Creative Metaphors in Political Discourse. Theoretical considerations on the basis of Swiss Speeches

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Abstract

This article develops a basic tool for stylistic metaphor analysis to assess the role of creative metaphors in a corpus of political speeches. Starting with a general discussion of creativity in political discourse it provides a definition and six basic strategies of creative metaphor uses. This definition and the strategies allow the identification of creative and conventional metaphors in speeches by two Swiss Federal Councillors, Christoph Blocher and Moritz Leuenberger. The data suggest that there are indeed not only differences between the speakers but also between speeches. Finally this article will discuss the contribution of stylistics to a critical assessment of speeches.

Dieser Artikel entwickelt ein grundlegendes Instrumentarium, um Metaphern stilistisch zu analysieren, und beurteilt auf dieser Basis die Rolle kreativer Metaphern in einem Korpus politischer Reden. Ausgangspunkt ist eine allgemeine Diskussion der Forschung zur Kreativität im politischen Diskurs. Auf dieser Grundlage werden kreative Metaphern definiert und sechs Strategien kreativen Metapherngebrauchs entwickelt, um kreative und konventionelle Metaphern in den Reden der zwei schweizerischen Bundesräte Christoph Blocher und Moritz Leuenberger zu untersuchen. Die Resultate weisen darauf hin, dass es nicht nur Unterschiede zwischen den Rednern, sondern auch zwischen den Reden gibt. Abschließend wird der mögliche Beitrag einer stilistischen Analyse zur kritischen Bewertung politischer Reden diskutiert.

It is not as common to talk about “creative politics” as it is to talk about “creative writing” or “creative science”. One explanation may be that the domain of politics (like many important domains in life) is too loosely organised (cf. Csikszentmihalyi 1996:29) to allow an easy distinction of creative and non-creative ways of ‘doing’ politics. It is, nevertheless, possible for politicians to be creative in some domains (e.g. Churchill’s Nobel Prize in literature). This stylistic analysis of creative metaphors will argue that political speeches are another domain of creativity within politics. Even if speeches are essentially a spoken genre and, therefore, do not conform to prototypical examples of artistic language (cf. Carter 2004:53), they may share several features with literary or creative texts.

However, a stylistic study of political speeches needs some justification to counter the objection that political speeches are persuasive or rhetorical, but not creative. Others might even share George Orwell’s verdict that “political writing is bad writing” (Orwell 1968:135).

1. The effect of creative metaphors

Looking more closely at Orwell's negative evaluation of political speeches it becomes apparent that political writing is not necessarily bad writing, but that Orwell criticises bad habits in political writing, such as the use of stale metaphors:

> By using stale metaphors, similes, and idioms, you save much mental effort, at the cost of leaving your meaning vague, not only for your reader but for yourself. (Orwell 1968:134).

Orwell's comment shows a few interesting differences to Lakoff's and Johnson's (1980; 1999) widely accepted cognitive theory of metaphor (cf. Steen 2002b:20). Lakoff and Johnson criticise the traditional view of metaphor for merely focussing on metaphors as stylistic ornaments and ignoring their underlying conceptual patterns. Orwell, however, puts an emphasis on the stylistic selection of metaphors. Interestingly enough, he motivates his focus on style with the relation between "mental effort" and "vague" language. His comment, in fact, asserts an interdependence of cognition and style. This is a relationship, which has often been neglected by research in the vein of Lakoff and Johnson (cf. Goatly 2002).

Furthermore, Orwell introduces an ethical aspect to the issue of style and metaphor, since vague language not only corrupts the thoughts of the author, but also beguiles the audience (Orwell 1968:137). Orwell's critique is supported and extended by Erhard Eppler, a German politician (and philologist). Eppler (1992) asserts that political language has become an accumulation of meaningless ready-made phrases, in particular because of the careless usage of metaphors. Moreover, he even fears that democracy may run empty as its language and that this process could endanger democracy in the long term, since it may leave a space in which populists can operate.[1]

These fears do raise the question of the extent to which style influences a message's effectiveness. However, the issue of a metaphor's effectiveness in persuading an audience has not been uncontested. On the one hand, there are scholars who recommend unrestrained use of stale metaphors, since they would have the strongest persuasive impact.[2] There are even

[1] "Die Gefahr, daß die Demokratie leer läuft wie die Sprache. Daß die imposanten Leerformeln, mit denen die Menschen traktiert werden, immer mehr Langeweile, Überdruß und schließlich Abneigung und Abwehr hervorrufen.
[...] Dies könnte schließlich dazu führen, daß, wer auch immer aus dem Gefängnis des politischen Jargons geschickt und gekonnt ausbräche, politisch die Erde erbeben ließe [...]. Dabei ist es offenbar gar nicht so wichtig, was ein solcher Populist politisch zu bieten hat, wichtig wird, daß er einen neuen Ton findet. " (Eppler 1992: 249).

