the border/boundary as a line and frontier as space (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013: 16). This is an important issue but marginal within the fabric of the present study and will not be pursued further here.

⁴ This dual function of borders is captured through the French term *partage*, which combines the sense of division and connection (Mezzadra & Neilson 2013: 17, citing Iveković 2010).

⁵ Walls, however, involve their own complexity beyond the function to separate; cf. Underhill (2016).

⁶ On border permeability, cf. Mezzadra and Neilson (2013: 265).

⁷ A fine exploration of a border and borderland as space is Garrett Carr’s (2015) *The Rule of the Land*, a personal account of his trek along the Irish–Northern Irish border.

⁸ Cf. also Brdar & Brdar-Szabó (2007) or Dąbrowska (2022). Denroche (2018) develops a model of metaphonymy in text and discourse.

⁹ The two metaphonymies (or metaphor-metonymy configurations) proposed here, metaphor-within-metonymy and metonymy-from-metaphor, are not exemplified in Goossens (1990). The present proposal might be viewed as a tentative step forward in the theory of metaphonymy.

¹⁰ This linking function of oxymora is noted by Preminger & Brogan (1993: 873; in Shurma & Lu 2018: 144), who point out that the oxymoron fuses discrepant experiences into unity (recall Rothenberg’s idea of “Janusian thinking” in Section 3.1). And yet, this interpretation leaves room for discussion, for how does one interpret an oxymoron like *the living dead*? Most logically, those are not creatures that are both living and dead but rather oscillate in some in-between space between life and death (or

constitute a *sui generis*, paradoxical subcategory of the dead). Such cases need to be addressed in further studies.

¹¹ As an analytical alternative, one might want to link into a single (though complex) phenomenon the varied (but related) processes of metaphorization, metonymization, and oxymoronic elaboration that take place here. Inspiration may come from Raymond Gozzi's (1999, 2003) notion of *oxymetaphor*, and so *inclusive border-violent inclusion* may perhaps be considered as *oxymetaphonymy* (an oxymetaphonymic complex). Let us note, however, that this solution may be said to unnecessarily proliferate conceptual categories and therefore must fall under Ockham's ruthless razor. I therefore leave this option for further study.

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