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Metaphor Across Contexts and Domains:
From Description to Application
Hong Kong June 2018

A BOTTOM-UP ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF DELIBERATE METAPHOR: VARIATION AND CIRCULATION



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Starting point of the research

✓ Bottom-up analysis of deliberate metaphor ⇔ most existing research: top-down approach

→ **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?

Starting point of the research

✓ Bottom-up analysis of deliberate metaphor ↔ most existing research: top-down approach

→ Existing list of features may not be complete, therefore “*important to perform the identification of potentially deliberate metaphor in a bottom-up fashion, starting from the data rather than from a set list of features to look for.*” (Reijnierse, 2017)

✓ *Can deliberate metaphors be characterized by means of other features?*

(linguistic, conceptual & communicative level)

✓ Diachronic analysis of deliberate metaphors in Belgian political discourse



Methodology: diachronic analysis of deliberate metaphors in Belgian political discourse

Why use political discourse for the analysis of deliberate metaphor?

- ✓ Metaphors : powerful potential to frame political debate & convey hidden ideologies
- ✓ Deliberate metaphors:
 - typically more novel & original

'It's the picture of a Mikado government: none of the ministers are looking in the same direction! You know that game, right, with those little sticks that are stacked together. If we take one out – in this case Prime Minister Verhofstadt –, ten others move. And that is precisely what is happening now, with four new ministers and seven additional state secretaries.' (JMN – Green P – 2008)

→ “explicitly used to present one’s conceptualization of a given issue” (Perrez & Reuchamps, 2015)



Methodology: diachronic analysis of deliberate metaphors in Belgian political discourse

Why use political discourse for the analysis of deliberate metaphor?

- ✓ Political discourse = space of conflict between people's representation of a given topic
⇒ fertile ground for use of different types of DM conveying those representations
- ✓ Purpose of political metaphor : “serve[s] primarily as a means to change meanings, and hence, to change social and political attitudes” (Musolff, 2016)
⇒ take into account communicative purpose of metaphor within political discourse
⇒ deliberate metaphor = communicative level of Steen's (2007) three-dimensional model of metaphor analysis



Methodology: diachronic analysis of deliberate metaphors in Belgian political discourse

- ✓ Diachronic: ten year time span (2006 – 2016)
 - large data (approx. 1 million words)
- ✓ Belgian political discourse:
 - Belgian governmental policy statements (Prime Minister's policy statement + politicians' responses)
 - Bilingual corpus French – Dutch
 - Peer-to-peer political discourse
- ✓ Deliberate metaphor:
 - Deliberate Metaphor Identification Procedure (Reijnierse et al., 2017) = bottom-up procedure to identification of potentially deliberate metaphors
 - Organization of identified deliberate metaphors into larger semantically-connected domains = metaphor scenarios (Musolff, 2016)



Variation of (potentially) deliberate political metaphors

✓ Deliberate metaphor:

“A metaphor is potentially deliberate when the source domain of the metaphor is part of the referential meaning of the utterance in which it is used.” (operational definition, Reijnierse, 2017)

✓ Metaphor scenario:

“enable us [...] to go beyond mere categorization of metaphors based on domains by searching for recurring argumentative, narrative and stance-taking patterns in corpora of present-day metaphor use.” (Musolff, 2016)



Variation of (potentially) deliberate political metaphors: 2 types

TYPE 1: VARIATION OF METAPHOR SCENARIOS

Example 1: Metaphors depicting functioning of governmental coalition

'It's the picture of a Mikado government: none of the ministers are looking in the same direction! You know that game, right, with those little sticks that are stacked together. If we take one out — in this case Prime Minister Verhofstadt —, ten others move. And that is precisely what is happening now, with four new ministers and seven additional state secretaries.'

(JMN — Green P — 2008)

'Unfortunately, the orange-blue-red coalition looks more like a class of bickering children than a government. The Prime Minister who has to lead the class, exceeds in indecisiveness. The final examinations are over and the government carries a grade F.'

(MA — Green P — 2008)



Variation of (potentially) deliberate political metaphors: 2 types

TYPE 1: VARIATION OF METAPHOR SCENARIOS

Example 2: Metaphors depicting politicians' opinion on the Prime Minister

'The Prime Minister presents himself as a red fairy with a green magic wand, but it is typical for fairies to cast a spell on people'
(RD – CD&V – 2006)

'He is not a leader, but a beggar, and his budget plan is a beggar's wallet !'
(JMD – 2008)

'For the past two years, the Prime Minister was some kind of janitor. Sometimes he even did a good job. He fixes what is broken, but he does not renovate nor does he think ahead. He doesn't act like the architect of tomorrow's Belgium.'
(SVH – Green P – 2013)



Variation of (potentially) deliberate political metaphors: 2 types

TYPE 1: VARIATION OF METAPHOR SCENARIOS

Example 3: Metaphors depicting politicians' opinion on the governmental policies

'Our country is a patchwork quilt of policies; the leaders are tinkers who do nothing else than patching holes in a leaking bucket and their measures are nothing else than stopgaps.'