[2] Cf. Mio 1997: 118f. for further references.

empirical findings that question the effectiveness of metaphor. For instance, Bosman and Hagendoorn (1991:280f.) find that non-metaphorical speech is more persuasive and they point out that the alleged effectiveness of metaphors may depend much more on accidental factors, such as gender or political orientation of the audience. On the other hand, there are a number of psychological studies that support the hypothesis of the advantage of metaphor over literal language, such as Sopory's and Dillard's (2002) meta-analysis of 24 empirical studies shows. Moreover, novel metaphors seem to have a more persuasive effect than conventional ones (Sopory and Dillard 2002:407).

Contradictory opinions about the effectiveness of metaphors (cf. Mio 1997:130f.) are not surprising as the process of understanding and appreciating metaphors is very complex. As a result, there is no conclusive corroboration of the persuasive effect of metaphors. Nevertheless, from a perspective of literary stylistics one is also tempted to ask why any metaphor should be more effective than literal language. More investigation into novel and creative usage of metaphor could shed further light on this issue.

2. Metaphors

One pre-requisite of an analysis of creative metaphors is metaphor identification (cf. Steen 2002b). Although this article emphasises stylistic issues, it uses the cognitive and conceptual view of metaphor outlined by Lakoff and Johnson (1980; 1991). The theory of conceptual metaphor sees metaphors as a means of understanding something in terms of something else by "mapping" one conceptual domain to another. For instance, the concept "greifen" ('grasp') may be used to understand or talk about thoughts and the conventional metaphor "begreifen" reflects consequently a cognitive mapping from the conceptual source domain OBJECT MANIPULATION onto the conceptual target domain of THINKING.

The theory of conceptual metaphor is useful for this investigation, since it makes plausible assumptions on a "theory level" (cf. Cameron 1999) about what expressions may potentially be understood metaphorically. This conceptual view also implies that metaphors are pervasive in everyday discourse. Therefore, metaphors cannot generally be regarded as something literary or creative. Metaphoricity exists rather in clines and also includes expressions whose metaphorical meaning can be found in a dictionary. As a result, a procedure of metaphor identification has to differentiate between rather conventional metaphors and "creative metaphors" which occasionally exploit the principles of conceptual mappings.

At first sight it seems to be quite easy to tell the difference between metaphors that are strikingly creative and metaphors, which have become conventional:

> A newly invented metaphor assists thought by evoking a visual image, while on the other hand a metaphor which is technically 'dead' (e.g. iron resolution) has in effect reverted to being an ordinary word and can generally be used without loss of vividness. But in between these two classes there is a huge dump of worn-out metaphors which have lost all evocative power and are merely used because they save people the trouble of inventing phrases for themselves (Orwell 1968:130).

However, in real data it often becomes difficult to draw distinctions between active, worn-out or dead metaphors (cf. Carter 2004:140f.). For instance, Orwell's example "iron resolution" is not 'technically dead', since it still contains an apparent incongruity between the terms. An identification of creative metaphors may even trigger more discussion, since it entails a value judgement. Therefore, it is necessary at least to develop a set of explicit criteria, which are used to determine creative metaphors.

3. Creative metaphors

The notion of "creativity" is complex. First of all, there are considerable differences in describing creativity on a 'genius level' and in everyday context. Moreover, the description of creativity differs depending on whether the term is applied on creativity in general or on creativity within specific domains such as literature, marketing, education and leisure activities (cf. Kaufman and Baer 2004:6-12). As a result, creativity exists – as does metaphor – in clines (cf. Carter 2004:54) which need to be redefined depending on the context. Hence, creative acts or events have to be analysed differently if they are on an uncontested 'genius level' or on a less recognised level of 'everyday creativity'. For instance, a political speech may be judged to be creative within the genre even if it will never win a poetry competition. Additionally, it is important to render more precisely whether "creative" describes processes, personalities or products.

