

*Metaphors in Belgian political discourse:
a new look on the identification of
deliberateness*

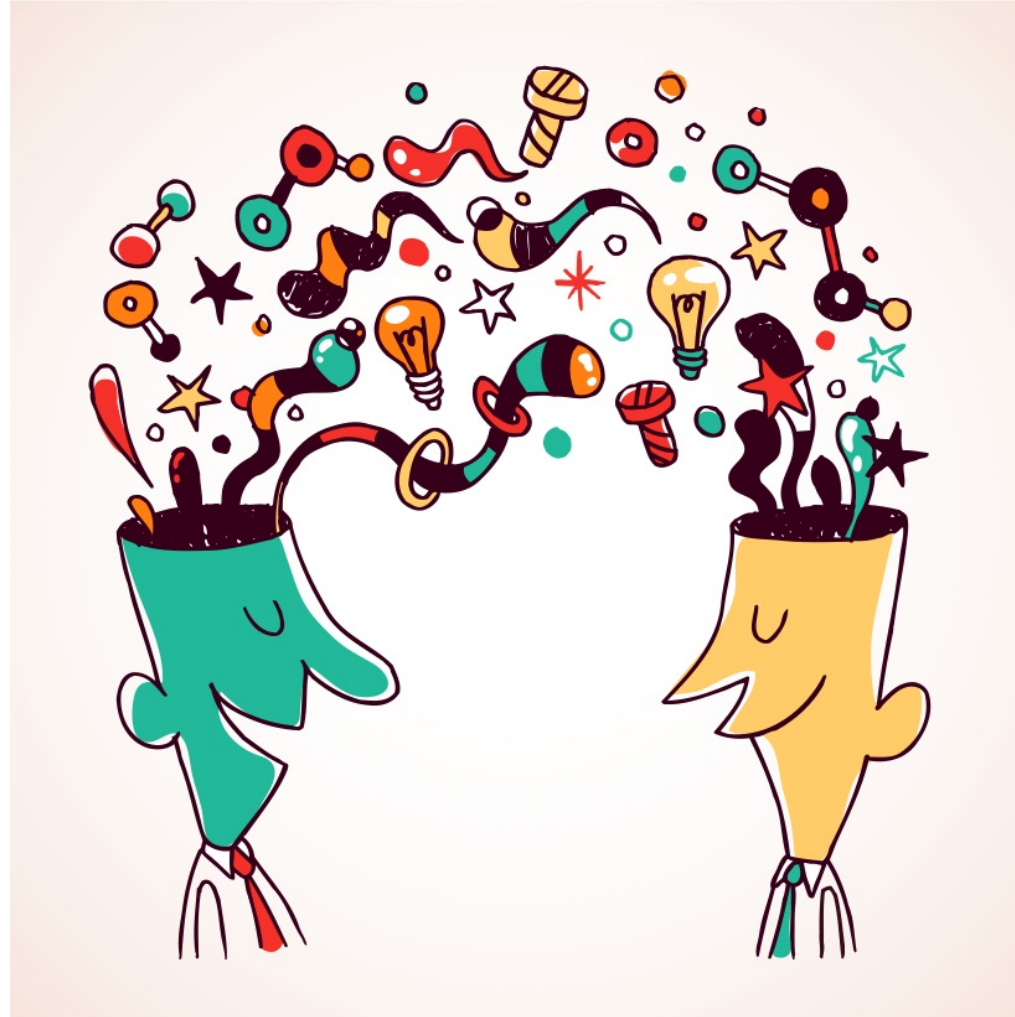
Pauline HEYVAERT,
Université de Liège,
Université catholique de Louvain



Outline of the presentation

1. Goal of the talk
2. Personal background
3. Starting point of the project: *The Paradox of Metaphor - Deliberateness* (Steen, 2008)
4. Outline of the project
 - a. Intro
 - b. Aim
 - c. Methodology
 - d. Data
5. Conclusion

Goal of the talk



Personal background

Master

Germanic Languages and
Literature
(Dutch – English)

Thesis: *How French-speaking
learners of Dutch talk and gesture
about placement events*



PhD

Research project ADAPOF: *A
Discursive Approach to the
Paradox of Federalism*
(Supervised by Julien PERREZ & Min
REUCHAMPS)

Ongoing projects: Belgian
Federalism is a Tetris, Basic
Income, Citizens' panel, etc.