(JMD – 2012)

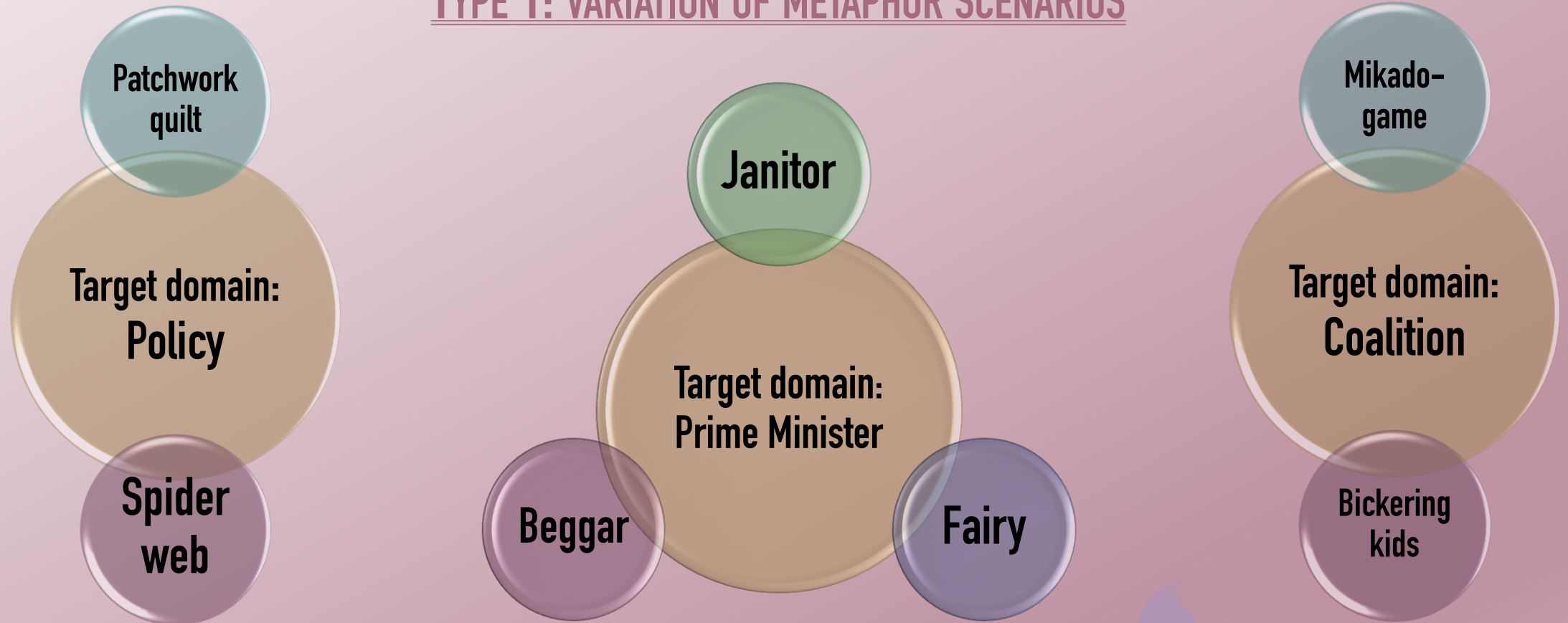
'This government's policy is like a spider web. The big birds fly right through it, but the little flies stay stuck in it. The government does not choose for everyone's future.'

(MK – Soc P – 2016)



Variation of (potentially) deliberate political metaphors: 2 types

TYPE 1: VARIATION OF METAPHOR SCENARIOS



Variation of (potentially) deliberate political metaphors: 2 types

TYPE 2: VARIATION OF METAPHORICAL FILLING OF A SCENARIO (CIRCULATION)

'As a country, you cannot change the wind by yourself, but you can set the sails. It's time to, day in and day out and with determination, take steps in the right direction and to stay on course.'

'[...] 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 inbetween, there is a footbridge with a chair on which the Prime Minister sits in a very unstable way.'