The following focuses on linguistic products and in particular on metaphors in political discourse. This choice deliberately neglects the fact that a personality may be creative in other domains than political metaphor. Moreover, it does not take into account how instances of creative metaphor are produced or received.

Characteristically, "creative" depends on deviation from what might be expected in a given situation, such as the delivery of a political speech. However, as Csikszentmihalyi has pointed out, creativity depends not only on the rules of the domain in which creativity is exerted, or

on the creative individual's personal traits and abilities, but also on the acceptance by the experts of the field (Csikszentmihalyi 1996). Creativity is, therefore, not only deviating or rule-breaking. It requires also awareness of when and where creativity is appropriate and useful. This introduces an important social aspect into the definition of creativity.

In summary, creative metaphors challenge discursive or linguistic norms in a way which is acceptable by a relevant audience. Assuming that metaphors in political speeches are usually selected in an automatic and uncritically way we may define "creative metaphors" as being either novel or stylistically foregrounded. Therefore, all metaphors which are either foregrounded by stylistic figures of speech, which mark metaphoricity by wordplay or uncommon phrasing, or which are just new in political discourse are here seen as being potentially creative. However, the context of politics and the expectations of the genre of political speech limit the possibilities of creativity. Difficult, contradictory or surrealist metaphors are not 'apt' for the genre, as it would undermine understanding in a too obvious way. In fact, creative metaphors require a creative co-production by the audience and this also requires a readiness to accept the metaphor. If a metaphor is not accepted by an audience and is not explored by being interpreted and discussed it has failed its political-communicative purpose.

Therefore, creativity in political discourse, even if it deviates from certain rules of the genre, has to comply, to a certain extent, with its norms. The following will outline some strategies of the creative use of metaphors and, thereby, provide a more detailed picture.

4. Strategies of creative metaphors

This study collected and analysed examples of creative metaphors in political speeches and determined basic strategies of creative use of metaphors. It focussed on examples from speeches by two Swiss politicians, Federal Councillor Moritz Leuenberger and Federal Councillor Christoph Blocher. Both politicians represent antagonistic political trends although they belong to the group of seven members of the highest executive authority in Switzerland: Mr Leuenberger, on the one hand, has a social-democratic background, which supports international integration and a welfare state. Dr Blocher, on the other hand, represents the Swiss People's Party which follows an anti-immigration policy and which is often marked as a right-wing party.

Moritz Leuenberger and Christoph Blocher are not "authors" of their speeches in a traditional sense. Ghostwriters, officials and assistants may provide them with information and even with ready-made texts. Moreover, their function as the highest executive authority sometimes forces them to make statements that conflict with their own opinion. Nevertheless, there is usually something authentic in these speeches that may not necessarily belong to a single voice, but through lexical choices,3 biographical details and idiosyncratic stylistic features reflects authorial roles with individual characteristics.

The texts by Christoph Blocher and Moritz Leuenberger provide, therefore, two different corpora of speeches. Moritz Leuenberger is famous for his speeches and in 2003 received the "Cicero-Redner-Preis" for the best German public speech, whereas Christoph Blocher shows a tendency towards a 'folksy' style with quotations from folk songs and anecdotes. Nevertheless, both politicians also use creative metaphors. The identified instances of stylistic or novel metaphors were grouped according to six basic strategies of creative use. However, some examples could have been assigned to several strategies. The strategies can, therefore, only be used as a further description of creative uses of metaphors.

4.1. Combine a metaphor with another figure of style!

A first strategy shapes the text that surrounds a metaphor to make the metaphor more striking. This effect may be achieved by integrating a metaphor into another figure of style, such as parallelism or alliteration:

(1) Vom ***Stricken*** einer ***Str***ategie gegen den ***Str***eit um ***Str***assen (Leuenberger, 15.1.2004).
[About knitting a strategy against the argument about roads]