Linguistics  Political Science

1st year as PhD

- Work on shared projects ADAPOF
- Discovery of the Paradox of metaphor and distinction between deliberate and non-deliberate metaphor
- Application of Steen's three-dimensional model to Belgian political corpus:
 - “Metaphors in spontaneous political communication:
A case study of the use deliberate metaphors in informal political interviews”*

Starting point of the project:
The Paradox of Metaphor – Deliberateness

Most metaphor are processed by **lexical disambiguation**, and not by **comparison**

Solution to this paradox: 3-dimensional model of metaphor analysis

1. Linguistic level: direct versus indirect
2. Conceptual level: conventional versus novel
3. **Communicative level: deliberate versus non-deliberate**

Starting point of the project: *The Paradox of Metaphor – Deliberateness*

The idea of deliberate metaphor = hotly debated issue in literature

- ↳ especially from theoretical point of view
- ↳ need for empirical work on how the notion of deliberate metaphor may be conceived
 - ↳ treat deliberateness “as an empirical question” (Steen, 2011)

*Metaphors in Belgian political discourse:
a new look on the identification of
deliberateness*

Not all metaphors = equal

metaphors which are
produced/perceived
as metaphors = more likely to
activate + ratify certain properties
of a particular representation
(→ deliberate)



metaphors which constitute
the type of language use that people
usually use to talk about
certain topics will
not have the same effect
(→ non-deliberate)

A few examples...

But we can truly support them.
That is our historical
responsibility.
It's an important support we're
going to provide [...]

Today's policy statement is build
on the same foundations. But
determination and
thoughtfulness do not mean
anything without the third
foundation of this policy
statement: commitment.

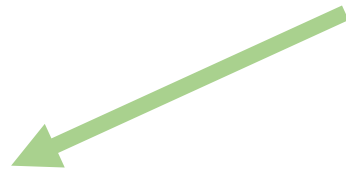
There are two ways to do politics and
run a country, like there are two ways to
steer a ship. Either your only concern is
to keep the ship floating, without
specific beacon, without a specific
purpose. You just keep on floating in a
direction whatsoever. Or you have a
mission, a vision, a dream. You have a
clear purpose in mind, even if you
know that you sometimes may have to
venture wild waters and severe storms.

Aim of the project

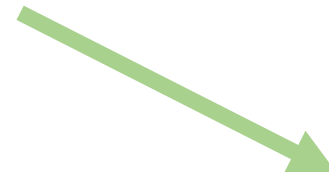
Instead of determining whether metaphor
= potentially deliberate (yes/no)



take different approach by means of extensive corpus analysis
⇒ list a criteria which can be taken into account as potential indicators
to distinguish



metaphors which are
produced/perceived
as metaphors = more likely to
activate + ratify certain properties
of a particular representation



metaphors which constitute
the type of language use
that people usually deploy
to talk about
certain topics will
not have the same effect

Aim of the project

- Instead of binary opposition (deliberate versus non-deliberate):
continuum

Today's policy statement is build on the same foundations. But determination and thoughtfulness do not mean anything without the third foundation of this policy statement: commitment.

Degree of
deliberateness



But we can truly support them [...] It's an important support we're going to provide.

There are two ways to do politics and run a country, *like* there are two ways to steer a ship. Either your only concern is to keep the ship floating, without specific beacon, without a specific purpose. You just keep on floating in a direction whatsoever. Or you have a mission, a vision, a dream. You have a clear purpose in mind, even if you know that you sometimes may have to venture wild waters and severe storms.

Methodology

1. Application of MIPVU to corpus
2. DMIP: identification of potentially deliberate metaphors
3. Determining degree of deliberateness
 - 3a. Use of criteria described in Krennmayr (2011)
 - 3b. Additional criteria

Methodology

1. Application of MIPVU to corpus

- Bilingual corpus Dutch – French
- Dutch: Pasma (2011)
- French: “*under construction*”

⇒ Problems?

Need for specificity about operationalisation issues and identification decisions

Methodology

MIPVU: Dutch

- cf. Trijntje Pasma (2011): *Metaphor and register variation: The personalization of Dutch news discourse*
 - Dictionary: *Van Dale*
- Some issues:
 - Polywords: 1 or separate lexical units?
 - Nouns defined by nominalisation: e.g. « *achteruitgang* » vs. « *vooruitgang* »
 - SCVs: e.g. « *draaien om* » vs. « *omdraaien* » ⇒ SCVs = 1 lexical unit
 - Expressions: « *terug op gang trekken* », « *aan de macht komen* », etc.