'That's why the government crawls on a ship, in the hope that the storm blows over.'

'The Prime Minister seems to forget that while sailing, you might dash against a cliff.'



Variation of (potentially) deliberate political metaphors: 2 types

TYPE 2: VARIATION OF METAPHORICAL FILLING OF A SCENARIO (CIRCULATION)

CIRCULATION → language users react by using same domain or metaphor scenario, but they adapt the metaphorical filling (=use of potentially deliberate metaphors) based on own perception of/opinion on a given issue

⇒ Utterance = adapted on a linguistic level according to speaker's conceptualization of a given issue and communicative purpose behind the utterance



Variation of (potentially) deliberate political metaphors: 2 types

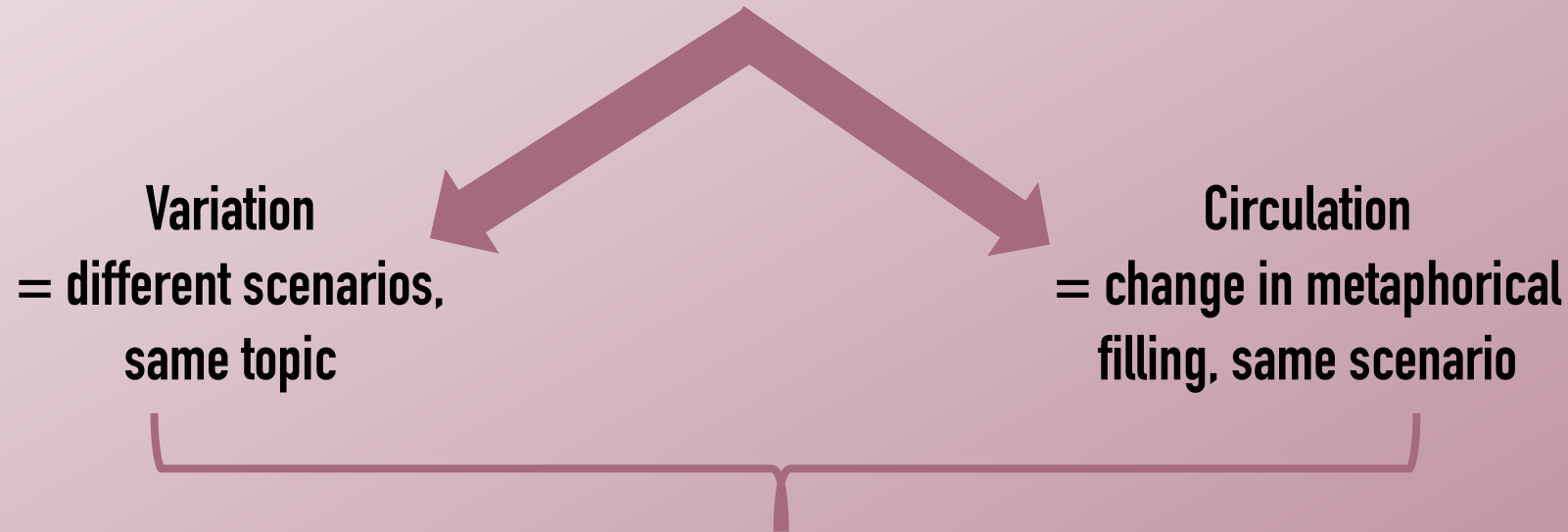
TYPE 2: VARIATION OF METAPHORICAL FILLING OF A SCENARIO (CIRCULATION)

- ✓ Political discourse allows for quite a few cases of circulation (reminder : political discourse = space of conflict)
- ✓ Circulation in wide range of discourses within political sphere (elite — citizen — media)
- ✓ Diachronic approach to circulation: how does the metaphorical framing of a given issue evolve over time?



Concluding remarks

Bottom-up approach to analysis of potentially deliberate metaphors



Linguistic perspective: variation/circulation on linguistic, conceptual, communicative level

Political science perspective: how do people express their conceptualization of their country's political landscape?

How can this be linked to political variables such as political context, politicians' individual preferences, type of political discourse, political party, etc.

& other disciplines ..



Context development of this research project

- ✓ Part of larger research project “ADAPOF”: *A Discursive Approach to the Paradox of Federalism*
- ✓ Linguists & Political scientists
- ✓ Aims:
 - Experiments
 - Diachronic corpus analysis
 - Metaphor use by elite — citizens — media
 - ...



May 2019: RaAM Seminar (University of Liège, Belgium)



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THANK YOU

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