[3] A superficial statistical comparison of Christoph Blocher's and Moritz Leuenberger's speeches of the year 2004 with the programme WordSmith (Scott 1999) reveals interesting keywords. Some keywords reflect a particular lexical choice: Blocher: *Herren, Damen* (formal introduction), *insbesondere, rund, sowie, des, insgesamt;* Leuenberger: *wir, doch, es das, nicht, ja, uns, gibt.* Moreover, Moritz Leuenberger used the words *Freiheit* [freedom], *Bürger* [citizen], *Schweiz* [Switzerland] and *Probleme* [problems] significantly less frequent than Christoph Blocher. On the other hand, the words *politischen, uns, wir, ja, nicht, doch,* and the construction *es gibt* [there are] are underrepresented in Christoph Blocher's speeches. Many keywords expressed also political agendas: Councillor Blocher spoke frequently about asylum, refugees, migration (*Personen, Asylsuchende, Migration, Flüchtlinge, Verwahrung, Ausländerpolitik, Asyl, Nichteintreten, Nothilfe, Papiere, Vollzug, illegal*). Moreover, he used exceptionally often the word *Probleme* and he frequently used neo-liberal vocabulary (*Selbstverantwortung, Freiheit, Unternehmer, Regulierung*). There are fewer terms with potential ideological background among Moritz Leuenberger's keywords: *Nachhaltigkeit* [sustainability], *Verkehrspolitik* [traffic policy]. However, most keywords simply reflected Christoph Blocher's Department of Justice and Police respectively Moritz Leuenberger's Department of Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications. Additionally, since the compared corpora are equally rather small, it was inevitable that several of these keywords could be traced back to specific thematic speeches.

Interestingly enough, a combination of a metaphor with a figure of speech leads often to an uncommon combination of words (collocations). For instance, the word "stricken" is metaphorically often used with collocates such as "Legende" or "Mythos", whereas the combination with "Strategie" is rarely found in larger corpora.[4]

4.2. Make the audience aware of a metaphor!

A second strategy is to make an audience aware of a conventional metaphor. A very simple (and rather non-creative) way of doing so is the use of markers and hedges (e.g. "sprichwörtlich", "sozusagen"). A more elaborate respectively literary way is to question a metaphor (Lakoff and Turner 1989:69-70).

(2) Und manchmal ertappen wir uns bei den eigenen Worten, wie ausgeliefert wir uns fühlen: Da reden wir über die Süd-Nord-Migration wie von einer ***Naturgewalt***: als „***Flüchtlingswelle***" oder „***Flüchtlingsstrom***". (Leuenberger, 2002, 10f.)

[And sometimes we find ourselves using words which show that we feel at the mercy of events. For instance we talk about the migration from the South to the North in terms of a force of nature: as "wave of refugees" or "stream of refugees".]

Questioning of metaphors is usually questioning an opponent's metaphor. In this respect, it is important to keep in mind that questioning deviates from an established or a prominent metaphor. Therefore, questioning of metaphors is in many cases part of a specific political debate, such as Margaret Thatcher's questioning of the EUROPE IS A TRAIN JOURNEY metaphor (cf. Musolff 2004:30f.) or the more recent debate about Franz Müntefering's (leader of the German Social Democratic Party) comparison of private equity firms with locusts.5 Moreover, it is important to analyse how a metaphor is questioned. For instance, although the flood-metaphor in the context of migration is used in Swiss parliamentary debates without being questioned, it can be traced back to a German journal of the early 1980 (Böke 2002:281).

Besides of questioning there are additional implicit techniques to make an audience aware of a conventional metaphor. On the one hand, certain contextual [extra-textual] circumstances such as a specific audience or visual representations may increase the awareness of certain metaphors. For instance, "beichten" ('to confess') can be used metaphorically to mark a

[4] Analysis in the COSMAS II-corpus, cf. Belica 1995.

[5] E.g. "Locust, pocus – German Capitalism". In: *The Economist*, May 7, 2005.

revelation of something very personal. However, the metaphor's religious origin is revitalised if it is used in the context of a religious topic or audience:

(3) Und so ***beichtet*** er [der Politiker Leuenberger] ihnen, wo ihn Heinrich Bullinger angesprochen hat (Leuenberger, 13.6.2004)

[And therefore, he will confess where Heinrich Bullinger appealed to him].

Literalisation (cf. Goatly 1997:273-279), on the other hand, reactivates the literal meaning of a metaphor by using either an expression literally and metaphorically or making a pun on the metaphorical meaning.

(4) Wenn der Löwe will, dann schlägt er seiner Natur gemäss zu. Macht geht vor Recht. Das zeigt uns auch die Weltpolitik immer wieder. Und die Gutgläubigkeit – davon ist man geneigt beim Esel zu sprechen – kann verhängnisvoll sein. Bleibt der Fuchs. Er überlebt. […] Ich muss Ihnen auch sagen: ich habe in der Politik weit weniger mit kraftvollen Löwen als mit Füchsen zu tun. Der Löwe ist vom Aussterben bedroht, doch die Füchse übervölkern bereits unsere Städte. Hoffentlich gilt dies nicht auch für die Politik. (Blocher, 5.6.2004).