Methodology

MIPVU: French

- What dictionary should be used?
 - *Le Petit Robert* (electronic version)
 - Depending on dictionary → entries can differ → results can differ (cf. Reijnierse 2010, 2011)

- Some issues:
 - Compounds: « Gasfabriek » vs. « Usine à gaz »
 - Multiword expressions:
 - « winkelen » vs. « faire des courses »
 - « door » vs. « à cause de » / « à travers »

Methodology

Conceptual analysis \Rightarrow Use of WMatrix

- Decide on suitable domain labels for SD and TD
- “Lexical fields can provide an initial point of entry into (...) conceptual domains” (Steen 2007, p. 190)
- Semantic fields & lexical fields \neq conceptual domains, but closely related

Annotation result:

TOKEN	LEMMA	POSTAG	SEMTAG
Ook	ook	adv	N5++
in	in	prep	M6 O4.2+ Z5
Europa	Europa	noun	Z99
bewijzen	bewijzen	verb	A5.2+ X2.4
we	we	pron	Z8
ons	ons	pron	Z99
engagement	engagement	noun	Z99
.	.	noun	Z99
De	de	art	Z5
Europese	Europees	adj	Z99
eenmaking		noun	Z99
is	zijn	verb	A3+ Z5
het	het	art	Z99
grootste	groot groots	adj	Z99
politieke	politiek	adj	G1.2
succesverhaal	succesverhaal	noun	Z99
van	van	prep	Z5
de	de	art	Z5
geschiedenis	geschiedenis	noun	T1.1.1 P1/T1.1.1 Q2.1
.	.	noun	Z99

Methodology

A general and abstract terms	B the body and the individual	C arts and crafts	E emotion
F food and farming	G government and public	H architecture, housing and the home	I money and commerce in industry
K entertainment, sports and games	L life and living things	M movement, location, travel and transport	N numbers and measurement
O substances, materials, objects and equipment	P education	Q language and communication	S social actions, states and processes
T Time	W world and environment	X psychological actions, states and processes	Y science and technology
Z names and grammar			

Methodology

2. DMIP: Deliberate Metaphor Identification Procedure (Reijnierse, 2017)

« There are two ways to do politics and run a country, *like* there are two ways to steer a ship. Either your only concern is to keep the **ship floating**, without specific beacon, without a specific purpose. You just keep on floating in a direction whatsoever. Or you have a mission, a vision, a dream. You have a clear purpose in mind, even if you know that you sometimes may have to venture wild waters and severe storms. »

⇒ is source domain part of referential meaning of the utterance?

Methodology

3a. Use of criteria described in Krennmayr (2011, p. 154-155)

- Is the metaphorical unit **signalled** (e.g. by a simile or other signalling device)?
- Is the metaphorical unit in the **form of A = B**?
- Is the metaphorical unit **expressed directly**?
- Is the metaphorical unit **novel**?
- Is the metaphorical unit **surrounded by metaphorical expressions from compatible semantic fields**, which are somehow connected?
- Is the metaphorical sense of the unit particularly **salient** through, for example, alluding to the topic of the text?
- Does the metaphorical unit participate in **word play**?
- Does the metaphorical unit **elicit rhetorical effects** such as, for example, persuasion or humor?

Methodology

3b. Additional criteria

- **Frequency** (high frequency vs. low frequency, even hapax)
- **Need for conversational inferences** (to what extent do we need to have context in order to understand what is said)
- **Possibility alternatives:**

Few or no alternatives possible \Rightarrow strongly shared, low saliency

vs.

Alternatives = available \Rightarrow activate one representation over another

Methodology

“The temperature rises” vs. “Belgian Federalism is a Tetris game”

- High frequency as MRW
- No need for conversational inferences to understand
- Few alternatives possible to say the same
- strongly shared

- Tetris as MRW = very novel, very rare, low frequency
- Need for conversational inferences, need for context in order to be understood
- Alternatives are available
- Metaphorical sense is not lexicalized, not strongly shared

Methodology

Combination of steps mentioned previously:

⇒ describe use of deliberate metaphor based on systematic identification of a large number of metaphors in discourse

⇒ quantitative and qualitative perspectives:

- quantitative: provide insight into distribution and frequency of DM in language use

- qualitative: manifestations of DM to analyse functions and forms of DM

Data: Belgian political discourse

Political discourse = ideal:

Situated in a **space of**
“conflicts”
between **representations**
of topics and issues



Lends itself quite naturally to
the use of metaphors that are
likely to highlight and activate
certain properties of particular
representations

