DELIBERATE METAPHOR
THEORY AND ITS
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
A BOTTOM-UP APPROACH TO THE
ANALYSIS OF DELIBERATE METAPHOR IN
BELGIAN POLITICAL DISCOURSE

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WHAT ARE DELIBERATE METAPHORS?

She **defended** her standpoint.

He **attacked** all my arguments.

We have to **move forward**.

This Belgian government isn’t a **political marriage**, it’s not even a **marriage of convenience**. It’s a **sham marriage** at best!

The Prime Minister uses the image that as a country, you cannot **change the wind’s direction**, but that you are able to **set the sails**. He seems to forget that while **sailing**, you might **dash against a cliff**.

Exchanging Brussel-Halle-Vilvoorde for a federal constituency isn’t different from **exchanging the plague for cholera**.
< 1980: Metaphor = stylistic device
— METAPHOR = MATTER OF LANGUAGE

1980: Lakoff and Johnson’s *Metaphors We Live By*
— Turning point in link between metaphor & cognitive linguistics
— Metaphor = essential part of our cognition
— *Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT)*
— METAPHOR = MATTER OF LANGUAGE AND THOUGHT

— METAPHOR = MATTER OF LANGUAGE, THOUGHT AND COMMUNICATION
METAPHORS ACCORDING TO CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR THEORY (CMT, LAKOFF & JOHNSON)

Target domain (TD)

Source domain (SD)

Cross-domain mapping
She *defended* her standpoint — He *attacked* all my arguments.

Target domain

DISCUSSION

Source domain

WAR

Cross-domain mapping

DISCUSSION IS WAR
The Paradox of Metaphor: most metaphors aren’t processed by cross-domain mapping (comparison), but by lexical disambiguation (categorization)
The Paradox of Metaphor: most metaphors aren’t processed by cross-domain mapping (comparison), but by lexical disambiguation (categorization)

Distinction between metaphors that are processed by comparison and metaphors that are processed by lexical categorization

Solution: Distinction between deliberate and non-deliberate metaphors
DELIBERATE METAPHOR THEORY

- Conceptual Metaphor Theory (1980) = two-dimensional model of metaphor analysis
- Deliberate Metaphor Theory (2008) = three-dimensional model of metaphor analysis
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**Definition:**
deliberate metaphor concerns the intentional use of *metaphors as metaphors* between sender and addressee. This definition minimally implies that language users, in production or reception, pay distinct attention to the source domain as a separate domain of reference (Steen, 2017)

Jean-Marie Dedecker keeps attacking the Belgian government by saying they did a bad job = **NON-DELIBERATE**

They tried to make a community mayonnaise with the wrong ingredients and with the wrong tools. Moreover, they forgot to put lubricating oil in it to keep the Belgian system running. They wouldn’t understand that the Flemish oil will now continue rippling with the French vinegar, and that the Brussels egg yolk will never come along in the plate = **DELIBERATE**
PHD PROJECT ON DELIBERATE METAPHORS

➤ Deliberate metaphor = hotly debated issue in literature

➤ Theoretical and empirical perspective

➤ Need for more research on how the notion of deliberate metaphors may be conceived

➤ Existing research on deliberate metaphor = top-down approach (e.g. Krennmayr 2011, Pasma 2011, Perrez & Reuchamps 2014, Heyvaert et al. submitted, etc.)

➤ Aim of this research = bottom-up approach to the analysis of deliberate metaphor

TOP-DOWN versus BOTTOM-UP?
→ **Top-down approach** to Deliberate Metaphor Identification

= *use of existing set of features to identify potentially deliberate metaphors*

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?
PHD PROJECT ON DELIBERATE METAPHORS

➤ Belgian political discourse: governmental declaration from 2006 - 2016 (bilingual corpus French - Dutch, approx. 1 million words)

➤ Political discourse = situated in « space of conflicts » between people’s representations of topics and issues

➤ Political discourse lends itself quite naturally to use of deliberate metaphor
Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA):
- locate, analyse and study linguistic structures
- potential influence on people’s mental representations
- key notions: discourse & ideology

Figurative Framing:
- important concept in communication
- shape discourse, contain important linguistic and conceptual content about the issue under discussion
- Burgers et al. 2016

Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA):
- CDA + CMT
- Political concepts = metaphorical
- Importance of analyzing metaphor when analyzing discourse
- « Different metaphors have different ideological attachments » (Fairclough, 2001)
There are two ways to do politics like there are two ways to navigate a ship.

Either your only concern is to keep the ship floating,
without a specific beacon, without a specific purpose.
You just keep on floating in whatever direction.

Or you have a mission, a vision, a dream. You have a clear purpose in mind, even though you know you might have to face wild waters and heavy storms.
(Guy Verhofstadt, 2006, Prime Minister)

You enthusiastically talked about yourself as a captain leading his ship through wild waters,
Mr. Prime Minister, but this doesn’t get to me one bit.
(Patrick de Groote, 2006, N-VA)

Will Prime Minister Leterme lead this out-of-control ship and disappoint the elector? Or will the cartel guide him towards a new Flemish ship that sets sail right next to the Walloon ship? I hope he picks the latter, otherwise part of his crew will mutiny or jump overboard.
(Bruno Valkeniers, 2008, Vlaams Belang)
The Prime Minister uses the economic crisis to hide the fact that the system is crashing. He does so by using the image of the wind and sails: the wind blows and the only thing we can do is set the sails.

The reality, however, is that we are sailing on two different ships, with two poles and two sets of sails. These ships are sailing next to each other and between them, there is a footbridge with a chair, on which – in a very unstable way – the Prime Minister sits.

(Gerolf Annemans, 2009, Vlaams Belang)

The Prime Minister uses the image that as a country, you cannot change the wind’s direction, but that you are able to set the sails. He seems to forget that while sailing, you might dash against a cliff.

(Jean-Marie Dedecker, 2009, LDD)
**THE ANALYSIS OF DELIBERATE METAPHOR IN POLITICAL DISCOURSE**

➤ *Discourse-analytical perspective*

➤ Why do political actors use one metaphor and not another one when talking about politics?

➤ Why do different politicians use different metaphors to talk about the same topic?

➤ Or why do they use the exact same metaphor to talk about a certain topic?

➤ In what way does the use of particular metaphors have an impact or effect of the interlocutors’ representations of the issue at hand?

➤ What is hidden behind (the use of) these metaphors, and accordingly, behind the discourse itself? (ideas, perceptions, ideologies, etc.)
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THANK YOU!

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