[When a lion wants something it strikes by virtue of its nature. Might is right. This is also shown by global politics again and again. And gullibility – which we are inclined to speak of in the donkey – may have dire consequences. The fox remains. He survives. […] I have to tell you: In politics I have to deal far less with powerful lions than with foxes. The lion is endangered but the foxes overpopulate our cities. I hope this is not true for politics.]

As Goatly points out, literalisation may have different effects. It can revitalise a metaphorical meaning by highlighting its literal origin. Moreover, it may also blur the distinction of metaphorical and non-metaphorical. For instance, in the quotation above it becomes sometimes unclear whether Christoph Blocher is talking about animals or politicians. This may help the audience to find a contemporary application of the fable, but it may also suggest problematic conclusions, as a later discussion will show.

4.3. Combine compatible metaphors!

A third strategy is based on the use of several compatible metaphors. Compatibility is defined by matching conceptual mappings. For instance, the example below displays a specific stylistic choice by combining several expressions which are conventional on their own, but which fit together because of the common conceptual mapping POLITICAL STRUCTURES ARE BUILDINGS:

(5) Das neue Gericht, […], stellt eine erste ***Säule*** des neu ***gebauten*** – oder zumindest grundlegend ***renovierten*** – Justizgebildes dar, zu dem Volk und Stände mit ihrem JA vom 12. März 2000 den ***Grundstein gelegt*** haben. (Blocher, 16.9.2004)

[The new court is a first pillar in the newly constructed – or at least radically renovated – judicial structure for which the people and states have laid the foundation.]

Lakoff and Turner (1989), who focussed on poetic metaphors and innovation by conceptual mappings, draw the attention to the fact that these kinds of compatible metaphors may also go beyond what is expressed by conventional metaphors if they "extend" mappings (Lakoff and Turner 1989:67). Such an "extension" of conventional metaphorical mappings works by adding aspects, which are conventionally not mentioned.

(6) Sie fordern simplere ***Strickmuster*** oder wollen das ***Strickwerk*** gerade ganz ***auftrennen***. (Leuenberger, 15.1.2004)

[They demand simpler knitting patterns or want to unravel the knitting]

"Stricken" [knitting] may in German metaphorical denote the fabrication of something abstract (often as story or image). However, this conventional mapping does usually not take into account that these fabrics may also be unravelled.

4.4. Elaborate metaphorical mappings!

A fourth strategy is based on a creative "elaboration" of a given metaphorical mapping (Lakoff and Turner 1989:67-69):

(7) Am 19. Oktober 2003 hat der ***Wecker geklingelt***. (Blocher, 16.1.2004)

[The alarm went off on 19th of October 2003.]

Goatly describes this technique as a 'concretising secondary metaphor' (Goatly 1997:39, 46). This explains very well that elaboration works in contrast to extending within the same metaphorical mapping by replacing a conventional metaphor with an expression that fits into the same semantic script: Waking up is associated with understanding and if the alarm goes off, one has to wake up.

4.5. Expand metaphorical mappings!

A further way to expand a metaphorical mapping is "composing" (cf. Lakoff and Turner 1989:70-72). Composing, as Lakoff and Turner describe it, is a literary technique which combines several different conceptual metaphors with a common target domain. However, this strategy seems to be rather rare in political discourse. Significantly, in the corpus only a quotation from a Gottfried Keller poem fulfils the criteria of composing in my opinion:

(8) Die Perle jeder Fabel ist der Sinn
Das Mark der Wahrheit ruht hier frisch darin

Der Reife Kern aller Völker Sagen
(Blocher, 1.8.2004)
[The pearl in every fable lies in its message,
Exposed to view, the essence of truth,
The ripe core of all folk legends.][6]

4.6. Create novel mappings!

A sixth and final strategy is based on a novelty of metaphorical mapping. "Novelty" has to be defined in the context of the discourse, since political speeches rarely invent entirely new metaphorical mappings. In many cases a given metaphor may have been used several times in other discourses. However, it is still a creative act to introduce a metaphor intertextually into political discourse.