Data: Belgian political discourse

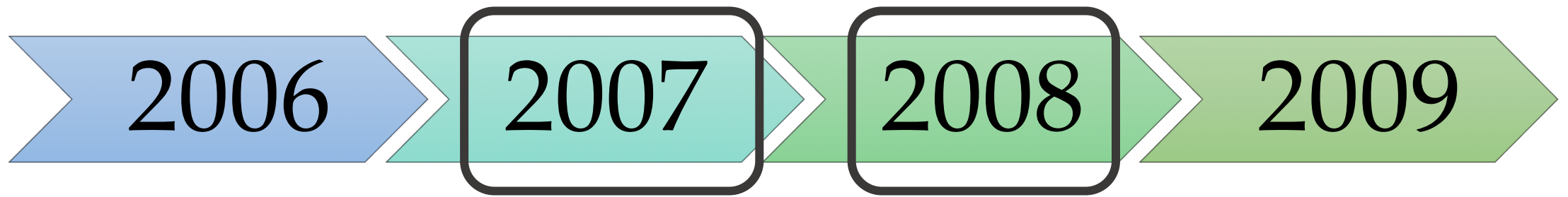
- Chosen corpus: Belgian governmental declaration
- Timespan: 2006 – 2016 (10 years)



- Size of corpus: approximately 1 million words

*Brief overview
Belgian politics:
2006 – 2016*





June '07: Federal elections
⇒ Negotiations to form governmental coalition
⇒ Characterized by disagreement between Dutch- and French-speaking parties: need and nature of constitutional reform
⇒ Political crisis

November '07: Negotiations are still ongoing
⇒ Longest formation period in Belgium

December '07: Interim Government
⇒ 194 days without government

**March 20, 2008:
New government**

Prime Minister: Yves Leterme

**First Belgian political crisis
(2007 – 2008)**



At that moment: Political, economic and ideological instability

June '10: Federal elections

⇒ Widen gap between political parties

Wallonia: PS (left-wing party)

Flanders: N-VA (right-wing party)

December 25, 2010:

⇒ 195 days without government

February 17, 2011:

World record: 249 days of political crisis

December 6, 2011:

New government with Elio Di Rupo as Prime Minister

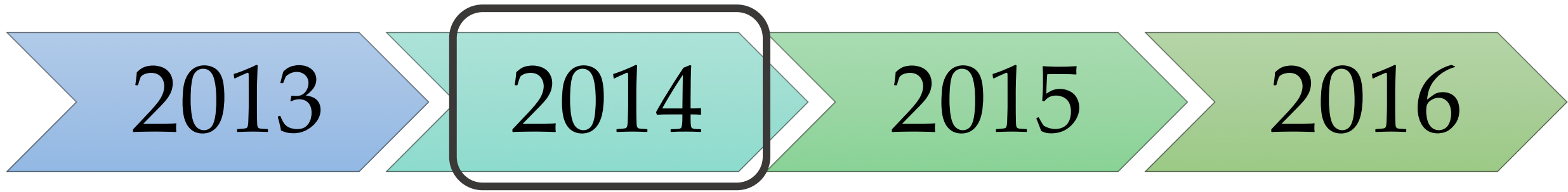
⇒ 541 days without government

Second Belgian political crisis (2010 – 2011)



Agreement regarding the Sixth
State Reform is reached:
Butterfly Agreement





May 2014: Federal elections

⇒ Beginning of new government with Charles Michel as Prime Minister

“Swedish Coalition”

⇒ 1 French-speaking party (MR) + 3 Dutch-speaking parties (N-VA, CD&V, Open Vld)
= surprising and novel majority



Overall analysis of the corpus

- MIPVU: 2006 – 2011 – 2014
- Adapted version of MIPVU: other years
 - ↳ not taking into account all lexical units
 - ↳ concordance search to find potentially relevant context
 - ↳ to what extent is it necessary to fully apply MIPVU?
- Further analyse MRWs with DMIP

Extra: “in-between cases”



Extra: “in-between cases”

“In-between” cases

“Wafelijzerpolitiek” (waffle iron politics); “Usine à gaz” (gas plant)

- Not MRW according to MIPVU
- Yet, not without importance in political discourse

Conclusion

- Define deliberateness in terms of degree \Leftrightarrow yes/no
 - Contribution to ongoing debate on deliberate metaphors
- Use of extensive political discourse (10 years, 1 million words)
- Linguistic + conceptual + rhetorically-oriented + discourse-analytical approaches
- Still some methodological issues left:
 - MIPVU
 - WMatrix
 - Additional criteria
 - ...
- Provide material for further research on existence of deliberate metaphor

Thank you !

Pauline HEYVAERT,
Université de Liège,
Université catholique de Louvain