(9) Es überleben diejenigen [Tiere bzw. Insekten], die mit ihrer Farbe entweder andere Tiere abschrecken oder sich unsichtbar machen können. Tiere ohne solche Farben werden gefressen und ihre Gattung stirbt aus. Darum haben es politische Parteien, die sich dem Ausgleich oder dem Frieden verschreiben, schwer [...] (Leuenberger, Moritz, 31.7.2004)

[Animals (specifically insects) that deter other animals with specific colouring or that can make themselves invisible will survive. Animals without such colouring will be devoured and their species will become extinct. Therefore, it is difficult for political parties that commit themselves to compromise and peace [...]

Metaphors of EVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE have been used before in Swiss politics (e.g. Blocher's example 4). However, the specific elaboration by mapping insects onto political parties is novel in Swiss political discourse.

5. Social creativity

The focus on creative features of speeches in the strategies outlined above neglects the fact that uncreative parts may also corrupt a speech. For instance, mixing metaphors has often been considered as a stylistic mistake:

(10) Aber die Nachhaltigkeit ist zumindest keine Ideologie, sondern ein ***Strickmuster***, an dem wir unser Gewissen ***schärfen*** können. Sie ist keine ***pfannenfertige***, einfache Vorgabe, sondern die schwierige Aufgabe, drei Grundziele unter einen ***Hut*** zu ***bringen***. Und das ist eine ewig dauernde ***Strickarbeit***. (Leuenberger, 15. Januar 2004)

[However, sustainability at least is not an ideology, but a knitting pattern with which we may sharpen our conscience. It is not a simple ready-to-cook template, but the

[6] English translation from an earlier Blocher speech: Blocher: *The Seven Secrets of the SVP (strictly confidential).* http://www.blocher.ch/en/artikel/000121albis.pdf (2.6.2005).

difficult task to reconcile (‘to gather under one hat’) three basic goals. And this is an eternal knitting job.]

However, mixing metaphors is not necessarily ugly (cf. Goatly 1997:269-271) and a too rigid rule of exclusion may obscure interesting cases of creativity. Nevertheless, an evaluation of creativity in a speech will need to take into account blatant non-creativity such as dull combinations of stale metaphors without any evocative power:

(11) Was wären wir ohne Sängerinnen, Sänger, Jodlerinnen und Jodler, Alphornbläser und Fahnenschwinger? Arm wären wir! Wir wären Menschen in einer leeren, einsamen, grauen Welt. (Blocher, 6. Juni 2004)

[What would we be without singers, yodellers, alphorn players and flag jugglers? We would be poor! We would be people in an empty, lonely, grey world.]

Moreover, these strategies neglect the social aspect of creativity. It was mentioned earlier that creativity demands in fact a creative co-production by the audience. This co-production becomes apparent when political metaphors develop lives of their own. One of the most striking examples is Gorbachew’s metaphor of the common house of Europe which has been interpreted and discussed by journalist and politicians (cf. Chilton 1996:251-402). Interestingly enough, media and politics engaged in a collaborative interpretation of Gorbachew’s metaphor by extending it. This process is similar to the ways in which literary critiques may disagree about the correct interpretation of a poem. In fact, some political metaphors seem to have a “poetic effect” in the sense that they trigger very rich interpretations by opening up a wide range of ‘weak implicatures’ (cf. Sperber and Wilson 1995:202-237).

Exploration of analogies, questioning of metaphors and individual extension or elaboration of a metaphorical mappings have an important role in both political conversations and political discourse as Musolff’s process of “metaphor negotiation” shows (Musolff 2004:146-158). Creative metaphors are often embedded in a debate which, not unlike a dialogue (though in absence of the interlocutors), links different uses of metaphors. This enables the discussion of the possibilities and limits of a metaphor and thereby a test of its usefulness as an instrument to explain aspects of the world. An otherwise conventional metaphorical mapping may be refreshed in this process (cf. Böke 2002:267). However, it is also possible that the extension of a metaphor may be used as a strong persuasive instrument against an opponent, for instance by twisting the metaphor’s argument into a different direction (Mio 1997:129). This is also why using creative metaphors may be considered as a form of creative ‘risk-taking’ (Carter 2004:109). There is the danger that not only a creative metaphor but also its originator may be rejected (cf. Booth 1978).

6. How creative are political speeches?

The strategies outlined above, even if they are possibly incomplete in some aspects, allow the identification of creative metaphors in a corpus and the investigation of the extent to which creative metaphors are used in political speeches and the assessment of their role and importance. To this end, a corpus of extracts from 46 speeches by Christoph Blocher and Moritz Leuenberger in the year 2004 was created.7

Metaphor identification requires a sufficient co-text (frame of the metaphor). Therefore, it was not possible to choose extracts of equal word length, because this would have fragmented several sentences at the end of the extracts. As a result, the extracts vary between 399 and 428 words and have an average length of 408 words. In order to prevent having too many introductory sentences the extracts usually start with the first full stop after 200 words unless a speech had slightly less than 600 words. This resulted in a corpus Leuenberger of 9346 words and a corpus Blocher with 9423 words.

A first count showed an equal distribution of creative metaphors between Christoph Blocher (45) and Moritz Leuenberger (45). However, if one excludes all quotations (which reduces corpus Leuenberger by 126 words and corpus Blocher by 436 words) there appeared to be a difference: In the corpus Blocher there were only 28 creative metaphors counted (2.78 creative metaphors/1000 words), whereas the corpus Leuenberger still had 42 creative metaphors (4.56 creative metaphors/1000 words). More interesting is the distribution of metaphors among the speeches. In the corpus Blocher the creative metaphors cluster in fewer extracts than in the corpus Leuenberger. This becomes apparent if one compares the number of creative metaphors in the five speech extracts (~22% of all words) with the highest number of creative metaphors. In the corpus Blocher the five speeches with the highest number of creative metaphors accounted for 25 (~90%) of all his creative metaphors. In the corpus Leuenberger it was only 66% of all his creative metaphors. These data suggest two conclusions: Speakers use creative metaphors to a different extent, but there is also a very important difference between individual speeches.

It is, of course, interesting to compare these finding with the number of conventional and highly conventional metaphorical words in all extracts. However, the procedure of identifying

[7] List of speeches see end of article. The texts are available in electronic format on the Internet; cf. the personal websites of Blocher and Leuenberger within the Department of Justice and Police and the Department of Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications on the website of the Swiss government on http://www.admin.ch (22.05.2005). These speeches may differ in words form the original speeches and may have been edited for the Internet publication.

conventional and highly conventional metaphors is beset by so many difficulties that it is impossible to discuss all of them in this article. The main problem is that metaphor identification may differ even between trained analysts (cf. Steen 2002a:396-398). Moreover, identification entails here a difficult and contestable assessment of the conventionality of metaphors. Therefore, the following results should be handled with care.

This analysis tries to focus on metaphors which might be potentially processed metaphorically and ignored deliberately 'dead' and 'sleeping' metaphors (cf. Goatly 1997:31-35). Specifically, the analysis

- focussed on nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs (cf. Steen 2002b:25)
- ignored foreign words which are mostly used in their metaphorical meaning (e.g. Konkurrenz [competition])
- excluded 'delexicalised words', such as machen [make], which cannot be traced back to a single non-metaphorical meaning (cf. Heywood, Semino and Short 2002:44f.).

After the identification of conventional and highly conventional metaphors in both corpora8 I counted in the corpus Blocher 245 conventional and 567 highly conventional metaphors whereas the corpus Leuenberger had 241 conventional metaphors and 375 highly conventional metaphors. In fact, there are less creative and more conventional metaphors in Christoph Blocher's extracts than in the corpus Leuenberger. These preliminary data suggest that there is indeed less stylistic awareness towards the use of both creative and conventional metaphors in Christoph Blocher's speeches. However, these data do not show a relationship between the quality of a speech and the number of conventional metaphors although extracts of two apparently more sophisticated speeches9 turned out to have fewer highly conventional metaphors. In summary, a tentative quantitative analysis of metaphors demonstrates that political speeches use creative metaphors to a degree that differs from speech to speech. This finding reinforces the intuition that some speeches may be less fruitful for stylistic analysis than others.

7. Towards a critical stylistic analysis?

It was Orwell's opinion that orthodoxy, "of whatever colour, seems to demand a lifeless, imitative style" (Orwell 1968:135). If this assertion were true the finding above would indeed

[8] Excluding quotations from other texts.

[9] Blocher (5.6.2004): *Der Zoo feiert seinen 75. Geburtstag!* and Leuenberger (31.7.2004): *Rede über die List in der Politik.*

suggest that Christoph Blocher's speeches tend to be more affected by ideology than Moritz Leuenberger's. This view is also supported by the fact that Moritz Leuenberger thinks critically about metaphorical mappings (as example 2 shows).

However, it is debatable whether stylistics are a good tool to debunk ideological structures in political discourse. The problem is that it is unclear what might be concluded from the finding that the style of a speech is good or bad. For instance, Kopperschmidt (1990) points out that simply finding that fascist speeches were indeed ugly does not explain why they were successful and how one could prevent these kinds of events in the future. Looking at the stylistic aspects of speeches may, therefore, misconceive the importance of persuasion and reduce rhetoric to a mere 'surface phenomenon' (cf. Kopperschmidt 1990:487f.).

This problem should caution against a naïve stylistic analysis, which does not link the content of speeches with social context, e.g. by seeing speeches as a part of a discourse. Such a broader perspective on metaphors may also look at aspects that are not explicitly mentioned in a text such as a metaphor's hidden political agendas. For instance, accepting a metaphor may also lead to accepting its underlying analogy and its presuppositions (cf. Musolff 2004:150). If one accepts the metaphor IMMIGRATION IS A FLOOD one might also accept the conclusion that it is necessary to build dams against a metaphorical 'flood of immigrants' (cf. Böke 2002:269). This 'suggestive analogical reasoning' (Mio 1997:119f.) is a powerful persuasive instrument. However, it is difficult to predict which parts of analogical reasoning will be accepted and which will be recognised as being incongruous. For instance, deterrence or mimicry in Moritz Leuenberger's metaphor (example 9) may be a good strategy for survival of an insect. However, it does not seem to be a suitable PR-strategy for a political party. In fact, Moritz Leuenberger's metaphor should probably suggest that only a distinct profile helps a party to survive. However, it is conceivable that somebody could draw more specific and problematic analogies between insects and political parties. Christoph Blocher also blurs the difference between politicians and foxes and lions (example 4), which is not necessarily to be understood as a call for disinfesting the cities from the overpopulation of cunning politicians. However, although there are serious problems with the application of the principle of suggestive analogical reasoning, it may suffice that these metaphors allow problematic analogies, which may be taken for granted under certain circumstances, even though it may seem absurd to many readers or hearers. Creativity is, therefore, neither neutral nor innocent and this fact calls for a critical evaluation of creative metaphors.

Nevertheless, this is not a sufficient argument against an analysis of creativity in political discourse. It is important to bear in mind that persuasion is not the only function of creative metaphors. In fact, a mere focus on persuasion gives a distorted picture of metaphors and political speeches:

- Metaphors may communicate something which is difficult to express in literal speech because literal words are lacking (cf. Gibbs 1994:124f.; Mio 1997:121f.)
- Metaphors may help in face-threatening situations in which it is more appropriate to speak about a topic in an indirect way (cf. Chilton 1996; Charteris-Black 2004)
- Metaphors may add vividness to a speech (cf. Gibbs 1994:125f.)
- Metaphors may help structuring the argument (cf. Goatly 1997:163f.; Sopory and Dillard 2002:408)
- Creative metaphors may introduce new angles of sight (cf. Booth 1978; Carter 2004:140)

Some of these possible effects of metaphor go beyond persuasion. For instance, 'introducing new angles of sight on things' (Carter 2004:140) is a major function of literary texts. Literary texts attempt to change or refresh our representations of the world or our schemata through which we understand the world (cf. Cook 1994:4). This effect of changing or refreshing schemata has also been shown on metaphors in literature (cf. Semino 1997:219).

Political speeches may not necessarily attempt to change or refresh our schemata, since many political utterances seem to entrench clichés and prejudices. However, Moritz Leuenberger's effort to structure a speech via a knitting metaphor (examples 6 and 10) and Christoph Blocher's speech about metaphorical and literal lions (example 4) cannot only be explained by persuasion. Moreover, changes in social practices may produce new discursive challenges which demand creative response (cf. Fairclough 1989:169-196). It is in this respect that creativity is sometimes necessary to ensure political survival.

Political speeches can function in a similar way to literature by breaking the 'quasi-norms' (Fricke 2000) of the genre of political speech or political discourse. Further research in creative and conventional metaphors may unveil some of these implicit quasi-norms, although Orwell's critique of political prose already suggests that the use of stale metaphors is one of these implicit quasi-norms.

In summary, the scope of socially acceptable deviation may be more restricted in political discourse than in literature, but there is also strong pressure to react creatively to social changes. This dialectic relationship between creativity and social practices does not constitute an essential difference between literary and political texts, since deviations in literature are

also expected to be functional in some way (Fricke 1991). Politicians may not be creative in their profession; their speeches, however, can be.

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